



**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM**

**THE PERMANENT EXCLUSION OF ASIAN PUPILS  
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE  
BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL AREA**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the context of racial discrimination and racism, particularly in Education, this study focuses upon a group of permanently excluded Asian pupils and aims to give an interpretation of their, and their parents', perception of schooling in the central area of Birmingham. A literature review of current research, LEA's response to exclusion, various educational legislation and its implications is included. The data were collected using 26 Exclusion Reports [13 Asian and 13 English pupils] from schools. Comparisons are made between the two different groups. Other methods include interviews of five permanently excluded Asian pupils and their parents, four Education Social Workers, Headteachers of secondary schools and a questionnaire to the Headteachers. The main themes that have emerged in this research related to schools are: racial discrimination and racism, shortage of Asian teachers and Asian Governors, a distinct lack of teachers' understanding of racial and cultural issues, a dearth of policies on anti-racism, anti-sexism, multiculturalism and equal opportunities, and inadequate provision of interpreting/translating services for non-English speaking parents in the schools. In conclusion, recommendations for LEA policies and for further research have been put forward.

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## **A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY**

In this thesis, we need to establish what we mean by certain terms. A set of terms appear throughout the thesis and it is therefore important to define their meaning, as the terms used and their implicit political implications are subject to on going debate. The following terms are adopted in this thesis.

### **Culture:**

- is an identity which every person recognises for themselves. It is an identity which is based on a number of factors, such as: experience, memories, ethnic identity, family practices, social class, economic situation, religious beliefs, family and community, traditional and community roles. Cultures are neither superior nor inferior to each other. They are constantly evolving for individuals within communities, yet they are recognised by the participants within the culture at any time, and are often a source of tradition, pride, and reproduction.

### **Ethnicity:**

- refers to individuals' identification with a group, sharing some or all of the following traits: customs, lifestyles, religion, language and nationality. In the context of British society, the 'racial factor' influences an individual's definition of their own ethnicity, such as: Asian, black/Caribbean, black/African. It is important to remember that white people also belong to diverse ethnic groups. This term has become contentious in the UK in recent years.

The term ethnic minority is used for those groups of people who are in minority in British Society.

**Race:** The term 'race' is in regular use in daily conversation and has been given a certain equal status by various acts of Parliament. The word 'race' is scientifically discredited and has no biological validity. Therefore the word 'race' has been used in 'parenthesis' in this thesis.

**Racism:**

- is defined as a prejudiced belief where people who are not white/black are seen to be inferior/superior to white/black people in terms of their culture, religion, lifestyle, beliefs and intellect etc. Racism is a form of practice which has the power to turn prejudice into acts of unfair treatment or discrimination. Racism can operate on at least two different levels e.g. individual and institutional.

**Individual Racism:**

- is when a person is treated less favourably because of their racial or ethnic origin.

**Institutional Racism:**

- is when an organisation or group assumes certain conditions and requirements as equitable to everyone, which unconsciously or actively discriminates against or precludes members of particular ethnic groups and thus prevents their participation.

**Black:**

In this thesis, this refers to people who are African-Caribbean in origin predominantly, however some writers refer to people who are - Asian or otherwise because their skin colour is visibly non-white.

**Asian:**

In this thesis, this refers to persons or descendants from the Indian sub-continent and persons who identify themselves as being Asian within this context. In Britain this generally refers to people who are Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi among others. This may also include Asians who have come to Britain from East Africa or other countries.

**African:**

Persons of African origin born in Africa, with distinctions between black, Asian and White Africans.

**African-Caribbean:**

Persons of African origin born in one of the Caribbean islands and the terms also refers to their descendants born in the United Kingdom, Europe or the USA.

**White:**

Descendants of persons of European origin born in one of the European countries including the United Kingdom - normally white.

**Eurocentric:**

Looking at, exclusively valuing and interpreting the world through the eyes and experiences of white Europeans. This includes, for example, the presentation and interpretation of historical events; defining culture from one perspective and seeing Europe as the power centre of the world.



## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

A Levels:	Advanced Level examinations which provide access to higher education.
ACESW:	African-Caribbean Education Social Worker.
AESW:	Asian Education Social Worker.
ARTEN:	Anti-Racist Teacher Education Network. A network set up by teacher educators in Britain which aims to promote equality.
BMJ:	British Medical Journal.
BSS	Behaviour Support Service.
CRE:	Commission for Racial Equality, a government-funded body, concerned with the implementation of the 1976 Race Relations Act.
CSE:	Certificate of Secondary Education.
CV:	Curriculum Vitae.
DES:	Department for Education and Science, the government department responsible for state education. In 1992, it became the Department for Education. (DfE).
DfE:	Department for Education.
DfEE:	Department for Education and Employment.
EAL:	English as an Additional Language.
ERA:	Education Reform Act (1988). An act of Parliament bringing widespread Changes in education including the first National Curriculum, and changes to the powers and funding of local authorities, schools and higher education.
ESG:	Educational Support Grant.
ESL:	English as a Second Language.
ESN:	Educationally sub-Normal.

ESW:	Education Social Worker.
FE:	Further Education.
GCSE:	General Certificate of Secondary Education: examinations normally taken after five years of secondary education, which replaced the two-tier CSE (Certificate of Secondary Education) and O [ordinary] level examinations in 1988.
Govt.	Government.
GRIST:	Grant Related In-Service Training.
HEFCE:	Higher Education Funding Council for England.
HMCI:	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector.
HMI:	Her Majesty's Inspectorate.
HT:	Headteacher
ILEA:	Inner London Education Authority.
INSET:	In-service Education and Training: Continuing professional development for practising teachers.
LEA:	Local Education Authority.
LMS:	Local Management of Schools.
NAGM:	National Association of Governors and Managers.
NALDIC:	National Association of Language Development in the Curriculum.
NAME:	National Anti-Racist Movement in Education, a voluntary body.
NASSEA:	National Association of Support Services for Equality and Achievement.
NCC:	National Curriculum Council.
NEC:	National Exhibition Centre.
NERS:	National Exclusions Reporting System.
NUT:	National Union of Teachers.

O Level:	General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level.
OFSTED:	Office for Standards in Education.
PGCE:	Postgraduate Certificate of Education: one year course for graduates leading to qualified Teacher Status.
PRU:	Pupil Referral Unit.
PSI:	Policy Studies Institute: an independent research body undertaking studies of economic, industrial and social policy, and political institutions. Formerly Political and Economic Planning [PEP].
SATS:	Standard Attainment Tests.
SEN	Special Educational Need.
SHA:	Secondary Heads Association.
WESW:	White Education Social Worker
WFESW:	White Female Education Social Worker

## **PREFACE**

The thesis focuses upon evidence of widespread institutionalised racism in the contemporary society of Britain, particularly in Education. Educational policies are born in a political framework. There has been a wave of privatisation to satisfy the conservative notions of a 'free market'. This massive restructuring for control cannot be divorced from the policies of key areas including education. A free market is favourable to those who are in better positions in terms of class to take advantage of the opportunities available. The fact that the majority of Asian people are positioned in the working class strata of society makes the notion of 'free market' inherently racist. It is in this context, that the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils from secondary schools in Birmingham has been examined.

In chapter one, racism in Employment, Housing and Education has been discussed, and how it affects Asians and other ethnic minority communities, in particular, in British society.

My reasons for undertaking this research and the purpose of this research has also been explored. The starting point is that Asian pupils may be facing racial discrimination in the process of permanent exclusions from secondary schools.

In chapter two, a number of reports and legislation have been discussed to reveal how exclusion of pupils was carried out since the Education Act of 1944. The Warnock Report [1978], the Education Act 1981 and the Education Act 1986 too are discussed in this context.

The 1988 Education Act [introduced National Curriculum, Local Management of schools and Open Enrolment Policy] and its implications are discussed in relation to equality of opportunities for pupils. Finally, the Education Act 1993 and 1997 and the review of exclusion procedure is reviewed and developed.

In chapter three I have reviewed literature about exclusion drawing on previous research. Reasons for exclusion are examined in a sub-section before moving to the issues of exclusion, particularly in relation to Asian and other ethnic minority pupils.

The findings of previous research into exclusion, in general, has revealed that exclusion is more prevalent in secondary schools and in year 10 and 11. It also showed that exclusion among boys i.e. White, African-Caribbean and Asian is higher than girls.

Birmingham Education Authority's response to exclusion is analysed, how the authority opened Pupil Referral Units and set up a Working Party to reduce the exclusion rate. Some projects have also been referred to which reduce the exclusions, particularly of African-Caribbean boys.

In chapter four, I explain how qualitative methodology was used to gather the data for this research. Methodological problems and the issues faced during interviews with pupils and their parents, Education Social Workers and Headteachers are also discussed. The chapter also reveals how the information was gathered through a questionnaire from Headteachers, with reference to Exclusion Reports and the issues which arose during this process.

In the autobiographical context section some reflections have been developed about how was I motivated and affected personally during this study.

In chapter five, 13 permanent Exclusion Reports of Asian and English pupils were compared and it was found that the majority of excluded English pupils were not in Year 10 and 11 whilst all the excluded Asian pupils were either in Year 10 or Year 11. In total, disruption, truancy and damage to property incidents were more associated with English rather than Asian pupils. Incidents of fighting in Asian and English pupils were almost the same. In school Exclusion Reports the use of ethnic data for Asian pupils was inconsistent.

In chapter six, the role of self-concept which has three aspects i.e. self-image, ideal-self and self-esteem is considered important in pupil behaviour. The data from Exclusion Reports reveal five themes i.e. relationships of pupils and teachers, how the pupils behaviour changes particularly amongst peer groups, the role of sanctions, expectations of pupils' parents and community and the role of 'gangs' for pupils' security, survival and identity.

The role of 'significant others' and pupil self-esteem is addressed in pupils' behaviour.

In chapter seven, the behaviour of pupils, and the focus of the relationships with teachers is discussed, particularly from the pupils' point of view. It appears that the pupils who experience permanent exclusion are likeable and intelligent boys who happen to get involved in groups or gangs for their group identity and survival in the school. These pupils claim that they have suffered racial discrimination in the school. The permanently excluded pupils appear tough and strong on the surface but had low self-esteem and were vulnerable to pressure from peers.

This chapter also covers the parents' perspectives on permanent exclusion of their boys and how their family pride had been tarnished. Parents did not approve the friendships of their boys and believed this was the contributory factor along with racial discrimination and poor communication, for the permanent exclusion of their children from the schools. Parents were not happy about the education provided at the Pupil Referral Units.

In chapter eight, four Education Social Workers (i.e. a White Female, a White Male, an Asian Male and an African-Caribbean Male) responded to queries about the process of permanent exclusion of Asian pupils. They were of the opinion that the number of exclusions is increasing and there are no set rules for the exclusion of pupils. They believe that supporting services (e.g. Education Welfare Service, Child Advisory Service, Psychological Service, Behaviour Support Service) are not used appropriately and teachers need training on racial and cultural matters along with anti-racism, anti-sexism, multiculturalism and equal opportunities. Education Social Workers also criticised the provision for interpretation and translation for non-English speaking Asian parents and educational provision for excluded pupils.

In addition, they commented on League Tables, and the content of the National Curriculum because of a missing Asian dimension and they saw the need to have more Asian role models in the schools.

In chapter nine, Headteachers' response to permanent exclusion is that it is on the increase particularly among male and Muslims pupils. Headteachers criticised the resources allocated to them and the Governments' legislation. They also felt that their teachers may not be meeting the

racial, cultural and psychological needs of some pupils in schools. Headteachers were of the opinion that violence, bullying, challenging behaviour, not obeying to the schools' rules and drugs were the main causes for permanent exclusions of pupils and they were not satisfied with the supporting services and wished to have them under their management. Anti-racist practice in the schools appeared to be lacking and Headteachers did not approve the educational provision for excluded pupils. Some Catholic Schools in the city are attempting to reduce the exclusions of pupils by partnership between the schools to deal with their problems.

In chapter ten, questionnaire results highlighted that there was a shortage of Asian teachers both in mainstream and Section 11 provision. Though many of these schools had a large population of Asian pupils, they had a few Asian Governors. Facilities for interpreting and translation were not adequate. Some schools did not have equal opportunities, anti-racist, anti-sexist and multicultural policies and school staff were not provided with any relevant training.

In chapter eleven, conclusions of the study and recommendations for Birmingham Education Authority are discussed. The pupils and their parents believed that racial discrimination and racism play a crucial role in the process of permanent exclusion of pupils from secondary schools in Birmingham.

This study also revealed that education in Britain is politicised and various education legislation has created inequality. Market forces are playing a significant role in the education of pupils and there appears to be no 'neutral education' in Britain. In the conclusions, some recommendations for Birmingham Education Authority and wider implications for future research have been put forward.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **RACISM IN BRITAIN**

#### **Introduction:**

To arrive at any meaningful understanding of the prevailing ideological basis of educational policies in relation to Asians and other ethnic minority communities, one has to clearly examine the growth and refinement of racism and the subsequent disadvantaged position of Asians and other ethnic minority communities in the contemporary society of Britain. Only by employing an historical perspective can one make sense of the patterns of division and inequality that exists in Britain today.

People do not exist and operate daily cocooned in isolation, but identify and interact on a group basis. Social identity is seen as being derived from an individual's group membership. It is therefore necessary to reflect on the importance of individual and group identity in shaping the development of racially defined 'in' and 'out' groups.

A belief in the cultural superiority of white people in relation to Asians and other ethnic minority communities has been prevalent in British society for centuries. In the UK an inherent form of racial discrimination has ensured that the structural position of Asians and other ethnic minority communities has been controlled by members of the dominant culture. This is clearly evident when one compares employment, housing and education provision and the opportunities available to white and ethnic minority communities in Britain.

Given the pervasive racism of British society and the specific discrimination faced by Asians and other ethnic minority communities in the field of employment, housing and education, it is

crucial to consider the context in which educational policies and practices for multicultural and multiracial society were developed. Since the subject of this study is the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils from secondary schools in the central area of Birmingham, we are concerned here with the ways in which racial discrimination and racism affects the school of Asian pupils.

In this chapter, I will attempt to argue that the issue of racism in British society warrants serious attention particularly in the area of employment, housing and education. This does not mean that racism does not operate in the judiciary, the national health service or other institutions in Britain. A number of studies and official reports (for example Fernando, 1992; Hood and Cordovil, 1992; Hickey, 1993; O'Flynn, 1993; OPCS, 1994; Owen 1994) have shown how racism operates in these British institutions. At the end of the chapter, the motivation and the purpose of this research is developed.

### **Employment:**

Many Asians and African- Caribbeans in Britain complain that they are the last to be hired for good jobs and the first to be fired in hard times. Overall, Asians and African-Caribbeans do tend to have less well paid jobs and earn less than the white working population.

Ohri and Faruqui [1988] concluded from their research related to employment, that discrimination is a major factor in determining the patterns of employment and unemployment.

Ohri and Faruqui state that:

..... regardless of whether one examines the situation of those blacks in employment, those skilled, unskilled or professional, those unemployed or indeed those on government-sponsored YTS, it must be concluded that blacks have been, and are, discriminated against at every level and in every sphere.

[Ohri and Faruqui, 1988:94]

This is not a new phenomenon. Racial discrimination was in operation since African-Caribbean people came to Britain in the 1950s and Asians in the 1960s. A number of studies (e.g. Patterson 1965; Daniel, 1968; Humphrey and John, 1971; Hiro, 1973; Lawrence 1974, Smith 1977, Jenkins 1986) have shown this, but we want to consider now what the situation is in the 1990s?

Cross in his editorial states that:

The raw facts of discrimination in the labour market are well known. The PSI report over the years have known that both African-Caribbean and Asian people are less likely to be appointed to a range of jobs than are similarly qualified white applicants. (Smith and McIntosh 1974; Brown and Gay 1986). The general pattern does not appear to be changing very much.

[Cross, 1992:1]

Racial discrimination is not only faced by less qualified Asians and African-Caribbeans in the employment sector, but also by qualified people. The Commission for Racial Equality (1990) conducted a formal investigation into a lecturer's appointment in Leicestershire and found that discrimination can still occur in the most unexpected places e.g. a Local Authority College of Further Education with a long-standing equal opportunity policy.

C.R.E. published the report named 'A Question of Merit' and stated that:

The investigation found that an Asian applicant for the post of principal at Hinckley College of Further Education had been rejected on racial grounds - although six out of the nine people present at the interview thought he was the better candidate. The job was offered to an internal, white candidate.

[C.R.E., 1990a:5]

Pirani, Yolles and Bassa's [1992] study also found that Asian and African-Caribbean workers tend to be on lower salaries than their white counter parts. Pirani et al concluded that:

There appears to be both direct and indirect discrimination at institutional level, manifest in the perception of the ethnic minorities as less promotable than similar

white employees. The data indicate that even when ethnic minority workers have higher education and training their wages tend to be lower when compared with their white counterparts. What is indicated from the data is that ethnic minorities do not get promoted and in relative terms tend to stay on in lower grades relative to their education and qualifications.

[Pirani et al, 1992:40]

The essence of the matter is, that those who are guilty of such discrimination have failed to fairly distinguish between their fellow human beings as individuals. They have reacted to a whole racial group on the basis of the generally assumed characteristics of that group, without treating each individual on his/her merits. Such actions often spring from generalised assumptions about the characteristics of particular groups.

Racial discrimination has persisted in Britain despite the presence of the statute book of first the 1968 Act then the 1976 Act. viz, Race Relations Act 1968, Race Relations Act 1976.

The 'Equal Opportunities Review' magazine has published a number of cases where racial discrimination was in operation for example the September/October 1990 edition reports 'Racial inequality in the nursing profession is wide ranging and deep seated' (No. 33 p7). The May/June 1991 edition reports, 'The evidence given to the House of Commons Employment Committee highlighted unprofessional and potentially discriminatory practices at each stage of the recruitment process'. (No 37 p6). The May/June 1993 edition reports, 'Alibis for in action' by London-based consultant, John Carr, was commissioned by the council after an industrial tribunal had found that the authority had unlawfully discriminated on grounds of race for the fifth time in six years', (No. 49 p7). The March/April 1995 edition reports, 'In a separate survey, ['local authorities and racial equality'] the C.R.E. found that despite many examples of good practice, 'local authorities are not meeting their obligations when it comes to racial equality in employment', (No. 60 p 16). The May/June 1996 edition reports 'A hospital nurse has secured

a £50,000 settlement after bringing a racial discrimination claim, backed by the Commission for Racial Equality (C.R.E.), against the Bethlem and Maudsley NHS Trust;’ (No. 67 p7). The November/December 1996 edition reports, ‘Ethnic minority graduates continue to face discrimination in the labour market compared to their white counterparts,’ according to an explanatory study by the Institute for Employment Studies (No. 70 p8).

In comparison with white young people, considering their skills and the educational qualifications at the age of 19, Drew (1995) found that Asian and African-Caribbean young people are less likely to secure the job.

The Commission for Racial Equality’s magazine ‘1996 AT THE CRE’ reports:

1566 tests were carried out on 850 companies in the north of England and around Glasgow to see whether there was racial discrimination against job seekers. The tests were conducted in four ways: by following up job advertisements in the press, by sending out CVs to likely companies; by visiting selected companies; and by visiting job centres. Analysis of the results found unequal outcomes between different ethnic groups in one area only: the chances of a white person getting a job or an offer of interview after applying for a vacancy advertised in the press were three times as high as those of an Asian applicant and almost five times as high as those of a black applicant.

[C.R.E., 1996:10]

The major study, the fourth in a series carried out by the Policy Studies Institute since the 1960s, shows that diversity among ethnic minority communities is now as important as the black-white divide. Main findings from this survey which was conducted by Modood et al [1997] revealed that Pakistani and Bangladeshi men are two and a half times as likely to be unemployed as white men. Those in work receive only two thirds of the earnings obtained by white men and a very few Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have a job. This survey showed that Indian and Caribbean male employees’ average earnings have not caught up with white men’s.

The survey also found that men from all ethnic minority communities are seriously under-represented as managers and employers in large establishments - the top ten percent of all jobs. Even the best off minorities are only half as likely to hold these top jobs as white men.

Evidence would indicate that white applicants are often favoured in job-seeking situations.

### **Housing:**

Now let us look at the situation with regard to housing to find any differences in the treatment of ethnic minority communities.

The accommodation by Asians and African-Caribbeans in the 1950s and 1960s was shaped by a process of discrimination, and there were a number of reports in various parts of United Kingdom of landlords operating a 'colour bar' [Luthera, 1988]. Controlled studies of discrimination in housing were conducted in the 1960s and the 1970s [Smith, 1977]. The level of discrimination revealed in these tests was high. The study concluded that in the house purchase tests, Asians and African-Caribbeans were offered houses which were inferior in 12 per cent of cases.

In the 1980s, the Commission for Racial Equality investigated a number of cases of discrimination in the housing policies of Local Authorities. The Commission for Racial Equality (1989a) found discrimination in housing in Tower Hamlets Borough Council and Liverpool City Council. The Commission was concerned about the allocation of families to particular housing estates when they were rehoused. The Commission was also concerned about the council's policy on homelessness. C.R.E. noted:

Homelessness is a growing problem in the UK, and in London it has reached levels that should be unacceptable in any civilised society. The wretched

conditions and the constant insecurity of the homeless have been well publicised. What is less well known is that ethnic minorities are represented amongst the homeless at disproportionately high levels and have suffered racial discrimination as well as the other problems associated with homelessness.

[C.R.E., 1989a:42]

In the 1990s, the situation of Asians and African-Caribbeans in the housing sector does not appear to be very promising. The Equal Opportunities Review reports:

Unemployment among black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people aged 16 to 24 was nearly 40%, almost three times the rate for young white people.

(No. 70, 1996 p8)

If people do not have jobs, they will not have the money to purchase their own houses and for them housing will become even more difficult, especially when there is also the added feature of racial discrimination. In addition, the local Government Housing Act of 1989 did not help the housing situation because of a more complicated renovation grant system and higher rents for council tenants.

The Commission for Racial Equality (1991) investigated racial discrimination in hostel accommodation in Bristol. They concluded that:

Refugee Housing Association Ltd. had unlawfully discriminated on racial grounds by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide housing and/or facilities and services to people of Afro-Caribbean origin, and by inducing or attempting to induce others to do such acts, in relation to its hostel at Cotham in Bristol.

[C.R.E., 1991:9]

The Conservative Government in recent years has failed in bringing any improvement in the housing position of Asians and African-Caribbeans. It has identified money for social problems e.g. inner cities and health, but has failed to expose the practice and to eradicate racial

discrimination against Asians and African-Caribbeans, when the policies are being put into practice. The Equal Opportunities Review reports:

Housing associations have awarded few major contracts for development schemes or regular contracts for maintenance and repair work to ethnic minority construction firms, according to research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The report suggests that housing associations' dependence on well-established contracts with white-run firms could constitute an indirect racist practice.

(No. 63, 1995 p7)

It will be interesting in the future to find out if racial discrimination has increased or decreased.

This appears to be a complex issue but the Commission for Racial Equality may assist us. C.R.E

(1994) Annual Report may provide us with some clues. C.R.E revealed:

In 1978 there were 1,033 applications to Commission for assistance and in 1994 these number reached 1,937.

[C.R.E., 1994:8]

Modood et al [1997] found that a significant proportion of Pakistanis and Bangladeshi are in serious poverty. On average Pakistani or Bangladeshi households contain twice as many people as the average white households - but they have to be supported on a lower income. These two groups still face widespread housing problems. This study also revealed that members of ethnic minority communities are more likely than whites to live in run-down areas. Caribbean and Bangladeshi households continue to be under-represented among owner-occupiers. The study highlighted that racial disadvantage is still faced by ethnic minority communities and remains, an important theme.

Modood concludes that:

Evidence from the fourth survey, as well as social attitude surveys [Sachdev 1996; Dawar 1996], suggests that young white people are beginning to express more prejudice against Asian than Caribbean people: while those over the age of 34 are only slightly more likely to say they are prejudiced against Asians and



Muslims than Caribbeans, those under 35 are half as likely to say they are prejudiced against Asians and Muslims than Caribbeans.

[Modood, 1997:352]

This suggests that racial discrimination has not decreased. The implication of this situation combined with educational factors are a cause of concern.

### **Education:**

In the context of education, it is perhaps worth stressing the general point that, if less favourable treatment is given to ethnic minorities generally, then direct discrimination is occurring even though the person acting on behalf of people from ethnic minorities may be acting paternalistically or with good intentions

Studies have revealed that children between three and five years of age become 'racially' aware (Davey, 1983; Milner 1983; Aboud, 1988). These studies have shown that this applies to white children and Asian and African-Caribbean children in the UK. The results of the studies show that small children adopt their value system from adults.

### **Racial Harassment:**

In a survey by the Commission for Racial Equality (1988) a number of instances of racial harassment amongst primary school pupils were reported. These included the case of a seven year old girl who suffered from persistent name-calling by a white child of the same age, and who was beaten up by that girl's older sister. In a similar case the mother of a nine year old Asian girl who had been the victim of regular racial abuse and bullying was attacked by the parents of the child responsible for the bullying.

Name-calling, casual insults, covert physical threats, and sly kicks, which teachers may easily overlook, are part of a pattern that seriously diminishes the quality of experience of pupils in schools. Left unchallenged, such incidents may develop into divisions within the school, and possible subsequent tragedy [Macdonald et al, 1989]. Name-calling and personal insults based upon a pupil's skin colour, culture are not only an attack on an individual in isolation, but also on that pupil's family and community.

Racism, in any form, is damaging to society in general and, more specifically, to those groups in society against which it is directed. Racial harassment is a particularly direct and often violent form of racism, as surveys, studies and reports have shown, [Home Office 1989, CRE 1989b, Macdonald et al 1989, Troyna and Hatcher 1992] and is still widespread in society as a whole and in schools in particular.

Modood et al (1997) found that in 1994/95 12,000 racially motivated incidents were reported to the police, an increase of 175 per cent since 1988. However, evidence suggests that more than half of all people who have been subjected to racial harassment do not report it to the police. PSI's survey suggests that as many as 250,000 Caribbeans and Asians experience racial harassment every year - including insults and abuse at the hands of strangers, neighbours, workmates or even the police. Most ethnic minority communities do not think enough is being done to combat discrimination and harassment. Half of those who had reported an incident of harassment to the police were dissatisfied with their responses. A majority lack confidence in the police to protect them from racial harassment and favour self-defence groups.

Regarding racial violence and racial harassment Home Secretary Jack Straw stated in his speech at Policy Studies Institute conference, London:

We included in our election manifesto a pledge to introduce specific offences of racial violence and racial harassment. These will form part of the Crime and Disorder Bill which we will introduce in the next parliamentary session. Last week I published details of these new offences in a consultation paper. The responses will be looked at carefully and will help us to decide how these offences can best be framed to provide maximum protection.

[8th october 1997]

With the Government's initiatives discrimination of ethnic minority communities may be alleviated to a certain extent, but it appears that there is still a long way to go to eradicate discrimination completely.

### **Discrimination:**

Berkshire County Research and Intelligence Unit [BCRI] [1989] examined the grammar school selection procedures and found that Asian pupils in particular might be experiencing discrimination at both 11 and 13 when transfers were carried out.

The Commission for Racial Equality (1992) found that Watford Boys' and Girls' Grammar Schools were discriminating against pupils. It concluded that:

The fact that, in practice, parents had to give a minimum number of reasons in support of their child's application to an oversubscribed school amounted to a requirement or condition which had a disproportionate adverse impact on Asian parents and their children. The council was unable satisfactorily to justify this requirement on non-racial grounds.....

[C.R.E., 1992b:8]

Once the pupils have passed their 'A' level with good grades, they expect to pursue further studies of their choice, but again Asian and African-Caribbean pupils face racial discrimination as the following report reveals.

## Equal Opportunities Review:

Ethnic minority students are less likely to be accepted by UK medical schools than white students despite having the same 'A' level results, according to two studies published in the British Medical Journal [BMJ]. As a result 'good students are denied places at medical school and good doctors denied their chosen careers,' says the BMJ.

[No. 60, 1995 p 8]

Gillborn (1996) argues that the Swann's (1985) report's recommendations were modest but they were rejected by the then Secretary of State for Education, Keith Joseph.

Gillborn argues that the general level of debate sparked by the Committee's report has not been matched since, and have been conspicuously absent from most subsequent policy debates, with the National Curriculum the power of LEAs has drastically reduced, and the ILEA - a champion of anti-racist education - has been abolished.

Gillborn stated that:

In the mid 1990s, as the political parties vie to appear the strongest in their approaches to education, equal opportunity issues (particularly those concerned with race and racism) are not on the list of priorities. And yet each new reform carried with it the potential for further inequality and social exclusion

[Gillborn, 1996:15 ]

Gillborn further argued that:

The recent educational reforms, for example, make no mention of race, although they emphasis 'the nation's Christian heritage and traditions'. In this way an apparently inclusive policy - claimed to help 'every child in this country' - actually excludes many pupils and their communities.

[Gillborn, 1996:17]

Gillborn's argument is very convincing and indicates therefore, that there remains a considerable agenda for those who are committed to equal opportunities to pursue. Therefore this thesis is

important to me, as education is often presented as a non-political site of struggle by those intellectuals and politicians sympathetic with views and policies of the 'new right'.

In recent years, it has become increasingly fashionable to argue that the educational failure of working class and African-Caribbean pupils is due to poor self-concept and self-esteem, and that if this is treated they will achieve better results in school.

Stone has argued that:

This is a false and dangerous argument based on incomplete and unsound theoretical assumptions and biased research findings. By focusing on self-esteem, it manages to ignore the vast body of evidence showing that working class and black families have much less access to power, to resources of every kind than middle class children, 'self-concept' becomes a way of evading, the real and uncomfortable issue of class and privilege in our society. Furthermore no-body of research has ever demonstrated unequivocally that the children of the working class as a whole poor children black children in particular, suffer from poor self-image or self-esteem.

[Stone, 1981:8]

In America the Coleman Report (1966) supplied this explanation: that working class and African-Caribbean failure in school was a result of poor motivation resulting from bad family background and poor self-concept. In Britain the Plowden Report [1967] echoed this: that the attitudes of parents and the home circumstances of the child were the most important factors influencing achievements in schools.

The ethnographic research which this thesis is based upon is concerned with permanently excluded Asian pupils from Birmingham's central area secondary schools and the racist ideologies which underpin such practices.

Birmingham statistics showed that in all the school exclusions in 1991, African-Caribbean, pupils accounted for one-third of all exclusions, although they were only 9% the school population. In Sheffield twice as many pupils were excluded

in 1990 compared with 1988 and the African-Caribbean pupils who made up 2% of the school population comprised nearly 7% of all excluded pupils.

[The Guardian, 21 January 1992]

Arising out of national and local concern about the number of African-Caribbean pupils and Asian pupils, who were being, suspended from schools, the C.R.E.) decided in 1979, to carry out a formal investigation under The Race Relations Act 1976 into suspension arrangements in a major urban, multi-racial Education Authority. It selected Birmingham as representative of this type of authority.

The evidence pointed to institutional, rather than direct or intentional discrimination as the main reason for the differential pattern of treatment. The term 'institutional discrimination' was taken to include all those practices and procedures employed by a school or Local Authority which, unintentionally or otherwise, had the effect of placing members of one or other racial or ethnic group at a disadvantage that could not be justified.

As a result of these enquiries the Commission concluded that there were sufficient grounds to justify further enquiry. The suggestion that African-Caribbean pupils were over represented in units appeared to be borne out; so too was the view that African-Caribbean pupils were suspended more readily than whites. Two further issues had also emerged for consideration: first, that the suspension and referral procedures used by the schools and LEA (Local Education Authority) could be inadequate and disadvantageous to African-Caribbean pupils. Secondly, that the educational provision afforded to pupils in the centres might not be consistent with the principle of equality of opportunity.

Birmingham LEA was referred to by, a Daily Evening Newspaper from Wolverhampton, 'Express and Star' which reported:

The number of pupils expelled from Birmingham schools has increased by nearly 60% in the last four years. In 1993 - 1994 the number of pupils permanently excluded leapt by 18.5% on the previous year - the highest recorded increase in a single year. In the last academic year 295 pupils were permanently excluded from school compared with 185 four years ago. Analysis of the latest statistics shows that more than a third of permanently excluded pupils, 33%, were of African-Caribbean origin. But African-Caribbean pupils make up only 9% of the city's school population. 16% of those expelled were Asian pupils, who make up an estimated 30% of the school population, and 49% were White pupils who make up 56%. A report by the city's Chief Education Officer, Professor Tim Brighouse, said - The most significant rises in exclusion took place in the first three years of secondary school, the last year of primary school and in the early years of primary school.

[Express and Star, 7 November 1994 ]

Looking at the national rate of expulsions two reports give us cause for concern.

The first - the results of the survey by the Office of Standards in Education [OFSTED] found that 900 pupils were either expelled or suspended in 428 secondary schools inspected during the 1992 - 1993 year. This could mean that there are merely 8000 expulsions nationally - twice as many than the previous year - although OFSTED warned that the schools used in the survey may not be properly representative.

[Birmingham Voice, 8th November 1994]

The second, research carried out by MORI for the BBC's Panorama Programme which was transmitted on 15th March 1995 suggested that 66,000 pupils nationally were excluded on either a temporary or a permanent basis. It also suggested that between 1990 and 1992 there was a 50% rate of increase in exclusions.

It was in this context that my interest arose to examine the permanent exclusions of Asian pupils from secondary schools.

My aim for this research study was to appraise the parents and the child's view of their exclusion and what had caused it? Were there feelings of anti-school as Reid (1986:66) argued or were these exclusions merely for the school's convenience? Similar observations were made by Galloway and his colleagues (1982) after investigations in Sheffield and by McManus (1987) after a study in Leeds, Galloway et al concluded that:

A pupil's chances of being excluded or suspended are influenced as much, and probably more, by which school he happens to attend, as by any stress in his family or any constitutional factors in the pupil himself.

[Galloway et al, 1982:33]

Or was it that these exclusions particularly of Asian pupils were due to discrimination and racism, because racism is a structural feature of our society? It is not simply beliefs or ideas floating in the air but it is beliefs and ideas that are being constructed and sustained by practices and operations within the society in which we live, created and maintained through relationships based on domination and subordination. Racism is not the product of prejudice but of power. As an ideology it is a set of beliefs and ways of structuring lives which are rooted in material existences.

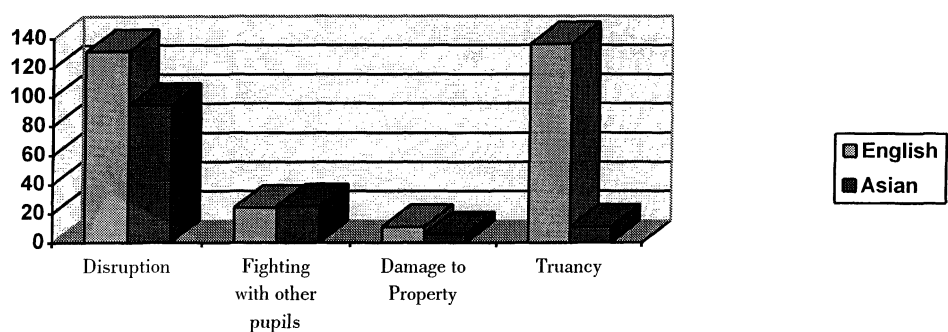
I was to do this research study by examining the Exclusion Reports written by Education Social Workers and the schools for permanently excluded Asian pupils in the period of March 1992 to November 1993 and then comparing them with permanently excluded English pupils not Irish, Scottish or Welsh pupils. In total thirteen sets [one school report and one produced by Education Social Worker] of reports were used. It was revealed by studying these reports, that there were a number of reasons for which a pupil is excluded, which I categorised into 4 areas; disruption, truancy, fighting with other pupils and damage to property. Headteachers of



secondary schools, Education Social Workers, five pupils and their parents were also interviewed. In addition, information was gathered from secondary schools' Headteachers by sending them a questionnaire.

**Table 1**

**Overall Totals of incidents of Permanently Excluded English and Asian Pupils In Case study of Exclusion Reports.**



English	131	24	11	136	Year Group 6 to 11
Asian	94	25	6	11	

My basic belief in beginning this research was that individual and institutional racism together form a strong, barrier to the overall development of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils which is accentuated by British society and the education system. Teachers' low expectations - in a subtle way, act in concert to deny the Asian and African-Caribbean pupils opportunities for career development leading to economic independence and true identity. The search for a solution to racism is not just to examine the prejudices of white individuals. Racism raises fundamental questions about the political, economic and social structure of Britain and the world. The potential for follow-up is limitless.

The question can be posed:

*Do secondary school pupils from Asian backgrounds have different experiences of permanent exclusion from English pupils?*

The promotion of the local school and teacher autonomy which is enshrined in the 1944 Education Act is highly prized by the professionals and is potentially one of the strongest features of our democracy. But this highly prized autonomy carries with it certain fundamental professional responsibilities. It was created for a particular purpose: to enable schools to be sensitive to local needs, issues and perceptions.

1944 Education Act says:

..... and it shall be the duty of the Local Education Authority for every area so far as their powers extend to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages (primary, secondary, further) shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area.

[1944 Section 7]

Halsey stated:

Despite the aims of the 1944 Act and the range of subsequent reformist measures and interventionist programmes, there remained a tenacious pattern of class inequality in educational achievement and attainment.

The state's attempts to expand educational opportunities beyond the statutory leaving age had the opposite effect, in that they had 'been seized disproportionately by those born into advantageous class circumstances'

[Halsey, 1978:130]

In 1983 Hall wrote,

Inequality in education had become, once again, a positive social programme.

[Hall, 1983:3]

Teachers, Headteachers, Advisers, Inspectors and Officers who are serious about their professional principles need not seek further policy statements on multicultural education. We are becoming overwhelmed with good intentions on paper. The 1944 Act and Anti-Discriminatory Acts already embody the policy on which they can identify their professional duty. What is needed is strategies for change, and clearly defined programmes of action in every school from every Headteacher and their staff.

Policy statements have been sought from elected members who are often set up and then dismissed at the whims of local politicians who are intent on securing the local Asian and African-Caribbean vote. Whatever the perceived motivation of those politicians, it is time for professionals to put up some serious proposals based on educational principles and sound management theory and practice with the aim of serving all sections of the community.

Often Asian and African-Caribbean people, are merely asking the education authorities to be accorded their statutory rights under the law of the land. If the Officers, Advisers, Inspectors, Headteachers, Teachers and the members of the Governing Bodies in multiracial areas paid serious attention to their statutory obligations under the Education Acts and the Anti-Discrimination laws, there would be no need for separate policies. There would, however be a need to explicitly state change strategies which would give details of how changes could be made in order to redirect the perspective of dominant policies and practicies. What are needed are efficient education policies.

**The purpose of this research therefore is:**

- i) To establish whether there is an increase in the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils in Birmingham.

- ii) To evaluate the processes that are giving rise to the increasing number of Asian pupils being permanently excluded from secondary schools in the inner city areas of Birmingham.
- iii) To identify factors which are responsible for distorting the education of pupils excluded from secondary schools.
- iv) To evaluate the response of excluded pupils and their parents.
- v) To ascertain whether there is racial or cultural (or both) discrimination by the Teachers/Headteachers and/or Governing Bodies in carrying out permanent exclusions of Asian pupils from secondary schools.

A change in perception is necessary because the present perceived 'normal' educational system is clearly based on the premise that only the knowledge, values, attitudes, beliefs and perspective of certain groups are worthy of transmission in schools. This present 'white ethnocentric system' is based on, and perpetuates a deeply held belief in the dominate hierarchy. The primary issue which needs to be addressed therefore is not only that of culture but rather an analysis of the wider framework within which educationists perpetuate these beliefs.

The debate in the area of 'multicultural education' (i.e. education of distinct cultural groups) has not yet become a serious educational issue for the majority of educational professionals. It is mainly conducted at a socio-political level by community groups, some socially aware local politicians and a growing but increasingly marginalised group of teachers. The avoidance of these issues is a serious matter and of great concern, given the decentralised nature of the system as created by the 1944 Education Act, which in effect places a great deal of power in the hands of Headteachers.

Given the nature of our increasingly decentralised education system and the power vested in Headteachers and their Governing Bodies, the direction of educational debate (i.e. politicians to professionals) at the present time is curious.

#### **SUMMARY:**

In Britain, racism prevails in the sectors of employment, housing and education and it mainly affects Asians and African-Caribbean people. The motivation and the purpose of the research is discussed in the context of racial discrimination and racism, and argues that this may play a significant role in the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils in secondary schools of Birmingham.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT FOR EXCLUSION**

#### **Introduction:**

There is little doubt that most pupils who are excluded from school because of disruptive and challenging behaviour are those who may now be termed pupils with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems. In this section, I shall give a background into various reports and legislation over the past few years and how this has affected such pupils. The 1988 Education Act was introduced by the Government as an attempt to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all pupils. I shall also attempt to show why I feel that the implications of the provisions of the 1988 Education Act will lead to an erosion of equal opportunities practice and to a further rise in the number of excluded pupils. At the end I shall discuss the changes in the law of the 1993 Education Act and 1997 Education Act on exclusions.

As suspension of pupils from school stands out sharply from other disciplinary action in that it cuts across both the pupil's right to continuous free education and the parents' obligation to enforce attendance. Newsam rightly stated:

Since the mid -1970s, the number of suspensions from schools began to move up:  
the time taken to get suspended pupils back into school lengthened.  
[Newsam, 1979:110]

#### **The Background:**

Suspension: is not mentioned at all in the Education Act of 1944 [which set up the present system of School Government] and the criteria used by successive Ministers and Departments of

Education in approving variations of the article are not available for study. The Model Articles were published in 1945 [Ministry of Education 1945].

For each school, the authority by which pupils may be suspended is set out in the Articles of Government. The form and content of such Articles depends on the type of school. Mostly church foundations [known as the ‘voluntary sector’] do share much of the same administration, but they vary more, both in the form of Articles and in their practice regarding suspension.

Each school’s Articles of Government are drawn up by the Local Education Authority and [for secondary schools] need the approval of the Secretary of State. Consequently, the wording tends to be uniform within each area and most follow the clause in the Model Articles mentioned above.

From this, we can only assume that the legislators were happy to give wide discretion to Local Education Authorities in their day-to-day use of this power. Where the Article stands in this form, ‘report’ and ‘consult’ can be interpreted by the parties as they wish and frequently no rules are made for the length of suspension, nor is expulsion mentioned. In some areas, however, the Article itself continues with more detailed instructions or these are published separately as notes of guidance [These may or may not have the force of the law depending on how they were issued].

Jennings stated:

Even where such regulations are carefully made, the National Association of Governors and Managers has evidence from across the country of ‘unofficial’ suspensions taking place.

[Jennings, 1980:158]

This is endorsed by Stirling:

Some pupils are encouraged not to turn up by orders to confirm strictly to school uniform or to modify their hair style which, if not obeyed, are used as a pre-text

for exclusion. Another strategy, mentioned by the School Governor [ACE, 1992] is used by heads who persuade parents that their child should remain at home while the school approaches the LEA to make special provision.

[Stirling, 1992b:128]

Stirling further stated that:

Heads and their deputies told me that those pupils most likely to be excluded from school, either officially or unofficially, were those who had behaviour difficulties and/or were underachieving. Many schools described how pupils with behaviour difficulties had reacted in a disruptive way during National Curriculum assessments or had been obliged to take part with their peers in curricula areas which did not meet their needs.

[Ibid.]

Not only unofficial suspensions happened in the past and at present, but furthermore, it was common for Articles to authorise the Headteacher to suspend for a short period with only token consultation and these actions may fail to be reported or recorded in a way that enables a Local Education Authority to say with any confidence how often they occur.

The position in law appeared to be that state schools could indeed expel but Local Authorities are not relieved thereafter of their duty to provide education. In Halsbury's laws of England [1984], Vol 15, it is set out like this:

In the case of a school which is maintained by a Local Education Authority a registered pupil of compulsory school age may be expelled by the authority or by the Governors or Managers of the school, but where in the result of an appeal by his parents the appropriate secretary of state determines the pupil has been excluded on other than reasonable grounds, he must be re-admitted to the school.

[Halsbury, 1984:47]

These provisions are derived from the pupils' Registration Regulations 1956, No 4(x) [Taylor and Saunders 1976:339] not, as has been pointed out earlier, from the 1944 Act itself.

Halsbury continues:

Where the pupil is not re-admitted to the school as a result of the Secretary of States determination..... or when no appeal is made?..... it would appear that the Local Education Authority is required to find a place for him at another



school, unless he receives full-time education under arrangements made by his parents.

[Ibid.]

It ‘appears that’ Local Authorities must find another school place because of their duties under Section 37 of the Act [Taylor and Saunders 1976:129] to take action where a child is not receiving education. Though it has not happened yet, the parent of an expelled pupil, could perhaps, if alternative education were not offered,

complain to the courts that the authority is failing in its own duty, and thereby preventing him from performing his own, under section 36.

[Barrell, 1978:201].

I echo Sassoon:

I am waiting for a test case where a parent will take an LEA to court for defaulting on its duties and will look forward to hearing what the learned judges have to say.

[Sassoon, 1992a:93]

I personally know a number of pupils who were permanently expelled from schools and Birmingham Local Authority failed to provide them any education at all, for many months. The parents either don’t know their rights that they could take LEA to court for not providing education to their excluded children or they feared that by doing this, it might create more problems for the education of their children in the future. Also the question is, does the Education Welfare Service [Education Social Workers] inform the parents that they can [if they wish to] take the LEA to court? The Education Welfare Service claims that it advocates for pupils and their parents, and the Education Social Workers may not provoke the parents into this action, because of their loyalty to the LEA, as it pays their salaries.

In those cases where some education [2 hours a day] is provided to excluded pupils by the LEA in its Pupil Referral Units, does that warrant a sufficient and satisfactory education for those

pupils? On the contrary if any pupil attends any school for only two hours, then school and LEA take action against that pupil and labels him/her as a 'truant'. Furthermore, parents can be taken to the court and fined. Similarly, if any parent decides to educate a child at home as 'alternative provision of education', LEA officials visit that parent and make full assessments of home circumstances and education provision to their satisfaction before allowing the parent 'officially' to carry on with this.

To me, it appears double standards operate on the part of the LEA. Jennings argued:

The point at issue here, is the handling of the expulsion process, and it is clear that the moral and legal obligation on local authorities to educate the most intractable of youngsters forces them into one difficult position or another. Either they sanction expulsions, and endeavour to tidy up the consequences by transfer of pupils between schools as far as possible. Or they manage the process at the local authority level, knowing, for any pupil when the last school in line has been reached. Or they may over-ride a Governors' decision to expel, a practice which may be resented.... or they try to keep the number of expulsions down by a policy of gentle persuasion at the Governor level. If the local authority settles for a 'no expulsions' policy, Governors may be empowered to recommend 'transfer'. Staff may bring strong pressures on them to do this and, if the authority then assures the school that the pupil will not be returned to them, this is expulsion in all but name. Or the authority may, in these circumstances, turn a blind eye to very long suspensions, or even to unofficial expulsions, for pupils who are anyway nearing the school leaving age.

[Jennings, 1980:159]

No procedure can, by itself deal with the underlying problems, but ill-defined or unofficial practices can make the task more difficult. As Sallis has pointed out:

The present chaos is allowing problems which ought to be tackled to be swept rather inadequately under the carpet.

[Sallis, 1977:98]

The Taylor Committee reporting on the work of school governors, noted rather more soberly that for suspensions there was ‘a lack of reasonably uniform, comprehensive and well understood procedures’ [Taylor, 1977:80].

The Report makes its own recommendations: National Association of Governors and Managers [N-A G.M] [1980] has done likewise, but the details of these are less important than the conflict of views as to the nature of a suspension decision; conflict which underlies the notoriously variable practice and which can even make discussion difficult.

A number of Authorities were adamant that the decision to expel a child from school should only be made at the Local Authority level - The Taylor committee has even called for this to be a matter of legislation [Taylor, 1977:117]. This view was consistent with a new wish that governors should be closely identified with their schools - not just occasional formal visitors.

### **The background to the 1988 Education Act:**

The report of the committee of enquiry in 1978 into the Education of handicapped children and pupils [The Warnock Report] was the first full-scale review of special educational provision in Britain this century. The report widened the scope of special education to cover the 1 in 5 children said to have learning difficulties at any one time. It called for a systematic approach to the assessment of special educational needs, and for the official ‘recording’ of children with particularly marked needs. Though commonly believed to have promoted the integration of children with special needs into ordinary schools, the report made no firm recommendations on this, and saw a substantial and continuing role for special schools. Pre-school and post-school

provision, and in-service training, were accorded top priority in the recommendations. The curriculum was not central to the report's concerns.

In 1980 Her Majesty's Inspectorate [A View of the Curriculum] by contrast to the DES [Department of Education and Science] view in the 'A Framework for the School Curriculum' circular 14/77 to LEAs document, HMI set out a Curriculum in terms of 'areas of experience'. For primary schools, language and literacy, maths, science, aesthetic and social aspects. For secondary; aesthetic and creative, ethical, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, social and political and spiritual. The document refers to equality of opportunity, forms of knowledge, needs of the individual child, racial and cultural diversity etc.

**1981 Education Act:** Following the Warnock Report this act abolished statutory categories of handicap and replaced them with a new definition of special educational need as a learning difficulty which calls for special provision to be made. A 'statement of special educational need' is to be made for all children for whom the LEA has to determine the provision to be made. The Act set out complex assessment procedures, including new rights for parents, leading up to the making of a statement. Children with special educational needs were to be educated in ordinary schools where this was consistent with the efficient education of the child concerned and other children in the school, and with the efficient use of resources. Although no extra funding was made available in order to meet these needs in mainstream schools integration began to be seen by legislators as the most desirable option.

**1985 DES Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children of Ethnic Minority Groups. Education for all [The Swann Report]:-** In a long account

covering most aspects of education in a multicultural society, the committee concludes that the issue is not simply that of educating ethnic minority children but rather all children who must be enabled to understand the nature of Britain as a multicultural society, with schools leading the attack on racism and stereotyping. LEAs were urged to declare a commitment to 'education for all'; to adopt a pluralist curriculum, with HMI giving clear guidelines on the practical application of adopting a pluralist approach. LEAs to expect school to produce clear anti-racist policy and to monitor implementation and practice.

1986 Education Act:- The exclusion procedures are based on the 1986 Education Act, Sections 22-26. Under this legislation, it is the duty of the Headteacher to be responsible for all issues related to pupil behaviour, and she or he is required to make such measures generally known.

Under the 1986 Education Act, Headteachers had available three different types of exclusion:

- 1 Fixed Term Exclusion - The pupil is given a definite date to return to the same school. Guidelines indicate that the return should be within a short period of time such as five days.
- 2 Indefinite Exclusion - The pupil remains out of school pending further investigation. The LEAs produced guidelines for schools, stating that the pupil must be re-admitted to school within a 15 day period or the procedure for a permanent exclusion invoked.

- 3        Permanent Exclusion - The pupil is unable to return to the original school, and the LEA is required to provide alternative provision.

Through the 1986 Education Act, the Government legislated for an ‘Open enrolment’ policy for schools, giving parents the right to choose the school that they considered was the best one to meet their child’s needs. The only reason that a school could turn down a pupil was that it had already reached its planned admission limit or that the school was unable to meet the needs of that pupil, for example if a child had a statement of special educational need. This was the beginning of schools being forced to open themselves up to ‘market forces’ which were a central tenant of the thinking of the Conservative Government. This, in turn, led to competition between schools in order to attract pupils and therefore, funds.

### **The 1988 Education Reform Act:**

This Act saw the Government removing control of the education from LEAs by legislating for the Local Management of Schools [L.M.S.] under a formula funding basis. It also set up a mechanism enabling schools to opt out of LEA control by acquiring Grant-Maintained status. This legislation further subjected schools to market forces by ensuring that schools became educationally and economically accountable to parents through their Governing Bodies. The 1988 Act also introduced a National Curriculum - a common curriculum for all pupils regardless of their perceived abilities and disabilities. The National Curriculum Council document - A Curriculum for all [NCC] stated that the ‘learning environment’ for pupils with special educational needs should include: ‘an atmosphere of encouragement, acceptance, respect for achievements and sensitivity to individual needs, in which all pupils can thrive’ [1989:7].

The National Curriculum Council further argued that:

Curriculum development plans, schemes of work, and classroom and school environments need to be closely aligned with the teaching needs and individual curriculum plans of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities so that maximum access to the National Curriculum is ensured. [1989:7]

This was heralded as a move to ensure educational opportunities for all and arose from a concern over standards in education generally [Bowe et al, 1992]. Alongside this came national testing for all pupils at the end of key stages and the publication of nationally accessible results which, it is argued, would give parents more accurate 'data' with which to make an informed choice of school for their child.

### **The implications of 1988 Education Act for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties:**

The thrust of the 1988 Education Act is toward the creation of economically and educationally accountable schools. This appears superficially to be desirable yet has great implications for those pupils with challenging behaviour. The integration of pupils with special needs into mainstream schools advocated by Warnock [1978] and embedded in the 1981 Act gives teachers the responsibility for meeting a vast range of needs within their classroom. This requires a large amount of work, including producing differentiated work for pupils with a wide range of abilities and supporting the learning of these pupils. In-class support becomes the order of the day rather than the withdrawal of pupils requiring this level of learning or behavioural support. Many teachers do not have the confidence or expertise necessary to work in this way and such a fundamental change in ways of working requires proper resourcing in order to be successful.

Swann [1985] questioned whether the integration of pupils with Special Educational Needs had actually taken place in mainstream schools. He argues that the 1981 Act led to more pupils with

learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties being segregated into special education. Swann believes that because of Government antipathy towards comprehensive education, resources are unlikely to be made available to provide adequate funding to maintain the level of support in mainstream education and therefore, that exclusion of one form or another would be an inevitable result.

Sassoon argued that:

Since the Education Reform Act 1988 came on to the statute book, there is a body of anecdotal evidence to suggest that the number of exclusions across the country has risen significantly and LEAs are finding it increasingly difficult to readmit these children into alternative schools - even though the latter do not have full complements of pupils and are below their standard numbers. This is not surprising for four reasons. First, financial control has become tighter. Secondly, there is less finance held back by LEAs [from April 1993, every LEA will be required to delegate 85 percent of the potential schools budget] to entice schools to accept difficult children. Thirdly, the ERA [Education Reform Act] has encouraged schools to present themselves as pristine establishments and organizations that will be attractive to parents and youngsters. Fourthly, in relation to a school where the governing body have control over the budget, the Chief Education Officer has no powers of sanction against the headteacher who refuses to accept a difficult child, even though there is room in the appropriate age group. Only the Governors have. If the headteacher has secured their support not to accommodate the difficult child, there is little that the Chief Education Officer can do.

[Sassoon, 1992a:92]

How will the National Curriculum affect Asian pupils in both integrated and segregated special education, given that the 1988 Education Act will allow both statemented pupils and registered pupils at ordinary schools, in certain cases and circumstances, to be exempt from the National Curriculum or receive a modified version?

The implementation of a National Curriculum could be that more Asian pupils, particularly young pupils, could be referred for statementing and exempted from the National Curriculum or



assigned to a modified curriculum, on the basis of 'language deficiency' criteria, rather than being offered adequate bilingual teaching in ordinary schools.

Another problem is of a number of professionals involved who refer, assess and deal with pupils thought to have special educational needs. These professionals use 'jargon' in their language which worsens the situation, Larson [1977] called this the 'professional mystique'. She also suggested that professionals tended to be white, middle class people who expect working class and minority parents to accept their superior abilities and rational knowledge in delivering 'What is best' for their children.

Asian parents, in particular, have experienced difficulties in dealings with these professionals. They have to overcome barriers like, English language, jargon and then medical and psychological terminologies used by these officers.

Tomlinson points out some of the difficulties:-

- (a) the meaning of the word 'special' which 'always means different but not necessarily good or better than'. [Chaudhary 1988]
- (b) understanding the complex processes of referral, assessment, statementing and placement [either in an integrated or segregated setting]
- (c) knowledge of parental legal rights and obligations under the 1980, 1981, 1986 and 1988 Education Acts.
- (d) problems of home-school liaison and contact with special schools or units.
- (e) parental expectations of special schooling, dissatisfaction with the lack of stated goals of special schooling and the curriculum on offer.
- (f) parental problems with professionals who disagree among themselves or offer contradictory advice.
- (g) information on assessment processes and special schooling being unavailable in Asian languages.

[Tomlinson, 1989:121]

Regarding Asian parental involvement in special educational process, Chaudhury [1988a and b] found that parents lacked understanding of the whole area of special education, including the role of professionals, especially educational psychologists, and lacked knowledge of what special schools were teaching or how to affect the process in any way.

Similarly Rehal [1989] in an outer London borough, studied 14 families who had children who had been formally assessed. Only one of the 14 knew the child had gone through the procedures. None understood the significance of the 'formal letter' proposing assessment, none understood the contribution parents were being invited to make to the assessment process and none understood or had been invited to an 'annual review' of the child. Parents tended to go along with any educational assessments believing that 'professionals know best'.

In most of the cases, these Local Authority Officers may be white, who may not have language skills and adequate knowledge of Asian cultures, to fully assess the children's needs. Jervis [1987] has suggested that teachers, educational psychologists, speech therapists and others are only rarely drawn from the Asian Communities.

Examining the power of LEAs, in general - not particularly for Asian pupils, the 1988 Act has put them in a very vulnerable position by devolving funding to schools through Local Management of Schools [L.M.S.]. This leaves LEAs with very little central budget with which to meet the special educational needs of pupils by supporting them in mainstream schooling. Threats of 'opting out' of LEA control by large mainstream comprehensives have pushed LEAs into devolving the vast majority of their budgets into schools. This has led to 'restructuring' of centrally funded support services such as Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare

Services, services for Special Educational Needs which have inevitably reduced their services and thus their ability to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools.

I believe that there is a real fear amongst some teachers and parents that under the 'open enrolment' policy schools which are popular must always have a mindful eye on 'image' and may be less committed to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. [See Bowe et al (1992) for further discussion of this subject]. Such pupils may seem to be too expensive and difficult to manage for these schools requiring, as they do, a high level of input by experienced staff which would be expensive and paid for by schools under L.M.S. Such pupils are unlikely to benefit from or survive within mainstream without the advocacy and support of a whole authority policy and services.

How then do we meet the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties? One way is through a multi-professional assessment leading to a statement of Special Educational Need which the LEA is then legally bound to meet. As Swann (1985) has argued, there has been a huge increase in the number of statements issued. This will, surely, directly affect the budget of the Local Authorities and that means such expenditure can only be subsidised by cuts in other centrally funded support services. In addition, many Local Authorities are cutting down a number of jobs, making people compulsory redundants, as they get less money from Central Government, to save these jobs. All those factors are bound to affect the services which are meant to support the pupils who have special needs.

Thus the statementing procedure becomes a 'catch 22'. Not only does it take from six months to a year to complete a statement, during which time the pupil is often excluded from school, but what is the point of writing a statement if the Authority has neither the human resources nor the funds to meet the needs required within it? There are, consequently, numbers of pupils within mainstream schools who display emotional and behavioural difficulties yet have no statement and therefore, no additional funding to support their mainstream placement. This, it could be argued, makes them unattractive to schools who cannot afford to meet their needs and they inevitably often end up being excluded from school.

It is widely known that, at present, schools have no financial disincentive to prevent exclusions as they retain funding for the pupil until they appear on the roll of another school - a process that could take 6-8 months. No doubt, The Education Act 1993 says that money should follow the excluded pupil to the receiving school. But, the key dates that are used for calculating the budgets of schools are the third Friday of January [the day of the form 7 Audit] and September 1 [the beginning of the new academic year]. If a pupil is excluded on any other day, the finance for her/him stays with the school that is excluding and does not transfer to the receiving school. It appears to me that this is a grossly unfair situation and, while the money following the pupil will not do anything fundamental for a school to accept a difficult child, it will be some recompense.

Local Education Authorities are in a very vulnerable position where these pupils are concerned. They have the responsibility of ensuring that all pupils from the term following their fifth birthdays to the Easter or May Bank Holidays of the year in which they achieve the age of 16 [statutory school- going age] are in receipt of education. The Labour Government's document, 'Excellence in schools' [1997] state that we will change this with effect from Easter 1998, by

ensuring that young people do not leave school before the end of their GCSEs. Yet the powers that have been taken away from them and given to Headteachers and Governing Bodies under current legislation had made it impossible for them to operate within the legal framework.

Another factor is that Local Education Authorities have no control over Grant-Maintained Schools whatsoever and do not have any locus in the management of admission arrangements at voluntary aided and special agreement schools. The only way in which they may be able to assist parents of pupils [who are troublesome] to secure places at such schools is consultancy - advice about their rights of appeal under Section 7 of the Education Act 1980. As an education officer, I have often felt the urge to accompany many a parent to such an appeal meeting to support the case. When it comes to LEA schools, the situation does not become much better. Popular LEA schools, anyway, are full to overflowing. Less popular ones are determined to improve their image and will resist hard accepting pupils who are likely to disrupt the smooth functioning of their institutions.

Sassoon argued that:

The problem of securing school places for all children is exacerbated by two other factors. First, LEAs have been assiduously taking away spare places by closing schools down or meeting them, to use resources more efficiently. The choice of alternative schools for troublesome children has, therefore, become extremely circumscribed. Second, it appears that most of the pupils who are excluded are in years 10 and 11 [i.e. 14 to 15 plus]. When they have embarked on their option choices and coursework for GCSEs. Prospective, receiving schools may not be able to offer identical courses. When they do, the number of pupils in each of the subject groupings may be oversubscribed. Further, it is much more difficult for these youngsters to forge new relationships with other pupils at this late stage of their school careers and settling down to a new life at an alternative institution becomes one definition of the impossible.

[Sassoon, 1992a:92]

Local Education Authorities are reluctant to ‘direct’ the schools to accept these pupils, fearing that those schools may not ‘opt out’ as Conservative Government was encouraging schools to become Grant-Maintained. In addition, any pupil who is admitted to a school through ‘direction’ has got a very little chance of success in that school because of the strained relationships between a school and a Local Authority.

Mayet argued that:

The admissions confusion is leading to increasing discrimination and injustice for those pupils who do not fit the criteria that schools are being pressurised into adopting. The ideologically competitive atmosphere which the Government has created since 1979 means that children who have learning difficulties, and particularly those who present behavioural problems, will not be accepted easily into mainstream schools.

[Mayet, 1993/94:7]

The 1988 Education Act purposely thrust schools into the market-place for ‘buying’ by parents.

Schools, with their devolved budgets, are set against each other in direct competition.

Stirling argued that:

Given Local Management of schools, a school’s funding is directly dependent upon the number and the nature of its pupil population. In order to be perceived by parents as a ‘good school’ and therefore to attract ample referrals, from which in reality the more suitable candidates can be selected, the school needs to maintain an academically successful population. Consequently academic success promotes popularity which enables schools to exercise control over their intake and thus ensures further success. On the other hand disadvantaged children, children who are more difficult to teach because, for example, they are considered to present behavioural problems, or because their first language is not English, or because they are thought to have learning difficulties, these children in any number put the school at a disadvantage. This could result in a school being comprised largely of the most difficult to teach children. In order to manage more demanding children successfully, classes might need to be smaller, yet school funding is dependent upon numbers and schools unable to attract a ‘healthy’ number of pupils are at risk of closure.

[Stirling, 1993/94:3]

So the pastoral care and teaching of pupils with differences - particularly behavioural and emotional difficulties - is but one of these 1988 Act casualties. The new anxieties over image and performance, put back the clock. Moreover, with the emphasis on parental choice, this meant greater power to those parents who knew how to choose and felt empowered to make that choice. But there may be some parents whose English may not be the first language and they may not be familiar with procedures and bureaucracy. In addition, individual and institutionalised racism may play another stumbling stone to achieve justice and equality in this whole process. This is 'an acknowledgement of acceptable and unacceptable inequalities' [Troyna and Williams 1986:101]

The parents of many of these pupils are themselves sometimes uncoordinated and ineffective. They themselves are disempowered to make a fuss, or to appeal and they often feel guilty or made to feel to blame for their children's behaviour. They often feel frustrated or angry at the way their children are being treated.

Parffrey argued that:

Behaviourally difficult children are already a vulnerable group within our schools - already hampered by a variety of emotional and behavioural difficulties. What I suggest the recent political developments have done is to render this already vulnerable group even more vulnerable - vulnerable to exclusion, vulnerable to under-resourced alternatives, vulnerable to having their rights to education in its fullest sense, abused.

[Parffrey, 1994:108]

Parffrey continued:

So, we have a scenario - a socio-political climate which actually renders a group of children vulnerable to abuse. Special needs children within a market economy are bad news. One cannot make a profit out of children with difficulties - especially behavioural difficulties.

[Ibid.]

The National Curriculum - 1988 is a unique New Right model. The issues of Racial Equality and justice have never had a clearer and more direct snub from the Government. The incredible silence in the document 5-16, 1987 as well as the 1988 Act itself, about racism in schools and society is ghostly and eerie.

We are back to assimilation, 'embedding' being the new 'buzz' word. Mr. Baker then the Secretary of State for Education, set the scene to show, without using any words at all, that his policies were more likely to succeed where multicultural/anti-racist education had failed. The launching of the new revolutionary Reform Act 1988 did not begin with a newspaper headline or debate on exactly how the schools had failed pupils but Mr. Baker's visit to a school in Harlem where he is reported to have gone to 'study the effects of centralised curriculum on the education of the minorities, particularly blacks and Hispanics'. His party political broadcast - April 1989, with education as its central theme, was carefully stage-designed to leave parents in no doubt that their children will have an equal access to modern technology and they will all have a better chance than ever before.

In the White paper 'Choice and Diversity' the Government puts forward its proposed changes to education as 'enhancing the life of those with special needs..... and all the while ensuring genuine opportunity' [1992a:2]

There are critical interpretations of the effects of recent policy, however. The introduction of the National Curriculum and associated assessment has led to teachers being under tremendous pressure with an increasingly heavy work-load [Muschamp et al 1992]. This, in turn, means that



staff are already over stretched in time and resources and have very little time or energy to deal constructively with pupils with challenging behaviour. Alongside this, the sheer weight of content to be taught in the National Curriculum is forcing some schools to re-examine their mixed-ability teaching methods and move towards setting and streaming. This may create ‘sink groups’ of pupils who already have low self-esteem and whose behaviour is likely to deteriorate when they are all put together. I already see this in some faculties in schools and the effects are obvious.

I believe that this is not at all in keeping with the Government’s policy of ensuring genuine opportunity and that it may exacerbate loss of opportunity by reinforcing low self-esteem. The moral issue inherent in such a policy should not, in my view, be avoided. Government legislation requiring the support of pupils with special needs in mainstream school is being directly contravened by this further legislation which forces the non-integration of pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. This would seem to contradict the claim in ‘Choice and Diversity’ that the Government’s reform rest on:

‘..... above all, an insistence that every pupil everywhere has the same opportunities...[P.iii]

The publishing of results further undermines the efforts of schools and teachers to educate pupils with such difficulties. Given parental choice, the image of the school may become paramount in that it is possible that there may be a trend towards a link between parental choice and League Tables or the racial population of the school. Sanders argued that:

Under open enrolment there is a danger of articulate parents getting their children into the better schools, and those in deprived inner city areas becoming ‘sink schools’ or simply unviable. White parents may choose to send their children to predominantly white schools, which will mean that black parents may

be left with no choice but to have their children educated in largely black schools.

[Sanders, 1988:2]

Sanders further argued that:

For parents, such as those at Dewsbury, who want to get away from any form of multiracial education or equal opportunities stipulations, there is the opting out clause. Schools that become grant-maintained will no longer be covered by Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976. This places a duty on local education authorities to operate so as to eliminate discrimination and to promote good race relations. At present at least 50 LEAs have equal opportunity policies and many provide valuable centralised resources for ethnic minorities. Schools that opt out could choose to ignore these facilities.

[Ibid.]

If this image and therefore, pupil numbers and funding, is determined by the publication of S.A.T.S results, attendance figures and levels of exclusion it is possible that we may create ‘sink schools’ and an educational elite.

### **Equality and Educational Opportunities:**

The whole way of testing this curriculum also raises questions of educational opportunity. The assessment tests at seven, eleven, 14 and 16 according to Brah:

..... will not improve standards, but label children.

[Brah, 1988:3]

The easy categorisation as remedial of pupils for whom English is a second language is of particular concern, especially if the tests are not devised with such pupils in mind. More generally, there is widespread concern over the ability of any test to evaluate pupils, let alone those from different ‘race’ and cultures.

So, all this, in turn, could lead to covert or overt selection procedures by schools and, if this happens, where does this leave pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in terms of equality and educational opportunity?

### **Increment in Exclusions:**

The possible introduction of performance related pay for Headteachers, perhaps related to examination results and truancy rates, may mean that schools will be less tolerant of pupils with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems and therefore, exclusions will continue to increase. Another possibility is that unofficial exclusion numbers would rise, i.e. more parents would be asked to find another school for their child in order to avoid exclusion. This covert form of exclusion appears to be a way of getting rid of unwanted pupils without the bother [and potential appeals hearings] of exclusion.

For all these reasons I fear that the numbers of excluded pupils will continue to rise. The equality of opportunity for pupils with challenging behaviour will fast disappear due to the pressure on schools to sell themselves like business. If schools enter the 'market economy' does this imply that its pupils are products with the introduction of concepts like 'quality control' and if so, what are the consequences for the non - standard product? We are, or should be, in the market for educating **all** pupils regardless of their perceived abilities or disabilities as Warnock advocated. The language of the market place introduced into education as a consequence of the 1988 Act may lead to pupils with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems being perceived as an unsaleable commodity or 'damaged goods'.

### **Parental Choice and Higher Standards:**

Stirling has been researching into the effect of the Education Reform Act on pupils termed emotionally and behaviourally disturbed. Having interviewed fifty key professionals over the past years her conclusion drawn from their reports is that:

..... emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children are being increasingly marginalised; increasingly denied their statutory rights to an education. The Warnock report and the 1981 Education Act held out a promise of progress for such children. The Children Act 1989, requires that the welfare of the child is safeguarded. The stated intention of the Education Reform Act is an improved education **for all** children. Do these children not count?

[Stirling, 1992a:8, original emphasis]

The Education Reform Act 1988 is littered with references to parental choice and higher standards, it may not succeed in providing either for low income families - they may be White Europeans, African-Caribbeans or Asians. In addition, its lack of attention to the ways in which Britain has changed since the 1944 Education Act - and particularly the way in which it has become a multiracial society - should seriously damage African-Caribbean and Asian pupils' educational prospects.

In the next section, I will discuss the changes in the law of the 1993 Education Act on exclusions.

### **The 1993 Education Act and Changes on Exclusion:**

Under the Education [No:2] Act 1986, exclusions from Local Education Authority - maintained schools could be a fixed period, indefinite or permanent. A similar provision exists in the Articles of Government of self-governing [Grant-Maintained] schools. Section 261 of the 1993

Education Act, which came into force on 1st September 1994, abolished the category of indefinite exclusion. This change in the law has effect on both LEA and self-governing (Grant-Maintained) schools regardless of any contrary provisions which may exist in the school's Articles of Government. The Act also sets a limit for fixed period exclusions of up to 15 school days in any one term. The 1997 Education Act has extended the maximum duration for fixed term exclusions to 45 days. Schools are required by statute to supply information on permanent exclusions to the LEA and DfEE, but they are not required to supply records of fixed term exclusions. Circular 10/94 affirms: unless other suitable arrangements are made, all children should be in school and learning. Exclusion should be used sparingly in response to serious breaches of school policy and law [DfE 1994].

**Fixed Period Exclusions: New Procedures:**

Where a Headteacher decides to exclude a pupil for a fixed period, the following procedures apply in all cases. [It must be noted that only Headteacher, not Deputy Headteacher or any other teacher in the school, can make a decision on exclusion]

The Headteacher must without delay [if possible, on the day of the exclusion] inform the pupil's parent [or the pupil him/her self if aged 18 or over] of the exclusion, the length of the exclusion and the specific reason for it. [If the pupil is being 'looked after' the Local Authority should be so informed]. The notification should provide sufficient particulars to ensure that the reason for exclusion is fully understood and that all of the relevant circumstances are made known. The notification should be in writing and in addition, if appropriate, oral notification should be given. The notification must also inform parents that they have the right to make representations to the Governing Body [Discipline Committee in the case of self-governing schools] and the LEA.

Parents [or the pupils themselves if over 18] should be invited to inform the Governing Body/Discipline Committee and/or LEA in writing of their intention to make representations within seven days of notification.

In the case of an LEA- maintained school, if the exclusion is for more than five days or involves the loss of opportunity to take a public examination, the Headteacher must also and at once inform the Governing Body and the LEA.

In the case of a self-governing (Grant-Maintained) school, arrangements similar to those in the preceding paragraph apply except that the notification should be given to the Discipline Committee of the Governing Body; the LEA are not involved.

The Governing Body of an LEA- maintained school have the right to direct the Headteacher to reinstate a pupil who has been excluded for a fixed period in excess of five days or where the pupil has lost an opportunity to take a public examination.

If the parents give notice that they wish to make representations, the Governing Body should arrange and convene a meeting to discuss the exclusion within 14 days of notification by the parents. The Governing Body should give parents the opportunity to make written and oral representation in an environment which avoids intimidation and excessive formality. Under Regulation 25 of the Education [School Government] Regulations 1989, Governing Bodies of county, voluntary and maintained special schools may delegate many functions. Three or four members of the Governing Body, including a parent governor, should comprise the committee convened for the purpose of considering exclusion. For self-governing (Grant-Maintained)

schools, a minimum of three governors (excluding the Headteacher) is required to constitute the Discipline Committee. The decision of the meeting and the reason for the decision should be clearly communicated to the parent within two days.

The Headteacher of the excluding school should make arrangements for the pupil who is excluded for a fixed period to receive school work to do at home and to have it marked until he or she returns to school. The Governing Body should keep these arrangements under view.

### **Permanent Exclusions: Procedures**

In cases of permanent exclusion similar procedures apply. The Headteacher of any school must inform the pupil's parent or the pupil if aged 18 or over, or Local Authority [if the pupil is being 'looked after'] of the exclusion and the specific reason for it. The notification should provide sufficient particulars to ensure that the reason for exclusion is fully understood and that all of the relevant circumstances are made known. Notification should be without delay [normally on the day of exclusion], in writing and, in addition, if appropriate [for example, if there is concern for the health and safety of the pupil or others], by other means. The notification should also document for reference any previous warnings, fixed period exclusions or other disciplinary measures taken prior to the excludable offence being committed.

The Headteacher must also inform the parents of their right to make written and oral representations to the Governing Body and the LEA, in the case of LEA-maintained schools; or to the Discipline Committee, in the case of self-governing [Grant-Maintained] schools. Parents should be advised that they should make known their intention within seven days of notification. The notification should include a list of organisations who would be willing to advise and assist

the pupil and parent. It should also explain that under Regulation 6 of the Education [school records] Regulations 1989, the pupil's parent or the pupil him or herself [if 18 or over] also has the right of access to the school's curricular records on the pupil; and, under Regulation 7, to other educational records on the pupil through a request to the Governing Body.

Section 23 of the Education [No:2] Act 1986 [or, in the case of self-governing (Grant-Maintained) schools, the Articles of Government] require Headteachers to notify LEAs of all permanent exclusions.

In all cases of permanent exclusion the Governing Body - or in the case of self-governing (Grant-Maintained) schools, the Discipline Committee - should convene a meeting within a maximum of 14 days of the date of notification by the Headteacher of the exclusion to consider the case and any representations made by the parents, or the pupil if aged 18 or over. The Governing Body have the right, but are not under a duty, to direct the Headteacher to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil or to confirm the exclusion. The LEA are under a duty to consider whether the permanent exclusion should stand. They have the power to direct the reinstatement of permanently excluded pupils at county and controlled schools [though not special agreement or voluntary aided schools], but must consult with the Governing Body before doing so. In the case of an LEA - maintained school, where the Governing Body and LEA agree that the pupil should be reinstated but disagree on the date for reinstatement, Section 24 of the Education [No:2] Act 1986 makes it clear that the Headteacher must comply with whichever direction leads to earlier reinstatement.



The decision of the exclusion meeting [of the governors, or LEA, or both], and the reason for the decision, should be clearly communicated in writing to the parents within two days. They also have a duty to inform the parents of their right to make an appeal to an independent Appeals Committee, and of their right to make oral and written representations. The notification should make it clear that parents should set out their grounds for appeal within 14 days of notice from the governors.

A direction by the Governing Body [or Discipline Committee] in the case of self-governing (Grant-Maintained) schools to reinstate a pupil is binding on the Headteacher. In the case of LEA - maintained schools, a direction by the LEA is binding unless the Governing Body appeals against the direction. If the Governing Body wish to appeal they should do so within 14 days of the date of direction. The pupil's name should remain on the school roll until the appeals procedure is completed or until the parents confirm that they accept the exclusion and intend to make other arrangements for their child. While the pupil is still on the school roll the school retains responsibility for his or her education. Schools should therefore set work and monitor progress during this period.

### **Education Act 1997:**

Apart from extending the maximum duration for exclusions to 45 days, some other notable points of the Education Act 1997 are that:

- (i) There is no requirement to admit children permanently excluded from two or more schools.
- (ii) Nothing in the law requires any arrangements to be made for enabling the parent of a child to appeal against a decision.

### **Appeals Against Permanent Exclusions To An Independent Appeals Committee:**

Section 26 of, and schedule 3 to, the Education [No: 2] Act 1986, and the Articles of Government for self-governing [Grant-Maintained] schools, set out in detail the procedures to be followed upon appeal. If the Appeal Committee directs reinstatement, the date should never be more than three weeks after the Appeal Committee hearing. Parents must appeal within 15 days of notification from the Governing Body that they do not intend to direct the pupil's reinstatement. The Appeals Committee must then meet within a period of not more than 15 days of parental notice. The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and binding on all parties and the Appeal Committee is to communicate its decision to all parties within a period of not more than 17 days of parental notice.

Where an interested party considers that either an LEA or school governors have acted unreasonably in the performance of any duty or have failed to carry out any duty in relation to an exclusion, they may complain to the Secretary of State and ask her/him to exercise her/his powers under Section 68 or 99 (1) of the Education Act 1944. Where the Secretary of State considers that an LEA or governors have acted unreasonably [the courts have ruled that 'unreasonable' conduct means conduct which no sensible Authority acting with due appreciation of its responsibilities would have decided to adopt] or have failed in a duty, he/she may make a direction binding on the LEA or governors, as appropriate.

Where a pupil is permanently excluded from an LEA or Grant-Maintained School, Section 262 of the Education Act 1993 provides for money to follow that pupil into a new school or into any alternative education provision made by the LEA under their new duty. The 1994 DfE

circular,‘money following the permanently excluded pupil’ provides further guidance on these arrangements.

**SUMMARY:**

Discussions of various reports and legislation have revealed that they influenced exclusion of pupils since the Education Act of 1944 but there was not a consistency in the procedure among schools within the Authority. The Warnock Report [1978] reviewed special educational provision for handicapped pupils. The Education Act 1981 abolished statutory categories of handicap and introduced provision for pupils with special educational needs in ordinary schools. In 1986, the exclusion procedures were introduced, which are based on the 1986 Education Act.

Local Management of schools, National Curriculum and open enrolment policy was introduced by the 1988 Education Act. Government claimed to ensure equality of opportunities for all pupils but the implications of the 1988 Education Act created inequality.

The 1993 Education Act reviewed the exclusion procedure based on the 1986 Education Act and introduced only two categories: fixed period exclusion and permanent exclusion. The 1997 Education Act further reviewed fixed period exclusion and permanent exclusion.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND BIRMINGHAM'S RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION**

#### **Introduction:**

In this section I will review literature about exclusion drawing on previous research. It should be noted that very little work has been done on the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils in the UK. However, I will examine exclusion, particularly in relation to Asian and also African-Caribbean pupils in a separate section. Also in this chapter, in brief, I will analyse Birmingham's response to exclusions and the strategies adopted to reduce it.

#### **Research on Exclusions:**

The increasing number of excluded pupils has been a national concern since the early 1970s [See Lloyd-Smith et al 1985]. Many of these excluded pupils display disruptive behaviour, truancy and occasionally violence. York et al (1972) found that exclusion was three times more common in secondary schools than in primary schools and that more boys than girls were excluded. They also found that exclusion levels of both sexes rose in Year 11. This increase was also noted by Gale and Topping (1986). Grunsell (1979) found a heavy concentration of excluded pupils in Years 10 and 11, suggesting several reasons for this: that the pupil's behaviour deteriorates, that staff tolerance of disruptive behaviour may be reduced due to GCSE pressures and that pupils' tolerance of school may diminish as they look forward to the world of work. I would add that, as there is no longer much work to look forward to for these pupils (See Griffin, 1985), we should ask whether Grunsell's point about pupils' growing intolerance of school is perhaps more to do with their needs to be perceived as being young adults, rather than children, and thereby treated accordingly.

The Commission for Racial Equality (C.R.E.) conducted a formal investigation between 1974 and 1980 and published the findings in April 1985. That research showed that:

..... during that period black pupils were almost four times more likely to be suspended from Birmingham secondary schools than were white pupils. Black pupils were also more likely than white pupils to be suspended after a direct confrontation with a teacher and, even when the main reason for the suspension was held constant between white and black pupils, were more likely to be recommended for suspension units.

[C.R.E., 1985:2]

The C.R.E report concluded that:

West Indian children come into conflict with teachers in schools because of their liveliness. The teacher in charge thought that many West Indian pupils were wrongly placed at the centres and were there largely because of their schools' inability to cope with them. Additionally, West Indian children were more often referred for one-off incidents than were white children and particular schools referred black pupils who would not have been referred by other schools.

[C.R.E., 1985:10]

Some research [Galloway 1981 and York et al 1972] has shown that many excluded pupils have difficult home situations. Galloway (1981) noted that 69% of the pupils he studied had a history of serious accident or illness requiring in-patient treatment and that poor health, particularly psychiatric, was frequently a characteristic of the pupils' parents. This is supported by York et al [1972] who found that only 7 out of 34 pupils had parents without psychiatric disorder and that only 5 of these pupils lived consistently at home with both natural parents who had a good relationship.

Research has found that many pupils who are excluded also have some measure of learning difficulty. [Lowenstein 1990; York et al 1972]

Lowenstein stated that:

Children frequently ‘break down’ mainly because the expectations of the educational regime are beyond them.

[Lowenstein, 1990:37]

This statement may be supported by a study in Scotland by York et al (1972) who found that 25 out of the 38 pupils that they studied were ‘backward’ in their reading and that the excluded pupils were ‘intellectually far inferior’ to the general population of Scottish children at the time. Galloway (1981) administered tests to the excluded pupils he was researching and found that the results ‘..... suggested that pupils might experience considerable scholastic difficulties at school’, although the teachers’ estimate of the pupils’ intelligence and attainments were markedly higher than Galloway’s listing of them.

At the Education [Policy and Standards] Sub-Committee meeting on 28th November 1988, a report was presented which gave the results of a study undertaken following concern expressed by the Commission for Racial Equality about the suspension of African-Caribbean pupils in Nottingham schools. The advisory and inspection service was asked to carry out a further enquiry into pupil suspensions, now termed **Pupil Exclusions** report No:15/89. This report states that:

We found that some of the teachers with whom we talked held stereotypical views of pupils, parents and their communities. Most comments reflected a view that problems were brought into school and typically related to:

- a lack of ambition, reflected in attitudes to the academic side of school life;
- poor pupil attitudes to staff [including rudeness, swearing, disrespectfulness, defiance, answering back, aggressive behaviour and the way the pupils ‘looked’ at a teacher];
- poor relationships between pupils;
- certain catchment areas exhibiting behavioural difficulties and low achievement;
- behaviour difficulties linked to social and personal problems rather than curriculum appropriateness

[1990:56]

This report further states:

Many of the stereotypical views had clearly been found on generalisations from a minority of children, as our observations indicated that the majority of pupils in all the enquiry schools behaved well. We recognise that there will always be a small amount of unacceptable behaviour, both in and out of school, but this does not mean that such behaviour is generally acceptable to parents or within the community

[Ibid.]

Certainly underachieving is not a measure of pupils' intellectual potential. This could be for a wide variety of reasons: that they find the curriculum irrelevant and have 'switched off', because they have truanted a lot and therefore missed out on a lot of schooling, or that they cannot do the work and cannot afford to fail so they do not try. It may also be argued that they have not received enough help, cannot do the work and that their behaviour subsequently deteriorates as they disrupt to mask their learning difficulties. For Asian and African-Caribbean pupils, along with so many other factors, it may be a form of racism within the school.

Nottingham's 'Pupil Exclusions' report No: 15/89 highlights racism:

We were told by some teachers and by almost all the parents of black children in the sample that racism is an inherent part of the local community, but they had learned to live with it. We did not feel that those teachers who made such comments were aware that the absence of challenge to such racism and prejudice, when it occurred or was discussed in school, contributed to those views being legitimised.

[1990:57]

The same report discusses the issue of African-Caribbean pupils' suspensions:

. . . analysis reveals that black pupils are five times more likely, on average, to be excluded from school on a fixed term, indefinite or permanent exclusion than are white pupils

[1990:30]

Analysing the exclusion of Asian pupils this report reveals that Asian pupils were more likely to be excluded than were white pupils in schools with lower than average percentages of pupils from ethnic minority groups.

Again analysing the intimidation of African-Caribbean and Asian pupils, this report reveals:

Although the percentage of black pupils involved in intimidation is twice that of white pupils, and that of Asian pupils four times that of white pupils, numbers are small and it is possible that reporting of such incidents had been affected by stereotypical views of black and Asian pupils.

[1990:35]

Arguing about racism in all these ordeals, this report concluded:

We have also commented on racist behaviour in schools and made recommendations which are designed to reduce the number of racist incidents. These reductions, however will only come about through the development of consistent practice in schools which recognise and values the variety of cultures within the society in which we live. For some teachers successful practice in this area will mean a re-examination of deeply held values

[1990:119]

Arguments about intelligence, mental health, learning difficulties and achievement, particularly in relation to African-Caribbean pupils, may be affected by the higher rate of suspensions and the existence of racism in schools.

Birmingham's investigation by the C.R.E. notes:

It was not the function of the investigation to examine the levels of achievement of black or white pupils generally. However, it was noted that one of the concerns relating to achievement identified by the Rampton [ later Swann] Committee was the suspension rate for black pupils

[C.R.E., 1985:4]

Resisting such treatment [discrimination, racism, negative attitude] in schools, Asian and African-Caribbean pupils are then picked out as 'troublemakers' by teachers. Instead of tackling all these, the Birmingham Local Authority has identified education for a multicultural society as



its theme which concentrated on single sex secondary schools, parental involvement and mother-tongue teaching. No mention is made of racism in inner city areas school - of how schools encourage low expectations and how they fail pupils even in terms of getting basic skills or a few 'O' levels.

Bhavnani et al noted:

One school in Handsworth has never produced one Black child with five 'O' levels, one professional told us: This school is 90% Black, predominantly Asian. The school has failed Afro-Caribbeans and now Asians. We are turning out children who do not have the basic training to go to further training.  
[Bhavnani et al, 1986:41]

It continues: one woman said:

We are being made into semi-literates. We need people to do some research - Black people to do the research.  
[Ibid.]

Another said:

It is so unprofessional. Teachers see us as sub-humans - you don't stand a chance of passing 'O' level and 'A' levels'.  
[Ibid.]

### **Rise in Exclusions:**

Concern about the numbers of pupils [in general] being excluded from school was expressed in the Government's White Paper 'Choice and Diversity' [DfE. 1992a] and the discussion paper on exclusions published towards the end of the same year recognised the unsatisfactoriness of the situation in no uncertain terms:

Too many children are excluded from school, either permanently or temporarily. [DfE 1995b. para 1] Lovey et al argued:

A number of recent surveys have suggested a marked and possibly increasing, reluctance among many Secondary Heads to embrace policies of containment and intervention and instead to engage in damage-limitation by excluding pupils more

freely. Since regular truants can ruin a school's attendance record, some pupils are even excluded for not coming to school.

[Lovey et al, 1993:3]

In the Summer of 1990, through the National Exclusions Reporting System [NERS], the DfE began a two year study to monitor permanent exclusions from LEA and grant-maintained schools. This was the first official effort to collect information systematically on a Nation-wide scale. Unfortunately, as senior department officials have admitted, the data may not be reliable since the NERS relies on self-reports from schools.

[TES, 25 September 1992]

Additionally, the survey does not include temporary exclusions or schools in the independent sector.

The analysis of the findings [ DfE News 126/93] revealed that permanent exclusions rose from 2910 in 1990/91 to 3833 in 1991/92, a rise of 32%. Boys outnumbered girls by 4:1 in year one and 5:1 in year two. Those in the primary sector increased from 13 to 14 percent of the total, while those with special needs increased from 12.5 to 15 percent.

However, the exclusion rates differed markedly between schools. Lovey, Docking and Evans (1993) argue that although this could be attributed in part to socio-economic differences in catchment areas, the variations were said to be too large to be explained by this factor alone.

This view is consistent with the conclusions drawn in Regional studies on exclusions by Galloway et al [1985] in Sheffield, McManus [1987] in Leeds and Imich in Essex. [TES, 23 October 1992]. Indeed, McManus found that it was often schools with the highest proportions of deprived, working class children that had the lowest exclusion rates. While Imich [in an address to the annual conference of the Association of Educational Psychologists in the Autumn of 1992]

reported that two schools in his county accounted for as much as 50% of all permanent exclusions, while another school accounted for 35%.

Among other evidence about the scale of the exclusion problem, are teacher union surveys which attracted considerable media attention. The more alarmist, published by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) [1992], but based on research by consultants Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte, suggested that during 1990/91, exclusions of all types had risen by as much as one-fifth, with an estimated 25,000 pupils suspended or expelled. The increase [which the NUT maintained was an underestimate of the real position since not all authorities included temporary suspensions in their returns], was attributed mainly to pressure on resources and the impending introduction of published 'League Tables' comparing school performances. These factors, together with 'deteriorating home circumstances and lack of parental discipline' (p5), were said to be restricting the ability of schools - as well as their motivation - to make suitable on-site provision for their disaffected pupils. However, the NUT estimate must be treated with some caution since it was based on returns from just 26 of the 117 Local Authorities in England and Wales.

Recent studies, as well as informal evidence from individual LEA's, indicate a major rise in the rates of all forms of exclusion in recent years (BBC 1993; HMI 1992; Mayat 1992; NUT 1992; Stirling 1992b; Bourne et al 1994).

Birmingham Education Authority's (1994) Survey of Secondary Schools revealed that all types of exclusion were increasing.

Osler (1997a) confirms this trend and draws attention to 'indefinite' exclusions:

In 1994, legislation abolished 'indefinite' exclusions but the overall picture does not seem to have greatly changed. The abolition of the 'indefinite' category does not appear to have further inflated the number of permanent exclusions. Instead

‘indefinite’ exclusions appear to have been absorbed into fixed term exclusions. According to Rowbotham 1995, in the previous three years, the levels of both permanent and fixed term exclusions had grown by around 13% nationwide.

[Osler, 1997a:18]

According to DfEE [1997] statistics there were 12,500 permanent exclusions from primary, secondary and special schools in 1995/96, and an increase of 13% in relation to the 11,100 permanent exclusions in the previous year. Thirteen percent of these permanent exclusions were of pupils permanently excluded from primary schools, 83 percent from secondary schools and 4 percent from special schools.

There is also a recognition that current information about exclusion from British schools is inadequate. It should be noted that pupils officially excluded from school represent only a part of the picture since some pupils may agree to move to another school before they are excluded. Stirling (1992b) argues that the extent of unofficial exclusions can only be guessed and the numbers have risen during the last four years.

Stirling also asserts that:

Children are being unofficially excluded from school and statistics on exclusions are unreliable. Procedures for exclusion under the Education [No:2] Act 1986 are not being followed by schools. Consequently, children who are unofficially excluded have less chance of receiving their continuing entitlement to education if the exclusion is not recorded and their parents have not been informed of their rights of appeal against the lack of schooling.

[Stirling, 1992b:130]

Unofficial exclusion is widespread in LEA practice. Birmingham Education Committee: Statistical Report 1993/4 endorsed that there are unofficial exclusions in the schools of Birmingham. The Secondary Heads Association [SHA] notes that in many independent schools the question may be ‘resolved’ - and the stigma of exclusion avoided - by parents agreeing to withdraw the pupil [ SHA, 1992]. Stirling [1992b] also notes that some pupils may be

encouraged to remain away from school for extended period of illness, e.g. a boy who was off school for a whole term because of ‘flu’ and a girl absent for weeks because of ‘menstrual pain’.

For a variety of reasons, therefore, official data about exclusions is incomplete. Launching the DfE discussion paper ‘Exclusions’ the then Education Minister Eric Forth admitted that, despite attempts to gather accurate information about exclusions through the National Exclusions Reporting System, neither the Government nor LEAs know very much about exclusions [Education, 1992].

**Trends in Exclusions:**

The survey commissioned by the Department for Education and carried out by a research team led by Dr. Parsons at Canterbury Christ Church College between January and April 1995 shows that the total number of permanent exclusions recorded for 1993/94 in the 101 of the 109 responding LEAs in England was 10,624 of these 11.6% were primary and 4.1% were from special schools. The estimated total of permanent exclusions for that year for all LEAs in England is 11,181 [See Table 2].

**Table 2**  
**Pupils Permanently Excluded From Maintained Schools in England**

September 1993 - July 1994  
AND  
September 1994 - December 1994

SCHOOL TYPE	Boys	Girls	Gender specified not	Total for 101 LEAs	Estimated Total for 109 LEAs
Primary	940 (470)	77 (22)	213 (64)	1230 (556)	1291 (584)
Secondary	6135 (2694)	1362 (633)	1463 (388)	8960 (3715)	9433 (3910)
Special	358 (255)	43 (17)	33 (7)	434 (279)	457 (294)
	Overall Total			10624 (4550)	11181 (4788)
	=			15174	15969

(Source: ‘Nations Survey of LEAs policies and procedures for the identification of and provision for children who are out of school by reason of Exclusion or otherwise’ - Parsons et al 1995).

In the Autumn term 1994 the total number of recorded permanent exclusions from 101 LEAs was 4,500 of which 12.2% were primary and 6.1% special. The estimated total number of permanently excluded pupils for that term for all 109 LEAs in England is 4,788. The gender ratio for secondary permanent exclusions is 4.5 boys for each girl in 1993/94 and 4.3 boys for each girl in Autumn 1994. At primary level the ratio is 12 boys to 1 girl in 1993/94 but 21:1 in the Autumn of 1994. Over 80% of all exclusions are from secondary schools [84% in 1993/94 and 82% in Autumn 1994]. DfEE (1996) statistics revealed that in 1994/95 permanent exclusions from primary schools were 13 times higher for boys than for girls.

The increase in exclusions since the National Exclusions Reporting System figures for 1990/91 [number of permanent exclusions 2910] and 1991/92 [the number of permanent exclusions 3833] is substantial. The 1993/94 figures show almost a threefold increase over the figure for two years earlier.

Parsons et al survey further notes that:

For 11 LEAs, where more detailed figures were sent in with the questionnaire, it is clear that year 10 and 11 pupils contribute inordinately to an LEA's exclusion numbers though the variation is very considerable amongst even these 11 authorities. In ten of the authorities year 10 and 11 pupils accounted for over 45% of exclusions from all schools. In one case year 11 pupils alone made up 70% of the authority's exclusions. For five of the nine LEAs where year 10 exclusions are the more numerous.

[Parsons et al, 1995:19]

The Times Newspaper reported:

The number of children permanently excluded from school continues to rise, according to research. Carl Parsons, commissioned two years ago by the Government to investigate exclusions, has continued his own survey of education authorities.

Returns from 92 English authorities for 1995-96 show exclusions 8% up on the previous year at 13,400. That means permanent exclusions have risen almost 20% since Dr. Parsons completed his research for the Department for Education and Employment in 1994.

The Department is expected to publish its own research suggesting that exclusions have stabilised around 11,000. The Department's statistics are based on a survey of individual schools, not on official returns to education authorities.

But Dr. Parsons, of Christ Church College, Canterbury, said that: 'he suspected schools could have played down the size of the problem'. His figures suggest that exclusions had risen dramatically from the 2000 identified in 1991-92. In his own latest survey, more than 80% of exclusions - 11,094 - were from secondary schools. Primary exclusions were also growing at 1,794 but more slowly. There were 531 exclusions from special schools.

[The Times, 9 November 1996]

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools [HMCI] was asked, as part of a Government initiative on discipline in schools, to conduct a survey to find out whether, and if so why, some schools are more effective than others in managing pupils' behaviour so as to avoid exclusions.

This inspection took place during the academic year 1995/96 and 16 LEAs were involved. In each LEA, data on exclusions which occurred in the academic year 1994/5 were analysed. In total, Her Majesty's Inspectors inspected 39 schools and observed 343 lessons.

The survey confirmed that since 1990 rates of exclusion have generally risen. The findings revealed that:

The socio-economic context of a school is sometimes associated with its rate of exclusion. The children of families under financial or emotional stress are more likely to engage in behaviour leading to exclusion, as are pupils with low levels of literacy. More boys than girls and a disproportionate number of black pupils are excluded.

[OFSTED, 1996:6]

This report shows that there is some association between rates of exclusion and the proportion of pupils taking free school meals but does not state why more boys than girls are being excluded.

But it did state that:

At least 80 per cent of exclusions occur in secondary schools and boys are four times as likely as girls to be excluded. Black Caribbean boys are disproportionately subject to exclusion. Rates of exclusion are higher among less able pupils and particularly high for children looked after by local authorities.  
[OFSTED, 1996:8]

The findings are similar to Parsons et al (1995) survey that over 80% of all exclusions are from secondary schools and the majority of exclusions are of boys. This report revealed that the exclusions of African-Caribbean boys is disproportionately high. Also the rates of exclusion are higher for children in Local Authority care.

Analysing the trends in permanent exclusions Birmingham Education Committee: Statistical Report 1993/94 revealed that:

- 1 The numbers of permanent exclusions has increased from 185 in 1988/89 to 249 in 1992/93, a 35% increase.
- 2 The majority [87%] of pupils excluded are from secondary schools, mainly pupils in their final three years of compulsory education [63%].
- 3 17 secondary schools [22%] have not permanently excluded any pupils over the past five years. Most schools [35%] have excluded just one or two pupils per year. However, nine schools [11%] have excluded between five and eight pupils per year and one school has permanently excluded an average of twelve pupils per year.
- 4 The majority of excluded pupils are boys.



5 African-Caribbean pupils are over represented in the exclusion statistics when compared to the proportion of African-Caribbean pupils in the population

Again, analysing Birmingham's records on permanent exclusions of academic year 1994/95 and 1995/96, some patterns and trends were revealed. The total number of exclusions has risen from 348 to 382 and the majority of them were boys. In academic year 1994/95 the boys' exclusion was 308 and increased to 311 in the following year.

The number of female permanent exclusions also increased from 40 (1994/95) to 71 (1995/96). In general, the majority of exclusion focused upon Year 10 and Year 9 pupils.

Analysing the trend for Asian pupils, the number permanently excluded in academic year 1994/95 was 42 and it increased to 53 in academic year 1995/96, but decreased to 41 in academic year 1996/97. Comparatively the number of permanent exclusion of African-Caribbean pupils decreased from 121 (1994/95) to 95 (1995/96) and in academic year 1996/97 it decreased to 83. This was against national trend but in proportion to their school population, the exclusion number was still high. However, mixed parentage exclusion has increased from 38 [1995/96] to 51 [1996/97]. The exclusion of mixed parentage pupils currently exhibit a steady annual increase and this trend is a cause for concern.

In Birmingham, the permanent exclusion of primary school pupils has increased in recent years. In the academic year 1994/95 the total number of permanent excluded primary school pupils was 64 and it decreased to 51 in the academic year 1995/96 and increased to 66 in the academic year 1996/97. Hayden (1997) studied the permanent exclusion of primary school pupils.

Hayden concluded that:

The overwhelming majority of excluded primary children were boys, an average proportion of 90 per cent, although this proportion varied a little across the different types of LEAs. It might be expected that a greater proportion of exclusions would be found in the older age range in primary schools, and this was indeed the case in both county councils and metropolitan districts, the majority of respondents.

[Hayden, 1997:37]

Hayden's study also revealed some trends by ethnicity and found that African-Caribbean and mixed-parentage pupils tended to be over represented in exclusion statistics.

Some of the trends picked up in Hayden's conclusion are reflected in Birmingham LEA's primary school permanent exclusion statistics i.e. the majority proportion being male and African-Caribbean pupils.

This is also endorsed by Osler's study:

Analysis of the statistics on exclusions from Birmingham Schools showed an overall increase in the number of pupils excluded in recent years, from 227 in 1990/91 to 382 in 1995/96, in line with national trends. We found, however, that while exclusions had increased in some schools, other schools had been able to stabilise or reduce their use of exclusion. Schools which had been effective in reducing the numbers excluded had been equally successful for all groups. African-Caribbean pupils therefore continue to be over represented.

The statistical evidence does not throw much light on why African-Caribbean pupils, particularly boys, are more likely to be excluded than their white peers.

[Osler, 1997a:35]

According to DfEE [1997] news, 83 percent of permanent exclusions were of boys in 1995/96.

The overall permanent exclusion rate was 0.19% in 1995/96; the exclusion rate for Black [Black Caribbean, Black African, Black other] pupils was 0.66%, for pupils from the Indian Sub-Continent [Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi] was 0.11% and for white pupils was 0.18%.

Again it can be argued that the above data may be incomplete for the reasons already discussed as there are unofficial ways of excluding children from schools.

### **Reasons for exclusion:**

I would now like to examine what the reasons are that lead to exclusion. Often it is disruptive behaviour which precipitates exclusion from school.

York et al [1972] found that exclusion is invariably the culmination of a series of incidents. Longworth-Dames (1977) only found one case where a single incident led to exclusion. York further found that aggressive or disruptive behaviour always precipitated exclusion. Abuse to staff, refusal to follow instructions, bullying or assault, truancy, damage to property and disruption have all been found to be major causes of exclusion by Gale and Topping [1986].

Galloway [1981] interviewed 51 pupils who had been excluded from Sheffield schools about their social and educational experiences at school. Many pupils claimed that suspension had frequently escalated from a relatively minor incident and that confrontation with one teacher led to confrontation with the year tutor, then the Deputy, then the Head. McManus echoes this finding:

..... suspension may often be no more than the unforeseen and unintended consequence of a referral system that provides an insufficient number of steps before a child comes nose to nose with the Headteacher.

[McManus, 1987:55]

Galloway (1981) further found that a strong sense of injustice usually prompted the more overt acts of defiance and that the Headteacher's need to support the staff came through clearly in

several pupils' accounts. 32% of pupils said they had a major clash with one particular teacher. These findings led me to question the role schools play in the creation of disruptive behaviour.

### **Social Factors:**

In the 1960s and early 1970s there was much research which held the hypothesis that social factors were the determinant of achievement and behaviour [See Jencks, 1972, and the Plowden Report, 1967]. Bernstein's (1970) comment that 'Education cannot compensate for Society' was echoed throughout both the research and the wider community.

There has, however, been a move away from this belief as over the past years more and more research has been done which indicates that schools can and do, have a powerful effect upon the behaviour, attendance and achievement of their pupils [Rutter et al 1979; Reynolds and Sullivan 1979, 1981; Mortimore et al 1988; Smith and Tomlinson 1989]. Rutter et al concluded that:

..... children were more likely to show good behaviour and good scholastic attainments if they attended some schools than if they attended others. The implication is that experiences during the secondary school years may influence children's progress.

[Rutter et al, 1979:179]

On the other hand the research in primary schools [Troyna and Hatcher 1992; Wright 1992a] and as part of a wider study focusing on young African-Caribbean women, suggest that, even where well-intentioned white teachers are conscientious and committed to equality of opportunity as an ideal, they may nevertheless **act** in ways that unwittingly reproduce familiar racial stereotypes, generate conflict [especially with African-Caribbean pupils] and perpetuate existing inequalities of opportunity and achievement. As Mac an Ghaill notes:

There may be no conscious attempt to treat black youth in a different way to white youth, but the unintended teacher effects result in differential responses, which work against black youth.... There was a tendency for Asian male students to be seen by the teachers as technically of 'high ability' and socially as conformist. Afro-Caribbean male students tended to be seen as having 'low ability' and potential discipline problems.

[Mac an Ghail, 1988:3-4]

In relation to African-Caribbean pupils the above views are also shared by Gillborn [1990:30-31] and Wright [1992a:16-19]. They argued that teacher expectations can lead to inequitable treatment. Classroom observation, for example, has suggested that African-Caribbean pupils are frequently singled out for criticism even where several pupils [of other ethnic minority backgrounds] share in the conduct.

In contrast to this body of work, Foster's [1990a] study of a multi-ethnic school in the North of England ['Milltown High'], challenges the view that racism is a subtle and widespread influence on the lives of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils. Foster looks at the development of 'multicultural and anti-racist education' policy in a school. He also considers how pupils were differentiated into hierarchically set teaching groups and explicitly addresses the question of racism in the school. The most striking of Foster's conclusions is that 'ethnic minority students enjoyed equal opportunities with their white peers' [1990a:174].

Gillborn states:

Foster's work is the only published ethnography of a British school where racial inequalities are not highlighted as a major issue despite the author having made 'race' a central problematic of the research.

[Gillborn, 1995:48]

Rogers [1983] carried out a study of disruptive incidents and found that more disruptive behaviour occurred in classes whose teachers gave little respect, empathy and praise to pupils.

Steed (1985) carried out two school based studies in London boroughs into incidences of disruption and found that pupils complained that teachers were unfair and illogical in their reactions to disruptive incidents. Pupils had very high expectations of teachers and saw it as fair to behave badly in lessons where the teacher was boring or could not control the class.

Steed concludes that:

Teachers who refuse to negotiate or rely solely on imposition, should not be surprised if their authority, no longer supported in the same unequivocal way by wider societal norms, breeds resentment, apathy and aggression among their pupils.

[Steed, 1985:5]

Both Blyth and Milner argue that:

Both national studies and reports from individual LEAs indicate wide variations in exclusion rates between schools.

[Blyth and Milner, 1993:262-263]

Such evidence should not be surprising given the existing evidence about school differences in relation to a wide range of variables [e.g. Mortimore et al, 1988; Reynolds, 1985; Rutter et al 1979] and the variable impact of individual teachers [e.g. Hargreaves et al, 1975]. Reporting on their Sheffield study Galloway et al conclude that:

..... a pupil's chances of being excluded or suspended are influenced as much, and probably more, by which school he happens to attend, as by any stress in his family or any constitutional factors in the pupil himself.

[Galloway et al, 1982:33]

However, consensus that such differences between schools exist conceals conflicting explanations. The Secondary Heads Association [1992:2] claim that 'much, if not most, of this difference..... relates to the nature of the intake to the school', is at odds with the conclusions of Galloway et al [1982]. For its part Government [DfE 1992b:3] considers the variation

between schools to be ‘too great to be explained by the socio-economic nature of schools’ catchment areas, and echoing the Elton Committee Report [DES, 1989] focuses on school and classroom management as possible sources of differences.

Several researchers have studied exclusion rates in relation to the socio-economic status of school catchment areas and individual pupils [Gale and Topping 1986; Galloway 1976, 1981; Galloway et al 1985 and McLean 1987]. All of these studies conclude that the prevalence of socio-economic disadvantage in intake is not a reliable predictor of exclusion rate. It has also been found that the rate of exclusion was not significantly related to the side of the school. Galloway also states that:

It was clear from parents in the interviews that by no means all the children presented problems at home as well as school.

[Galloway, 1981:208]

### **Parents’ Attitudes:**

Any research into Asian parents’ attitudes to their children’s education, have always shown a considerable interest on their part. Davey and Norburn (1980) noted that Asian parents claimed frequent contact with and an active interest in their children’s schools.

There are influences on Asian parents views of schooling as important, related to the historical background of the British Raj fostered in the Indian sub-continent. The image of a British based education as the passport to social elevation would appear to have given Asian parents an extremely positive, if somewhat over-optimistic, view of English education. They are likely to encourage their children to work hard and to do well at school and to expect an English education to equip them, particularly the boys, for a professional vocation, the type of vocation

which has, in many cases, remained closed to the first generation of Asian immigrants in Britain. Unrecorded discussion with a number of teachers, and myself have confirmed this impression. Most teachers consulted appear to find Asian parents extremely interested in, and supportive of the work of the school, but perhaps somewhat unrealistic about the current attainment and future prospects of their children.

Raby and Walford [1981] in a study of lower and middle stream pupils in an urban comprehensive school found that of the English, Asian and African-Caribbean background pupils in their study, those with an Asian background had the most ambitious aspirations. They also found, for all the pupils, a positive correlation throughout their secondary school career between their own aspirations and those they perceived their parents to hold for them. Whilst some of the earlier research would seem to agree that parental influence is strong in career choice [Beetham 1976; Office of Population Census Survey 1980] others noted the influence of peers in the choice of vocation [Hilton 1972; Figueroa 1974; Walberg 1980].

When Taylor [1981] considered the work undertaken into the attitudes of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils, she noted that many of the scales used may be ethnically biased and may also be influenced by how the pupil sees the researcher and what he supposes the researcher's expectations to be.

Taylor (Ibid.) also noted the conceptual and terminological confusion was inherent in the dimension of attitudes towards self. She reports that any findings on the self-esteem of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils need to be viewed in the wider context of life in Britain, as a member



of a minority community subject to prejudice and racism which may alienate the African-Caribbean or brown skinned pupil from herself/himself and perhaps stifle his/her potential.

Pharles [1976] reviewing research into locus of control and, at this point, concerned particularly with the supposed development of belief in an external locus of control amongst the 'black' population, gives two possible reasons for the development of social esteem. Firstly that parents, siblings and peers teach children directly about the harsh realities of life within an 'oppressed' minority community. Secondly, that the reality itself teaches them to expect to be powerless in the face of authority to have fewer job opportunities and to have fewer housing options than the majority. Pharles stated that:

Such experiences teach them in vivid terms how little power they possess.  
[Pharles, 1976:154]

As far as the support from Asian and African-Caribbean parents is concerned there is a considerable body of opinion to support the premise that African-Caribbean and Asian parents are likely to be highly supportive of their children's education. [Hawkes 1966; Rose 1969; Richmond 1973; Pryce 1979; Rex and Tomlinson 1979; Davey and Norburn 1980; Driver 1980; Oakley 1988].

In relation to general success in school, the Plowden Report [1967] concluded that home influences were the most important, Jenson (1969) saw hereditary factors as most important, Jencks (1972) considered it the result of chance, West and Farrington [1973] saw family influences in the pre-school years as most important whilst some sociologists [Bowles 1971: Bowles and Gintis 1976] were inclined to see the roots of inequality in the economic and political structure of society.

## **School Effect:**

Rutter summed up the effect of school itself on pupils:

The association between the combined measure of overall school process and each of the measures of outcome was much stronger than any of the associations with individual process variables. The implication is that the individual actions or measures may combine to create a particular ethos, or set of values, attitudes and behaviours, which will become characteristic of the school as a whole..... The total pattern of findings indicates the strong probability that the associations between school processes and outcome reflect in part a casual process..... Children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experience at school and, in particular, by the equalities of the school as a social institution.  
[Rutter, 1979:179]

The effect of school on pupils is recognised by a number of researchers [for example DfE 1993; ACE 1993; Mayet 1993; Imich 1994; Parffrey 1994; Mihill 1995; Parsons and Howlett 1995; OFSTED 1996] and therefore there is a wide difference in exclusion rates of different schools.

This begs the question - what part then do schools and teachers play in the exclusion process?

Teachers are undoubtedly in a difficult position, trying to meet both the needs of the individual disruptive or difficult pupil and others attending school. Schools differ tremendously in their capacity to tolerate and deal effectively with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This depends on their philosophy and determination to help such pupils. The skills and experience of the teacher determine whether a pupil can be catered for. Lowenstein (1990), Galloway et al [1985] found that neither school nor catchment area variables were helpful in predicting exclusion rates although the school variables studied were of school's buildings or formal aspects of academic and pastoral organisation. Variables reflecting the school ethos were not studied. Reynolds [1987b] and Rutter et al [1979] suggest that these were critical. Grunsell

[1979] also found that there was strong evidence for the importance of such variables in determining exclusion rates.

McLean [1987] studied six schools with low exclusion and minimal disruption rates and found that they shared a child centred ideology with whole school flexible discipline systems and support structures. There was a positive, proactive style of pupil management and much involvement of senior staff with ‘problem’ pupils. Galloway concluded that schools with a well developed form-teacher pastoral care system tended to have lower rates of disruptive behaviour. While McManus [1987] found that such schools probably had fewer suspensions. There are then variables within a school which can significantly contribute to the exclusion or non-exclusion of pupils.

McLean concludes that:

Because there is no widely accepted evidence for one major cause or several minor causes of disruption, the choice of solutions is ideological. The choice depends on, and to a certain extent reflects, the values of the school.

[McLean, 1987:304]

It appears from the above discussion that some of the studies undertaken indicate a fairly consistent pattern of reasons for exclusion, ‘although such observations should be treated with at least a degree of caution’ as argued by Eric Blyth and Judith Milner [1993:261]. ‘Firstly, the recorded reasons are, by definition, the official reasons as provided by the Head Teacher’. In reality, the formal reason for exclusion may represent the ‘final straw’, the culmination of a long standing deterioration in relationships within school between the pupil and staff [Galloway et al 1982]. Anecdotal evidence tends to support this view and may help to explain the apparent, such as ‘repeated failure’ to abide by the school rules concerning length of hair (BBC, 1993) and ‘disruptive’ behaviour [Channel 4, 1993]

## **Racial Harassment:**

Furthermore reasons cited in official exclusion reports fail to take account of the pupil's own perception for the reason for his/her exclusion. 'As with other evidence concerning exclusions, that relating to the reasons given is patchy' as argued by Blyth and Milner:

Some reasons are quantified, others are not: What does emerge from the available data is that, despite current concerns about violence within society, bullying and aggression are not major reasons for exclusion. Violence towards school staff accounted for 8 percent of permanent exclusions in the National Exclusions Reporting System [NERS] study, whilst bullying and violence towards other pupils accounted for 19 percent [DfE 1992.b]. In the National Union of Teachers Study various acts of aggression towards others emerged as the second most prevalent reason for exclusion. However the issue of violence in school and the way in which it is identified and 'processed' requires more sophisticated and detailed analysis. Bullying is experienced by many school children [e.g. Smith and Thompson 1991] but is not always reported and those instances that are reported are subject to various filtering processes. Racial bullying and harassment is more painful and if the teachers do not take any notice of the complaints made by the pupils it breaks their confidence.

[Blyth and Milner, 1993:261]

Bhavnani et al notes:

Racist name-calling and being subjected to derogatory remarks is a recurrent theme, both for Asian and Afro-caribbean children. One woman told us of regular taunts of 'Paki go home' in a local school which teachers conveniently ignore.

[Bhavnani et al, 1986:40]

Other examples of racial harassment are cited in this work.

It appears too, that although racial bullying and harassment takes place in schools, so too do white pupils suffer. Gillborn gives an example of a white girl who was bullied in Mary Seacole Comprehensive School:

Karen [White: Year 10]:

*It's like one minute I was great and they all liked me and everything like that, and they used to talk to me; and then the next minute they were calling me and*

everything like that. What got me mad was that they did not admit to themselves what they were doing to me - because they were bullying me. It is worse than being beat up and things like that because they just take your confidence away from you, you know. It really destroys you. You don't want to come to school and then you are upset at night and in the morning. I used to dread lessons because they used to pick on me in lessons.....

[Gillborn, 1995:15, original emphasis]

The evidence shows that harassment and bullying carried out for whatever reason, undermines pupil confidence and often is not prevented within school situations.

### **Violence:**

Concern about levels of physical and sexual violence directed towards staff [Norman, 1993] have also to be seen in the context of current constraints on schools to promote a positive image which militate against the reporting of violence in schools. According to a representative of one professional teaching association: 'Staff are not reporting violent incidents because they are under pressure from their school to hush attacks up' [Brook, 1993].

I support Blyth and Milner when they argued that:

In both the NUT study and NERS the major [but unquantified] reason for exclusion comprises a constellation of negative, disruptive, insolent and unco-operative behaviours. Whilst the DfE study gave no further detail the NUT report identified pilfering, malicious damage and absconding from school/ poor attendance as the next most frequent incidents warranting exclusion. What is not clear is to what extent there is any matching of 'offence' with the type and duration of exclusion. However it is interesting to note that, although not quantified, the school response to poor attendance by means of exclusion provides a neat (if somewhat illogical) way for schools to get rid of troublesome pupils, whilst at the same time improving their published attendance rates.

[Blyth and Milner, 1993:262]

Furthermore, some schools may be massaging their attendance rates, particularly the authorised absences, to create a positive image in the public and to avoid the label of a 'failing school'.

## **Exclusions and ‘Race’:**

There is a lot of evidence [e.g. C.R.E. (1985)]; Nottinghamshire County Council (1990); NUT (1992); DfE (1992b); Mayat (1992); DfE (1993); Bourne et al (1994); Hayden and Lawrence (1995); Klein (1996a); DfEE (1996); Osler (1997a) to suggest that pupils from ethnic minority communities especially African-Caribbean males, are over-represented in the exclusion rate; and this rate is disproportionate to their representation amongst the total school-age population. According to Mayat (1992), in Birmingham African-Caribbean pupils make up 9% of the total school population but their exclusion is 30%. Similarly The Commission for Racial Equality [1985] reported that in Birmingham African-Caribbean pupils were four times more likely to be excluded than white pupils. This report also revealed that African-Caribbean pupils were suspended on average at a younger age and after short periods and fewer incidents of disruption. Their chances of re-admission to schools were also less likely. Nottinghamshire County Council’s findings are also very similar but with small differences.

Coopers et al [1991] notes that African-Caribbean boys are over-represented in special educational units and schools for pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties, compared to their representation in the total school population. Again, as far as behaviour leading to suspension is concerned, in Birmingham, C.R.E. investigation found that the commonest main reasons for suspension were:

violence to teachers and pupils; threats and abuse; insolence; disobedience; and disruption. The commonest secondary reasons were: disruption, disobedience, abuse, insolence and truancy.

[C.R.E., 1985:25, original emphasis]

C.R.E. furthermore noted:

Although violence to pupils and staff was the most common reason for both racial groups, black boys were suspended more often than white boys for direct

confrontations involving violence with both staff and other pupils. They were suspended less often for disobedience, disruption, theft and truancy. Black girls were similarly suspended more often for direct confrontations with staff but less often than white girls for disruption, disobedience and truancy. The same pattern continuing into secondary reasons for suspension.

[C.R.E., 1985:26]

The Birmingham enquiry revealed that over-representation of suspension among African-Caribbean boys and not Asian boys, was due to direct confrontation with teaching staff including actual violence, with the greatest over representation being verbal abuse to staff [14.4%]. As with other reasons for suspension, all African-Caribbeans pupils were most over-represented in aggressive behaviour. Similarly, all African-Caribbean pupils were consistently less represented in the less directly confrontational offences of disobedience, disruption, damage and truancy. This enquiry also notes that in 74.1% of all cases, no previous history was indicated.

The Birmingham investigation also sorts out the views of the African-Caribbean community and found that they did not condone bad behaviour of the pupils but intimated that too frequently, the attitude or behaviour of the teacher concerned had been a contributing factor to the actions of the pupil. This was also found, when C.R.E. examined the suspension records.

The African-Caribbean parents views are also expressed by Bhavnani et al:

Black people's experiences of the schools in Handsworth areas take place in an atmosphere of poverty, of high unemployment, of poor quality housing, of a lack of access to facilities and poor resources in schools. The chances of success in this atmosphere are compounded by specific grievances from both Afro-Caribbeans and Asians about their bitterness of the education system.....

[Bhavnani et al, 1986:39]

Discussing the issues, Bhavnani et al revealed:

Issues raised by people included channelling and educating Black people into particular jobs, picking on Afro-Caribbean children and the new generation of

Asian children as ‘troublemakers’ and treating them as subhuman. Teachers are seen mainly as ones who don’t expect Black people to get jobs or be able to learn. It was felt that the education system promoted perceptions about Black people’s cultural inferiority, whether through food, dress, language and religion. Multicultural philosophy as currently practised is not teaching ‘respect’ for other’s cultures, it continues to reinforce the hierarchy of cultures, created by the state and the Government in which Black cultures somehow ‘fail’ to live up to the high regard given to white English middle class culture.

[Ibid.]

‘Pupil Exclusions from Nottingham Secondary Schools’ inquiry [1989/90] Report No:15/89 also revealed almost similar results as that of the Birmingham enquiry in 1985 by C.R.E. This report revealed that:

Low excluding schools were more likely, on average, to exclude black and Asian pupils, but there were considerable differences among the schools. .... In this case, black pupils were 7.5 times more likely, on average to be excluded than white pupils in the lower excluding schools and 3.6 times more likely, on average, in the higher excluding schools.

[C.R.E., 1990:32-33]

Analysing the issues regarding exclusion, this report found that the first issue was that an unacceptable high proportion of African-Caribbean pupils were still being excluded, compared with their white peers. A number of researchers confirm that African-Caribbean males are over represented among exclusions from school. The recent research conducted by Hayden and Lawrence, 1995; DfEE (1996) and Osler (1997a) endorse this view. DfEE (1996) statistics reveals that ‘Black Caribbean’ pupils account for 1.1% of the school population but 7.3% of excluded pupils. That is, they are nearly seven time more likely to be excluded from school than white pupils. The differences are so great that ‘race’ must be a significant factor. The report continues that it was not possible to distinguish from the exclusion data whether ‘race’ itself [and therefore racial prejudice] or cultural differences associated with ‘race’ [and therefore cultural prejudice or misunderstanding] was the predominant factor. The fact that the analysis reveals



approximately the same results whether or not formal warnings are included leads us to believe that in-school factors are more important than any factors connected with the formal operation of the exclusion procedures.

The second issue is that African-Caribbean pupils in schools with lower than average proportions of pupils from ethnic minority communities are even more likely to be excluded, on average, than they would be if they were in schools with higher than average numbers of pupils from ethnic minority communities. Many of these schools, because they have fewer pupils from ethnic minority communities, may have placed less emphasis on developing a multicultural and anti-racist perspective.

This report also found that overall there was no difference in the re-admission rate when analysed by ethnic groups. African-Caribbean pupils, however are more likely to be re-admitted following an indefinite exclusion [old category of exclusion] than white pupils, and are more likely to be excluded permanently following a permanent exclusion than white pupils.

Analysis of reasons for exclusions by sex and ethnic background revealed few differences. Although slightly more African-Caribbean pupils were involved in assault and defiance than were white or Asian pupils, fewer African-Caribbean pupils were involved in verbal abuse or disruption.

When the three most frequent reasons for exclusion [assault, disruption and verbal abuse] were analysed by ethnic group and type of exclusion, differences emerged. Of exclusion of white pupils for assault, 52% were fixed term exclusion and 33% were indefinite or permanent

exclusions. The corresponding figures for the exclusions of African-Caribbean pupils are 45% given fixed term exclusions and 45% given indefinite and permanent exclusions. This indicates that African-Caribbean pupils tend to receive a more serious exclusion from school for assault than do white pupils.

A similar pattern emerged when disruption was considered. Here 47% of white exclusions resulted in a fixed term exclusion with 24% resulting in indefinite or permanent exclusion. For African-Caribbean pupils 43% resulted in fixed term exclusions and 32% in indefinite or permanent exclusions. A similar outcome occurred with verbal abuse. The report concluded that African-Caribbean pupils receive more serious exclusions for what are described on exclusion forms as - assault, disruption and verbal abuse. For Asian pupils, their report analysis shows that:

Exclusions of Asian children were less likely to result from a sequence of different incidents or from a single incident than is the case with white or black pupils. Although numbers are small, Asian pupils were more likely to have been excluded following more than one incident of the same type than were white or black children.

[1990:37]

This report also reveals that the most surprising feature of this analysis is that on very few occasions were the Education Liaison Officers, based in Nottingham Area Education Office, involved in cases of behavioural difficulties which eventually led to exclusions of African-Caribbean or Asian pupils.

A Race Equality officer in Education, Rafael concludes in his exclusion report that:

1. Pupils of African-Caribbean and mixed parentage origin are well over-represented among the population of excluded pupils.
2. Children of Asian origin are also over-represented though to a lesser extent. The most recent statistics show a growing trend of exclusion of Asian children.

3. Exclusion records of individual schools differ significantly; some schools are high excluders while others resort to exclusions very rarely.
4. The size of the school, the size of the ethnic minority population in the school and the socio-economic character of the catchment area had no permanent correlation.

[Rafael, 1991:16]

Peagam concludes in his research as part of a Ph.D. that:

Exclusion is firmly linked with deprivation and the low status municipal housing estates.

[Peagam, 1993:6]

African-Caribbean mothers interviewed on Channel 4's 'Free for all' programme on exclusions from school in Birmingham identified the importance of white teachers' misinterpretation of African-Caribbean youths' body language as threatening, echoing Gibson's [1986] findings that African-Caribbean pupils and their teachers mistakenly assumed a mutual understanding without taking account of the subtle cultural differences in the use of language.

Blyth and Milner state that:

Elsewhere there is convincing evidence of teachers stereotyping and caricaturing both Asian and Afro-Caribbean children - Afro-Caribbean pupils seen as truculent and Asian children as conformist [Brandt, 1986]. Mac an Chaill [1988] found that teachers identified with middle class Asian pupils and saw them as ideal pupils - then extended the perceived conformity of these pupils to the Asian pupil group as a whole, although the Asian pupils themselves admitted to as much 'trouble making' as other pupils.

[Blyth and Milner, 1993:259]

The argument is in contrast to what we have found in the Nottingham Enquiry discussed above.

Blyth and Milner argue that:

There is clearly some support for the argument that the construction and belief in an Afro-Caribbean male stereotype may contribute to the high rates of exclusion from school experienced by such pupils.

[Ibid.]

They further argued that:

The extent to which this process holds true for Asian pupils must remain speculative at this stage, since little evidence has been made available about exclusion rates amongst Asian pupils.

[Ibid.]

The question can be posed- what are those factors which will provide us with different results? Are there cultural issues to be considered in schooling? Is there any discrimination or racism? Do schools' Governing Body, teachers and Headteachers use power fairly? Or are there some other factors in the situation, which so far have not been explored when we compare the exclusion of white pupils with African-Caribbean and Asian pupils, which would shed light on why these problems are occurring ?

## **BIRMINGHAM'S RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION**

In this section I will briefly analyse Birmingham Education Authority's response to the issue of exclusion and the strategies adopted to reduce exclusion of pupils in the schools.

The increasing number of excluded pupils has been a national concern since the early 1970s and many of these excluded pupils displayed disruptive behaviour, truancy and occasionally violence. Local Authorities responded in the seventies and eighties by opening special units both on site and off site. Following the report produced by the Birmingham Working Party in 1974 Birmingham opened its suspension and guidance centres. Referrals to suspension units were made for pupils who had been suspended and for whom no other school place could be allocated. It was envisaged that after a period of six months at the unit, children would return either to their original school or to another school.

Lloyd-Smith et al 1985 Review Report of suspension and guidance units states:

Referrals to guidance units were for pupils who:

- (a) Were not suspended
- (b) Were not in need of special education treatment and who
- (c) Were described as 'so disruptive as to hinder seriously their own or other pupils' education or social progress.

[Lloyd-Smith et al, 1985:3]

The Working Party advised that pupils be taught in 'very small groups'. The pupils who attended these units were aged between 9 and 16 years and were expected to remain for no longer than 6 months. It was indicated by the Working Party that the provision of Guidance Units would have the effect of reducing the number of suspensions in the city.

Lloyd-Smith et al argue that:

Their first action when the need for suspension arises, will be to contact the Education Guidance Unit.... before they are actually suspended and that consequently, the need for suspension units would decrease.

[Ibid.]

In November 1974, Birmingham Education Authority opened five Guidance Units and two other units for younger pupils were opened in 1981 and 1985.

In 1974 the Working Party recommended that the Local Education Authority needs to give a clear statement of policy and detailed administration procedures for the suspension of pupils.

[Lloyd-Smith et al, 1985:8].

Examples of situations which might lead to suspensions were described as acts of violence, dangerous behaviour or immoral or delinquent conduct. In the event where a pupil had failed to respond to 'normal sanctions' and consultation with his/her parents had been ineffectual, the Working Party suggested that Heads needs to consider if the bad behaviour could have been

caused by the pupil's 'inability to cope with the work.... emotional instability..... a seriously defective home background or any other cause'.

[Lloyd-Smith et al, 1985:3]

It was recommended that before resorting to suspension, consultation with an Education Guidance Unit should be carried out in the cases of younger pupils. Lloyd-Smith et al found in their study that:

Suspension can mean anything from a temporary exclusion to permanent exclusion. The suspension procedure is not used by all schools in the same way. Some schools seldom suspend while others suspend more frequently.

[Lloyd-Smith et al, 1985:3.3.1]

The Education Committee adopted procedures recommended by the Working Party and implemented them in September 1974 with two additions:

- (a) There was to be a suspension meeting within ten days of the suspension followed by a case conference.
- (b) There was provision for a three day temporary suspension.

The suspension procedure, reviewed in 1980 and 1984, made no radical alterations, though the Standing Suspension Panel emerged which met regularly to consider all suspensions and to make recommendations for future placement of suspended pupils.

National developments following the publications of the White Paper 'Better Schools', necessitated a further review of the Authority's suspension procedures, although these were last revised in April 1984. In addition, there was an added pressure because of discussions with the

Commission for Racial Equality over the 'Report on Referral and Suspension of Birmingham Pupils' [Covering the period 1974-80].

The Education [No:2] Act 1986: Pupils Exclusions [Sections 22-28] radically altered the situation by establishing a detailed procedural framework for all authorities. [The duties of Headteachers, Governors and those of the LEA are outlined in chapter 2].

The Education Committee (1984) was concerned about the growth in exclusions because it can cost up to three times more to educate an excluded pupil compared to a pupil in school and the rising numbers were placing great strain on support services. In addition, growth in exclusion had a resource implications as LEA had to educate the excluded pupils. Osler states that:

Exclusions are inevitably costly: recent evidence confirms that provision for an excluded child, whose subsequent education is nearly always less adequate than in school is far more expensive than maintaining that child in mainstream education (Parsons, 1996).

[Osler, 1997a:67]

Furthermore, Grant-Maintained Schools contributed to exclusion and over the last three years [1991-1994] a Grant Maintained School has had one of the highest exclusion rates in the city. However, although the Committee had to educate these children, Grant-Maintained Schools did not accept children after exclusion and in the past there have been no powers of direction by the LEA.

Therefore, committee policy concentrated on preventative work. Initiatives included:

- (1) The establishment of the Behaviour Support Service.
- (2) Preparation of new guidelines for schools on exclusions.

(3) Discussions with Headteachers about attitudes to exclusion and variations in policy with regard to excluding and accepting pupils excluded from other schools.

(4) Training for governors.

(5) Particular attention was being given to the reasons and circumstances which had resulted in the high proportion of African-Caribbean pupils excluded from school and how this could be reduced.

An exclusion team was established and an appointment of an Exclusion Officer was made along with some other staff in this team. The main task of this team was to deal with the exclusion issues and somehow to reduce the numbers of excluded pupils particularly permanent exclusions.

In the same time, the Chief Education Officer created a 'Working Party' on Exclusions.

The Exclusions Working Party met on twelve occasions and it conducted a survey of all LEA secondary schools seeking and obtaining from them a good proportion of them a full and frank response both to qualitative and quantitative questions.

The evidence suggests that the number of exclusions, both permanent and fixed term, is growing. It also reveals that many pupils reach permanent exclusion after several fixed term exclusions; fixed term exclusions themselves are not always reported and so their accurate monitoring is essential if we are to gauge the likely scale of the problem in the future. There were discrepancies when the official LEA figures were compared with the 47 questionnaire responses. The LEA had on record 395 fixed - term exclusions from secondary schools in 1993/94, whereas



a questionnaire reported a total of 1752 in the same year. Although superficially this may appear surprising, this is not comparing like with like. The LEA figures comprise fixed - term exclusions of five days or more, whereas the questionnaire collected all exclusions, including those under five days. It is recognised, of course, that not all schools contribute to this trend. Since schools are not obliged by statute to submit returns on fixed-term exclusion to the LEA, it is likely that such figures are under-estimated.

### **Exclusions of high proportions of pupils of African-Caribbean origin:**

Apart from the information from the Questionnaire, the Working Party also had available the Chief Education Officer's Report to the Education Committee which revealed the growth in exclusions, and in particular the number of pupils of African-Caribbean background who had been excluded. As far as African-Caribbean pupils are concerned, the picture in Birmingham is broadly typical of other parts of the country.

The Working Party's 48 recommendations fall into nine sections dealing with information and monitoring; re-integration; parental and carer involvement; the exclusion of African-Caribbean pupils; preventative strategies; co-operation; other LEA action; provision for excluded pupils and resources.

The Working Party concluded: 7.3:

What we have recommended will, we believe, diminish the numbers of pupils who have to be excluded. It is clear to us, however, that this is not one of those issues which can be solved by the Education Service alone. The Youth Service, the Police, Social Services, the Voluntary Sector and Community Groups all contribute, often in a key and major way, in picking up the pieces when a young person seems to be self-doomed to an anti-social life which is costly to himself [the choice of gender is deliberate] and to society.

The above Working Party Report was presented as - 'Exclusions - The Interim Report Of A Working Party' by the Chief Education Officer to the Education Committee in June 1995. On the title of this Report it says: 'If there were an answer, somebody would have found it by now.' It appears to me that the Local Education Authority acknowledges that there is no easy answer to this problem and there is not simply one factor which contributes towards exclusion of pupils. The LEA recognises the complexity of this problem, its own powers, funding and the pressures on teachers. The various legislation and the policies have not helped to resolve this problem. It appears that the LEA is thinking of tackling exclusions head on. Some of the recommendations are commendable and time will tell how they are translated into action and alleviate the sufferings of pupils, teachers and other agencies involved. The Chief Education Officer, in particular, deserves praise for initiating this mammoth task. In addition, the Chief Education Officer has set a personal performance target of limiting the increase in exclusions to 10%. However, I am also conscious of the fact that C.R.E. [1985] after its investigation made a number of recommendations at that time, but after more than a decade, the situation of African-Caribbean pupils exclusion rates has not changed much. If we use this yard stick, then we can say categorically, that little has changed. The Working Party's recommendations and other initiatives so far have little difference. Perhaps more time is needed for long-term changes in the general school culture involving teachers, Headteachers and Local Authority, policy and practice.

I share the views expressed by Wright in her ethnographic study of school practice published as part of 'Education For Some'. Wright states that:

It is tempting but over-simplified to blame teachers. We have tried to report on both their difficulties and their perceptions..... hope comments will not be

misunderstood, but taken in context in no way intending to blame teachers directly for the situation. Rather than trying to present arguments from the point of view since teachers are able to present their own case and the children deal with are often not articulate enough to do so.

[Wright, 1986:178]

Wright has referred only to teachers, however, I would extend her comments on them to the Local Authority as well. As far as pupils and some parents are concerned, they may not be articulate enough to present their cases either in the school to teachers, or to the LEA personnel.

Birmingham Education Authority is a member of the West Midlands Exclusions Forum, which consists representatives from nine LEAs. This Forum share expertise and develop policies and strategies on school exclusions. Despite the evidence provided by the government statistics and various researchers, this Forum lacks representation from ethnic minority communities.

Referring to this Forum Osler stated that:

Forum members showed sympathetic understanding of the needs of individual pupils, families and school. But the debate did not touch on race and ethnicity at all nor acknowledge that government statistics show African-Caribbean pupils being excluded four to six times more than would be expected from their proportion in the school-age population.

[Osler, 1997a:60]

In the current situation of exclusions from schools, the issue of 'race' and ethnicity cannot be ignored, particularly by Birmingham Education Authority, where ethnic minority pupil population in schools may be almost 50% by the year 2000.

However in 1995, Birmingham Education Department has supported two voluntary projects e.g. KWESI, for African-Caribbean pupils and Second City Second Chance for all pupils i.e. White, African-Caribbean and Asian to reduce the exclusion. The broad aim of these two projects is to

involve community people and professionals to work with those pupils who are at risk of exclusion. Another Birmingham Education Department's initiative is 'New Outlooks'. This project is led by one of the psychologists and is in operation since the academic year 1996/97. The project is focused on managing the school behaviour using a system that is in harmony with, but different from, the Code of Practice for special educational needs. It promotes early intervention and begins by looking at the environment in which the behaviour is taking place. The concerted efforts have made some impact, the permanent exclusion of African-Caribbeans pupils in 1995-96 and 1996-97 has gone down, but mixed-parentage exclusions are increasing.

#### **SUMMARY:**

Research shows that there are complex societal explanations of pupil exclusions from school - the way secondary pupils are treated, home back ground of pupils, learning difficulties, teacher stereotypes, racism and the general low achievement of these pupils. We also find that exclusions are increasing generally throughout Britain and in Birmingham LEA. It appears that exclusion is more common in Secondary Schools, particularly with pupils in Years 10 and 11 and that it is often as a result of a series of incidents. The various researches have also revealed that socio-economic disadvantage has not been found to be a reliable indicator for levels of exclusion and that a positive school ethos appears to be a crucial factor. Another obvious finding is that exclusion among male [White, African-Caribbean and Asian] pupils is higher than female pupils.

In relation to the LEA's response to exclusion, Birmingham has opened some Pupil Referral Units and set up a Working Party to examine the exclusion of pupils from schools. Some projects e.g. New Outlooks, KWESI, Second City, Second Chance are also supported by the LEA to reduce the exclusion, particularly of African-Caribbean boys.

I understand that exclusion is a complex issue and does not have an easy solution. I believe that in solving the dilemmas of excluding pupils from our schools by labelling them as the ‘problem’, schools can and do, play a fundamental part in the exclusion process, the problem lies in the difficulties of building and maintaining good relationships between pupil and teacher, as professionals we must accept that meeting the needs of these pupils is our problem. However, we are being forced to move further away from meeting these needs and will continue to do so as the Government introduces more and more legislation which fixes curriculum content too rigidly and doesn’t allow for a flexible curriculum containing educational topics of genuine interest to ethnic minority pupils.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY AND AUTOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT**

#### **Introduction:**

In this chapter I will attempt to discuss the methodology used to gather the information and the methodological problems faced in this study. In the end, autobiographical context: myself and reflection will be discussed. The techniques used, which were based on a qualitative methodology were as follows:

- Analysis of policy documentation and Education Department documents.
- Questionnaire to Headteachers with follow-up interviews.
- Interviews with pupils, parents and Education Social Workers.

#### **Research Perspectives:**

The methodology I chose for this study stems from the qualitative tradition in social research. The interpretative/interactionist approach to social science is one that I follow in this work that human action is not merely a response or reaction to the system. Action is meaningful to those involved. Morrison states:

The aim of a sociologist taking this perspective is to understand the motives and personal reasons why people do what they do. The basic assumption is that social interaction and the operations of people in society involved self-conscious thought and so cannot be studied in the same way as the non self-conscious natural world, internalising and interpreting, the social system of which he is part, is the main focus.

[Morrison, 1986: 16]

An understanding of social action requires an interpretation of the meanings which individuals give to their activities.

To understand the act, it is necessary to discover the meaning held by the individuals. Our actions depend in part on our interpretation of how others see us.

Interactionists emphasise ‘the self’. Individuals develop a picture of themselves, a self-concept which influences their behaviour. So, if an individual is consistently defined as disrespectful or polite, friendly or hostile, he or she, will tend to see him or herself as such and act accordingly.

But how do individuals come to be defined in such ways? How are such definitions constructed?

In any social situation each individual will interpret the language, gestures, appearance and manner of others. They will also interpret the context in which the interaction takes place. For example, research has indicated that the Police are more likely to perceive an act as delinquent if it happens in a low income inner city area. In typically defining the inner city as a ‘bad area’ the police expect trouble. Once arrested, a suspect is more likely to be defined as a juvenile delinquent if his/her manner is interpreted as aggressive or unco-operative.

Labelling of individuals as certain ‘types’ is not simply based on preconceptions which individuals bring to interactional situations, a process of negotiation takes place in which images are redefined and definitions and meanings are constructed which both direct and derive from action in on-going interactional situations.

My non-directive approach in the interviewing was useful as it avoided leading questions. From time to time I reflected on what they had said in order to check whether I had understood what they meant. However, there were occasions when I had to probe my interviewees for further information. This happened during the interview of ‘ASI’ (pupil).

Me: What about your future schooling?

ASI: I don't know. I like the school but not some teachers and I get on quite well with other pupils.

Me: If you don't get any school place, what would you do?

ASI: I don't know, perhaps I will join youth training scheme. [See Appendix 1 for a sample interview of a pupil]

Selltiz et al [1965:238] discuss some of the remarks which can be made by the interviewer in a non-directive interview, for example 'You feel that.....' or 'tell me more' or 'Why' or 'isn't that interesting?' or simply 'ah huh'. Selltiz et al further suggests:

The interviewer must create a completely permissive atmosphere, in which the subject is free to express himself without fear of disapproval, admonition or dispute and without advice from the interviewer.

[Selltiz et al, 1965:268]

Interviewing excluded pupils was not problematic as all my interviewees were aware that I was a principal social worker within the Education Department and that I was to prepare a dissertation on exclusions. This information was given to parents and pupils on the phone at the time of making appointments and was confirmed again when I visited them. I found parents relaxed and even provided me information of some sensitive nature without any questions; as mother of pupil 'FS':

Me: Have you arranged any teacher for 'FS' at home as Local Education Authority has not provided any alternative education as yet?

Mother: We have not enough money in the family to afford a private teacher. Only one person in the family is employed and the job is not very high paying. 'FS' himself does not



study and watches television most of the time. He goes to mosque to study Urdu (Asian language) one hour daily Monday to Friday.

Me: What is 'FS' going to do when he passes his 16th birthday?

Mother: We don't know. It is up to him. We don't think, he will be able to get any job.

Me: Would you keep him at home after 16th birthday even if he is unemployed?

Mother: Yes, we will keep him at home. It is not in our culture, as you know to ask the children to leave home, once they pass their 16th birthday. If he chooses to leave us, then it is different and that will be his decision. He does not listen to us but still, we will not expel him from home. [See Appendix 2 for a sample interview of a parent].

I found that pupils became relaxed once they began to acknowledge that I was interested to hear what they had to say. They then invited me into their world, giving me reasons for their behaviour at school, and this inspired me enormously, providing positive strokes for me to continue with the study as in the interview of pupil 'FS'.

Me: When you joined 'AM' school, did they put any condition on you?

FS: Yes, they said: If you misbehaved we will send you back to B.C. [one of the Pupil Referral Units]

Me: Did they put any other condition?

FS: Yes, fight.

Me: So they said if you ever involve yourself in any fight, they will exclude you?

FS: Yes, that's right.

Me: You are in 'AM' school since May 1994, has any incident happened yet?

FS: Yes. I was involved in a fight. A guy started messing about and I immediately informed the teacher.

Me: So, no action was taken against you?

FS: No, not at all.

Once I had interviewed them I was overwhelmed with data. I interviewed parents separately from pupils so that I could obtain independent views of exclusion.

When interviewing professionals I occasionally felt that they wanted to give me information but that the white interviewees were in fear of making racist comments. It was as if 'I want to tell you this, but, is it legitimate to say it?' There was also confusion amongst Asian and African-Caribbean professionals as to what information I, as the researcher, was licensed to have as in the interview with African-Caribbean Education Social Worker:

Me: Do you think the exclusion has been used adequately?

ACESW: No, I don't. I think the exclusions are means of addressing a difficulty a pupil may have in the school. But I feel that because of the inconsistency by which the exclusions are applied then some pupils will actually get away with inappropriate behaviour. The way in which the exclusions are used today does not necessarily identify or cure problems.

Shipman states that:-

The asking of questions is the main source of social scientific information about everyday behaviour, yet between question and answers there may be shifts in the relationship between scientist and subject. The final answers emerge from this interaction and the meanings that each party gives to the situation. The questions have created this situation and the answers are meaningful only in its context.

[Shipman, 1972:76]

Any additional information, concerns or contradictions were logged in my diary. For example two Headteachers said to me in separate interviews, ‘Well Harish, off the record.....’ This then caused concerns for the ethical treatment of the data; is it ethical to share confidential information? For my part I felt it was necessary to describe the difficulties that schools were facing which teachers try to avoid profiling in the climate of competition with other schools in which they portray their school as ‘one of the better schools.’ Ewing states that:

We ought not to tell lies, though we obviously need empirical knowledge to decide what is the true thing to say and how best to say it so as to make ourselves understood by others.

[Ewing, 1967:55]

Schools and names of interviewees in this study were given fictitious names to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Nachmias argues that:

Two common methods to protect participants are anonymity and confidentiality. The obligation to protect the anonymity of research participants and to keep research data confidential is all inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs unless arrangements to the contrary are made with the participants in advance.

[Nachmias, 1992:85]

The interviews with the Headteachers were structured and I asked the same questions of all the teachers.

Visiting parents and pupils certainly was a different experience. I thought that I was in authority no matter how hard I tried to portray myself as a student. I am not sure whether it was the families’ verbal/non-verbal communication or whether it was my personality or my attitude. I was cautious not to display any superiority in the tone of my voice or my body language.

Another factor, I found interesting was that almost all the parents welcomed me and offered me tea or cold drink. It was probably that they were Asians and when they met another Asian person they felt at ease. Oakley states that:

In terms of my experience in the childbirth project, I found that interviewees very often took the initiative in defining the interviewer - interviewee relationship as something which existed beyond the limits of question- asking and answering. For example, they did not only offer the minimum hospitality of accommodating me in their homes for the duration of the interview: at 92 percent of the interviews I was offered tea, coffee or some other drink; 14 percent of the women also offered me a meal on at least one occasion . . . there was also a certain amount of interest in my own situation. What sort of person was I and how did I come to be interested in this subject?

[Oakley, 1988:45]

But when I used a tape recorder for two parents and pupils they became suspicious. Once I explained that everything they say is confidential, then a rapport developed. Parents expressed themselves in their own mother tongue Panjabi which is my first language also. In addition, my counselling skills were of great use to me to engage in the interview process.

Goode and Hatt suggest that:

An interview is not simply a conversation. It is, rather, a pseudo-conversation. In order to be successful, it must have all the warmth and personality exchange of a conversation with the clarity and guidelines of scientific searching.

[Goode and Hatt, 1952:191]

### **Process of Information Gathering:**

### **Methodological problems, issues and reflections:**

Information was gathered from the 'Research Unit' of the Education Department, regarding the total number of permanent exclusions of UK, European, African-Caribbean and Asian pupils in the central area of Birmingham. Also, this unit provided me the information regarding the

number of Asian pupils in the schools. This information helped me to validate the information provided to me by the Headteachers.

The ‘personnel section’ of the department provided me the information about the number of Asian teachers employed in the main stream of the schools. The reason for obtaining this information was to ascertain how many Asian teachers are there as role models for Asian pupils in the schools. The school support section gave me the number of Asian Governors in the schools.

This information was gained to find out how many Asian Governors are in the schools to make sure that racial and cultural issues are taken into consideration whilst making the decision on permanent exclusions.

Regarding the training of staff in schools the ‘Curriculum Support Unit’ provided me the list of courses run by the Education Department. They also gave me the number of school teachers who attended the courses. This information assisted me to cross check and validate what Headteachers provided me through my questionnaire.

As far as the Exclusion Reports are concerned, they were obtained from Education Welfare Service (Central Area Office).

As shown in Appendix [3] I decided to use a questionnaire to obtain information about Asian pupils, Asian teachers, Asian Governors, training and policies on Equal Opportunities, anti-racism, racial and sexual harassment, bullying and the implementation of these policies. This

questionnaire was sent to all Local Authority secondary schools in the central area of Birmingham. Four weeks were given to reply to the questionnaire.

After three weeks, I phoned the secretaries of the schools who had not returned the completed questionnaires to me. Then, once the four weeks had passed I phoned the secretaries again to remind the Headteachers to return the completed questionnaire to me. With these reminders, I did get some of the questionnaires back, but still there were some schools, who did not return them. So, a week later, I phoned the schools a third time and requested them. Out of the original twenty secondary schools, twelve returned the completed questionnaires to me.

After posting the questionnaire to the schools, I phoned all the schools to make an appointment to interview the Headteachers. This interview was separate to that of the questionnaire and its purpose was to have their views on the issue of permanent exclusions. The majority of the Headteachers co-operated [particularly the Roman Catholic and other Christian Schools] and gave me their valuable time for the interviewing.

One Headteacher was very angry about my questionnaire and when I tried to make an appointment to see him, he was not available but left a message for me, 'I am not going to reply to your questionnaire and I do not want to see you. Your questionnaire has been thrown into the bin'.

This school has a high population of Asian pupils and the Headteacher may have felt uninvited intervention in his management of the school as the school excluded a few Asian pupils at that time. Probably he felt threatened with my questionnaire and interview.

After several attempts I managed to discuss the matter with the Deputy Headteacher who reluctantly agreed to see me for twenty minutes and asked me to bring a copy of the questionnaire. On the appointed date and time I went to see him. He was extremely cautious in replying to my questions. He gave me more than half an hour of his time and he even asked me if I wished to stay for another thirty minutes! He agreed to return to me the completed questionnaire in the next few days, which he did, but the code number on the questionnaire was cut off. This Deputy Headteacher blamed LEA for exclusion. He stated that:

The city does not have the resources. It is a difficult area. Spotlight is on the statistical points. We have a very systematic way of dealing with difficult children. In the last two years there was no exclusion.

[When I checked the departmental sources, this was not true].

Perhaps that's why this Deputy Headteacher like many other professionals wanted confirmation as to what was going to happen to the interview. I did not use a tape-recorder as it may have been threatening to many professionals involved in this study. But I was surprised that even when I had written to all the Headteachers explaining that all names would be kept confidential and stressing the same at the beginning of the interview, there was still reluctance and suspicion. My presence as an outsider and as a researcher also influenced his (and other Headteachers') response to me and at times it appeared as if they were holding back something from me. Van Maaren states that:

Fieldwork amplifies such strangeness because the research comes into the setting as an uninvited, unknown guest, carrying a suitcase, wearing an uncertain smile and prepared for a long stay.

[Van Maaren, 1991:32]

Another Headteacher was extremely cautious. I tried to make an appointment to see her, everytime I phoned, the secretary informed me that the Headteacher was busy and would I ring again. This happened at least five times. When I phoned the sixth time, the Headteacher left a message with the secretary to say that before she allowed me to see her, I must post her the questions that I would like to ask her at the interview. I agreed to this request and posted the questions on the same day, first class. I phoned the school after a week but the Headteacher was again busy and the secretary confirmed to me that the questions had been received and passed on to the Headteacher. The next day I phoned the school office before 9.00am and at last managed to speak to the Headteacher. She said 'I have made enquiries that you are not conducting the research on behalf of the local Education Authority but studying independently and have been seconded by the Department. Therefore, I am not going to give you any time for an interview and your questionnaire will not be returned. This is the policy of the school'.

### **Reflection on the experience:**

The difficulty of this type of experience was, that I nearly fell into the trap of thinking/assuming that 'this Headteacher is hiding something as her school is full of Asian pupils. Perhaps she is afraid of me exposing weaknesses in the school'. I tried hard to reframe my mind and to stay non-judgmental. I thought, I have lost one Headteacher's interview but there was nothing else I could do.

Two other Headteachers did not respond to more than a dozen attempts to see them for interviews. They were either with 'someone' or 'teaching'. I left my phone number to contact me, but I had no response.



These two Headteachers and the previous Headteacher did not return my questionnaire either.

Kahn and Connell [1957] distinguish five principal symptoms of inadequate response:

- 1) Partial response. Respondent gives a relevant but incomplete answer.
- 2) Non-response. Respondent remains silent or refuses to answer the question.
- 3) Irrelevant response. Respondent does not answer the question.
- 4) Inaccurate response. When the question is answered by a reply which is biased or distorted.
- 5) Verbalised response problem. Respondent explains why he/she cannot answer the question, perhaps he fails to understand it because he lacks the information necessary for answering it or because he thinks it to be irrelevant or inappropriate.

[Kahn and Connell 1957, cited in Moser and Kalton, 1971:276]

I did, however, manage to interview a Head of Pastoral Care from one of the above schools. I had a good professional relationship with this teacher and at the time of the interview she was resigning from the school and moving to another job.

### **One to One Interview:**

Whilst interviewing a female Headteacher or a male Headteacher or a Head of Pastoral Care, I felt the effects of hierarchy. [See Appendix 5 for a sample interview of a Headteacher]. I felt that teachers had some authoritative means of control in allowing me to interview them and spend their valuable time with me. I was very cautious about what I said, polite and possibly over-conscious of a need not to upset them. I felt that they were expressing themselves to me in ways which signified their importance over me. An authoritative tone in their voices certainly portrayed a position of power. [It was taking place in their environment] Once the interviews were over I was grateful and was in an accelerating mood to leave. I have been reflecting on this issue in my diary. I felt uninvited even though we had verbally arranged an appointment to meet. Whether it was due to the fact of they and I being aware that I was an Asian man, or whether I

was projecting my feelings of being nervous and lacking confidence in interviewing for the purpose of the research, I am unsure. My own doubts left me at the end of the interviews wondering whether their behaviour would have been different if I had been a 'white' interviewer. In addition, it could have been that the topic I was researching was too sensitive and political for them to feel relaxed. The teachers' non-verbal communication and verbal responses were defensive. For example in my question to the Headteachers:

HM: Did the reasons warrant exclusions?

Headteacher: What do you mean? Can you explain what you mean by that?.

This happened almost with all the Headteachers. Some Headteachers commented: 'This is a stupid question to ask'!

This comment belittled me and I felt that I had annoyed the Headteachers. But when I answered that I wanted to get at other external factors e.g. League Tables or political pressures, this made them more at ease to answer my questions.

One Headteacher was a bit rude and abrupt when I arrived about ten minutes late, due to traffic problems on the way to the school. I explained the reasons for my lateness, but he refused to see me and made another appointment for a week later. On my second visit, he invited his Deputy to the interview. Most of the answers were given by the Deputy Headteacher. All the answers were short and once the questions were over, both of them took leave immediately saying, 'We have another appointment and the people are waiting for us'. I felt rejected, it was as if they had excluded me from their school.

However, I felt that it was necessary for me to gain some insight by trying to view events, actions, norms and values from the perspective of the people who are being studied as this is the most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research. Such an approach involves the ability to empathise with those being studied. So my concerns about the investigation and the means used to obtain data gave me cause to reflect about the participants' concerns in giving me answers to my research questions.

McCall and Simmons clearly describe the variety of methods involved in ethnographic research and the methodology used, some of which are relevant because of their use in this research:

.... participant observation is not a single method but rather a characteristic style of research which makes use of a number of methods and techniques..... observation, information interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing, and participation with self-analysis.

[McCall and Simmons, 1969:1]

The degree of observation and participation with teachers, Asian pupils, Education Social Workers, parents and governors varied from complete immersion in school, and interaction with teachers to participation in exclusion meetings. Because I was employed in the Education Department and had obtained permission from my Line Manager, therefore I was not subjected to institutional restraints and I was able to use Local Authority data, statistics and schools for my research. A selection of central area schools was made because it was an area I knew well and an area where the majority of Asian pupils reside. As Nachmias states:

Very often, geographic or other practical considerations will dictate the choice.

[Nachmias, 1992:277]

The advantage of this choice was that staff from our agency based in central area of Birmingham had worked/liased with teachers from these schools. In addition, as part of my daily practice it

was expected that I would liaise with Headteachers, Teachers, Chair of Governors, Governors and visit schools and parents, consequently there were no problems of access. Burgess states that:

Access influences the reliability and validity of the data that the researcher subsequently obtains.

[Burgess, 1984:45]

However the limitation of this selection is that it is an arbitrary choice and means that complete objectivity is difficult nor is it claimed in this study. Shipman argues that:

Affluent workers, juvenile thieves, working wives, new methods of teaching children to read studied for their topical importance. But a sample chosen for convenience, because access is easy or because the school or area has some unique characteristic limits the study as a basis for generalisation.

[Shipman, 1972:551]

He goes on to state that, 'where the sampling is purposive there is not even a guarantee of an even chance'.

I have chosen the sample to provide an in-depth study of a problem. Evidence is collected systematically and by focusing upon a practical instance, as Nisbet and Watt state:

We can obtain a full picture of the process of interaction. These processes may remain hidden in a large-scale survey but may provide an identifying of key issues for future investigation.

[Nisbet and Watt, 1980:5]

Bassey [1981] suggests that, if research is carried out systematically and critically and is aimed at improving education, through publication of findings, and if existing knowledge is extended then are valid form of education research.

On selection and sampling, Fetterman states that:

The most common technique is judgement sampling; that is, ethnographers rely on their judgement to select the most appropriate members of the subculture or unit, based on the research question. Some experienced ethnographers use a rigorous randomised strategy to begin work - particularly when they already know a great deal about the culture or unit they are studying.

[Fetterman, 1989:38]

My next step was to examine the records of permanent exclusions from secondary schools in the central area of Birmingham. To record the ethnic origin of excluded pupils was not a normal practice before my arrival in September 1991 to this department and in the beginning there was some reluctance to adopt this practice. I used The Birmingham City Council's Equal Opportunity Document as a weapon to implement this change. I facilitated this change at the senior level by debating with colleagues. Senior Managers were subsequently convinced and asked me to write an Equal Opportunity Document specific for The Education Welfare Service and for The Child Advisory Service, which I did, and later on it was accepted as a policy document for my particular section of the Education Department.

In many ways I was attempting to make a virtue out of necessity. I muddled through, attempting, as I did so, challenging my own beliefs to be theoretically aware and trying to be creative, open and fair in obtaining the best quality data that was possible for me to manage in the circumstances.

I was aware that:

Keeping the data organised allows the ethnographer to test the mini hypotheses throughout the investigation. In addition, organised accessible data, are enormously valuable when the ethnographer leaves the field and tries to put the entire puzzle together.

[Fetterman, 1989:19]

After checking the exclusion records exhaustively, I separated the numbers of Asian and English pupils from African-Caribbean, Scottish, Welsh and Mixed-parentage pupils. This was a laborious task because I had to check, recheck files, reports and interview concerned team leaders and social workers before concluding that the pupil in question was definitely related to specific ‘racial’, ‘ethnic’ communities. To determine the identity of the Asian pupils was comparatively simple as the naming system and religious column assisted me. In addition, my own background being an Asian, helped me to ascertain their identities through their names, addresses and family details.

**Exclusion Reports:**

I thoroughly studied the reports (one from the school and the other one from an Education Social Worker) for 26 cases and made a table of events on the basis of which these pupils were excluded permanently, from their schools.

Schwartzman states:

All of the groups that an organisational ethnographer may study will be composed of specific individuals with particular roles, interacting with each other in specific occasions. Depending upon the size and complexity of an organisation just trying to describe and characterise the various parties and gatherings that make up a setting can itself be a daunting task.

[Schwartzman, 1993:53]

At the time of my investigation, only 13 cases of English [not Irish, Scottish or Welsh] pupils were available in the Exclusion Records of central area of Birmingham and for comparison purposes 13 Asian pupils [who also were permanently excluded during the same period] were

selected. In the period of March 1992 to November 1993 [the time of excluded pupils under research study] there was only one more Asian case available and that was not included in this study.

I compared 13 Asian pupils' school reports [Not Education Social Workers'] with the 13 English pupils' school reports.

I wanted to be sure I was asking the right research questions because ethnographers should not automatically assume that they know the right question to ask in a setting. In fact, as Spradley suggests, in ethnographic field work, 'both questions and answers must be discovered in the social situation being studied' [1979:32].

After consultation with my supervisor and a break down of the data from the tables a few were drawn up choosing only four major areas of concern i.e.

- \* *Disruption*
- \* *Fighting with other pupils*
- \* *Damage to property*
- \* *Truancy*

### **The Sample:**

The sample consisted of the Exclusion Reports of 26 pupils. Eighteen Headteachers; Deputy Headteachers, Head of Pastoral Care, four Education Social Workers [One white female, one Asian, one African-Caribbean, and one white male] were interviewed [See Appendix 6 for a sample interview of an Educational Social Worker]. Information was gathered from twelve out of

twenty secondary schools by sending them a questionnaire. In addition, five permanently excluded pupils in the academic year and their parents were interviewed separately.

Five pupils and their parents who were interviewed, came from Muslim [2], Hindu [1 ], Sikh [1 ] and one Hindu-Sikh backgrounds. Actually, I wanted to interview two pupils from each Asian community but when I went to visit the Sikh family, I was informed that the other Sikh pupil; [who happened to be a cousin] has been reinstated. Due to the time factor I did not search for another Sikh pupil [permanently excluded]. The purpose of this division was to check out if Asian pupils of different backgrounds have any different experience.

This particular technique is known as purposive sampling. Nachmias suggests that:

With purposive samples (occasionally referred to as judgement samplers), the sampling units are selected subjectively by the researcher, who attempts to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population.....

[Nachmias, 1992:175]

From a purposive sample of the population [excluded pupils] I chose my subjects by taking the background in the Asian community. In order to narrow my research project I concentrated on secondary schools only.

As stated earlier two Headteachers out of twenty did not give me any time to see them. As Kleinman [1991:184] points out ‘ Field researchers may experience anger, disappointment or ambivalence towards those they study’. I was fortunate in that I was able to share my feelings with my colleagues at the Education Welfare Service (Central). Monthly group meetings with our researchers at the University and my personal tutor were supportive too, and it was encouraging that I was not on my own. Kleinman argues that:-



We act as if it is always fun and that any emotional discomfort can be overcome in a few weeks. It is as if the only uncomfortable feeling we permit is the anxiety of the first days in the field..... the worry about participants' approval. Once participants accept us, supposedly all is well. But other uncomfortable feelings arise, too.

[Kleinman, 1991:194]

### **List of Questions:**

The original list of set questions was produced by me and I passed it on to several people i.e. senior social worker colleagues, research colleagues and my tutor who made alterations, added additional questions and improved the design (See Appendix 4).

### **Self-completed Questionnaire:**

Before constructing a questionnaire I read various books, magazines and articles about the permanent exclusion of pupils, to know what kind of relevant questions should be devised. For this specific purpose, in addition, I consulted a number of my 'ethnic minority social worker friends'. Finally, I discussed the questionnaire with my tutor and sent it off. [See Appendix 3].

While devising the questionnaire, it was kept in my mind that the questions on 'race' be expanded to cover the cultural and identity aspects of Asian pupils in the schools. These aspects were also relevant to the Asian teachers and Asian Governors.

Communication plays a detrimental role in people's lives particularly the school children and their parents who comparatively hold less power than teachers. If the children and their parents are not communicated with appropriately, this can lead to serious consequences as the messages conveyed insensitively could be interpreted and received differently. So a question was designed

how those Asian parents are communicated with, whose first language may not be English or those who may not understand the English language at all.

Some questions were on equal opportunity, racial and cultural awareness to find out, how the needs of Asian pupils are met in the school. Another relevant question to this topic was related to the equal opportunity policy; racial harassment and multicultural policy, to elicit more information and to look more closely at the school's practice issues in order to view how they influenced the 'Exclusion' situation.

At the end an open question was asked (given a free choice) to let imagination run free 'to make any further comments to this research' enough space was provided to answer this question.

In summary the questionnaire can be divided into three broad areas:

- (a) General information on numbers of Asian pupils, exclusion, teachers and governors
- (b) Training and policy issues
- (c) Communication and identity issues

### **Transcripts:**

Having completed the interviews which ranged between three quarters of an hour and an hour, the next stage was to transcribe each interview 'word for word' which took me approximately two to three hours in each case. I used a tape recorder to interview (twice) with two parents and two pupils. Almost all the parents I interviewed spoke in Panjabi. Translating from Panjabi to English took me additional time. I then gave the hand written transcript to a typist who typed them for me.

At the completion of the transcripts, I read each individual one and made notes of issues arising from the interviews. Throughout the reading I became immersed in the data, recording headings and themes of contents which formed a pattern of factual evidence of the data.

Burnard writes:

This process of immersion is used to attempt to become more fully aware of the 'life world' of the respondent, to enter as Roger (1951) would have it, the other person's 'frame of reference'.

[Burnard, 1991:462]

### **Limitations of the study:**

In terms of methodology getting access to persons who could respond to the questions about present practice to its problems was a limitation. Time was a constraint for the research participants and I had to restrict my questions interviews as a result. Limitations may be possibly in terms of the number of pupils and parents interviewed, but this was circumstantial within the time frame of the work undertaken. However as case studies they provided valuable qualitative evidence.

Limitations may be concerned with the boundaries of my professional role - I wanted to investigate in-depth a small area - a small group rather than cover larger numbers on a more surface level.

Overall I feel the limitations are those of any qualitative research study confined to a certain area and time. Nevertheless, the depth of cover, analysis and the resulting conclusions validate the methods used, I am sure that this research will serve as a valuable resource for policy makers in education and future researchers in the same field.

### **Autobiographical context: Myself and Reflection**

I feel that it is important to provide a short autobiographical account in order to enable the reader to understand how my experiences have led me to where I am now in this research.

I will begin with my choice of workplace and how my career has informed my way of looking at things and then develop the theme through the research.

I have had a varied career both in and outside of 'Education', much of which has been working with pupils.

I came to Britain from India in 1973 after completing my B.Sc. Degree. I worked in industry for a few years before gaining my Diploma in Social Work in 1984. I also completed a Marriage Guidance Counselling course at Rugby in 1987. I worked as a Social Worker in Coventry and then as a Training Officer with Sandwell Social Services before taking up my position as a Principal Officer [ethnic minorities] with Northampton Social Services Department in 1989. In 1991, I took up my post as a Principal at the Education Welfare Service Birmingham and undertook the current research as a part-time student in 1993.

It was always in my mind to conduct research in an education setting particularly in relation to Asian pupils and how racial and cultural matters affect their educational development. In my employment, with the Social Services Departments, these issues were always at the forefront. Whilst working in the Education Department and the schools I began to question why the permanent exclusions of African-Caribbean and Asian pupils had been increasing during my period of working in the department. I began to question various factors e.g. racial and cultural

matters; support systems and identity issues of pupils in their school lives. In addition, I began to examine my views on schools as places of power and control. I have professionally been involved in some bad cases of bullying particularly of a racial nature in schools where teachers were often the perpetrators. I began to wonder why the vast majority of pupils accepted their treatment without question while others rebelled every inch of the way as I myself had done in my own school days. To develop my understanding of this issue I began to discuss the issues with colleagues particularly with the Asian and African-Caribbean Education Social Workers who were in direct contact with the teachers in the schools as well as the pupils who had problems. My contact with Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers during negotiations for the placement of excluded pupils encompassed discussion of many issues about exclusion and thus made me aware of their perspective. It became clear to me that 'excluded' pupils, whether they were at fault or not, had less power than Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers and teachers. My professional aim became therefore to empower pupils and encourage them to take on some measure of responsibility for their own educational development. I arranged a number of training courses for Education Social Workers on Equal Opportunities; Racial and Cultural matters; Education Acts and the Race Relations Act to encourage my staff to assist pupils who had problems in their schools. Before arranging these training courses, team leaders and Education Social Workers were consulted to find out if they found such training necessary for them before final decision was made about their running.

Gordon stated that:

People are more likely to accept a decision and are more motivated to carry it out when they have participated in making the decision - as opposed to one in which they have been denied a voice.

[Gordon, 1984:241-242]

There appeared to be a clear demand from colleagues in this case - which led to my intervention. Through my experience and listening to Education Social Workers, I felt; we [Education Social Workers and myself] had little or no power to engage pupils in changing their behaviour. It was important to involve the teachers, which was however, beyond the remit of my professional role situated within 'Social Work'.

Fontana states the importance of teachers' involvement with the whole child and propounds that it is more helpful for pupils when:

The school makes it clear by word and deed that it is there to help children with both their personal and academic achievement problems.

[Fontana, 1985:50]

While we [myself and staff] had a range of educational skills learnt from a number of training courses, in order to manage challenging behaviour in our own roles, it was important to us that we effectively manage such behaviour without shattering an already fragile and low self concept.

It is usually the same form of conflict with authority that has led to a pupil's exclusion from school. When teachers are in conflict with pupils there should be a commitment to resolving such conflicts without either side resorting to the use of power, at the expense of the loser - inevitably the pupil. Treating pupils as equals, in my experience has lowered resentment and enabled pupils to be more open with teachers when problems occur. Occasionally teachers use a behavioural contract with a particular pupil but a teacher's ethos to be successful needs to be one of negotiation rather than imposition. If this process breaks down then there is evidence of unequal power use. Lane sums it up:

The failing student, or one who presents a challenge [inappropriately disruptive] to the school is often the child who has lost faith in that process of negotiation.

[Lane, 1990:252]

The concerns above were in my mind before I undertook the current research. Before I began this investigation, I was not fully aware of the pressures in schools. It is clear that League Tables, National Curriculum, S.A.T.S, Unauthorised and Authorised absence and Local Management of Schools has monopolised teachers' time which formerly may have been devoted to pupils with challenging behaviour. My experience has taught me that in order to be positive about other people, we must first feel positive about ourselves. This had led me to consider my own professionalism. It is difficult for teachers to support difficult pupils in mainstream schools when their own self-esteem is being consistently undermined by a Government introducing more and more Education Legislation which takes away their professionalism by dictating to them what to teach and how they assess their student's learning.

This raises the question that where then, does this leave pupils with disaffection generally, emotional and behavioural difficulties in particular and the schools who are trying to educate them?

Through interviews with some pupils and from the Exclusion Reports prepared by Education Social Workers, there can be little doubt that mainstream schools have failed to meet their needs yet that is where most of these pupils would prefer to be educated. The ignoring of racial and cultural issues in schools leads to pupils behaving in difficult ways and to behaviour which arises from their anger and frustration. They then get punished which can lead to 'exclusion' which affects their educational careers.

It is difficult to see how we are helping these pupils to overcome their difficulties by excluding them from schools. Exclusion is often seen by them as a rejection and therefore, this action lowers their self-esteem further. I believe that these pupils have a right to be heard, that their views are both relevant and enlightening and my current study has voiced their views.

The lack of Asian teachers; Asian School Governors; Anti-racist and Multi-cultural policies in the schools and training on racial and cultural issues made me consider what action I should take. I shared my concerns with the Chief Education Officer of Birmingham City Council, who listened to me carefully and agreed to look into these matters to overcome these concerns. I agreed to contribute by formulating active strategies to curb the increase of Exclusion in Birmingham schools through this educational research.

O'Hanlon expresses my views in arguing that:

The researchers' understanding of the subject after investigation at Ph.D. level will invariably deepen and become more complex and meaningful and may lead to a changed perspective on the subject which unconsciously motivates action in an innovative or novel direction. It can also consciously direct the graduate to specific new forms of acting because of his/her new awareness and the determination to make an impact on static or unproductive educational contexts. Such change in the person is what makes their research educational.

[O'Hanlon, 1994:282]

My training skills on equal opportunities, racial and cultural matters as well as my new found knowledge on these matters aroused me to volunteer myself to the Chief Education Officer, to participate and have a lead role for INSET training for teachers.



I have completed my research four years part-time. During the year of 1995/96 I worked very hard studying on some days for up to 8-10 hours per day. My wife and two daughters suffered as they could only see me for a short period everyday. My younger daughter who is only 10 years old stated several times, ‘Daddy, I miss you, and you don’t give us any time. You are always in the library’.

I felt extremely guilty that I could not devote enough time to my family. My wife was extremely supportive but there were occasions when she stated:

That’s enough. Don’t pursue any other studies after this. I cannot tolerate this anymore.

In this research there were occasions when I felt exhausted and I wanted a rest from it. I became sick and needed bed rest. After this, I started my study with a renewed energy and enthusiasm. Sometimes I got stuck particularly when I started writing my chapter on the interpretation of the data. I could not write a single word for a week and carried on thinking about this issue and then one day when I started writing up, I made progress little by little until the flow began. Later on, it became interesting to write the results of my study from different perspective and I really started living with my data. Day and night I could not think about anything else and was obsessed with all the people involved in my study. Guidance and encouragement from my supervisor made me confident to carry on writing until I finished.

The pressure of my study and the hours of my work in the library made quite a set back to my social life. Family friends phoned on several occasions and each time I was in the library, including Saturdays and Sundays. At the end, they stopped ringing and visiting us. My family suffered a lot of isolation because of my study.

In relation to the focus of research, I was in a good position because I have had a lot of experience in working with pupils who have either been excluded or are at risk of it. I wanted to listen to the real stories of these pupils. This, for me, was the only way of getting at their own unique experiences and the common threads, key issues, ambiguities and contradictions in them. I acknowledge that, as an Asian male, the data that I have gathered and its interpretation would have been different if it had been conducted by a non-Asian person. My racial and cultural background, my knowledge of Asian languages contributed to developing an open discussion with pupils and their parents.

Oakley argued that:

. . . these signs of interviewees' involvement indicated their acceptance of the goals of the research project rather than any desire to feel themselves participating in a personal relationship with me. Yet the research was presented to them as my research in which I had a personal - interest, so it is not likely that a hard and fast dividing line between the two was drawn.

[Oakley, 1988:46]

What they said to me in interviews is not necessarily what they would have said to their friends, it is an account for me. It may be argued by some that I am too close to the issues investigated here to conduct unbiased research. It is true that I bring to it my own perspective which I have argued up to this point and from which I have analysed the data collected. I have, however, attempted to put my interpretations and pushed views aside until after I had completed the interviews. I deliberately chose an unstructured interview style so that I was not influencing what the pupils said.

Being an Asian male person who was born and brought up in India and has been living in Britain for more than twenty years, and my role in the city I can understand the cultural differences and

how the education system affects Asian pupils. The inequality I observed in Indian society through the caste system, though it is not fully comparable to discrimination and racism in Britain it always aroused my feelings and I wished to do something to redress this inequality. I now realise that this has been one of the main reasons that I started writing in my first language and my articles on various issues of inequality, discrimination, racism and injustice in society have been published in India and in Britain in various Panjabi journals. The maltreatment suffered by some of my close friends gave me in-depth insight into the issues of injustice and how it hurts. I am now more sympathetic to Asian pupils who may have suffered some discrimination and injustices in their schooling. Like them, I am always recognised as a member of an ethnic minority. I have a lot of skills, e.g. communication in a number of languages, training skills, writing skills, managerial skills and negotiating skills which are not always recognised because people often only see my ethnicity. It is very difficult to divorce myself from society and the environment I am living in and the stigma attached to Asian people and the stereotypical views of some people about them. The same is true for many African-Caribbean and Irish people and so many other disadvantaged communities in contemporary society in Britain. The only difference seem between Asians and African-Caribbean people is their skin colour which cannot be hidden and we must learn to live with all the labels attached to it.

This research is an opportunity to open up the issue of exclusion of Asian pupils through research/discussion groups, in seminars, on the radio, in writing articles and in the press. It is an attempt to give a voice to Asian pupils and their parents who may not be articulate enough or in a position to fully understand the operation of the education system in Britain. My investigation has given them a voice and allowed me to speak 'through' and 'for' them.

## **SUMMARY:**

The use of qualitative methods was justified, largely because it gave me an insight into the social worlds of the teachers, Education Social Workers, parents and excluded pupils and it offered me first hand experience of the problem situations and their causes. The themes of concern and patterns of behaviour produced a description of what it was like. At the outset of this research I had little knowledge about the characteristics of excluded pupils. It transpired that these were charm, charisma, articulateness in conveying meaning via spoken language, leadership and challenge of authority where they found injustice being done to them. The characteristics can be lodged at points along a positive-negative continuum according to who it is experiencing them. Thus it is that what may be judged by one to be a necessary, even laudable expression of a characteristic can be viewed in a negative light by another. Filstead (1970:4) maintains that insight into social knowledge is obtained by 'being on the inside of the phenomena to be observed'. There were initial difficulties in that a complete stranger had come to visit them with a tape recorder and a note pad which caused anxiety for the interviewees about anonymity. Their body language including facial expressions, crossing their arms, and their tone of voice, confirmed this. However, the gaining and sharing of important insights into some of the issues as reflected in this research assignment may inform the practitioners [teachers, policy makers and other relevant agencies] such that they may produce policies which will be more effective.

## **Regarding autobiographical context: myself and reflection**

I came to this country in 1973 and then passed my diploma in social work in 1984 and Marriage Guidance Counselling Course in 1987. Since then I have worked in Coventry, Sandwell, Northampton and Birmingham Local Authority. In 1993, I joined Birmingham University and undertook this research on a part-time basis. My work with schools encouraged me to research in

the area of exclusion of Asian pupils in secondary schools of Birmingham. During my research, I learnt more about the pressures in schools and a lack of Asian teachers and governors in those schools where the majority of pupil population was of Asian origin. I was also made aware of the issues of equal opportunities, racial and cultural matters and training of teachers.

My study affected my family and social life as I could not devote much time to them. However, I was satisfied that my research would give voice to Asian pupils and their parents' concerns.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF EXCLUSION REPORTS**

**Introduction:**

In this chapter I will examine the findings of 52 Exclusion Reports and then will compare and analyse the six factors which are: Year group, disruption, fighting with other pupils, damage to property, truancy and ethnic origin.

After studying the 52 reports [two reports for each case i.e. one school report and the other one from an Educational Social Worker] for 26 cases [i.e. 13 Asian cases and 13 English cases]. I made tables of the factors which form the basis for permanent exclusion of pupils from their schools [See Tables 3 and 4]. Then I compared these two tables and grouped the data as follows. I compared five factors only i.e. Year group, disruption, fighting with other pupils; damage to property and truancy [See Table 5].

Table 3: Total Incidents of Permanently Excluded Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports

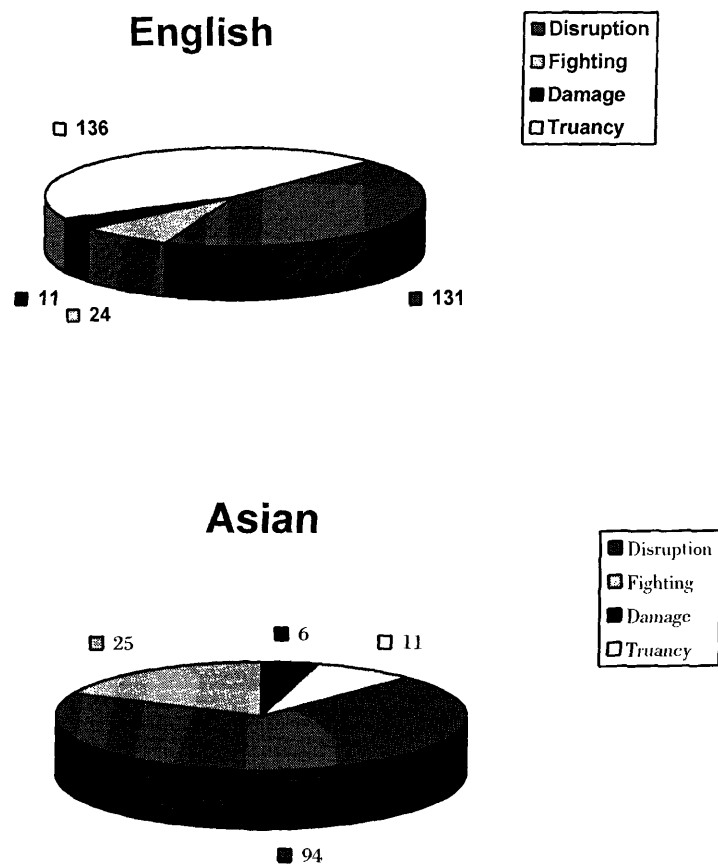
No	Abusive, Rude, Insulting, Threatening, Disruptive to Teachers	Fight with other pupils	Damage to property	Brought weapon eg/hammer, knife in the school	Started fire in the school	Smoking in the school	Use of drugs or Intoxication	Theft	Tuancy	Bullying	Police Involvement	Racist Remark	Set off school fire alarm	Ethnic Origin	Year Group
1	23													Asian	11
2	21	4												Punjabi	10
3	1	1			1				2½	1				Bangladeshi	10
4	2	1	2										1	Asian	10
5	4	4		1						3	1			Asian	10
6	2	2		1					½		1			Asian	10
7		3		2		1					1			Asian	11
8	2		1	2		1	1		1½	2	2			Asian	10
9		2	1								1		1	Nothing Mentioned	11
10	9	3	2						1	2				Asian	11
11	17	3												Asian	11
12	1	1		1					5½	3				Asian	11
13	12	1						1		8				Pakistani	11
Total	94	25	6	7	1	2	1	1	11	19	6		3		

Table 4: Total Incidents of Permanently Excluded English Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports.

No	Abusive, Rude, Insulting, Threatening, Disruptive to Teachers	Fight with other pupils	Damage to property	Brought weapon eg/hammer, knife in the school	Started fire in the school	Smoking in the school	Use of drugs or Intoxication	Theft	Truancy	Bullying	Police Involvement	Racist Remark	Set off school fire alarm	Ethnic Origin	Year Group
1	13	3	2		1				1½					British	9
2	6	5		1										White (uk)	8
3	38	5	3											White	10
4	17	1	2		1	1				7				White-European Female	9
5	9					2	1		81	1				British	10
6									31½	1				White	7
7	7	2		1	1					1				English	8
8	11	4	2						12	3	1	1		English	9
9	6								4				2	British	10
10	11	1	1			1					2			White-European	9
11	6		1	1					2	1				European	7
12	5	1							3	1				White	8
13	2	2						2	1	1				English	9
Total	131	24	11	3	3	4	1	2	136	16	3	1	2		



**Table 5: Comparison of Total Incidents of Permanently Excluded English and Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports.**



**Year Group: (i) Asian pupils:**

Out of 13 Asian pupils in this study, seven were from Year 11 and the other six were from Year 10 group.

**(ii) English pupils:**

Comparing with the English pupils, out of 13 pupils three were from Year 10 and none of them were from Year group 11. In this sample, five were from Year group 9, three pupils were from Year group 8 and the other two pupils were from Year group 7.

If we compare the percentage of, Asian pupils excluded from Year group 11 they make up 54% and from Year group 10 they make up 46%.

English pupils on the other hand, in the Year group 10 make up 23% and Year group 9 make up 38.5%; and from Year group 8 make up 23% and the rest from Year group 7 which nearly make up 15.5%.

**Another point** to note here is that all the 13 Asian pupils are male and out of 13 English pupils only one is female from Year 9 and in the rest, 12 are male. Also all the incidents listed are counted for one year back dated from the date of permanent exclusion from school.

### **Disruptive Behaviour:**

In this section, I have included not only the disruptive behaviour of Asian and English pupils but also abuse, rudeness, insults, threats, telling lies and not obeying instructions of the teachers.

#### **(i) Asian Pupils:**

Examining the reports [Education Social Workers and school's] of Asian pupils in this study, there were no allegations of disruption against two pupils.

Two pupils have one allegation each and another three pupils have two allegations each of disruption against them. Two of these pupils denied both the allegations made against them.

One pupil was accused of disruption for four times, another one for 9 times [ He accepted 7 incidents and denied 2].

Another pupil had 12 allegations of disruption against him. [He stated: he accepts some incidents but not all].

One pupil was accused of disruption for 17 times and he denied one incident. Another pupil who was accused of disruption for 21 times, only admitted two incidents. Similarly one pupil had 23 allegations of disruption made against him and he only admitted three incidents.

So, out of these 11 pupils, 7 of them denied one or more allegations of disruption made against them. The total number of allegations [including the denials] made against Asian pupils are 94.

**(ii) English pupils:**

Comparing with English pupils, there is only one pupil against whom no accusation of disruption is made.

One pupil had two allegations and another one had five allegations of disruption against him, whilst there are three pupils who were accused of disruption six times each. One pupil was accused for disruption seven times, another one nine times [denied one allegation] and another two pupils had allegations of disruption eleven times each.

Out of the rest, one pupil had 13 allegations, another one 17 and the third one had 38 allegations of disruption. The total number of allegations [including one denial] made against English pupils are 131.

### **Fighting with other pupils:**

#### **(i) English pupils:**

Looking at the fighting incidents of English pupils out of 13, there was no allegation of fighting against four pupils in this sample. Three pupils had one allegation of fighting, each and one of them denied the allegation made against him. Two pupils were accused of fighting, twice and another one for three times.

Another pupil had 4 allegations of fighting against him and the other two had five allegations. Total incidents of fighting in this sample are 24.

#### **(ii) Asian pupils:**

Out of this sample of 13 Asian pupils, two of them were not accused of any fighting incidents and four pupils had one allegation of fighting against them. Two pupils out of these four denied the allegation.

Two pupils had two allegations of fighting each, one of them denied both the allegations, whilst the other one denied one incident. Three pupils had three incidents each and the other two had four allegations of fighting each. Total incidents of fighting in this are 25.

### **Damage to property:**

#### **(i) Asian pupils:**

Out of 13 pupils 9 were not accused of damaging any property at all. Two pupils were accused for damaging property once each and the remaining two had two allegations each, for damaging property. In total, the incidents are 6.

**(ii) English pupils:**

In this sample, seven pupils were not accused of damaging any property at all. Two pupils had one allegation each for damaging property and the other three had two allegations each for damaging property. One pupil denied one out of two incidents. One pupil was accused three times for damaging property and he denied one allegation. In total, there were 11 incidents.

**Truancy:**

**(i) English Pupils:**

Out of 13 pupils, five were not accused of truancy. One pupil had one allegation and another one had one and a half, of truancy. One pupil was accused of truancy twice and another one for three times. Another pupil truanted four times [denied one time] and another one truanted 11 times. It was also recorded in the report that: he is a persistent truant. So I put 12 times for our purpose. One pupil truanted  $31\frac{1}{4}$  times out of 129 days and another one 81 out of 136 days. In total, truancy happened 136 times.

**(ii) Asian pupils:**

In this sample 8 pupils were not accused of truancy. One pupil had  $\frac{1}{4}$  time allegation of truancy and another one had only one allegation. One pupil was accused for 'missing lessons' [how many - there was not mentioned any number] and lateness. So I put  $1\frac{1}{4}$  for our purpose. Another pupil truanted  $2\frac{1}{4}$  times another one for  $5\frac{1}{4}$  times. In total the figure comes to 11.

**Some other incidents:**

**(i) Asian pupils:**

One Asian pupil brought a metal bar in the school and two brought knives. One of them denied that he brought a knife in the school. Another pupil brought a knife twice and denied one allegation. Another one brought a hammer and assaulted a pupil. The second time he brought a knife and assaulted a pupil.

One Asian pupil was accused of starting a fire in the school, whilst the two were accused of smoking. Another one had an allegation of using drugs or intoxication. One was accused of theft, only once and another five were involved with the police.

Six pupils were accused of bullying and three had allegations of setting off the school fire alarm [two of them denied the allegation].

**(ii) English pupils:**

Three pupils brought knives in the school and three others started fire in the school. One pupil was accused of using drugs or intoxication and three others for smoking in the school.

One pupil had two allegations of theft against him and another pupil set off school fire alarm twice.

Eight pupils were accused of bullying and two pupils had involvement with the police.

One English pupil had allegations of making 'racist remarks'.

**Ethnic Origin:**

**(i) English pupils:**

Examining the recording of ethnic origin of English pupils, in this sample, it was found on the school reports, that only three reports recorded ‘English’.

Other three recorded British and three others had ‘white’ written on the reports. On two reports ‘White European’ was written and on another one ‘White UK’. There was one report which recorded ‘European’ in its ethnic origin column.

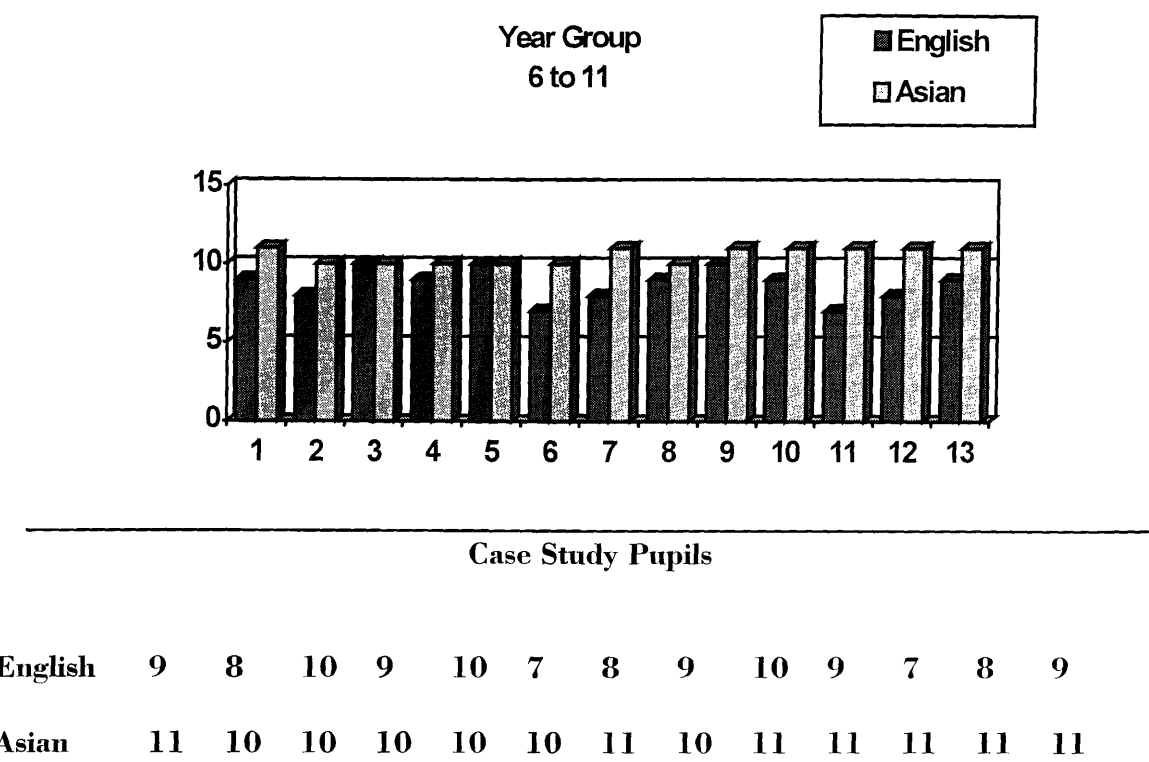
Overall, there is no consistency for recording the ethnic origin of the pupils.

**(ii) Asian pupils:**

Looking at the recording for ethnic origin of Asian pupils, 9 school reports recorded ‘Asian’, one recorded ‘Asian Punjabi’, another one recorded ‘Bangladeshi’, and another one recorded ‘Pakistani’. One report left the ethnic recording column blank.

So, in this sample, the majority of the recording was consistent - ‘Asian’ but the ones who did not put ‘Asian’ in the column, were recording differently.

**Table 6: Comparison of Year Groups of Permanently Excluded English and Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports**



**Analysis of the findings of Exclusion Reports**

In this section I would like to analyse the findings of Exclusion Reports discussed in the previous sections.

**Year Group:**

All the Asian pupils who were permanently excluded from schools came from Year group 11 or Year group 10 and comparing them with the English pupils, that was not the case [See Table 6].

Once these pupils are excluded permanently [from Year group 11 or 10], they would have little scope to resume their education. Consequently these pupils would end up having no GCSE qualifications and if they have not achieved that basic qualification then their chances to pursue



further studies are extremely limited. Hence, their chances to get a skilled or a professional job are very poor. Being Asians, there would be an added disadvantage because of racial discrimination in the contemporary society of Britain.

Raths suggests that:

All of us, as we grow up, do meet situations of failure and discouragement, of despair at times, and if these experiences are unusually severe or unusually prolonged or repetitive, we are apt to lose the feeling of self-respect, of personal worth.

[Raths, 1972:10]

Year group 10 or 11 is crucial for any pupil in the school. This is the stage of their lives when they step out in the wider world. Some pursue further studies and some end up in employment. Losing one's self-respect and personal worth may not contribute to seek employment or any other interest, particularly in the current recession.

What are the reasons? Is it the school system including the attitude of teachers? Is it the result of not understanding the Asian pupil's behaviour because they come from a different culture? Or their behaviour was such that teachers felt 'enough is enough' and they could not tolerate them anymore? Or is there an element of discrimination in the whole process of exclusion from schools?

### **Definitions of Disruptive Behaviour?**

Defining disruption is an almost impossible task and I have used quotes of various authors to focus on the diverse concepts of the definition of the words 'disruptive behaviours'.

Lowenstein [1975] define disruptive behaviour as any behaviour short of physical violence which interferes with the teaching process, and/or upsets the normal running of the school. Therefore, Lowenstein distinguished between disruptive and violent behaviour.

Lawrence et al's [1981] definition encapsulates a common standpoint which interprets disruption in terms of its consequences for the institution:

Behaviour which seriously interferes with the teaching process and/or seriously upsets the normal running of the school. It is more than ordinary behaviour .... and includes physical attacks and malicious destruction of property.

[Lawrence et al 1981, cited in Reid, 1986:35]

Galloway et al argue that children's behaviour at school does not fall into two neat groups of 'normal' and 'disruptive', rather it:

Consists of continuum from extremely co-operative to totally unacceptable. Few children consistently occupy the same point of continuum, their behaviour changes as their teachers, their age and their family circumstances change.

[Galloway et al, 1982: XV]

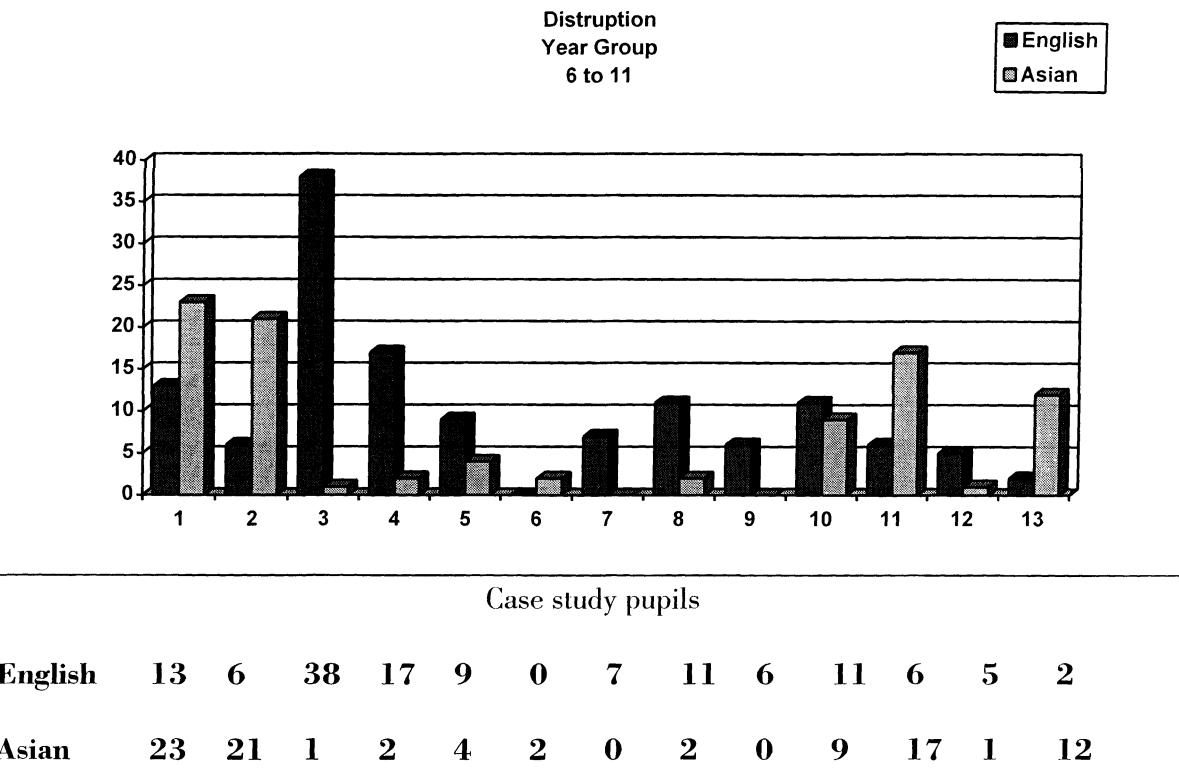
So, Galloway therefore defines disruptive behaviour as:

Any behaviour which appears problematic, inappropriate and disturbing to teachers

[Ibid.]

All these definitions highlight the difficulty of the concept which confuses the issues around serious and minor misdemeanours. Moreover, teachers' perceptions of disruptive behaviours are also important in their practical consequences. Disruptive behaviour from the teachers' point of view seems to include ordinary misbehaviour in the classroom, playground, corridors and in other places in the school. So, disruptive behaviours are those that disturb the teacher or other pupils, and those which disturb the teaching process.

**Table 7 Comparison of Disruption Incidents of Permanently Excluded English and Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports.**



**Disruptive Behaviour:**

Analysing the disruptive incidents there were seven Asian pupils who denied one or more than one incident of disruption, whilst comparing this with English pupils, there was only one pupil who denied one incident only. Overall, the disruption number is high in the English sample [See Table 7].

Were the English pupils tolerated for a longer period of time for a number of incidents of disruption, compare to their Asian counter parts? Or the severity of disruption of Asian pupils was higher than that of English pupils? Or was it a matter of judgement by the teachers?

Reid states that:

Staff room ‘gossip’ can establish long-standing and unfavourable reputations for pupils; many teachers are prone to make hasty and irrational judgements about individuals and groups of pupils based on very little evidence.

[Reid, 1986:117]

Among Asian pupils another factor to look at is spontaneous remission because disruptive incidents are comparatively less. Topping argues that:-

A major problem in the evaluation of provision for disruptive pupils is that a large number stop being disruptive after a while quite irrespective of what has been done to or for them. In other words, the problem behaviour shows 'spontaneous remission'.

[Topping, 1983:11]

Topping further argues that:

There is massive research evidence documenting this phenomenon [e.g. Levitt, 1957, 1963; Eysenck, 1960; Lewis, 1965, McCaffrey and Cumming, 1967; Rachman 1971, Shepherd et al, 1966, 1971; Glavin 1968; Clarizio, 1968; Onandaga School Boards, 1964, also see section 3, 'Prognosis' in Topping, 1976]. The data of Glavin [1972] are fairly typical - he found that of a large group of children identified as presenting behaviour problems, in only 30 percent of cases had the problem persisted on follow up four years later, quite irrespective of any intervention. Lunzer [1960] noted the apparent spontaneous remission of 'maladjusted' pupils who had remained in ordinary schools. A 'persistence rate' of around one-third, and a 'spontaneous remission rate' of about two-thirds, appear with stunning regularity in the research literature.

[Topping, 1983: 11-12]

If we apply the above arguments to English pupils it can be concluded that - that perhaps the argument supports the fact that when they reach Year group 10 and 11, they stop disrupting. On the other hand, applying this argument to the Asian pupils, they may have been tolerating unfairness and conforming for a longer period and in Year 10 and 11 become more aware of the injustice. They start reacting to the situations because their behaviour was misinterpreted for racial and cultural issues.

As Warnock [1978] points out:

the underlying problems may derive from or be influenced by the regime and relationships in schools, and many children may simply be reacting to these

There is certainly substantial and growing evidence for this point of view (e.g. Rutter et al. 1979)

[Warnock 1978, Rutter et al 1979, cited in Topping, 1983:11]

Looking into the schools' perspectives on discipline, teachers argue for their schools' procedures. Should a disruptive incident occur the pupil will be referred to the Head of Department. If the latter feels that it is beyond their control the matter will be referred to the Head of Year. This is very much a ranking process whereby the pupils who go to the Head of Year have had dozens of cautions by the Form teacher, Head of Department and Head of Year. Even at this stage the Head of Year may feel that the pupil is beyond his/her control and yet another rank needs to be added by involving the Headteacher. However, it is not always the case that a pupil is disruptive in class, so therefore the Form teacher is notified of the pupil's behaviour and from this initial stage the pupil climbs up the ladder seeing someone higher up who will be able to control the unacceptable behaviour perceived by teachers. In the event of it being violence the pupil may be excluded on a permanent basis.

From the teachers' point of view Lawrence et al argue that:

Disruption is clearly a matter of practical concern to teachers who worry that it thwarts their intentions and efforts to teach, it is thus a threat to their *raison d'être* and an affront to their professional existence; no wonder that it provokes a sense of outrage. Disruption is frustrating, irritating and stressful; in extreme cases, it may lead to complete breakdown of the classroom order and more seriously, of the teachers' health. Senior school staff worry that it may reflect on the competence of their staff, and at a time of falling rolls and school closures, may lose them the confidence of their prospective parents. Educational administrators worry about their legal responsibility to provide appropriate education for every child and problems which are created when headteachers, having exhausted coping procedures within schools, resort to the expedient of exclusion and suspension.

[Lawrence et al, 1989:viii]

Supporting the teachers' point of view Topping also argued that:

Schools may well argue that the stress and disruption for teachers and fellow students while they hang around waiting for the problem pupil to 'spontaneously remit' is damaging and intolerable. Obviously, one would have every sympathy with this point of view, particularly if one was a parent with a child in a class containing just such a disruptive pupil.

[Topping, 1983:12]

Some Asian pupils denied some of the incidents recorded in the school reports and some pupils stated that they had problems with particular teachers.

One of the Asian pupils [given a reference name ‘AA’] informed the Education Social Worker for the Exclusion Report: about the incidents and the Education Social Worker wrote:

‘AA’ admits to having some involvement in the incidents listed by the school. However, both ‘AA’ and his parents feel that on some occasions ‘AA’ had been blamed automatically because he was seen as the ‘leader’. Even though ‘AA’ does not deny some involvement, he feels that on many occasions he was not listened to by particular teachers, which exacerbated the problems.

In another ‘Exclusion Report’ prepared by an Education Social Worker, after interviewing the excluded pupil ‘MA2’ and his parents, notes that: ‘MA2’ had been involved in a number of incidents, according to the school report.

However, the Education Social Worker assumed that ‘MA2’s’ school attendance did not seem to be a problem because he had, had no previous involvement with the pupil and the family. The question can be posed that why an Education Social Worker was not involved when there were some problems?

Some parents were concerned that their children were not fairly treated and sometimes are misunderstood. In one of the Exclusion Reports for Asian pupils, an Education Social Worker wrote:

Father felt very strongly that much of the problem was due to ‘MM’ [pupil’s] manner [what could be called social skills]. At home his behaviour often looks bad, when he is talking, trying to explain himself, it looks as if he is threatening or aggressive. But Father knows that this is a mistake and there is no real violence behind it. Father believes his son, when he says he did not threaten or use abusive language to the teacher.

Similarly in another Exclusion Report, an Education Social Worker noted parents' views:

His [Father] reason for believing him [pupil] is that in the past 'BZ' [pupil] has honestly admitted to doing somethings in school that were wrong but denied doing things only when he was unfairly blamed. This time 'BZ' has insisted to his Father that he did not insult, abuse or threaten the teachers, or use bad language. Father is not happy that the school refused to listen to any explanation from 'BZ' or talk to the other boy who admits to pulling the teacher's clothes. Father is unhappy generally at the amount of time his son has missed from school recently. The category 'B' exclusion, mentioned by the school, took about nine weeks to sort out and this interference in the continuity of his son's education is not helping him get the results he wants for college.

The above pupil was in Year group 11 and the Father is rightly worried about his son's future.

Powers' article in the sixties [Powers et al (1967)] 'Delinquent Schools' suggesting that schools seemed to generate different levels of delinquent behaviour was greeted with disbelief, and facilities for research in London schools were promptly withdrawn. Now there is a greater willingness to acknowledge that schools make a difference and less defensiveness from teacher associations. But when Disruptive Children: Disruptive Schools? (book) by Jean Lawrence, David Steed and Pamela Young first appeared in 1984 there was still widespread disbelief and resistance to the suggestion that teachers and schools might be part of the problem.

Lawrence et al argue that:

The teacher's role in triggering misbehaviour is often not recognised, or ignored where it is. Presumably because it seems easier to modify the pupil's behaviour than the teacher's.

[Lawrence et al, 1989:4]

Lawrence et al further argue that:

Hardly any attention in the literature has been paid to the teacher's background and its impact on the definition of the problem behaviour in children. Does previous experience in secondary modern, grammar or comprehensive school affect a teacher's view of misbehaviour when he comes to work with children of widely ranging ability? Do problems persist for some teachers after their first probationary year? what are the characteristics of teachers who continue to experience problems and who find the job stressful? How is it possible to give

assistance in situations where it may be difficult even to admit to a problem? These are the questions that are asked by teacher educators and LEA advisors.

For schools the danger is more subtle: that having identified the problem within children, for whatever reason - low IQ, class, inadequate socialisation, environment, poor employment prospects - the teachers will cease to look critically at their own practices and the ways in which these may contribute to the very problems which they wish to solve.

[Lawrence et al, 1989:5-6]

In one of the 'Exclusion Reports' an Education Social Worker noted 'AS' [pupil's] father's views:

Mr. Singh [father of the pupil 'AS'] has always been willing to try and work with the school to resolve problems. Recently when his younger son was sworn at by a teacher, Mr. Singh listened to the teacher's explanation and accepted his apology.

If this child could have been an English pupil, his Father's reactions to the above incident could have been different. The teachers involved could have been disciplined and this incident could have become the headline news of the Newspapers, Radio and Television not only locally but nationally.

In another 'Exclusion Report' for pupil 'SM' regarding the parents' statement about exclusion an Education Social Worker wrote:

At the time of interview mother [of pupil 'SM'] is on holidays in Pakistan. She is not aware that her son is excluded for a second time. Father who speaks no English at all, through the interpreter commented: he knew that his son should be attending school, the reason for him to remain at home was unknown. He was not aware of the nature, severity and degree of the incident until we interviewed him on..... He was extremely anxious and implied that he should be informed of the full incident before hand. He is concerned about his son's education, and as far as he is aware he is doing extremely well at school.

The above example shows the communication problems between school and the parents. Where is the partnership between schools and the parents? Or does this rule only applies to those parents who can converse fluently in English? Schools of this nature certainly lacked the sensitivity to communicate with those parents who happened to be from a different 'race' and culture and could not make arrangements for interpreters and translators. In these



circumstances, how can these Asian parents assist teachers to overcome the problems created or faced by the Asian pupils? Are we saying they have no right to be communicated with appropriately and sensitively to enable them to be fully understood in their own mother tongues and to be aware of the cultural issues and non-verbal communications when meeting them. They are rate payers and tax payers like English people in this country so they should not be deprived of their lawful rights? Is this deliberate? Is this a form of discrimination or racism? This raises the question of intentionality.

Another Asian parent who was fluent in English complained to an Education Social Worker who wrote in 'RB' [pupil's] Exclusion Report:

Mother feels that she has been very supportive to the school and has taken time off to attend meetings at the school. In actual fact, the school failed to advise the parents of the date of the meeting with the Governors - the parents only knew the date two days before the meeting when Education Social Worker called to discuss the report.

This is an example of violation of the law which clearly states that parents should be informed about permanent exclusion, immediately. The governors did not take any notice of these incidents. It was the responsibility of the governors to enquire about these allegations and could have demanded a full explanation irrespective of the severity of allegations against the pupil. If a pupil misbehaves, he/she is excluded, but if a teacher/Headteacher or governors do not comply with the rules and regulations, nobody takes any notice. If however, someone does take any action against any teacher/Headteacher, their unions are there to support but there is no union to support these parents. In addition, many parents do not wish to go through this ordeal either and hence the people in power (teachers, Headteacher and governors) are excused for not following the rules and regulations laid down by the Government.

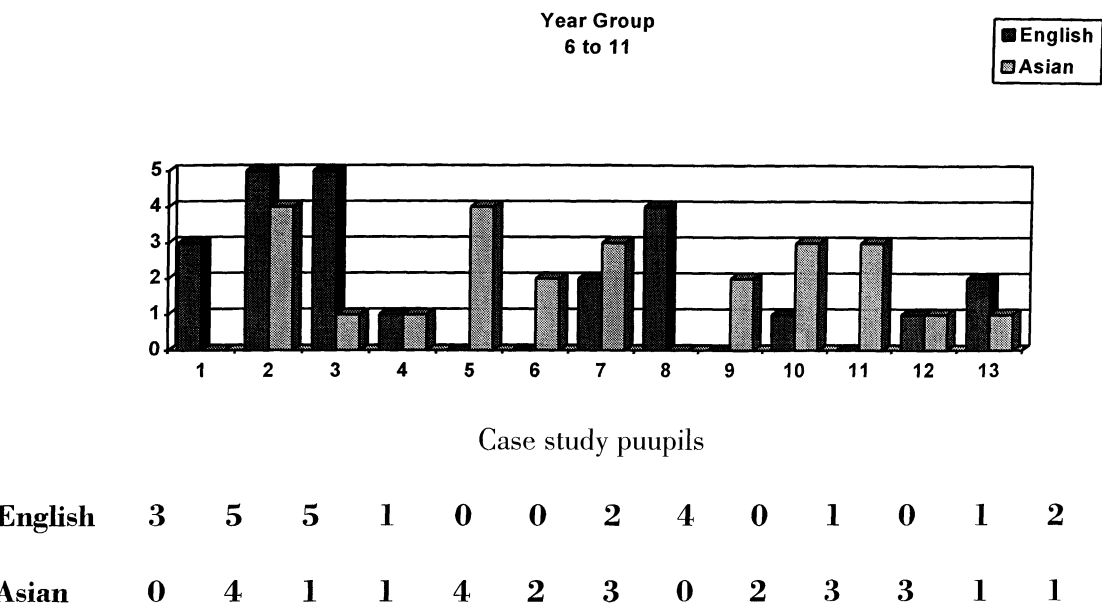
However, there were some parents who fully supported the school's actions in excluding their children. An Education Social Worker noted 'ZY' [pupil's] father's statement about exclusion, in the Exclusion Report:

Father quite clearly accepts that 'ZY' was to blame for the incident leading to his permanent exclusion. He feels that the school have made every effort to resolve the situation. He would welcome some support from Behaviour Support Service to address this.

In another Exclusion Report, the Guardian of the pupil 'WA' made the views to an Education Social Worker: 'Guardian' thinks the school acted reasonably in excluding 'WA' as there is no justification for taking a weapon into school'

Examining the English and Asian Exclusion Reports prepared by the Education Social Workers, it was revealed that out of 13 parents 8 English parents (62%) agreed with the school's decision to exclude their children. Whilst, on the other hand out of 13 Asian parents only five (38%) agreed with the school's decision to exclude their children permanently. Does this show that Asian parents have comparatively less faith in school systems? Or they are protecting their male children? But one thing is clear that the relationships of these parents and the schools are not very good and this can give a bad image to the school in the community. In that case do the parents have any choice to send their children to any other school, when - that school may be the only local one available, where the children can walk rather than bus which incurs some costs to the parents? If the parents were unemployed, would they be able to take that step? All in all the situation is complex and does not offer an easy solution.

**Table 8: Comparison of Fighting with Other Pupils’ Incidents of Permanently Excluded English and Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Report**



**Fighting with other pupils:**

Analysing the fighting incidents, four Asian pupils denied any involvement in one or more than one incident whilst one English pupil denied the one incident of fighting which was made against her. This was the only pupil [among English and Asians] who happened to be a female.

In total, the number of fighting incidents are almost the same i.e. English 24 and Asians 25 [See Table 8]. In many schools violence is taken very seriously and it warrants a pupil being excluded permanently.

One may question why the pupil gets into fights - one pupil may in confidence state that his/her granny has died whereas the other pupil may not trust an adult enough to confide in her/him. If the pupil is provoked either by teachers or other pupils in a way which is perceived a humiliation, an attack at personal level of self-worth, then it is possible the pupil will react in a way which could be seen as ‘aggressive’, ‘disruptive’ or ‘violent’.

In one of the Exclusion Reports an Education Social Worker recorded pupil's [ZY] statement about exclusion:

'ZY' explained that he saw the other pupils fighting during break time. He recalls attempting to break up the fight but was blamed for the incident. 'ZY' also recalls an incident about a month ago, when he feels he was wrongly accused of setting off the fire alarm.

This sort of behaviour generates frustration and anger in the pupil and injures his/her self-worth.

Another Exclusion Report in this sample reveals:

Education Social Worker discussed with 'WA' [pupil] the list of complaints produced by the school. 'WA' did not recognise many of the incidents as serious and would not describe himself as violent or aggressive. He thinks there would be no danger of aggression if the governors re-admit him.

Humiliation in class and in school in this evidence is powerful and undermines pupils' feelings of self-worth. Pupils who are seen as a threat tend to be easy victims. The pupil ['AA'] felt that Mr. 'B' [Teacher] was OK as he tended to listen more than some of the other teachers. The Headteacher did not listen to 'AA' and refused to give 'AA' a chance to explain, which he found 'frustrating'.

The Exclusion Report revealed that:

'AA' does not feel able to talk to his dad about the difficulties that have arisen. His dad gets upset and 'AA' does not like making him sad. He says he cannot handle it when his dad cries because this makes him upset.

Discussing about aggression Armytage [1970] argued that:

Human aggression takes small or large scale forms, is turned inward towards the person or outward towards others, and is expressed verbally or physically, indirect or more covert forms.

[Armytage 1970, cited in Lawrence et al, 1989:9]

## **Power:**

Regarding the relationship between pupils and teachers as in 'AA' [pupil]'s case Lawrence et al state:

There is some evidence to suggest that some children find 'relating to children' more problematic than others and need more help in adjusting to the demands made upon them. There is some evidence to suggest that this facet of schooling is not all one-sided: teachers also have their problems; they find it easier to relate to some children than others. If one accepts that, in order to explain the difficulties people experience in interacting with others around them, one needs to take into account both sides of the interaction, then a social-psychological perspective may be useful.

[Lawrence et al, 1989:15]

Consideration of the, social-psychological perspective could be useful, but the power factor cannot be ignored. Teachers, Headteachers and the governors have more power than pupils and their parents. When pupils are from a different 'race' and culture, their behaviour may be perceived differently and have less power than their English counter-parts in schools.

Rampton [1981] argues that:

Culturally different behaviours, whether ethnic or class or religious in origin may be perceived and reacted to differently

[Rampton 1981, cited in Lawrence et al, 1989:17]

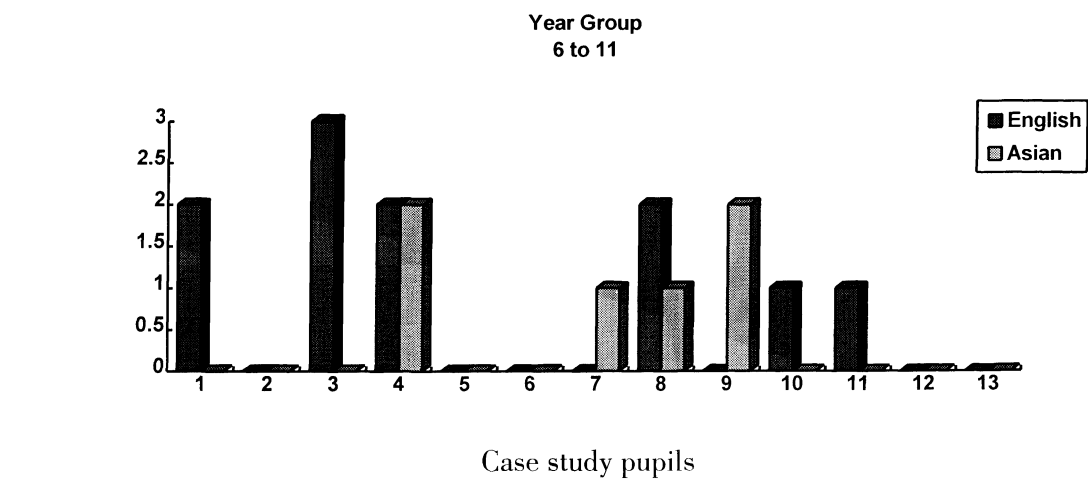
An incident with a teacher is revealed in pupil 'AA's' Exclusion Report by an Education Social

Worker:

Pupil 'AA' agreed that he made threats to the teacher with reference to the incident where it was claimed that he had been drinking alcohol. 'AA' admits to have been drinking what he thought was 'Kiwi Apple Juice'. When the teacher came out 'AA' was found with a bottle in his hand. The teacher accused him of drinking cider. 'AA' asked his friend if this was true and his friend confirmed this. 'AA' response was to throw the bottle away. The teacher picked up the bottle and took it into the school. 'AA' blames the teacher for informing the Headteacher that he was drinking cider, which consequently led to the threatening behaviour. This is the reason why he blamed the teacher for ruining his life.

Such behaviour can lead to some pupils reacting violently and threateningly. This sort of behaviour is difficult to cope with in mainstream schools as it puts other pupils and staff at risk physically. If a pupil happens to be an Asian there is a danger that the pupil may feel that he had been ‘labelled’ or picked up because of his culture and background. This can apply to any other ethnic minority pupil in this kind of situation. There is also a possibility that ‘race’ may be used by these pupils for their defence.

**TABLE 9: Comparison of Damage to Property Incidents of Permanently Excluded English And Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports**



English	2	0	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0

**Damage to property:**

Analysing damage to property Asian pupils in this sample committed only six offences in total [See Table 9]. Examining the severity of the damage and then comparing with English pupils, there is a huge difference, for example in the Asian pupils’ case, there is damage to a flip chart, wasted toilet paper, damage to a text book, graffiti on walls, corridors, piles of rubbish, litter and dirt kicked and redistributed over foyer areas and Tippex smeared.

Compared with English pupils' offences, they committed, in total eleven offences. Their offences are, damage to a local factory, damage to a car, tipped food and drink from tray deliberately, chalked obscenities on the wall about staff, burned a boy's map, graffiti on toilet walls, threw stones at window and ran away, returned and did the same again, throwing things, threw scissors at another boy, broke window when playing football in prohibited area and damaged school property on another occasion.

Another factor to note here is that English pupils are younger than Asian pupils who were involved in these offences. The question can be asked: are these children 'disruptive children' or 'problem children' or 'children with problems'.

Jones et al [1976] explained:

The concepts used in the area of disruption in schools are themselves interesting. Sometimes the talk is about 'disruptive children', around whom there is already a body of literature. The distinction is made now between the 'disruptive child' and the 'maladjusted child' the latter often seen as being unwell rather than culpable and suffering from a psychiatrically diagnosable disorder

[Jones et al 1976, cited in Lawrence et al, 1989:14]

Explaining about the damage to a 'flip chart' where an Asian pupil was involved an Education Social Worker for the 'Exclusion Report' wrote:

This involved damage to a 'flip chart'. 'MA1' [pupil] and other boys repaired the damage and 'MA1' thought the matter was resolved

Galloway et al (1982) claim that a pupil's chances may be influenced at least as much and probably more by which school he happens to attend, as by any stress in his family or any constitutional factors in the pupil himself.

Galloway emphasises the potential of such groups to offer a cooling off period during which staff and teachers can look at the stresses in school or home which have precipitated the pupil's problem, and at the means of overcoming them. He concludes that the problem of disruptive behaviour is most readily solved by prevention, that special groups cannot reasonably be seen as a solution to the problems which disruptive pupils cause in schools, that effective pastoral care must embrace all aspects of a pupil's welfare in school if it is to make an impact of the level of disruptive behaviour and that all pupils should feel that the school values their achievement.

Galloway believes that tackling the problem through the school's policy organisation and ethos is by no means wishful thinking. A similar point is made by Ford et al [1982]. She expresses concern at the growing popularity of disruptive units, at the disproportionate increase in the number of pupils identified as maladjusted or educationally subnormal and the concentration of interest on certain types of violent and extravagant behaviour to the relative neglect of behaviours which may be less threatening to teachers but which indicate deep seated needs. Regularities in the patterning of problem behaviour in schools - it is experienced more with boys than girls, more in county than voluntary schools, more with older than younger pupils, more with lower working class and ethnic minority than with middle class pupils - suggest that explanations and remedies are more likely to be found in the system of schooling than in the psychology's of individual pupils.

At present, teachers are not dealing with only English pupils but with pupils from different 'race', culture and abilities. This makes the teachers job difficult. Lawrence et al argued that:

Thus today far more secondary school teachers than in the past, are teaching children with abilities, backgrounds and propensities which may lead them into misbehaviour. In the past they would have been sheltered from such children.

[Lawrence et al, 1989:28]



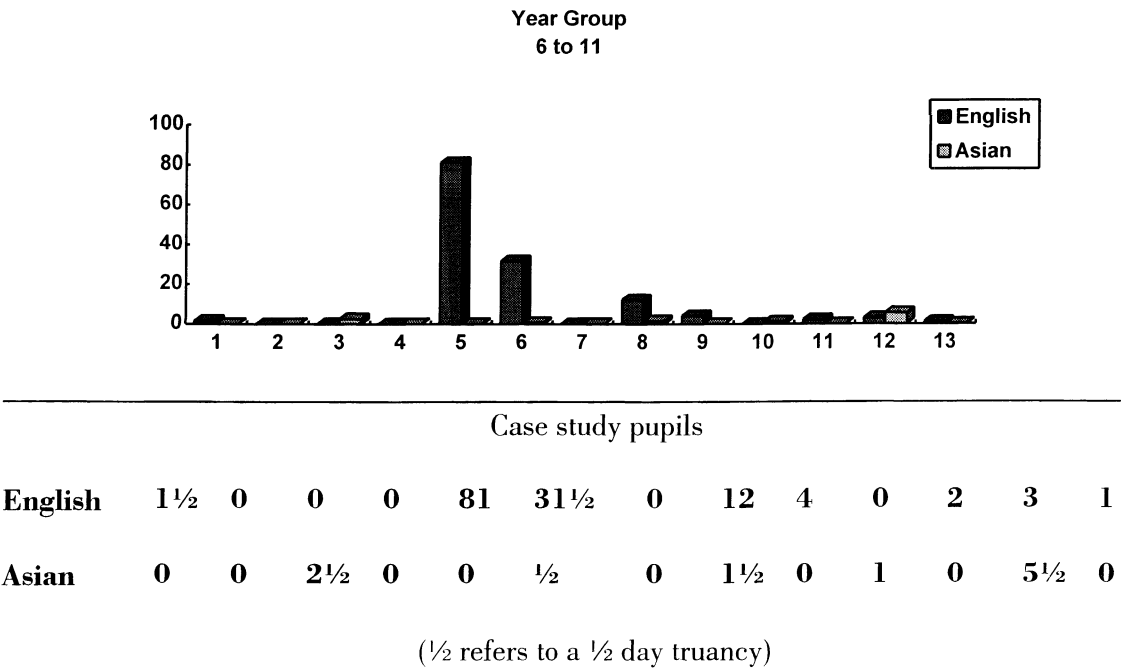
Damaging property may be one of the ways that pupils seek attention or express the frustration. If pupils are 16 years of age, it may be that they are being treated like small children and they may rebel against it by damaging property, and other ways seen by the school as ‘disruptive’.

Lawrence et al argued that:

The progressive raising of the school leaving age up to its present point of 16 in 1972-73 has retained in the schools many children whose goals and aspirations are at variance with those of their schools, who function as young adults outside school, and are dealt with as children in the school.

[Lawrence et al, 1989:10]

**Table 10: Comparison of Truancy Incidents of Permanently Excluded English and Asian Pupils in Case Study of Exclusion Reports.**



**Truancy:**

In analysing the truancy figures nearly 62% of the English pupils truanted. Among Asian pupils, 38% truanted. The total number of truancy incidents for Asian pupils is 11 whilst the total number of truancy incidents for English pupils is 136 [See Table 10].

Another factor to note here is that ‘truancy’ was not the only factor both among Asian and English pupils, to exclude them permanently from schools.

But why do pupils truant? Is it the attitude of some teachers? Or they do not like certain subjects or any subject? Or there is some bullying going on in the school and some pupils are really scared? Or there are some family and sociological factors? Or some other factors?

One of the ‘Exclusion Reports’ for Asian pupils in this sample, revealed:

‘RB’ (pupil) feels he has had a difficult time at the school. He finds the academic work hard and does not always understand what is happening in the classroom. It seems that sometimes he opts out by truanting, but of course this merely compounds the problems as he then gets further behind with the school work. ‘RB’ does not really relate to most of the other students and feels he has little in common with them. He thinks he has a poor relationship with most of the teachers - he says he has tried to explain and talk to them but they do not seem to understand.

Reid [1985a] argued that:

Research that emphasises the processes that go on inside the school suggest that anti-school attitudes of truants are shaped, in part at least, by the truants’ perceptions of their relationships with teachers.

[Reid 1985a, cited in Reid, 1987:44]

Brown [1987] argued the same points in more depth:

Again, there is a growing body of evidence [Eaton and Houghton 1974; Reynolds 1976 a, b, Reynolds and Murgatroyd, 1977; Cope and Gray 1978, Gow and McPherson 1980, Mitchell and Shepherd, 1980, Reynolds Jones, St Leger and Murgatroyd, 1980, Reid 1981, Galloway 1982 a] which suggests that the school contributes to its own truancy rate. It is not my purpose here to review that research.

[Brown 1987, cited in Reid, 1987:44].

Blaming the teachers and schools for truancy was not the case a few years ago. Reynolds argued that:

There was bias in the psychological and the sociological research of the time. Simply, there existed a belief in the importance of the family as a determinant of behaviour such as truancy that moulded research which was tailor-made to reinforce this initial belief. The greater part of educational research was simply obsessed with families concentrating on detailed descriptions of children, families and communities but neglecting to measure any details of the pupil's school's life.

[Reynolds, 1987a: 4]

Research on truancy provided numerous examples of this individualising of the educational explanations in accordance with the tenants of the dominant explanatory paradigm. The work of Tyerman [1958, 1968] provides a useful illustration, since his research design and explanations are virtually exclusively family-based.

Tyerman [1958:217-25] viewed such pupils as being born into an inferior [sic] environment. Although many of the children gave to Tyerman school - based explanations for their truancy, the author merely noted that these may have been 'excuses' and that the schools and teachers may have been 'scape-goated'.

One can ask, why was there this bias? Reynolds gives us some explanations when he argued that:

The predominance of former teachers among educational researchers may be part of the explanation, given their well-documented tradition of blaming everyone except themselves and their schools for their pupils' problems. Perhaps Government support for certain institutions [like the National Children's Bureau] which have usually generated family-based explanations for pupil problems had an impact, given that such explanations represented less threat to the status quo than school-based explanations. Perhaps concentrations upon the families and homes of children rather than upon their schools simply reflects the fact that it is easier to harass the parents of the deprived than it is to harass their schools.

[Reynolds, 1987a:5]

Reynolds continues:

Two further factors also seem to have been important. Psychologists laid great stress upon early experience as a determinant of later development, leading to an inevitable concentration upon the family to the neglect of the school. It is important to remember that so great was the belief in the importance of the

family that any research finding that did not fit with this paradigm [ Kuhn, 1962] was simply ignored.

[Ibid.]

The National Children's Bureau study 'From Birth to seven'[ Davie et al 1972] and other publications from the Bureau emphasised the family and structural environmental determinants of children's behaviour and attainment, as in the reporting of strong links between poor housing and reading retardation [Donnison, 1973]. Yet hidden in this report [ and not examined or discussed] were the findings that children's reading scores in Scotland [ a nation with the poorest housing in Europe] were actually the highest in Britain. 'From Birth to Seven' is widely reported as showing the dependence of children upon their family environment - in fact, it shows children's independence from their family environment.

The same ignoring of potentially embarrassing results happened with work of Douglas. His classic studies, 'The home and the school' [1964] and 'All our future' [1968] were widely understood to show the importance of the home. Yet he also showed that the school has considerable effects on pupils as counties with a high proportion of pupils in grammar schools achieved academic results above what would have been expected in view of their home backgrounds. Douglas himself later [1975] wrote that these findings were the most important of his study and were 'ignored in the subsequent debate on the secondary issue of home circumstances'.

In 'AA' [pupil's] Exclusion Report the parents' views were noted by an Education Social Worker:

Both parents are very distressed about the situation and very much regret what has happened. They do not want their son to go downhill. Father also feels that from the very beginning he was not made fully aware of the situation at school, down to when 'AA' truanted from school. Even though the school was aware that Father was on the phone, he was not informed until it reached crisis point. Both parents feel that the school have blamed many incidents on 'AA' because they see him as the 'leader'. The parents do not see him as the 'leader' rather, he is easily led.

Carlen et al put forward their arguments based on their research. Some of the research findings are as follows:

(2) That in Norwest certain truants are targeted for harsher sanctions and that such targeting is informed by stereotypes which discriminate according to typifications of class, gender and 'race'.

(6) That schools cannot by themselves remedy the gross economic and educational inequalities which presently make schooling appear so irrelevant to a minority of young people.

[Carlen et al, 1992:10]

From the above discussion one thing has come out very clearly that apart from other factors schools are not blameless. There is something in the school which puts off the pupils and they decide not to stay in the school. The argument of family background and home circumstances is not compatible for some Asian pupils.

### **Some other incidents:**

Analysing the other incidents like: bringing weapons to the school, starting a fire in the school, smoking, use of drugs or intoxication, bullying, police involvement and setting off the school fire alarm, three factors are very important i.e. bringing weapons to the school, starting a fire in the school and bullying [See Tables 3 and 4].

The use of drugs or intoxication can be attributed once each to an Asian or English pupil. Similarly allegations of setting off the school fire alarm in total for English pupils are two and for Asians three of which two are denied. Also there are two allegations of smoking in the school for Asians and four for English pupils.

Bringing weapons to the school is serious. Three allegations have been made, in total against English pupils and seven against Asian pupils. Out of these seven allegations two are denied by Asian pupils. Bringing weapons in the schools is not only dangerous to other people in the school e.g. teachers and pupils but also to those pupils who bring them.

Similarly, starting a fire in the school is very dangerous to the people in the school and the school property. Asian pupils, in total were accused for this only once and English pupils in comparison three times.

For bringing weapons to the schools, the incidents of Asian pupils exceeded than that of English pupils. On the other hand, starting a fire in the school, total incidents number exceeded are by English pupils compared to Asian pupils.

Comparing the bullying incidents, total incidents of bullying for Asian pupils come to 19 of which three incidents are denied, whilst examining the total incidents of bullying for English pupils the numbers reach to 16 of which one pupil frequently bullies [ this is counted only one for our analysing purpose] and another pupil bullies continuously [again this is counted as one].

As, regards bringing a weapon in the school, an Education Social Worker noted the views of an Asian pupil in an Exclusion Report:

‘MA2’ [pupil] explained that the incident related to his exclusion occurred on Friday..... He said it was non-uniform school day and a friend of his handed him a coke opener with a knife. He was subsequently seen by a dinner lady in possession of the knife. He handed the knife to the dinner lady and was then taken to see the Deputy Head and as a result excluded from the school. He denies holding a knife in the centre of a group of pupils, he explained that there was hardly anyone near him at the time of the incident.

In another report a pupil was accused of bullying. When an Education Social Worker asked about this from an Asian pupil 'AA', he gave the explanation to the social worker for the Exclusion Report:

'AA' (pupil) cannot recall what happened on this occasion as it was such a long time ago'

Another Exclusion Report revealed:

'SA' [pupil's] previous category 'B' exclusion was over his bullying of other pupils. On investigating this, it transpired that 'SA' was severely bullied himself as a younger pupil, and now he is older, was revenging himself on other pupils for that. He still shows some trace of this earlier suffering in that, Mother told: he gets very angry at times at home but they cope with that and it is not a serious problem.

In this case it appears that 'SA' started taking revenge to what happened to him when he was young. At that time he must have felt powerless and bullying affected his self-esteem and identity. Now, as he is grown up he tried to establish his identity and power by bullying the younger and weaker pupils. As Willis suggests:

You cannot generate fun, atmosphere and social identity by yourself.  
[Willis, 1977:23]

Another factor which comes out of 'SA's report is that he is not a serious problem at home.

The work of Rutter and Graham [1966] and Mitchell and Shepherd [1966] demonstrated quite clearly that while some children are a problem at home, there is very little overlap between the groups.  
[Topping, 1983:13].

Research on truancy has perennially provided evidence that bullying is a recurring factor in a pupil's refusal to go to school regularly. The Norwest research by Carlen et al was no exception:

Ten [25 percent] of the young people interviewed volunteered the information that they had experienced bullying at school, most of it restricted to verbal abuse about their physical attributes, their sexual reputations and their being in residential care.  
[Carlen et al, 1992:143]

Examining the perspectives of ‘MA2’ [pupil] of bringing a weapon (knife) to the school, it appears, if his version is marginalised or has not been accepted as the truth.

Galloway et al found that:

The significance of an event can vary from individual to individual depending on his part in it. The fact that pupils and teachers may describe the same event in different ways does not mean that either description is false.

[Galloway et al, 1982:48]

Here again the issue is of power. The official records of the schools will undoubtedly contain a different version of events. Humphries [1981] studies the perspectives of elderly people reflecting on school experiences in the early part of the century. He argues that education was intended to elevate working class children to middle class morality and that the only way to study the resistance of these impositions was through oral history because the official records ‘so frequently distort the evidence’.

### **Racist Remarks:**

In this sample, there is an allegation of making racist remarks, against one English pupil. The school report did not explain the details of racist remarks i.e. was that racial harassment by racial name-calling?

It appears to me that this case of racist remarks must have been very obvious and the school teacher had to put it on the school report. Otherwise, it is very difficult for the victim - pupil to report this sort of incident to a teacher. The reasons for not reporting to the teacher could be various. One, that the pupil feels weak and too down, to report. Second, the pupil thinks if he/she reports to the teacher and an action is taken against the perpetrator, then the perpetrator may cause more problems for him/her in the future. Third, the pupil may think whether the



teachers believes him/her and will they take it serious enough to warrant an action? I know from experience that when my 12 year old daughter was racially harassed by a few white girls and she reported this to her teacher, the teacher said 'don't make stories, no one harasses anyone here in this school'. My daughter and myself lost all faith in that teacher and eventually I changed her school.

Gillborn stated:

Within City Road, Asian pupils were frequently subject to attacks from their white peers. Usually this took the form of racist name-calling but I also observed physical assaults, an experience which is not confined to school pupils - a 1981 Home Office report stated that Asians were 50 times more likely than whites to be the victims of racially motivated attacks.

[Gillborn, 1990:75]

Gillborn further stated:

This kind of victimisation was a common experience for many of the Asian boys in City Road. Racist name-calling was a regular, almost daily experience for pupils such as Rafiq and Sadiq, and although physical attacks were less frequent they were by no means uncommon.

[Gillborn, 1990:76]

In the current study I have not come across any racist physical attacks but that does not mean that they may not happen. Racist name-calling affects one's personality and a pupil can develop 'withdrawn syndrome' i.e. becomes quiet and loses self-worth. Racist name-calling does not apply only to an individual but to a whole 'race' to whom the victim belongs.

Gillborn stated:

Racist name-calling insults not only the individuals who are victimized, but also their families, their culture - everything with which they identify. As the report 'Learning in Terror' [C.R.E. 1988] vividly highlighted, teachers frequently fail to appreciate the seriousness of such attacks.

[Gillborn, 1990:77]

It is most important that schools have a very clear policy on racial harassment or racial incidents; more so, in the inner city areas of Birmingham, where the majority of ethnic minority pupils go for their studies.

The Elton enquiry 'Discipline in schools' [1989], recommended that schools should have clear and consistent policies on behaviour, saying exactly what they mean by serious and minor offences, and how they will be dealt with.

The report also recommends that action should always be 'based on clear rules which are backed by appropriate sanctions and systems to protect and support victims'.

In this study and in my experience I have not come across any school which has specific policies and procedures for dealing with racial harassment or incidents. If the schools have no such policies then it is difficult to determine how much racial harassment is going on, kinds of racial incidents and how these incidents are dealt with.

### **Ethnic Origin:**

Analysing the ethnic origin of Asian and English pupils from the school reports, it came out clearly that there was little consistency [See Table 3]. Either the teachers had not provided the guidelines or if the guidelines had been issued, then they were not followed up.

If we look at the history of ethnic monitoring, Sir Michael Day gives us the explanations, when this started showing some signs in the education.

The question of introducing ethnic monitoring in education was first advocated officially by a House of Commons Select Committee as long ago as 1977, and has

been vigorously debated since. Its persistence as an issue reflects the widespread concern about apparent differences in educational achievement between pupils from different ethnic groups, and what schools should do about this. As there are virtually no national statistics on academic performance, by ethnic groups, much of the debate on ‘under achievement’ has been speculative and sharply polarised. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence from local research studies that certain ethnic groups are doing significantly less well at school, and that discriminatory practices in schools can have seriously damaging consequences for ethnic minority pupils in terms of their experiences and future prospects.

[Sir Michael Day, 1992:6]

In England and Wales, schools and LEAs began collecting ethnic data in response to circular 16/89 ‘Ethnically - based statistics on school pupils’ issued by the then Department of Education and Science [DES], which expects all LEAs to submit aggregated ethnic data on all pupils entering state schools at the age of five and eleven.

The DfE Scheme:- Since 1990, LEAs and grant-maintained schools have been requested by the DfE to collect data on the ethnic origins of all pupils entering school at five and eleven, as well as details of the languages they speak and their religion.

The ethnic categories used by the DfE are compatible with those used in the 1991 census, and with the C.R.E.’s own classification system, which has been revised recently after extensive consultation.

The categories are:

White

Black - African

Black - Caribbean

Black - Other (please describe)

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other ethnic group (please describe)

The DfE initiative has three main limitations:

\* It will be sometime before ethnic data are available on all pupils in the state sector.

\* The scheme does not make it compulsory for parents to co-operate.

\* There is no obligation on schools and LEAs to make use of the data to implement an equal opportunity policy.

[ C.R.E. 1992a:11-13]

This research reveals that schools ignored circular 16/89 and the DfE [now DfEE] scheme [1990]. In addition it also shows that LEAs have not monitored this issue and taken any action against the schools.

From my own personal experience, there was no consistency in recording the ethnic origin of excluded pupils in Education Welfare Service records in the central area, in 1991 when I started my job there. I believe this was true in the other two areas - North and South of Birmingham.

However, the analysis of exclusion on the basis of ethnic origin, and gender monitoring was/is in operation at the central headquarters of Education Department of Birmingham. This analysis is done on a quarterly basis giving the details of each school who has excluded the pupils. The status of the school e.g. Grant-Maintained, voluntary aided is also recorded.

## **SUMMARY:**

Comparing 13 permanent Exclusion Reports of English and Asian pupils, it was revealed that the majority of excluded Asian pupils were in Year 10 or Year 11 and none of the excluded English pupils was in Year 11, only three were in Year 10. Overall, disruption, truancy and damage to property incidents with English pupils were higher than that of Asian pupils. The number of fighting incidents with other pupils were almost same i.e. Asian pupils (25) and English pupils (24).

It was found that there was little consistency in using the ethnic origin of Asian pupils in school Exclusion Reports.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INTERPRETATION

#### **Introduction:**

In order to interpret this data I would like to introduce the role of self-concept in pupil behaviour. Although there are undoubtedly social/cultural reasons for the behaviour of pupils, somehow their self-esteem becomes lowered through schooling which is particularly evident at secondary level. It has been my experience, permanently excluded pupils have low self-esteem even though many of them present a front of self confidence or even arrogance. The role of self-concept in pupil behaviour is important and self-concept has three aspects i.e. self-image, ideal-self and self-esteem. The Exclusion Reports revealed five themes: (i) Pupil/Teacher relationships and the pupils' dissatisfaction with them: In this section, respect, fairness, disregard, trust, being shown up and inappropriate 'handling' by staff of pupils is discussed. (ii) The pupil's role within the school, peer group and teachers' expectations of behaviour: In this section, the influence of peer group is examined to find out how it plays a significant role in determining pupils' behaviour. (iii) Schools structures, rules and punishments: In this section, sanctions and school work is discussed. (iv) Parents and community responses to behaviour: The expectations of parents and community are examined in this section. (v) Pupil identity and survival in the school: In this section, pupils' socialisation with peer groups or gangs to gain security and identity is discussed.

In the seventies much research was done into the nature of self-concept and the effects of low self-esteem upon individuals and their schooling [Burns 1977; Thomas 1973; Barker Lunn 1970].

Maines and Robinson defined as person's self-concept as:

..... his perception of his unique personal characteristics such as appearance, ability, temperament, physique, attitudes and beliefs. These determine his view of his position in society and his value to and his relationships with other people.

[Maines and Robinson, 1988:4]

It has been suggested that self-concept has three aspects: Self-image, Ideal-self, and Self-esteem

[Lawrence 1973; Maines and Robinson 1988].

### **Self-Image:**

This is the idea that we have of our social, intellectual and physical self which we obtain and modify according to how we are accepted and valued by 'significant others' e.g. parents, teachers, peers and also by events we experience. Often these experiences are of an extreme or persistent negative nature occurring in childhood such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse

[Bass and Davis 1988; Mearns and Thorne 1988].

### **Ideal-Self:**

This is our image of what we would ideally like to be and is based upon our knowledge of qualities which we know are valued from our interaction with 'significant others'.

### **Self-Esteem:**

This is the degree of respect that a person has for himself and effects us all in our ways of interacting with others and in our behaviours. The greater the difference between our self-image and our ideal-self the lower our self-esteem is. A pupil with low self-esteem will find it difficult to attempt new ways of behaving. They will cling on to old patterns of behaviour, regardless of

how much trouble they get into, in order to behave in a way which is consistent with their poor self-image [Maines and Robinson, 1988].

This then becomes a self fulfilling prophecy, with adults responding to the negative behaviour rather than what underlies or causes the behaviour. Given that behaviour is mistakenly seen as an intrinsic part of the person rather than a symptom of underlying distress, the pupil will begin to internalise the negative messages that everyone around them is giving and continue to believe that they are of no value. Mearns and Thorne summarise that:

Once such a self-concept has been internalised the person tends to reinforce it, for it is a fundamental tenet of the person-centred viewpoint that our behaviour is to a large extent an acting out of the way we actually feel about ourselves and the world we inhabit. In essence what we do is often a reflection of how we evaluate ourselves and if we come to the conclusion that we are inept, worthless and unacceptable it is more likely that we shall behave in a way which demonstrates the validity of such an assessment. The chances therefore of winning esteem or approval become more and more remote as time goes on.

[Mearns and Thorne, 1988:7]

This is supported in the, 'MA1' [pupil's] Exclusion Report prepared by an Education Social Worker:

'MA1' was born in Pakistan. The family moved to Germany and he attended school there from the age of six until he was ten - then 'MA1' came to England. He was unable to speak English. He found school extremely difficult and his very limited English compounded the problem. For a time he opted out of school and had little interest in school work. He did not try very hard with his studies and gained a reputation for being 'thick'. Later he worked harder and made a greater effort with the academic work but found he was trapped in a negative role - stuck with the label 'dumbo and thickie' and did not receive the acknowledgement and recognition he felt his efforts deserved - his contemporaries still regard him as thick.

The Report continued:

Thus - the negative reputation inhibited the ability to make more positive relationships which undermined his confidence and left him lonely, depressed and vulnerable - dependent on the group for friendship and support or any other

friendship he could trawl. When asked how others would see him - 'MA1' answered: a waste of time, dim, stupid, someone who does silly things, which should be avoided and a bad influence on other boys. At times, he does present himself as a sad and lonely young man.

I will now look more closely at the five basic themes which have emerged from the 'Exclusion Reports' data and look at how they may be interpreted through this theory.

Five basic themes are/were:

- (1) Pupil/Teacher relationships. The pupils dissatisfaction with them.
- (2) The pupil's role within the school. Peer group and teachers' expectations of behaviour.
- (3) Schools structures. Rules and punishments.
- (4) Parents and community's responses to behaviour.
- (5) Pupil identity and survival in the school.

### **Pupil/Teacher Relationships: The pupils' dissatisfaction with them:**

This theme falls into several categories:

#### **Respect:**

The issue of lack of respect by staff was a common grievance expressed by the pupils in the

Exclusion Reports one Exclusion Report noted:

AA [pupil] feels that on this occasion he was given a 'raw deal'. He thought that he had completed the work he was given at the level required. He had concentrated well and was quiet throughout the lesson.

Being treated with respect is a key issue in self-respect work. If we are to value ourselves we need to be made to feel valued by 'significant others'. Lack of respect by teachers reinforces the



low self-esteem of the pupils and often has the effect of making them feel that they are being treated as young children. Pupil 'JR' made his views known to an Education Social Worker for his Exclusion Report:

'JR' recalls that he became very angry and frustrated because his teacher was writing notes about him, additionally he also kept miscorrecting him for minor mistakes.

The feeling of not being respected was mainly generated by the way that teachers spoke to the pupils.

'JR' also remembers a further incident when he was invited along with his brother to see the Headteacher [father was in Saudi Arabia]. On that occasion 'JR' became angry at being asked to do a role play incident that led to his disruptive behaviour.

### **Fairness:**

Fairness was an issue for these pupils in that they felt that they were not listened to and did not get the fair deal.

Exclusion Report of 'BZ' [pupil] noted:

'BZ' does not think he was fairly excluded. He does not know why Mr. R. [Teacher] came up to them in the playground in the first place. They were doing nothing wrong. 'BZ' did not touch Mr. R. at all, or his clothes, but Mr. R. touched his [BZ's] shirt, admiring it and also took BZ's hat and brought it into the school.

The following example illustrates how a pupil's perception of that incident appeared very unfair and that the power is all on the teachers' side. When it came to a confrontation with a member of staff it appeared that it was always the pupils that were deemed to be in the wrong.

'BZ' moved on when Mr. R. told him and Mr. R. followed behind. He and others were going into the school for their next lesson, so were not 'following' Mr. R. in any harmful way. 'BZ' said he asked Mr. R. for his cap back and Mr. R. said,

‘follow me’, so he accompanied him into the school but left him to go to class when the bell went. At lunch time Mr. R. told him Mrs. H. [Headteacher] had his cap. ‘BZ’ did not think anything serious had happened, Mr. R. seemed not at all upset by the joking among the group of boys.

After school ‘BZ’ said Mrs. H. [Headteacher] just gave him his letter of exclusion, gave no explanation and would not tell him what Mr. R. had said. He also could not get Mr. R. to talk to him. He was very upset and found the boy at the bus stop, whom he knew had pulled Mr. R.’s coat and brought him back to tell the teachers the truth. He also brought back another boy who was to blame, but did not really want to admit it. ‘BZ’ explained to me that ‘H’ [another pupil] was willing to own up but no one would listen to their story and just ordered them out of the school. He was very upset indeed by this treatment that he thought was most unfair and asks the Governors to take that into account.

Such an incident only serves to reinforce the pupil’s feeling of not being valued. If they have low self-esteem these perceived negative messages will become internalised lowering their feeling of self-worth.

### **Disregard:**

Young people with low self-esteem internalise the negative messages that they receive and seem to generalise these. This becomes apparent in that the pupils felt that staff did not like or care about them although it is hard to believe that ‘every single teacher’ felt this way.

Exclusion Report for ‘MM’ [pupil] noted:

He [‘MM’] was very upset when given his letter of exclusion because he felt it was completely unfair. He said he wanted to know what the teacher had said about him, and wanted Mrs. H. [Headteacher] to listen to his story, but he quoted her as saying she would not listen because he could explain it all to the Governors.

### **Trust:**

Trust is an important aspect of any good relationship. As I have stated previously our self-image can be damaged considerably by negative experiences such as abuse of any kind. Such abuse of

children by adults is fundamentally an abuse of trust, hence trust becomes an issue of primary importance to these young people. It appears from the data that these pupils feel little mutual trust in their relationships with many teachers.

Pupil 'QM's Exclusion Report revealed:

He ['QM'] does feel he has a poor relationship with the teachers - in 'QM's' view they don't like him and want to get rid of him

Pupil 'AA's' comments need more attention. His Exclusion Report revealed that:

He relates well with all of the teachers [at one of the Pupil Referral Units] and claims they treat him fairly. 'AA' feels that the teachers are able and willing to take time out and help him, particularly when he is finding any aspect of the work difficult. 'AA' also relates well with his peers at the centre.

This Exclusion Report also noted:

With reference to school, 'AA' said that the teachers were alright to his face but would then 'stab him in the back'.

I wonder if the teachers at the Pupil Referral Units have less pressure or more skills to deal with pupils like 'AA' or there is a difference of attitude among teachers of the schools and the Pupil Referral Units. Or there are some other factors. Whatever it might have been, one thing is clear that 'AA' [pupil's] behaviour was different in the pupil referral unit than that in the school.

### **Shown up:**

For pupils with a fragile self-concept public humiliation is an intrinsic attack upon their self-esteem. Some pupils reported some incidents of having been shown up by teachers which added to their resentment. This sort of behaviour also made some parents upset.

'Mrs. B.' Mother of 'RB' [pupil] expressed her views to the social worker who went to see her for the Exclusion Report, the report noted:

Mrs. B. was upset when the alleged incidents were brought to the attention of the other pupils in a very public way, which was humiliating and very upsetting for 'RB' and the family'.

### **Inappropriate 'handling' by staff:**

There are some Exclusion Reports which have revealed that when staff were 'physical' with pupils it provoked them into reacting violently. Such behaviour is difficult to cope with in schools as it puts other pupils and staff at risk physically. I believe that these situations need to be looked upon differently. There are, undoubtedly, several pupils in our schools who cannot bear physical contact. I would assert that it is likely that such pupils have been subjected to inappropriate physical contact in their past and that, when it happens in school, their reaction to it stems from all the feelings of powerlessness and fear stored up from previous experiences which is vented as anger. This may go some way to explain what staff often see as an over-reaction by pupils.

One of the excluded pupils 'AS' informed an Education Social Worker, who prepared his Exclusion Report for the governors' meeting:

'AS' said that Mr. R. [teacher] then grabbed his arm and squeezed it. 'AS' explains that he felt threatened and so immediately reacted by shrugging off Mr. R. [teacher]'s hand saying 'don't touch me'.

Relating to 'Shown up' and inappropriate 'handling' by staff Exclusion Report for pupil 'ZY' revealed:

‘ZY’ said he was grabbed by the back of the neck and asked to hold his hands over his head in full view of the school.

### **The pupils role within the school. Peer group and teachers’ expectations of behaviour:**

Having a laugh is an important strategy for young people when dealing with boredom at school. It can also be used by pupils to make teachers feel uncomfortable or excluded. Woods [1989] sees laughter as a form of resistance and says that both disruption and truancy can often be enjoyable activities, especially compared to the dullness of daily life.

Woods states that:

Some pupils, already alienated from school by virtue of their background, social class, culture and similarly structurally located in school as their parents are in work, also cope, largely through humour and laughter. For them, in fact, it transforms the situation into one that they consider is of an advantage to them.  
[Woods, 1989:222]

Exclusion Report for pupil ‘MA1’ noted:

It seems he [‘MA1’] arrived from the chip shop late for registration. ‘MA1’ went to registration but no one was there so he looked for his class in the English room but there was no sign of anyone. The room opposite was occupied and as he opened the door a girl pulled down his track suit bottoms. The trousers were extremely loose and almost falling down because they were far too large and belonged to his father.

Another pupil ‘QM’s’ Exclusion Report revealed:

On the bus journey back to the station ‘MA1’ [another pupil] jokingly kicked a newspaper which belonged to another passenger on the floor.

My research data not only reinforces the importance of having a laugh but also suggests that these pupils have taken on the role of the person who ensures that everyone else can have one.

This role in their peer group was also seen as a contributory factor in getting into trouble. Longworth-Dames [1977] asserts that by secondary school age pupils will have definite reputations to maintain and that labelling means that they are also unable to lose face.

Longworth-Dames states that:

Peer acceptance is often a stronger determinant of behaviour than adult acceptance, especially where the latter precludes the former. Excluded children could be behaving in a very socially precise way to maintain their image in their subculture.

[Longworth-Dames, 1977:171]

Reid argues that:

The influence of peers and friendship groups on behaviour in schools, inside the classrooms and within the local environment should never be underestimated, especially amongst teenagers who are at a vulnerable age.

[Reid, 1986:65]

This certainly seems to be the case for these pupils:

In 'SA' [pupil's] Exclusion Report, an Education Social Worker noted the views of 'SA's' Mother: 'She thinks he has very unsuitable friends who call him a coward if he does not join in what they do'.

The pupils also highlighted the importance of 'reputation' and its effect upon their behaviour and that of the teacher. This reinforces my assertion that the problem of low self-esteem can be exacerbated by teachers labelling pupils as disruptive, causing them to become more challenging.

Pupil 'AS' expressed his views to an Education Social Worker who prepared his Exclusion Report thus:

'AS' sometimes feels that he is not given a fair chance to change because some of the teachers automatically think of him as 'trouble'.

Another pupil 'RB's Exclusion Report revealed:

'RB' feels that perhaps he has acquired a rather negative reputation and has become labelled as a troublemaker which has added to his difficulties - certainly he looks much older than his fifteen years and appears to be tall and tough in stature.

Wright uses the following quote from an African-Caribbean pupil which illustrates my point:

..... I suppose it makes me behave bad, they pick you out, on your colour. They tend to say, oh well, he's black, so it's to be expected, they're bound to do that, so when they give you that kind of attitude, you think, oh well, blow them, if that's what they think, why not act like it.

[Wright, 1987:183]

Robinson argues that:

Due to the negative images of black people that have emerged from the Eurocentric approaches, it is clear that an alternative frame of reference is imperative. It can be seen that traditional psychology has failed to provide an accurate understanding of the black reality. In fact, its use has, in many instances, resulted in the pathologisation of black people.

[Robinson, 1995:17]

This process of stereotyping and labelling involves three stages:

As Hinton states:

The first is identifying a set of people as a specific category..... [this might be] ..... skin, colour, sex, age..... The second stage involves assigning a range of characteristics to that category of people ..... The final stage is the attribution of these characteristics to every member of the category..... This over generalisation... brings out the prejudiced nature of stereotyping as all groups members are placed in the 'strait jacket' of the stereotypes.

[Hinton, 1993:6]

Robinson argues that:

The dynamics of stereotyping ascribe to a single individual the characteristics associated with a group of people or extend to a group the characteristics attributed to a single individual. The stereotype generally represents a negative judgement of both the group and the individual and emphasises negative differences. For black people, negative stereotyping has revolved around skin

colour, low intelligence, pathological behaviour etc. Stereotyping occurs in the context of racism as a means of explaining away black people as inferior.

[Robinson, 1995:32]

During in-service training [you can .... you know you can! a self-concept approach] Maines and Robinson [1988] explain this by putting forward the notion that if a person's ideal-self is completely unobtainable they may then substitute one which is more easily achieved. It may be argued that a pupil who is consistently feeling that they are 'not good enough' will be pushed into becoming a member of a 'delinquent' group because within that group they will be seen as OK and their self-esteem will rise within that situation. As professionals there can be little doubt that we may see ourselves as 'significant others' in a pupil's life and that, as such, we can and do influence a pupil's self-esteem.

Burns stated that:

Teachers can reinforce the poor opinion a child already has of himself when he begins school, but they can also, in fact, help to reverse this opinion and to create in the child a more positive view of himself and his abilities

[Burns, 1982:vi]

### **Schools Structures. Rules and Punishments:**

#### **Work:**

A number of Exclusion Reports have revealed that the 'school work' was not liked by the pupils. Some felt, it was beyond their capabilities.

Many pupils with low self-esteem will often refuse to attempt work which they feel is beyond them or they may say that it is 'crap' or 'boring'. Both these strategies are employed in order to reduce the risk of failure and protect their self-concept.



‘RB’ [pupil’s] Mother expressed her views to an Education Social Worker for the Exclusion Report regarding the academic capability of her son:

Mrs. B. says ‘RB’ is not academic and has never really like secondary school. He finds the work difficult and needs special help with the lessons. Mother did have a discussion with Mr. C. [teacher] who suggested the possibility of a less academic and more practical approach but nothing happened.

Another pupil ‘AA’ revealed his feeling in the Exclusion Report:

‘AA’ admits that on occasion he has been late for his lessons. He does not feel that it helps the situation when he is on report as well. He thinks that this discourages him from turning up at all and he fears that he will get into further trouble.

In the same [above] report, it is noted

After speaking to ‘AB’ [Pupil’s Referral Unit] he explained that ‘AA’ is achieving his grades when he attends the centre [Unit]. However, ‘AA’ appears to have some learning difficulties particularly with reading.

MA1’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report reveals:

..... prior to starting at another school, the issues of ‘MA1’s self-image and his ability to make positive relationships needs to be addressed to enable him to make an effective and successful start at his new school.

Another pupil ‘QM’ behaved differently when his Father was abroad, but this does not mean that he liked school when his Father was not abroad. His Exclusion Report states:

Father went to Pakistan about twelve months ago and during this time ‘QM’ truanted from school. While Mr. S. [Father] was away ‘QM’ left home as though he was going to school, and arrived home at the appropriate time but did not attend school..... although ‘QM’ never really liked school. Mother and Father think he has not done very much school work and feel he does have special needs.

**Sanctions:**

There is enough material in the Exclusion Reports about the nature of sanctions employed in the pupils' schools, particularly with reference to the threat of exclusion - the ultimate sanction - and its efficacy.

'AS' [pupil] gave his version of events to an Education Social Worker who prepared his Exclusion Report:

Mr. R. [teacher] had asked an examination question. 'AS' had paused to think of the answer. He says that he was just about to give his answer when Mr. R. obviously thinking that 'AS' was not listening, asked him to get out of the classroom.

In another incident, in the same Exclusion Report 'AS' explains:

That he approached Mrs. J. [Headteacher] and asked her if the detention could be moved to another day because he had to pick his younger sister from 'YF' school. 'AS' says that despite his explanation Mrs. J. insisted that he stayed. 'AS' says that he felt as if he was not being given a fair chance to explain.

It is obvious from the above two examples that teachers have power and that that power can be used in anyway they wish to. In addition, I wonder, if there is any element of cultural misunderstanding for example 'AS' might have been assigned a duty by his parents to pick up his sister everyday and to escort a sister being female is crucial in Asian culture. This remains a number one priority unless an alternative safe arrangement is established. 'AS' might had been thinking that it was discrimination to which he put mildly 'not being given a fair chance'. The same Exclusion Report also noted that:

The Education Welfare Service has not had any previous involvement with this family.

The above lines are mentioned in the beginning of the report. The question can be posed that if ‘AS’ had some behavioural problems in the past, then why was the Education Welfare Service not contacted for assistance? Is it that the teachers were looking for an excuse to get rid of ‘AS’ being an Asian? If that was the case, then it could be concluded that it was a misuse of power and an exercise of racial discrimination.

‘MA1’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report noted:

‘MA1’ acknowledges he has been in trouble before the recent incident, but he did hope that these issues had been resolved satisfactorily and hopefully forgiven.

The above Exclusion Report further noted:

..... ‘MA1’ does feel it is unfair that he played a fairly minor part in the whole ‘H/N’ incident and was permanently excluded, while some of the main participants remain in the school.

The notion of self-concept is central to the humanist perspective of psychology. At the centre of this model is the individual’s perception of himself [his self-image] and his unique perception of others and the world around him.

Robinson states:

Perception is an active, not a passive process. It is one in which the perceiver adds his/her own meaning to the data provided by his/her senses.

[Robinson, 1995:31]

From within this paradigm effective learning and positive behaviour may be seen as a result of the ways in which teachers and pupils interact [Reid et al, 1988]. As professionals [teachers] we have a responsibility to be aware of the importance of raising the self-esteem of pupils in our interaction with them. From the Exclusion Reports [my data] I would argue that the pupils in

these Exclusion Reports have low self-esteem. This is reflected in their feeling of not being liked or cared about, perceiving very little trust or respect, in fact, it is apparent through everything that they have said to the different Education Social Workers, who prepared their Exclusion Reports for the governors' meetings.

Some of the Exclusion Reports revealed:

Both parents are anxious for an early return to some form of education for their son. 'MA2' [pupil] acknowledges that this is a very important stage of his school year, and that if he is going to achieve any form of qualification he must work very hard.

'SM' [pupil's] Report noted:

'SM' stated that he would like to return to school to complete his GCSE as he is intending to obtain a college place on the BTEC in Finance. If it is not possible for him to return to school, arrangements should be made at a unit where his needs can be met. His Father wishes for him to complete his education and go to college where he can continue with further studies.

'AA' [pupil's] Exclusion Report revealed the views of the pupil and his parents regarding his future education:

'AA' and his parents feel that if he was given a fair chance then they would like to see him return to..... [school]. Failing this they would like 'AA' to finish his education in another appropriate setting.

'BZ' [pupil's] Exclusion Report noted:

Mr. Z. [Father] agrees with his son that the school does not appear to have treated him fairly. He feels his son was put out without a chance to explain himself and there would have been no subsequent disturbance if the matter had been properly investigated. Consequently, Mr. Z. wishes the Governors to insist on a proper investigation by the school, resulting in the clearing of his son's name, so that he can get a good college place.

Like 'BZ' and his parents, similar comments are echoed by 'MM' [pupil] and his parents:

Clearly both parents and pupil feel the exclusion to be unfair. They think if Mr. R. [teacher] and Mrs. H. [Headteacher] had questioned him before deciding, the exclusion would not have happened and if they had subsequently spoken to his witnesses a lot of the aggression would have been defused and the events of the late afternoon would not look as serious. For these reasons they ask that 'MM' be re-admitted to the school.

Category 'C' Exclusion seems to them too serious a penalty for the part 'MM' played in the whole incident and would not make allowance for his subsequent upset behaviour when he felt himself unjustly treated.

I would argue that the concept of low self-esteem goes some way to explain what the difficulties have been for those pupils who have been excluded from school. There can be little doubt however, that there are other pupils in our schools who also have low self-esteem yet manage to maintain their places in mainstream schooling.

### **Parents and Community Responses to Behaviour:**

Asian parents live in a very close knit community where most of the people know each other's affairs. They have their ties from their backgrounds i.e. they may be from the same village or they may be extended relatives to each other. In this country, they may know each other through their social networks e.g. weekly gathering in a Sikh or Hindu temple or in a mosque. Or they may know each other through a number of Asian organisations of which they may be a member. So when someone's child is excluded from a school, this news circulates in the Asian community like a wild fire. Consequently this brings shame to the child's family.

Dhasmana states that:

Traditionally, Asian parents accord a very high status to teachers and respect their authority. They regard teachers as custodians of the knowledge which has to be imparted to children. These parents, therefore, depend far more on teachers than do indigenous parents for delivering the information, support and guidance about the skills and knowledge that will help their children ultimately to find a lucrative job. The British education system is perceived as a major means of acquiring job security, status and social mobility in this country as well as for

achieving upward social mobility in the established social order of their home country.

[Dhasmana, 1994:27]

When the above perception is shattered, then it is very hurtful for the parents. As mentioned before, if an Asian child is excluded permanently, this becomes a family issue.

‘SA’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report revealed:

‘MA’ [Elder brother of ‘SA’] was so ashamed of ‘SA’s actions that he originally intended to allow the exclusion to go ahead without attending the meeting, and let ‘SA’ take his chance in another school, nearby, where they could keep an eye on him and his friends.

‘MA1’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report noted:

Father says he is very ashamed about what has happened and does regret all the trouble that has been caused.

Community reputation is so important that even if an Asian person is not related to someone, but if he/she sees something unacceptable, would take courage to stop the Asian children.

In [ ‘SA’s] report, it is stated:

On the bus, ‘YA’ [another pupil] kicked another passenger’s newspaper onto the floor. An Asian man travelling on the bus suggested to the group that such behaviour gives the Asian community a bad reputation.

In ‘MA2’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report, it is noted:

‘MA2’ seems to acknowledge that he has let his parents and his community down by his behaviour at school.

Pupil ‘RB’s Report stated:

Mother says she feels disappointed and hurt and does not know what to think about the current situation.

Dhasmana states that:

The great majority of Asian parents emphasised that they expected teachers to provide a good standard of education for their children.

[Dhasmana, 1994:25]

Dhasmana further stated that:

It is better to know the truth, if your child is not doing well so that you can do something about it. The teachers must tell us how to help.

[Dhasmana, 1994:26]

Pupil 'WA's Exclusion Report noted:

Mr. 'AM' [older brother] and 'WA' both say they thought 'WA' was on a category 'B' exclusion and were waiting to hear from the school. Neither of them were aware that meetings had been arranged, which the school thought they had failed to attend.

Government talks about partnership with parents and giving them power and choice. Where is that power, choice and partnership in the above case?

Dhasmana discusses this issue quite sharply:

If Government really believes in what it constantly preaches i.e. power and choice to parents then prerogative should be made available to all parents. I strongly believe that children whose life chances and future depend on that choice - remembering that they have only one chance -should not be made victims of parents' lack of knowledge and ability. The choice and accountability must be for all parents and, more important, for all children. The Government and the LEA must find resources to empower all parents to play their role as co-educators and partners; both as an obligation to the principle of Equal Opportunity and to cater to the needs of disadvantaged communities.

[Dhasmana, 1994:28, original emphasis]

In all this an excluded child becomes the focus of attention and subsequently that child experiences a lot of stress. This can lead to his poor self-image.

Coombs and Davies offer the important proposition that:

In the context of the school world, a student who is defined as a 'poor student' [by significant others and thereby by self] comes to conceive of himself [herself] as such and gears his [her] behaviour accordingly, that is, the social expectation is realised. However, if he [she] is led to believe by means of the social 'looking glass' that he [she] is capable and able to achieve well, he [she] does. To maintain his [her] status and self-esteem becomes the incentive for further effort which subsequently involves him [her] more in the reward system of the school.

[Coombs and Davies, 1966:468-9]

An excluded pupil suffers from stress not only from the school and the parents but also from the society in general, where he/she suffers discrimination because of his/her skin colour.

Gibson argues about African-Caribbean pupils:

..... the stress of living in a society that devalues them because of their skin colour. Among the debilitating symptoms of this condition are a lack of confidence and self-esteem, poor sense of aspiration, low breaking point and an inability to cope with the challenges and demands of their situation in Britain.

[Gibson, 1986:93]

The above is true for Asian pupils as well. If this is true, one must ask what all those professionals [e.g. teachers] who work closely with Asian pupils can do to promote the development of a positive self-concept?

It can be argued that the Asian pupil's experience is negated by the school and this negation can result in the pupil questioning his/her self-worth.

Asian parents support their children as much as they can but they trust that the teachers are taking care of the welfare of their children. Asian parents have high regard for teachers and if they find out that teachers are not treating their children fairly, it jeopardises their world.



In 'BZ' Exclusion Report, it is noted:

'Mr. Z. believes his son's story and consequently thinks the exclusion very unfair' ..... Mr. Z. is not happy that the school refused to listen to any explanation from 'BZ'.

Similarly in 'MM' [pupil's] Exclusion Report; father is not happy:

Mr. M. [Father] did not think 'MM' was excluded fairly. From what 'MM' said to him, the teachers gave him no chance to defend himself, but excluded him without an interview, when he felt he had done little wrong. Consequently he was naturally very upset when he was given his letter of exclusion because he wants to take exams and go on to college.

It appears from the above reports that pupils did not get a fair deal. If the pupils do not get the justice, they lose their faith in the teachers and the education system and ultimately it affects their own career and lives.

Dhasmana argued that:

Actions speak louder than words written on Equal Opportunity policy documents. The printed policy, no matter how impressive, is of no value to those inner city Asian parents whose children are not getting a fair deal from the education system or who, along with their children, are silently suffering a victimisation of racism in schools. All parents need to be given a firm assurance and be convinced that they as well as their children are valued for the diverse and rich experience that they bring to the school. They also need to be given confidence to feel that if they perceive a situation, no matter how inadvertently caused, to be racist, they can approach the Headteacher without any fear of reprisals and with the knowledge and trust that it will be dealt with in a fair way.

[Dhasmana, 1994:28]

Birmingham Education Authority's document, 'Education for our Multi-cultural Society: Equality

Assurance' stated:

- (b) Identify and eradicate all discriminatory practices, procedures and customs and replace them with practices, procedures and customs which are fair to all.

[1991:2]

From the Exclusion Reports discussed above, that does not seem to be the case. Also, the above Exclusion Report ['WA'] clearly shows that there was a communication problem between school and parents. This lack of communication manifests itself in low parental involvement in school activities such as attending meetings and parents evenings. If there is no communication there cannot be any partnership and no interpersonal relationships can develop. It is the language which is used as a mechanism for power and control. It is possible that some Asian parents may not be able to communicate in the English language but that does not mean that they should not be informed regarding their children's activities. Also, if the Asian parents cannot communicate in the English, that does not constitute as a crime. It should be the responsibility of the school to communicate with non-English speaking parents in their mother tongues, sensitively and appropriately. Birmingham Education Authority's document, 'Education for our Multi-cultural Society: Equality Assurance stated:

- (c) Empathise with the needs, aspirations and demands of the minority ethnic communities and respond sensitively to them.

[1991:2]

It notes:

- (2) It hopes to locate the issues within the framework of quality and the effective schools debate, underpinned by our belief in democracy and pluralism, and effective parental participation in education.

[1991:4]

Again on page 7 it states:

It is important to take into account, as far as practicable the needs of parents who might have difficulty in understanding reports written in English. Children's achievements connected with their home culture also deserve to be acknowledged. **Discussions with your Governors could well be helpful in making sure that your school's policy reflects parents' and children's needs in these respects.**

[1991:7, original emphasis]

Then on page 8 under the heading of **The local context** it reads:

Entitlement to esteem - children need to be visibly shown esteem as individuals. Children and family members need to recognise they are valued. The partnership between parent and school in the education of the child will be particularly important.

[1991:8]

The above document is very good in written form but the pupils (discussed already) and the parents have not benefited from this. I am doubtful, if the parents, including Asian parents, are aware of this document? I am not aware if this document has been translated into various Asian languages and circulated to Asian parents. To my knowledge, I, as a parent, have not seen one. The other question is if the LEA is made aware of some of the malpractices in the City's schools, i.e. not implementing what this document advocates, then what are the sanctions, as sanctions are not stated in this. Whatever, the case might be, by not involving these Asian parents in their children's education their lives and future had been affected.

### **Pupil Identity and Survival in the school:**

#### **Peer groups and gangs:**

We all know that all pupils have certain physical and psychological needs which should be their of right; pupils who are permanently excluded from schools at the age of 15 and 16 will, already have likely suffered some deprivation of these basic rights and pupils who remain and grow up in the risk of being excluded from schools, are additionally at risk, particularly in terms of losing their sense of identity and feelings of personal growth.

Pupils from the Asian and African-Caribbean communities are perhaps at even greater risk in these respects since they are often educated in environments which do not recognise, understand

and value their family backgrounds and cultural heritage. This means that it can be difficult for them to communicate thoughts and feelings, that their judgements will often seem out of harmony with the people around them and consequently they may not obtain a satisfactory response to their needs. The result is that such pupils fail to achieve a sense of belonging at school, as well as outside in the community. When this alienation process continues and the result is a loss of identity and a lack of self-esteem. Growing up in a society where racially prejudice is manifested in so many overt or covert ways Asians and African-Caribbean pupils need help and support to understand and cope with the negative messages they receive, such help usually comes from their family. If children cannot get this help from their own families [as they may have different expectations from the schools and their children and their knowledge of education systems and racism may not be adequate. In addition, they also suffer from socio-economic factors and the result of all these pressures that may not be able to give enough attention to their adolescent children] then it is crucial that they find substitute help from peer groups and gangs who share and/or understand their needs and experiences and are able to give them the strength and confidence they will need to cope with life for their survival. Another point to note is that Asian pupils may be imitating white gang culture to establish their identity.

Gullotta argued that:

Away from home and in the company of peers, students are separated from their parents' and are engaged in the process of establishing their own lives. These school experiences and peer relationships contribute to the development of a new possible structure.....

[Gullotta, 1996:18]

Gullotta further argued in connection with gangs:

..... gangs provide males with the necessary peer support to free them from home, to demonstrate their masculinity, and to establish new social units.

[Gullotta, 1996:19]

‘MA1’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report noted:

It seems Mr. ‘A’ [Father] told ‘MA1’ not to associate with the group, but he disobeyed his father..... Father says ‘MA1’ is easily led and tends to drift into trouble without thinking.

Discussing about the gangs and peer group, ‘QM’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report revealed:

The parents feel ‘QM’ is capable of this behaviour when he is with the group. It seems they find it very difficult to keep him away from the group - the friends are constantly knocking on the door wanting ‘QM’. Mother and father considers that this group of friends are a very negative influence upon him and the cause of most of his troubles. However, the parents are at a loss as to know what to do - they say that if they use physical punishment they could be taken to the police station. Mother and father have talked to ‘QM’ but so far to no avail. They are considering sending him to Pakistan. The parents fear he will associate with the gang again.

Similarly, ‘SM’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report noted that sometimes there are fights among different gangs:

‘SM’ [pupil] explained that the incident related to his exclusion on 20th November 1992 was instigated by a group of at least seven to nine men aged between 17-18 years old. He stated that these men had been visiting the school for approximately two weeks before the incident.

On the day in question ‘SM’ informed me that he was approached by the group - one member of the group namely ‘J’ - walked up to him ‘implying did you say something to me’ and started to punch him before he could reply. Whilst the fight developed someone produced the knife. ‘SM’ said he was able to grab hold of the knife and threw it away before it could be used. He denied having a knife in his possession but admitted to issuing a telephone number to get help from his friends within the community.

This appears to be a planned gang fight but however if a group member is involved in a fight there are not questions asked as to how the fight started or who was at fault, the mere membership calls for back up. This is very much like the fact that if a policeman is seen by his

colleagues in a scuffle, though the policeman might have provoked the incident, his colleagues will take his side.

Sometimes these gang fights become more volatile and sensitive when two different gangs from two different communities start fighting. This becomes a question of 'honour', identity and recognition.

'AA' [pupil's] Exclusion Report noted:

'AA' explained that it was a fight between some Sikh boys and some Muslim boys. It started because a Sikh boy had beaten up 'AA's friend, while 'AA' was at the centre [Pupil Referral Unit]. 'AA' believes that when he attend 'HW' school nothing like this used to happen. He was seen as the 'hardest' and hence, no one would mess with him. Unfortunately, because 'AA' was seen as 'tough' the Sikh boys decided that they wanted to see just how tough he really was and told 'AA's friends that they wanted to fight him. On this occasion there were more than one that 'AA' had to defend himself against, which resulted in the very unfortunate circumstances. Both the boy who was hurt and 'AA' have now settled their differences, they have made friends and have mutual respect for each other.

'MM' [pupil] and 'BZ' [pupil] were involved with some other boys where a teacher 'Mr. R. had some difficulties. 'MM' [pupil's] Exclusion Report revealed:

He did pass comments about the teacher's shoes, but that was because the teacher was talking about his shirt and the clothes of some of the other boys. No harm was meant. He remembers boys asking questions about the teacher's family and how many children he had, but again 'MM' does not think there was anything wrong or threatening in that and certainly not from him.

Out of the 13 Exclusion Reports in this study, seven of these Asian pupils were involved mutually either in peer group messing (two) or gang fights (five).

### **Bullying:**

This is one form of seeking attention, exhibiting one's identity and asserting power.

Stephenson and Smith [1988] describe bullying as:

A form of social interaction in which a more dominant individual (bully) exhibits aggressive behaviour which is intended to and does, in fact, cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim). The aggressive behaviour may take the form of a direct physical and/or verbal attack or may be indirect as when the bully hides a possession that belongs to the victim or spreads false information about the victim. More than one bully and more than one victim may participate in the interaction.

[Stephenson and Smith 1988, cited in Byrne, 1994:13]

The above fits in 'MA1' [pupil's] case. 'MA1's Exclusion Report noted:

'AA' [another pupil] used to bully 'MA1' and made him do things against his will. 'AA' acquired a puppy. 'R' (another pupil) told 'MA1' that he wanted a dog and 'MA1' told 'AA'. Consequently - 'AA' offered to sell 'R' the dog for £10. 'R' gave 'AA' the money for the dog. Shortly afterwards 'AA' went to Pakistan. When he returned home he told 'R' that 'MA1' had the money. In actual fact - 'AA' had sold the puppy to someone else and collected another £10. 'MA1' did not have the £10.

These sorts of actions are performed by the 'Bullies' for a 'laugh' and also to increase the status among peer group and in a gang. They have to prove they are 'somebody'.

Byrne argues that:

..... there is nearly always the underlying motive of increasing their status within the group. This leads on to the idea of the 'gang'. It is a common belief among students that many bullies are lacking in confidence and need support of a 'gang' or 'group' to bolster it.

[Byrne, 1994:59]

Again 'MA1's Exclusion Report revealed:

'T' [another pupil] asked the boy for money - he refused and 'T' hit him. This confrontation only involved 'T' and 'HS' [school's] student. 'MA1' was not involved, although 'T' tried to get him to kick the boy, but 'MA1' refused to take any part, so 'T' hit the boy again. 'MA1' says that 'T' pressurised him to throw a token stone which he did half heartedly and missed. Apparently

sometimes ‘T’ shows off and does silly things. A ‘HS’ [school’s] teacher arrived on the scene and the group ran away shouting abuse at the teacher.

‘QM’ [pupil’s] Exclusion Report noted:

At the NEC the group met some boys from a school in Bloxwich. ‘QM’ admits accidentally bumping into one of the Bloxwich boys. ‘QM’ says he has no knowledge of any demands for money - he was standing at the back of the group. ‘QM’ says that he did not have a knife - nor did anyone in the group.

The ‘bullies’ lack self-respect and get their strength from the other members in the group. The group or ‘gang’ provide them an ‘identity’ and ‘survival’ mechanism.

Byrne stated that:

It is to be expected that victims will have lower self-esteem than bullies and average children. This is in fact the case and is the result of persistent harassment either physical or mental. However, it is also the case that bullies have lower self-esteem than average children. Any attempt to help the bully should seek to find the cause of this low self-esteem.

[Byrne, 1994:42]

Byrne further stated that:

Bullies tend to be sociably group-dependent. They are ‘joiners’ and followers of the group. This ties in with the notion of the ‘gang’ which is common in many schools.

[Ibid.]

It appears to me that several challenges face teachers, school systems, the Asian community and indeed the pupils themselves. A main challenge within schools is to develop a healthy self-esteem among Asian pupils.



Powell-Hospon and Hopson (1990) argue that:

..... there is a direct connection between [children's] self-esteem, and their racial identity, and their academic achievement

[Powell-Hospon and Hopson, 1990 cited in Robinson, 1995:134]

Asian parents try to assist their children to maintain their racial and cultural identity and to raise their self-esteem, but parents themselves are under a lot of stress and socio-economic pressure.

Dwivedi argues that:

For the ethnic minority families the impact of dislocation, loss of the extended family and that of other significant social network along with the experience of racism and the undermining of their value systems by the major institutions can produce serious consequences. The ethnic minority children's emotional difficulties can be further exacerbated by professionals who unwittingly conflate cultural differences in psychopathologies. The damage to self-identity of ethnic minority children in such a climate is often extremely deep and difficult to repair.

[Dwivedi, 1996:10]

On reflecting on this I have come to the conclusion that there are other factors which must be taken into consideration such as clash of values of the school and Asian home and community, cultural racism, a lack of recognition of the history and achievement of the ethnic minority people in the National Curriculum, a lack of importance to the Asian languages (e.g. Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati) and festivals (e.g. Diwali, Eid) on the equal basis that of European languages (French, German, Spanish) and festivals (e.g. Christmas, Easter)

### **Schools as socialising institutions:**

Furlong (1985) notes that one of the most consistent finding coming from sociological research on disruption in schools is that it is far more common among working class children, disruption and truancy being ways in which working class children respond to their domination. He argues that

there can sometimes be a conflict between the values of the school and their working class home and community.

Willis (1977) carried out a study of school deviance by examining the responses to schooling of a group of working class boys. He explains this response as ‘cultural production’ - the boys forming their own counter culture to that of the school - which, he argues, should be viewed as resistance by the working class to capitalist society. Willis argues that the boys culture ‘worried at the heart of the educational paradigm itself’ in that it penetrated the contradiction of the notion that everyone can succeed and be rewarded when patently they cannot.

Corrigan [1979] studied approximately 100 fourteen year old boys in two working class Sunderland schools and found that the boys went to school because they had to, not because they valued what was on offer. The schools and Authorities had the power to make them attend school which led to the notion of education as imposition. Both Willis and Corrigan suggest that schools are set up to reproduce the class structure of our society although Corrigan clarifies the role of the teacher within this system by saying:

..... the boys in Sunderland, then, highlight..... the overall experience of education as imposition. This imposition is not the whole explanation of education: it does not mean that all teachers get up every morning and aim to change working class children into paragons of bourgeois virtue. It does, however, form an element of the whole nature of education which must be understood in this overall way.

[Corrigan, 1979:44, original emphasis]

Mac an Ghaill argues that:

‘School (must be) viewed as a whole process linked to a wider social process’ but it takes it further than the previously quoted research by looking at issues other than those which are class based.

[Mac an Ghaill. 1988:3]

Mac an Ghaill concludes that :

Schools can be seen as blatantly recreating the social relations of the wider society, including such structural divisions as those of class, 'race' and gender.

[Mac an Ghaill, 1988:11]

Davies (1979) argues that the sociology of deviance has not taken sex roles into account and states that girls do not fit neatly into Willis' or Corrigan's framework for analysis. She found that both teachers and pupils see the deviance of girls manifesting itself in different ways to that of boys.

Davies argues that:

Girls were initially quieter, perhaps, and more conscientious; but having transgressed some rule, they were less amenable to discipline. Struggles were longer drawn out, and fought with different weapons.

[Davies, 1979:60]

Davies [ibid.] finds labelling theory to be too simplistic in that it does not explain the complexities of our interactions and she supports the notion of 'scripts'. These may be either societal, 'the background expectancies attached to various status's and memberships, whether of age, sex, race or class' [Davies, 1979:66] or personal; a personal script being, 'a social construction of reality, a limit on our actions'[Davies 1979:67]. Davies stresses the crucial role of teachers in determining the future life chances of pupils.

Davies concluded that:

It may be important for teachers to consider how potentially deviant scripts can be hardened by labelling them pathological or biological, and to recognise that is through the interaction or even the clash of scripts that pupil identity is defined and life chances are determined.

[Davies, 1979:71]

Parekh [1986] has argued that pupils tend to perform as well or as badly as their teachers expect.

Parekh argued that:

They [teachers] approach their black pupils with the familiar stereotypes; they expect little of them, tend to stretch them to their fullest, and fail to provide them with necessary educational and emotional support and encouragement. Not surprisingly many black children tend to underachieve, rarely feel relaxed in school, lack trust in their teachers and go through the school with a cartload of frustrations and resentment.

[Parekh, 1986:25]

Similar views are also expressed by Robinson that:

Teachers' negative attitudes, stereotyped views and low expectations are a major factor in explaining the academic achievement of the black child. Teacher expectations can serve a self-fulfilling prophecy.

[Robinson, 1995:125]

Tomlinson states that:

Out of the diverse explanations offered for minority pupils' performance, many of them concentrating on the supposed deficiencies of minority backgrounds, cultures or languages, the school has been particularly singled out as the most important agent for ensuring that minority pupils achieve well.

[Tomlinson, 1991:137]

On the other hand, the failure of some pupils within the schooling system may be seen to protect the status quo and exclusion from school becomes a logical consequence of a competitive system which re-inforces inequality.

What then of the notion of 'equal opportunities' in our schools? Bourdieu (1966) believes that schools reproduce the social hierarchies of the white, middle class culture through what seems to be a neutral process of 'inculcation and selection'. He argues that schools espouse equality of opportunity while, at the same time, favouring pupils who have already learned the skills necessary to thrive in a middle class culture. Bourdieu defines these skills as 'linguistic and

social competences' [ability, knowledge, language and good taste] which he perceives as a social gift and defines as 'cultural capital'. This means that those pupils from the working class or from cultural minorities may find their cultures invalidated and will certainly find it much harder to succeed in a schooling system which looks upon these gifts as natural.

German argues that:

In a system characterised by perceptions and practices based on concepts of social class status- male superiority and white supremacy, for example- it is inevitable that those who are seen to attain the highest academic standards are generally white, male and middle class. The expectations only serve to prove the rule, and those who emerge from the ranks of the otherwise disadvantaged very often do so as a result of embracing establishment values. This serves in turn to confirm the validity of those values.

[German, 1996:50]

So, there is a need to focus on what the equal opportunity outcomes are of working with ethnic minority children.

Schools, as I have argued, may then be seen as socialising agencies within our society. It is, however, an ideological issue how much schools and the teachers within them, choose to challenge racist, sexist and class based processes in order to substitute a more egalitarian ethos and ensure the success of all their pupils.

German argued that:

As far as black people in Britain are concerned, one of the biggest obstacles to their children's success and security is racism. What they would like to see is teachers and schools availing themselves of every opportunity to eradicate the effects of racist attitudes and practices in all aspects of school life so that they can enjoy their full share of equality with regard to educational access, treatment and outcome.

[German, 1996:61]

If I analyse the data gathered about excluded Asian pupils' backgrounds in terms of Bourdieu's definition of 'cultural capital' and other discussion, it is immediately apparent that these pupils are born into homes where they will acquire the skills necessary to enter the schooling system on an equal footing. The significance of this must not be underestimated.

The main arguments advanced in this dissertation about 'Excluded Asian Pupils' begins with the belief that such pupils have low self-esteem, do not make an 'informed' choice to behave in a challenging way and that they are not merely defiant. I would argue that negative life experiences, lack of support to maintain their identity from the schooling system, have had a damaging effect upon these pupils and that certain situations in schools compound that damage. This situation can lead to what may be perceived by the teacher as an over-reaction to a minor incident, but to the pupil is a repeat of a critical incident or string of incidents in their earlier life bringing with it all the associated feelings which pupils are unable to understand or control.

If, as I have argued, schools fulfil the role of socialising institutions then the impact that they can have on pupils whose cultural capital is devalued by the schooling system must be acknowledged. This can only serve to undermine the self-esteem of some pupils. However, I would argue that on its own the notion of low self-esteem, whilst being critical in my argument, is too simplistic and that cultural capital when taken alone is too deterministic. If we put together the concepts of self-esteem, cultural capital and other factors (which we have discussed) when attempting to understand what is happening to pupils in schools, then an explanation begins to emerge.

The assertion is that pupils who have high self-esteem, high cultural capital, support and recognition from teachers, school systems and parents are those who do well in school because they have the necessary skills and a positive enough self-image to succeed in the system.

Those who have low self-esteem, low cultural capital, no support and recognition from teachers, school systems and parents are pupils who may become political in that they see the injustices of the system but may not get support from their parents for various reasons [i.e. parents may not be politically aware of the operation of discrimination and racism and/or they may have a different belief system]. Yet because their self-image is good [because they make or join a group or a gang and get support for their survival and identity] do not allow these iniquities to become personal and will challenge them. This is how they get excluded.

German argued that:

People cannot have it both ways. On the one hand, poor academic performance may be attributed to a poor sense of identity, among other things. But then self-assertive articulate black children may be punished for expressing their reservations and criticisms and even challenging content, resources and teacher-pupil relationships.

[German, 1996:53]

My argument is, that pupils in this category are by far the most common group to be excluded from school. Here we have pupils who are persistently made to feel 'no good' who do not share the values of the system and who take on board the negative messages that they receive from 'significant others' such as teachers and consequently, feel undervalued as they are unable to truly value themselves. At the same time these pupils have low cultural capital within our schooling system, which interacts with, and reinforces, their sense of low self-worth. This could, perhaps, go some way towards explaining also, the disproportionate numbers of African-Caribbean pupils

excluded from our schools as their culture is also rarely valued and celebrated within our schooling system with its emphasis on the National Curriculum.

**SUMMARY:**

The chapter relates self-concept of pupils to the identity of their worth developed within the school system. If minority culture and values of ethnic minority communities are not valued and recognised in schools then pupil disaffection will result. The five themes which emerged from the present research are analysed in the context of other sources and the general conclusion is that pupils with low self-esteem, low cultural capital and parents who are not familiar with the school system experience schooling in a way which de-values their community identities and often leads to disaffection from schooling.



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## PUPILS' AND PARENTS PERSPECTIVES

### Introduction:

In this chapter I will attempt to describe the points of view of permanently excluded Asian male pupils from different religious backgrounds and how school teachers, school sanctions and peer group affected them. In parents' perspectives section, family pride, peer groups, racial discrimination, communication and educational provision for excluded pupils is discussed.

This sample consisted of five male permanently excluded pupils in November 1993 to October 1995. Two Muslims, one Sikh; one Hindu and one Hindu-Sikh pupil were chosen to interview. Their parents were also interviewed to maintain the balance and know if they had different perceptions of the situations. In actual fact, I wished to interview two pupils from Muslim, Sikh and Hindu background but at the time, that was not possible due to the unavailability of excluded pupils.

One Sikh pupil was reinstated in the school, so I had to drop that interview and at that time there was not any exclusion of any other Sikh pupil. A Hindu-Sikh pupil was interviewed as some members of his family believed in the Sikh religion and some others believed in the Hindu religion. No other Hindu pupil was excluded at that time. This sample was chosen in this way to find out if these pupils of different religious backgrounds had different treatment.

**Background of Pupils:**

In order to help the reader picture these pupils when reading the accounts of the interviews I would like to briefly describe them in terms of their home situation and their educational history. I have changed their names in order to protect their identity.

‘TD’ [Pupil]

‘TD’ is 16, in Year 11 and lives in the inner city area in a terraced house with his Sikh parents. He has attended this school for the past five years. For the last three years of his secondary school education there have been various incidents of bullying and assault within school that have been dealt with by the school and his parents.

‘TD’ has average literacy and numeracy skills which he masks by putting on a front of physical and verbal bravado. He likes art and games but not science. ‘TD’ is well liked by his peer group and is involved in a gang. The school considered him the leader of this gang. At present, he attends one of the Pupil Referral Units.

‘FS’ [Pupil]

‘FS’ is 15, in Year 10 and a Muslim boy who lives in the inner city area, in a terrace house with his parents. For the past four years of secondary school education ‘FS’ has been involved in fighting and intimidating other pupils. Last year he was expelled from school for five days, for the physical assault of another pupil. For assaulting another pupil ‘FS’ was excluded permanently and before joining a new school, he attended one of the Pupil Referral Units for a few months.

‘FS’ lacks confidence, having poor literacy and numeracy skills. He spent more than six months in Pakistan in Year 7 and could only understand Urdu [one of the Asian languages] but no one in the school assisted him to catch up with his education. He is liked by his peer group and associates with them in the evenings.

‘AS1’[Pupil]

‘AS1’ is 16, in Year 11 and lives in a terrace house in the inner city with his Pakistani Muslim parents. He spent five years in this secondary school and in the last three years, he was involved in irregular attendance, disruptive behaviour, verbal and physical abuse of girl pupils, perpetual foul and abusive language, swearing in mother-tongue, refusal to follow reasonable school rules about lunch breaks, unco-operative with adults, abusive and threatening to teachers. All this behaviour once led him to be excluded for five days and then permanently from school.

‘AS1’ has low self-esteem yet appears very sure of himself. He has some difficulty with his reading and writing but has the ability to express himself orally. He is a friendly young man yet can be violent which leads to his peers being very wary of him. After his permanent exclusion from school, he spent four months at home and then attended one of the Pupil Referral Units for only two months. Subsequently he was unable to sit for GCSE exams.

‘BH’ [Pupil]

‘BH’ is 16, in Year 11 and lives with his Hindu-Sikh parents in a terraced house in the inner city. He has been attending this secondary school for the past five years. For the last two years he has been involved in truancy, solvent abuse, bully, disruptive behaviour, abusive language to a teacher, and alleged theft of a stolen car. All these incidents were resolved with co-operation of

the parents and he was never excluded from school. Some of the incidents were denied by ‘BH’. He is currently permanently excluded from school for breaking school windows and demolishing walls. He denied demolishing the walls. At the time of interview, he was attending one of the Pupil Referral Units.

‘BH’ is very pleasant and amusing and has academic potential. He enjoys associating with his peer group. He is the only male child of his family and his parents have high hopes for him. Permanent exclusion has led him to lose much of his self-confidence.

‘SM’ [Pupil]

‘SM’ is 16, in Year 11 and lives with his Hindu parents in a terraced house in the inner city area. ‘SM’ has attended this school for the last five years and was never excluded before from school. According to school reports, he was involved in truancy, lateness to school and unexplained absences. He is a likeable young man who strongly denies any involvement in the incident for which he is being excluded permanently from the school. At the time of interview, he was attending one of the Pupil Referral Units.

‘SM’ has average abilities in literacy and numeracy skills. He is very friendly and enjoys the company of his friends. He appears to have low self-esteem and to a certain extent, he has compensated for this by becoming involved with his peer group. He appears to be a mature and caring young man who listens to others and is able to take responsibility for his actions. [See Appendix 1 for a sample interview of a pupil].

When I started to analyse the interviews of these five pupils, similar sorts of basic themes emerged [as mentioned earlier in ‘Interpretation’ chapter] These were;

- (1) Pupil/Teacher relationships. Pupils dissatisfaction with teachers.
- (2) The pupil’s role within the school. Peer group and teachers’ expectations of behaviour.
- (3) Schools structures. Rules and Punishments.
- (4) Pupil’s identity and survival in the school.

I will now examine the themes in more depth.

**(1) Pupil/Teacher Relationship:**

This consists of a number of sections.

**Fairness:**

This issue came out in these interviews very strongly. These pupils felt that they had unfair dealings and they were not supposed to be excluded permanently, particularly at this stage of their schooling as they were in Year 11 (three of them) and in Year 10 (two of them).

When I asked ‘SM’ [pupil], ‘What do you think of your exclusion?’

‘SM’ stated that:

It is not fair. They should have shown me the proof which they never did. I was not involved. My friends were involved in the incident and the teachers knew that. I am one of the friends, so they got me into it.

To another pupil I asked:

During the Governors meeting on your exclusion, do you think you were fairly treated?

Pupil ‘FS’ replied:

No, I don’t think I was fairly treated at all. School made a number of allegations against me but I denied all of those. Teachers never listened to me and the Governors did not bother what I was saying. Governors also did not take any

notice of my parents. Governors were provided with some additional information which was not passed on to the Education Social Worker before the meeting. I know that a letter was sent to the Chair of Governors by the Team leader of my Education Social Worker but that was ignored.

With the similar question, another pupil 'BH' replied as follows:

I was not fairly treated. I could have stayed in the school. If there could have been an English boy, he could not have kicked out. We did not break all the windows. The Ex -11 years were the ones who used to come to school to smash the windows and we were being blamed for it.

He continued

I hate the school, and the teachers who have done this to me. If I can get hold of the Deputy Head and the Head I will beat them up.

These pupils were angry and frustrated that they had unfair treatment and they could not overturn the decision which was detrimental to their lives. Teachers and governors had the power to make such decisions and in this context comparatively pupils were powerless.

Cassell discusses the issue of power, analysing Giddens' views on it:

His [Giddens] definition includes the idea of 'resources': 'resources' that make the exercise of power possible. Power is arguably the axial concept in Giddens' entire repertoire. It is at the centre of his 'structuration theory' and his analysis of modernity. When social practices are enacted, more is involved than the communication of meaning and the following of moral norms. Social practices involve actions which 'make a difference' to the world in some way, no matter how small. But agents, those who are able to effect change, must possess appropriate resources in order to do so. If I am to 'make a difference to the world' by purchasing a product, it is necessary for me to possess the requisite money; If I am to sanction a wrong - doer, I must possess the necessary authority, or possess a resource whose mobilisation will have the same effect. The transformations of nature, and the deployment of persons that accompanies it, are inconceivable without human access to power and the resources that must facilitate it.

[Cassell, 1993:11]

**Disregard:**

Some pupils felt that the teachers never bothered about their needs and were ignored. This sort of behaviour made some pupils feel that they were not valued. This exacerbated the low self-esteem further down.

Pupil 'FS' spent six months in Pakistan and when he returned from Pakistan and joined the school no one bothered to assist him to catch up. 'FS' [pupil] stated in his interview:

No teacher helped me. Whenever I asked any question from any teacher I was not given a satisfactory answer. I was not assessed and my English was very weak. I could only understand Urdu but no one bothered about this. I could not understand French, Maths and Science, so I was able to do some homework on my own. Teachers never corrected my homework but gave me the new homework. Teachers never helped me but asked me to study on my own.

Another pupil 'ASI' complained that:

..... I was excluded previously on a category 'A' and I could not understand how they went to category 'C' passing the category 'B' exclusion.

One pupil 'BH' was of the opinion that he was not listened to and some of the incidents were recorded in the school report, where he was not involved at all. 'BH' informed that:

There are some incidents with which I totally disagree particularly on 19.10.94 and 12.7.95. No Social Worker came to see me on 19.10.94 and I never took any knife in the school. There were some black guys who left the car in the road and a black woman asked me and my friends to push it aside. When we pushed the car the Deputy Head came around the corner and we panicked and ran. That's how he thought I was involved.

**Trust:**

In all human relationships trust plays an important part. If trust is lost, then to regain it is difficult. Children trust their parents and teachers and if their behaviour starts harming the children, then it becomes very difficult for them to believe and trust people, when they grow up. It can create a scar in their personalities. They start suspecting everyone and this affects their

self-esteem. They start panicking and lose their self-confidence. Eventually they may start believing that there is something wrong with them.

Pupil ‘TD’ was blamed for damaging the walls. When I asked about this, his version was:

Yes I did damage the walls. They said they have seen me on the video but the video was never shown to me. The other boy who was with me is still in the school and the school never took any action against him..... Some of the damage to the walls was done by African-Caribbean boys but I was never believed. I think I was set up. At the Governors meeting I was asked some questions which I did not understand. When I asked, what do you mean, the Headteacher said, ‘you know what I mean’ I could understand the English language but did not get the actual meaning of the question.

Another pupil ‘SM’ denied some of the allegations made against him. When I asked him about the allegations, his explanation was:

The allegations of June 1994 and 12 July 1995 never happened. I was not involved in the stolen car. There was a car and the driver asked us to push it. The teacher saw us and he thought, we had stolen the car. When the teacher took us to the General Office, the other boys who actually did it, were laughing that I have been brought here for nothing. I told the Governors about this but no one believed me. In another case, some ex-school boys smashed the windows and they threatened us that if their names were mentioned, then they would teach us a lesson. When some boys reported this to the caretaker he blamed them. I was unnecessarily dragged into it.

### **Shown up:**

To humiliate someone publicly is very hurtful particularly in front of the peer group. This can create a lot of anger and hatred. The imbalance of power in relation to a pupil and a teacher, can sometime end up in rebelling against the situation. Pupil ‘FS’ thought that he was always picked on by two teachers in particular. When he was asked about this, he informed:

I was always picked on by two teachers in particular. I was never allowed to talk and I was always asked to stand in the corner.



This sort of situation is like throwing a dirty cloth at one side of the room, the pupil is devalued and the self-esteem gets injured. The pupil feels insecure in the school.

Cassell argues that:

The individual feels bereft and alone in a world in which he or she lacks the psychological supports and the sense of security provided by more traditional settings.

[Cassell, 1993:305]

### **Inappropriate ‘Handling’ by staff:**

Physical handling can cause a number of problems in pupil and teacher relationships. Everyone of us has our own personal space and no one likes that - that should be invaded. Inappropriate handling is one of the means of exercising power and control. Reactions to it can flare up in verbal abuse and not complying with the instructions or orders.

When I asked pupil ‘AS1’: ‘Do you obey your teachers?’ He replied:

Not always. Sometimes, I don’t do what they ask me to do and then teachers shout at me and on some occasions, they have grabbed me.

Physical touch is related to trust and security. Physical handling plays significant roles in the maintenance of inter-personal relationships among adults as well as adults to children and vice versa.

Analysing the Giddens’s work, Cassel stated that:

Greater specificity however needs to be given to the claim concerning the linkage between routine and the need for ‘ontological security’.

..... There are those routines which are adopted by actors when they are in each other’s presence. Giddens draws heavily on the work of Goffman in discussing this matter, for it is the latter author who reminds us of the potential riskiness of face-to-face encounters, and the steps actors take to make social interaction safe. What are the perils that the self must confront in face to face meetings? There is the possibility of the violation of bodily autonomy or personal space.

embarrassment or loss of 'face'; and there is also the possibility of boredom. All are in some sense a threat to the self or the self's sense of reality. Goffman shows how individuals co-operate, by using tact, to ensure that risks to the self are minimised in the course of an encounter. Actors have a responsibility to protect other participants from blows to their self-esteem; they also have a right to expect that others will refrain from such 'assaults' on their own self. It is the routine, taken-for-granted nature of tactful procedures that enables actors to enter into encounters with a degree of confidence.

[Cassell, 1993:14]

Cassell further stated that:

Giddens attributes great significance to the means by which trust in others, and the world more generally, is sustained. A basic experience of trust, and the containment of anxiety that this presumes, is indispensable for the actor's ability to negotiate the routine interpersonal engagements that are integral to the reproduction of social practices.

[Cassell, 1993:15]

### **Discrimination and Racism:**

The issue of discrimination and racism cropped up several times during the pupils' interviews.

In some cases, they have blamed certain teachers that they picked on them because they were Asians. When I asked about this, pupil 'SM' said:

Yes, the Deputy Head is racist. If the white pupils are in trouble in the 5th Year, they don't throw them out.

Another pupil 'FS' gave a specific example of discrimination, he highlighted that:

..... I was attacked in March and the teachers never did anything to punish my attackers.

Pupil 'AS1' blamed a teacher that he was always after him. He informed me in the interview that:

..... I feel I was being discriminated against. A teacher said to me once: I get you out and you will cry and I will make you cry harder than any other child.

Another pupil 'BH' accused a Deputy Headteacher that he always picked on him. During my interview with 'BH', he stated that:

The Deputy Head always picked on me and he never liked me and it was him who put the above two incidents in my report..... (pause) He used to take cover lessons sometimes.

Swann highlighted the effect of racism on pupils:

Racism is an insidious evil..... We believe that for schools to allow racist attitudes to persist unchecked in fact constitutes a fundamental mis-education for their pupils.

[Swann, 1985:36, original emphasis]

Racism and discrimination are harmful and they change the personalities of the victims. The people who are at the receiving end start thinking that there is something wrong with them. It touches their self-esteem and integrity. It challenges their existence to compete as an equal candidate. Because of the power imbalance in the context of pupil and teacher relationship it cuts more deeply.

McIntosh argued that:

The suggestion of racist attitudes arouses the same sort of indignant, defensive response as accusations of sexism. Who? Us? We're broad-minded, liberal, tolerant. We treat everyone the same.

[McIntosh, 1985:7]

McIntosh further argued that:

Racism in Britain is rife. At its worst it is vicious, frightening and quite intolerable. In its less obvious forms it is subtle, pervasive, cruel and humiliating and, sadly, tolerated by most of us because we are either unaware of it or we don't think about it. Whatever form it takes, no civilised society should allow it to go unchallenged because it harms both those who embrace it and those who are its victims.

[Ibid.]

It appears in the current study that if Asian pupils have tried to challenge racism, they were accused of misbehaving and thrown out of schools.

Boyd-Franklin argued that:

Teachers must not:

Ignore the impact that racism and discrimination have on the lives of black people [in Britain]..... today. Both affect a black person from birth until death and have an impact on every aspect of family life, from child rearing practices, courtship, and marriage, to male-female roles, self-esteem, and cultural and racial identification.

[Boyd-Franklin, 1989:10]

Examining the role of teachers Kunjufu maintains that ‘research has shown that (teachers) expectations (are) the major factor in student achievement’ [1986:32]. Implications of these findings for the placement of teachers in classroom for work with black children are significant.

Kunjufu further states that he starts all his teacher workshops by declaring:

You cannot teach a child who you do not love. You cannot teach a child who you do not respect. You cannot teach a child who you do not understand. You cannot teach a child if your ‘political baggage’ i.e. sexism, racism is brought into the classroom.

[Kunjufu, 1986:32]

Kunjufu’s ideas are not applicable to Asian and African-Caribbean pupils but to all pupils irrespective of their ethnic origin. This may also be true that not all teachers deserve Kunjufu’s advice and they know that these issues are important to maintain the justice, equality and their professional integrity.

## **The pupil's role within the school. Peer group and teachers' expectations of behaviour:**

'Having a laugh' is important for pupils to counteract the boring situations. Some pupils were accused of bullying, racial remarks and threatening behaviour. Probably this sort of behaviour made them valued and assisted them to boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. This may have given them some temporary happiness and some status in their peer groups.

In pupil 'ASI's interview some of these issues came up:

Me: You have been accused of bullying, racial remarks and threatening behaviour...?

'ASI': I don't understand, what do they mean by bullying and I don't know what is threatening behaviour. I call to my friends 'Paki' for a laugh but I have never called Mr. 'B' [teacher] a Dalla [Means Pimp in Panjabi] it was my friend who called Mr. 'B' a Dalla.

Me: What about sexual remarks, particularly to female pupils?

'ASI': I think swearing is a small thing. It is trivial. I swear at female pupils, just for a laugh [he started smiling at this stage.]

Me: Would you swear at your sister for a laugh?

'ASI': No, I would not swear at my own sister. If someone swears at my sister, I will be very angry and upset.

Me: Do you swear at home?

'ASI': No, I don't feel comfortable to talk about sexual things at home. But I do talk dirty to my friends.

Me: What about teachers?

'ASI': No, I have never said anything dirty to any one male or female teacher.

Another pupil 'TD' was of the opinion that labelling and stereotyping created some problems in the pupil-teacher relationships. Peer group also played some role in the education and behaviour of these pupils. During the interview, I asked 'TD' what does he think about his exclusion? His reply was:

It was fair but the Headmaster is a bit racist. In 1993 at Diwali time, during break-time an Afro-Caribbean boy used some fireworks but he [Headteacher] immediately blamed a group of Asian boys [10 to 15 in number] but later on we told him that it was an Afro-Caribbean. He interviewed him and then let us go free.

Me: What do you think of the future?

'TD': I am at 'LC' [Pupil Referral Unit] and wish to become a motor mechanic or engineer.

Discussing about stereotypes Gullotta argues that:

Rapid visual and audio images create caricatures that, when repeated with enough frequency, establish the stereotypes we apply to those different from ourselves.

[Gullotta, 1996:7]

Gullotta discusses the operation of structural - functional theory and the role of the dominant group in the society. Gullotta maintained that:

It is logical that this theory would express the view that society needs to maintain a balance of functions through a state of equilibrium, so as not to be torn apart [Hill and Hanson, 1960]. One part of maintaining equilibrium is the need for deviance, which is the glue that binds healthy societies together, establishing, as it does, good people like our slightly trouble some [likely middle class] college student and his or her [significantly poorer and minority] gang-participating member [see Erikson, 1966]. Notice here that the standard of good and bad is defined by the predominant group and is relative in both time and place.

[Gullotta, 1996:19]

In the school systems in Britain, some schools may have predominantly Asians or African-Caribbean pupils but as far as teachers in these schools are concerned, they are not predominantly from these ethnic minority communities. In the society at large, again Asian and African-Caribbean people are in the minority. So, either in schools or in society, power and control is held by the white majority people. Therefore, good and bad is defined as Gullotta discussed above, by the predominant group.

## **Schools as Organisations:**

### **Work:**

Some pupils did not like some subjects and felt they were boring. There were some others who could not understand some of the subjects. They felt so bad in themselves that they did not mention this even to their parents. The other reason for not mentioning to parents, may be that, parents may start blaming them that they do not pay proper attention to their studies.

I asked pupil 'TD':

Me: Did you encounter any other difficulty in the school?

'TD': No.... but I could not understand the science lessons. I never told this to my parents. I tried to understand myself and then at the end I left doing anything about science.

Another pupil 'BH' was also not happy at school. I asked him:

Me: Do you like this school?

'BH': I used to like this school but it became boring sometimes, teaching the same stuff everyday.

Me: When you were truanting, what did you use to do?

'BH': We used to play cards, football or throw bricks/stones at each other. It was all due to being bored.

Me: How do you feel now after being excluded from school?

'BH': I knew they were going to exclude me. I am not happy. I go to 'LC' [Pupil Referral Unit] only for two hours a day for three days a week. I do some work around the house, listen to songs and watch television. It is a bit boring. I go to see my friends in the evening. We don't go to the old school anymore.

Me: What about your future?

'BH': I want to do apprenticeship either in garage or in building and construction. I am going to see the careers advisor and I think the apprenticeship starts at 16, not before.

It is not necessary that academic qualifications is everyone's cup of tea. Some pupils' aptitude may be towards building and construction, painting and decorating, motor mechanics and gardening. To push these pupils into academic qualifications and to teach those subjects where they have no interest, is neither fair to them nor to the teachers. Another issue to consider here

is that due to economic crisis world-wide, what are the chances of getting employment once a pupil has achieved some qualifications? The rising unemployment does not help the pupils to concentrate in their studies and to strive hard for academic qualifications.

Despite all this, pupils have the right to full-time education even if they had been excluded from schools. This right of full-time education is parallel to the right of schools to exclude a child if the child does not fit in there. It appears from the interviews of the excluded pupils that their rights to full-time education were not maintained.

### **Right to full-time education:**

Excluded pupils get education two hours a day only. If in a normal school, a child attends a school only for two hours a day then with the back up of LEA school instigates the proceedings against the parents of that pupil to take them to court and levy a fine at them. But when a pupil who happened to be excluded permanently from a school, is provided with two hours education a day by LEA, no one takes LEA to court to levy a fine on it. Is this a fair deal? A child's life is at stake, who is responsible for it?

I had a long conversation with 'ASI' (pupil) on his exclusion:

Me: You were expelled from your school, when was that?

'ASI': It was March 1994

Me: What happened after that?

'ASI': I stayed at home until June and then I was sent to 'BC' [Pupil Referral Unit] and then had school holidays.

Me: How has exclusion affected you, personally, educationally and otherwise?

'ASI': I could not do my GCSEs. I missed my friends at school.

Me: At 'BC' [Pupil Referral Unit] you were attending for two hours only?

'ASI': Yes from 9-11.00am, four days from Monday to Thursday.

Me: The school never reinstated you?

'ASI': No, not in any other school even.

Me: What did you use to do after finishing studying for two hours at 'BC'?

'ASI': Sit down and watch TV., there was no home work given to me.



Me: Just looking back do you think the school made the right decision to exclude you?

‘ASI’: No

Me: Why not?

‘ASI’: I did not do anything.

Me: So you think school discriminated against you?

‘ASI’: Yes

Me: Why?

‘ASI’: Because I am an Asian. I was messed around. They were looking for little things.

Another pupil ‘FS’ once excluded permanently from school spent several months at home before two hours a day education for four days a week was arranged. I asked him:

Me: When were you excluded from school?

‘FS’: I was excluded from school in October 1993

Me: What happened afterwards?

‘FS’: I went to ‘BC’ [Pupil Referral Unit] and then to a school in May 1994.

Me: How long did you stay in the ‘BC’?

‘FS’: Two months

Me: So what were you doing there?

‘FS’: Two hours study time from Monday to Thursday

Me: So you were going for 2 hours at ‘BC’, and what were you doing the rest of the time?

‘FS’: Watching television

Me: How has exclusion affected you educationally?

‘FS’: Really badly

Me: In what way?

‘FS’: Different school and friends.

Me: How has it affected you personally?

‘FS’: New school, different people, making new friends.

Me: Do you wish to go back to your previous school?

‘FS’: No

Me: Why not?

‘FS’: I want to forget the past.

‘FS’ may forget his past because he got a full-time educational place in another school, but how can the past be forgotten by those pupils who never got any full-time educational placement anywhere and who happened to be in their last year of schooling? In some cases, from my experience, where a pupil had to travel by bus and that travelling took more than an hour to

reach a Pupil Referral Unit, some pupils did not bother to attend these Pupil Referral Units for two hours daily. They thought it was a sheer waste of time and their parents agreed with them. These pupils were lost in the system and who is to blame for this?

Lashely and Pumfrey highlight the complex patterns of under achievement manifest amongst the ethnic minority communities. Probably the pupils like ‘ASI’ come into that category.

Lashley and Pumfrey state:

Current research has indicated the complex patterns of under achievement manifest amongst the minority communities. (Tanna 1990) Recently, it has become evident that some children of particular Asian backgrounds are at the very bottom of the performance league [DES 1985; CRE 1990b].  
[Lashley and Pumfrey, 1993:118]

**Pupil’s Identity and Survival in the school:**

**Peer groups and gangs:**

I know from my professional experience as a social worker that there are a number of Asian gangs. In these groups of young people a sense of unity and resistance to authority prevails. Most of these gangs have male members and recently some female gangs have also emerged e.g. Shia Girls.

This can be argued that some Asian girls may have been influenced by Asian and white male gangs. But Asian girls’ gangs have not established themselves like Asian male gangs for example ‘Shere Punjab! So this phase may be temporary.

However, the permanent exclusion of girls and in particular, of Asian girls, is low compared to Asian males. This may be that girls suffer discrimination and oppression of all sorts in the society and some Asian parents may be more interested to arrange marriages for their daughters, in some cases, possibly at a young age. To overcome these difficulties, one of the options could be to conform with school's rules and regulations and not to join any gang which may hinder their chances to pursue further studies and delay their marriages. To know more about this aspect, the current study has its limitation, so further in-depth and thorough study is needed specifically for this purpose.

These gangs give them an identity and support to survive in the school.

Mac an Chaill argues about an Asian gang 'the warriors':

..... at one level they constitute a sub-cultural group which challenges the authority of the school. At another level, the warriors respond to the teacher's expectations of their 'ethnic group' and adopt covert anti-school practices.

[Mac an Chaill, 1988:111]

The pupils I interviewed in this study, were involved in these gangs. If they felt that they were unfairly treated they will get support from their gangs and suspected that their parents will not support them. This was clear in 'FS' [pupil's] interview:

'FS': I was always picked on by two teachers in particular. I was never allowed to talk and I was always asked to stand in the corner.

Me: Did you ever tell your parents?

'FS': No.

Me: Why not?

'FS': Because I thought they will blame me and not the teachers.....

Traditionally, Asian parents respect the teachers that they are there to teach and children must obey them, otherwise they cannot learn anything. This is the reason they do not like their children to join any gang.

During my interview, this came out from ‘ASI’s’ Mother:

He [‘ASI’] has destroyed himself by joining a gang.

When I asked ‘ASI’ he denied by laughing.

Me: I gathered that you have joined a group. Was that a gang of Asian young people?

‘ASI’: (laughing)..... I am not a member of any gang. Yes, I have some friends and we go out together.

Here ‘ASI’ knew that I knew about his joining a gang and he tried to change the wording calling them ‘some friends’. Perhaps he thought, I am like his parents who do not like Asian gangs.

All these pupils were adolescents. Longworth Dames argued that:

Adolescents can belong to culture groups alien to the social and moral standards of adults. It is possible that the excluded children are integrated into an adolescent culture and may hold prominent positions within the society..... Social pressure to conform to peer expectation is very great. Peer acceptance is often a stronger determinant of behaviour than adult acceptance especially where the latter precludes the former. Excluded children could be behaving in a very socially precise way to maintain their image in their sub-culture. Most of the excluded children had long histories of poor behaviour compared with school standards. The ‘clown role’ encountered in sociometric studies is renowned for being difficult to break out of, and it would be reasonable to expect that an established role in a peer group sub-culture would be equally as difficult to escape from. By secondary school age the children will have a definite reputation to maintain. The conflicting cultural norms will consistently cause friction between the child and school until the school as an organisation must eventually reject the child.

[Longworth Dames, 1977:171]

This may be the reason that when pupil ‘TD’ was excluded from a school and then later on joined a Pupil Referral Unit, felt relieved from various pressures (e.g. peer group, parents) and said to me during his interview:

If I could have stayed in the school, then things could not have improved as I have a load of friends. But at ‘LC’ [Pupil Referral Unit] there is only a group of 3-4 boys who are taught by a teacher.

‘TD’s’ parents informed me:

Whatever he did, it happened after school time and his company was bad.

To join a group of Asian young people and to make a gang was also not liked by ‘BH’ [pupil’s] elder sister and Mother. They both stated to me, during the interview:

We never knew about this that he had a bad company.

On the one hand Asian parents have high expectations that their children should study hard and maintain their family pride and name in the community and on the other hand they do not want their children to be discriminated against their skin colour and culture. In some cases, it becomes very difficult for them to maintain the balance that the school teachers are treating their off-spring unfairly and they cannot give much support to their children. When they are not fully aware of the operation of discrimination and racism in this country, they wrongfully perhaps, sometimes start accusing the victims i.e. their own children. In these circumstances, children do not have any other option but to join a group or a gang who understand them and support them when they face any injustice. To join a gang maintains their survival and identity in the school.

Robinson argued that:

The emphasis of black psychology is that the essential goal of human behaviour is survival. Various authors have emphasized the survival skills of black people as being the primary goal and accomplishment of personality (for example, White 1991). The constant confrontation with racism and oppression is viewed as the consistent reality, and the development of strategies to out-manoeuvre threats to survival by black people is the goal of personality.

[Robinson, 1995:26]

Mac an Ghaill discusses an Asian group ‘the warriors’:

The group projected an image of toughness both to the racists outside the school, and to the teachers and students within.

[Mac an Ghaill, 1988:112]

Mac an Ghaill further stated:

The formation of the Warriors group demonstrates that Asian students can constitute a sub-cultural group which challenges the dominant school culture.

[Mac an Ghaill, 1988:115]

It appears from the above discussion and my findings in this study, that for the non-conformist Asian pupils, their survival and identity in the schools depends upon joining a gang, and if they establish a gang, then this is not viewed positively by the teachers and parents. In addition, the gang's activities lead the pupils to exclusions. The gang itself and the individual members have not got enough power to resist the exclusion from school. This exclusion from school determines their future both academically and in relation to employment and the whole situation does not provide any easy solution to the problem in question.

## **PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES**

In this section the parents' response is discussed that how the exclusions of their sons has affected their family pride in the community. Parents' perspectives on peer groups, racial discrimination, communication and educational provision is also highlighted.

The excluded Asian pupils were aware that they had let down their parents and the parents do not feel very comfortable in the community.

When I asked 'SM' [pupil] about his parents' reaction to his exclusion, he replied:

Yes, because I have been thrown out of school and they had different expectations.

Another pupil 'BH' also had the similar response:

Me: Do you think your exclusion has let down the family?

'BH': Yes, in a way, because my family wanted me to leave the school with good grades and I did not come up to their expectations. I feel ashamed that I being

the eldest male child, could not satisfy my parents. My Mum is very upset and she does not say anything to me . She has gone quiet.

Pupil ‘TD’ also told that he has brought a shame to his family:

Me: Do you think you have let your parents down?

‘TD’: Yes, I feel ashamed what has happened and I want to prove now that I can study in another school and achieve. Another thing, that the Deputy Headteacher always picked on me. I was sitting quietly once in the class, and a school teacher approached the Deputy Head that some pupils in the class are messing about. When the Deputy Head came, he blamed me for it.

Not only exclusion of a pupil is bother to Asian parents, even the involvement of an Education Social Worker is a matter of concern to them. It is again if found, that the community people, relatives and friends can ask why an officer from the Local Authority visited your home? I asked pupil ‘ASI’.

Me: What do you feel about our involvement with you?

‘ASI’: It does not bother me and I am not embarrassed, but my mother feels very embarrassed.

Pupils like ‘ASI’ and ‘TD’ feel powerless, and so do their parents that they cannot rectify the situation. This affects them personally.

Dalrymple and Burke argue that:

Oppression itself is a powerful force. On a personal level it can lead to demoralization and lack of self-esteem, while at a structural level it can lead to denial of rights.

[Dalrymple and Burke, 1995:57]

### **Family Pride:**

Family pride and dignity is very important among Asian families. Asian parents try their best to maintain that in the community, and if something goes wrong for their children and the children could not meet their expectations. it becomes a great concern to them.

This came out when I interviewed the parents of these five pupils:

Me: Do you think 'ASI's' permanent exclusion from school has tarnished your family's name in the Asian community particularly in the Muslim community?

Mother: He was always picked on and I feel very depressed that my child does not attend school. Whenever, any visitor comes to visit us, I ask 'ASI' to leave the room. Otherwise, every time I had to give an explanation regarding 'ASI's' stay at home. As a family we are very concerned about his exclusion and try to hide from the other members of the Muslim community.

Me: When 'ASI' was excluded from school, did you discuss the exclusion with your relatives?

Father: Yes, we have discussed the matter with some selected relatives and friends.

Me: What did they say?

Mother: They were with us. But you know, it was quite difficult for us, even to talk to them. We felt so ashamed of this episode that whenever anyone visited us and saw 'ASI' sitting at home, the question was always asked - why did he not go to school? We had to tell lies about the situation for example, I used to say he was not feeling well and he has to visit the Doctor or we are visiting someone and that's why he stayed at home. We were trying to keep our dignity and respect in this way. You know this, that if people could have found out about this, then it is a disgrace. The good English family must also be feeling the same way that if their child is excluded from school, then they may have felt insulted.

Father: I made a personal request to teachers and the Headteacher not to exclude 'ASI' and if they think 'ASI' has done something wrong then they should give him another chance but no one listened to me and did not take any notice of my feelings and the child's education and his future.

Mother: Whenever we went to school, they ignored us completely.

Another pupil 'TD's' parents also expressed almost the same views.

Me: What do you think of your son's exclusion?

Father: We feel very bad and sad. His education has suffered a lot. He only goes two hours a day for three days. People talk about this. Our relatives and friends comment:

'He has studied as much as he could. He will not study anymore'.

This was the last year of his studies and his education has been spoiled. Our relatives ask us, 'Why your son does not go to school?' It is very difficult for us, because all the people blame us that we could not control him. It is a real shame. Even teachers at school, ask my other children about 'TD' stating, 'Is he alright there?', 'Does he behave now?' All this is very degrading. We tell lies to the people in the community about all this. This has affected our children.....



because he is the eldest child in the family and a male. Probably, he was a bit spoiled being a male and the eldest in the family.

Asian people in general, and traditionally for various reasons, give importance to a male child rather than a female. Many Asian parents perhaps believe that the other children in the family may follow in the footsteps of the eldest child. The eldest child may be considered a role model in the family.

The educational expectations and cultural attitudes of Asian parents in the current study are echoed by Dhasmana when she states that:

The study highlighted the differences in the educational expectations and cultural attitudes of the Asian parents and the providers of education.

[Dhasmana, 1994:27]

Cultural attitudes of feeling ashamed of and a scar to their family pride was highlighted by other parents whose children were permanently excluded from schools.

I asked 'SM's' (pupil) parents:

Me: How are your relatives and friends reacting to this?

Father: We feel really ashamed of it and we have not informed any relatives or friends. We are trying to cover it up as much as we can.

Another pupil 'BH's' mother and elder sister were interviewed. Similar feelings were expressed by them.

Elder sister: I felt very shocked, when he was kicked out. We had a load of expectations on him as he is the only male child in the family. The other brother died 12 years ago.

Mother: We feel really ashamed of 'BH', when our relatives and friends ask about him that he does not go to school anymore.

Pupil 'FS's' parents were also very hurtful but they tried to take a brave stance but it was clear from the conversation that they were not happy at all.

Me: Do you think 'FS's' permanent exclusion from school has tarnished your family's name in the Asian community, particularly in the Muslim community?

[Both Mother and Father endorsed each other's comments]

Father: We are not so much concerned about family's name being tarnished as the whole atmosphere and environment in the community is like that and a number of Muslim children have been expelled from schools. The most distressing thing about all this is that our son is without any education for the last six months and still we don't know how long it will take before he resumes his education.

Me: How have the relatives and friends of the family taken the exclusion of 'FS'?

Mother: As you know, relatives always say things, particularly if something goes wrong in the family, they capitalise on it. Now they got a chance and they have made a number of stories for example - 'Their children have bad habits, they are not bright children'; 'The children are not interested in studies'; 'The company of the children is bad'. But we do not bother much about relatives. No doubt, it is painful to listen to all this.

Elder brother:..... But people in the community did find out that he has been excluded from school. He himself was very upset. As you know there was no point to tell anyone that he has been excluded from school and we had to work very hard on this. We were in a fix, what to do as this problem cropped up and we all wished to solve this, as soon as possible.

Me: Why?

Elder brother: Because it was like a shame to the family.

Parents felt at ease to talk to me about the issues and they may not have pointed out some of these concerns to any non-Asian person. This was because I could understand their difficulties, religion, culture and speak the Asian languages e.g. Panjabi, Hindi and Urdu.

I support Dhasmana when she states:

Parents who talked about these issues also felt that it is easy to express such concerns to someone who is aware of the religious, cultural and racial attitudes underlying some of these concerns, 'we could have never said all these things in the presence of a white teacher'.

[Ibid.]

## **Discrimination:**

The issue of discrimination was expressed by all the parents during my interviews.

‘ASI’ [pupil’s] mother stated it very clearly:

He was always picked on during his stay in the school. No one listened to him. On one occasion he was hit by a teacher with a tray without any apparent reason. No one took any action against the teacher. I tell you another example: Last year, outside the school, some girls threw some eggs at him and when he retaliated, the teacher followed him and he was blamed. He got into trouble without any of his fault. He was blamed for somebody else’s faults. On one occasion, he was insulted in front of me, .... He has been picked on so many times we now feel that he should not have been sent to this school. He is being blamed for those incidents where he was not involved at all. This is not fair and he is being discriminated outrightly.

Father: ..... I felt very strongly that he was made a target because he was an Asian. I contacted each and every teacher including the Headteacher to rectify the decision but no one listened to me. I appealed against the decision and thought, if need be, I will take the case even to the court. My child was made the target. Even the Headteacher turned against him. If other children do any injustice, I can tolerate and understand but this made me very angry to know that teachers have discriminated against him.

Mother: You know, in this country, you cannot hit any child but my child was assaulted with a knife. The school and no one else took any action against the perpetrator. We are thinking about taking this matter to court. We have discussed the matter with our solicitors..... (she paused for a few seconds). One of the teachers warned ‘ASI’ consistently that ‘I will not stop till I kick you out from the school’. He was really after him. Even after the exclusion, if ‘ASI’ happens to go near the school, the teacher warns him not to come near the school. We have to go out that way and the teachers say to him, ‘That you cannot use this way’, so, school still, is troubling us. They have really upset us. We feel very bad and we have kept everything to ourselves that nothing could be done. They have destroyed the life of my son and he is now 15 years old and not even passed the school. None of the other children have gone through this and ended up like this. You know at one time, some teachers came to our house in the car. Our neighbours and other people on the road started asking us the next day, ‘Why did teachers visit you?’ It was embarrassing and humiliating. Our next door neighbours are English people and none of the teachers have ever visited them. They have their school age children. Teachers visited us only because we are Asians.

‘ASI’s’ parents had quite high feelings and probably they thought, ‘here is someone who may have some sympathy to our plight’.

I kept on listening and came out the interview with heavy feelings, that I could not assist them. when there was a need.

Similarly 'FS' [pupil's] parents were also very unhappy. Father stated:

The incident for which 'FS' has been expelled from school on a permanent basis, happened outside the school. Teachers are like parents and in no way they have less responsibility than parents but in 'FR's case they have discriminated against him and have not carried out their responsibilities. They have done a great damage to him. This was not expected of them. 'FS' had three stitches in the fight but no action was taken against the perpetrators. This is not fair at all.

Mother: Bhaijan (traditional way of addressing a male (outside the family) means brother). It was an unfair treatment. There are hundreds of children from different backgrounds but he was blamed for something which he did not do. He was accused for 12 pence and for that 12 pence, not only has he suffered but the whole family has suffered. The allegation was never proved. School got all the wrong information and they did not investigate the matter properly and that's where they were unfair. He was excluded because of his 'race', we give him £2 daily as pocket money.

These sort of views were also expressed by those Asian parents who were in Dhasmana's study.

Dhasmana stated that:

Some parents talked about the low expectations held by certain teachers of Asian children and the racist attitudes of white teachers directed towards them as well as their children.

[Ibid.]

Pupil 'BH's elder sister and mother also talked about discrimination and racism very sharply.

Elder sister: I and others know that Headteacher is a racist. I myself went to that school, he does not like Asians.

Mother: I think he ['BH'] is being discriminated against as he has been blamed for some incidents which have no grounding.

Pupil 'FS's Father also believed that his son was discriminated against because he was an Asian.

He stated that:

Yes, it appears that if a child might have been English, then this may not have happened. The allegations put on my son that he was with other boys, damaging the property. When he asked the Headteacher - 'If it was recorded on the camera, then why not show that to me?' But I was not shown anything. In actual fact, according to my son, he was not there on that day - the day the damage was done to the school.

Pupil 'TD's parents also accused the teachers of discrimination:

Me: Do you think, your son has been discriminated against?

Father: Yes, we think so. Teachers never listened to us. It is possible that being Asians we have never been listened to.

If this is what Asian parents feel, then how can they participate in their children's learning?

Dhasmana argues that:

..... the main aim must be to encourage active participation by Asian parents in their children's learning, not just to gather information about the experiences and attitudes, as there is no dearth of such information on this subject.

[Dhasmana, 1994:24]

I support Dhasmana but the point here is to look at the attitude and practice of teachers to whom these Asian parents are blaming for discrimination, and then do something about it to rectify the situation.

People who feel they are being discriminated against are the ones who are oppressed. According to Thompson:

Oppression: it has been defined as inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups, hardship and injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another, the negative and demeaning exercise of power. Oppression often involves disregarding the rights of an individual or group and is thus the denial of citizenship.

[Thompson, 1993:31]

Asian parents and the pupils comparatively have less power than that of teachers. Anti-oppressive practice, ‘works with a model of empowerment and liberation and requires a fundamental rethinking of values, institutions and relationships’ [Phillipson, 1992:15].

‘Anti-oppressive practice’, as argued by Dalrymple and Burke:

Then, means recognising power imbalances and working towards the promotion of change to redress the balance of power. In discussing student-lecturer relationships, Jeanette Henderson (1994:19) argues, for example, that it is important not only to recognise that there is a power imbalance but also actively to work towards change - otherwise ‘the educator may perpetuate inequality’. This means challenging assumptions, recognizing that we all have rights and challenging the institutional practices that oppress and so systematically disempower those with whom we work.

[Dalrymple and Burke, 1995:15]

If the above happens, then there is possibility that the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils may reduce. In addition, Asian parents will have more faith in teachers and the systems of the schools.

### **Communication:**

Communication is an important element in imparting knowledge, power and feelings. If parents are not communicated with regarding their children’s activities, they cannot participate in their education and will not be equal partners to promote the welfare of the children. Not to communicate means undermining and ignoring. When someone is ignored it means that person is not important enough to be informed and this process is hurtful at the other end when found out. This causes anger and frustration.

‘BH’ (pupil’s) Mother was not happy at all, she said that:

They (teachers) did not tell us that he (‘BH’) was kicked out. No information was sent to us. He was away. at least for two months. He used to go out from school.

My father once saw him in the police car and his sister phoned the school. The school said he is in school. Only after a few minutes, police brought him home. He was with the police as a witness. When we asked the school why were we not informed they said they sent letters to us but those letters never reached us. He ('BH') cannot pick up the letters as the post comes later when he is already gone to the school. They never told us about a knife or a gun which was mentioned at the Exclusion meeting.

Another pupil 'TD's parents also complained to me when I asked:

Me: Were you informed about his ['TD'] exclusion?

Father: No one informed us about his exclusion. No letter and no phone. He was permanently excluded from school and he was excluded before the summer holidays and we were notified in September.

Pupil 'SM's parents did receive a letter from the school informing them of the permanent exclusion, but Father was not happy and he tried to contact the school. 'SM's Father stated that:

When I received a letter from school, I tried to contact the Headteacher but the secretary informed me that he is busy. I tried to contact him again after an hour or so, but again he was not available. It was Friday and afterwards the school was closed for the summer holidays. I was later accused that we did not contact the school. I did not like the attitude of the school. I requested that he should be pardoned but no one listened to me. Then we thought about appealing, but there was not enough time, so we did not bother much.

The situation becomes more complicated where Asian parents may not be able to speak English and schools have not arranged adequate interpreters and translators. This further limits their powers. Even the legislation do not seem to work here. Dhasmana argued that:

The Education Acts of 1986 and 1988 have brought radical changes in the Education system of this country. The changes brought about by the Education Reform Act (ERA) may actually increase the possibility of discrimination against Asian parents, especially those living in inner city areas. On average, Asian parents are less knowledgeable about the British education system. They are also more likely to have had a poorer educational experience themselves with little or no experience of Further or Higher Education here or even at home. So what is good for some individuals may not be as good for some less privileged minority groups who are less able or willing to participate in the daunting process. It is in fact inconceivable that these Asian parents will be able to benefit from any of these radical changes if they lack the skills, knowledge and confidence to use these powers.

[Dhasmana, 1994:24]

Dhasmana continued that:

One of the prerequisites for achieving this reality for all parents, especially the Asian parents already in a disadvantageous position in society, is by empowering them with confidence, knowledge and skills they need to help their children and to prepare them for the long-term goal of partnership with schools.

[Ibid.]

Yes, this may only be possible if parents are kept in the picture of their children's activities in the school. If the teachers do not communicate with the parents - as is the case in this study, then partnership with schools is not possible. The other thing to note is, as argued by Dalrymple and Burke:

The society we live in is characterized by 'difference' but these differences are not always seen positively. Differences are used to exclude rather than include. This is because relationships within society are the result of the exercise of power on individual, interpersonal and institutional levels.

[Dalrymple and Burke, 1995:8, original emphasis]

Dalrymple and Burke further argued:

If work with young people who have limited power or who are marginalised is to be effective then it should link the personal realities of people's lives to the structural context in which they exist. By incorporating the concepts of power and oppression within a theoretical framework, it is possible within our work to build on the strengths rather than the deficiencies of individuals.

[Dalrymple and Burke, 1995:9]

Our attitudes, value system and the power as discussed already are the crucial elements in this context, to improve the situation.

### **Educational Provision After Exclusion:**

Education provided by the LEA at Pupil Referral Units was not liked by the parents. They were not happy:

- (a) This was only for two hours for four days a week.



- (b) Only the excluded pupils attended these units.
- (c) This was not like a normal mainstream school.
- (d) A label was automatically attached to these pupils who attended these units.

I asked 'ASI' [pupil's] Mother:

Me: If 'ASI' does not get a place in any school then can you send him to 'Pupil Referral Unit'?

Mother: What we have heard about the Referral Unit is that they provide education only for two hours a day and I don't think that is enough. It is better for him to stay at home. He watches television and sometimes studies on his own. In addition, he is reluctant to attend any studies because of his bad experience at school. The school has excluded him but they never bothered about his studies. He was ignored most of the time and whenever, we parents, tried to find out from school, the reasons for ignoring him - they never gave us any satisfactory answers. Instead, school blamed him that he does not do anything and does not listen to any teacher.

[.....Mother gone silent for a few moments].

At this stage Mother became very sad and was about to cry.

Another pupil 'SM's' Father was not very happy to send him to Pupil Referral Unit. 'SM's'

Father stated:

I was not happy to send him to this Pupil Referral Unit but there was no choice.

Analysing the Giddens' work, in reference to conflict and social change, Cassell stated:

If we take the example of the school portrayed in Willis' study Learning to Labour, which Giddens comments on in 'The Constitution of Society', it is apparent that the myriad of practices that go on in the classroom, and elsewhere in the school, are marked by dissent. The 'Lads' - rebellious working-class students - operate within interpretative and normative frameworks that are quite different in many respects from those of the staff; conflict is chronic as each party mobilises their respective 'resources' to prosecute their particular purposes. The school authorities are incapable of achieving anything more than an 'effort bargain', a sort of uneasy truce, with the 'lads', whose 'resources' are, nevertheless, far more limited than those available to the staff. One might expect this scenario to produce chaos, but Willis' study reveals the manner in which the practices, the conflicts, actually form a pattern, to the extent that events are in some sense predictable: horribly so, one suspects for the participants. Although all parties are striving to achieve a routine which will guarantee their 'ontological security', the presence of the opposing party - who must 'eat into' the security of

the other to stabilise their own position - makes its achievements highly elusive and unstable.

[Cassell, 1993:15]

In my experience, I have found that to find another school for an excluded pupil is not an easy matter. Very few schools show any interest to admit any excluded pupil. Even if a school may have a vacancy it becomes difficult for the school to accept an excluded pupil for various reasons such as - the school may be considered a dumping ground to send excluded pupils; the effect on the League Table; the general reputation in the community and why is it that only this school should accept excluded pupils. That is why Education Social Workers and their managers, sometimes do not get any response from the Headteachers or the messages are never returned. This causes a lot of frustration to the social workers, their managers and the pupils' parents concerned. In this drama, the education of the pupil suffers and the excluded pupil lags behind further.

### **SUMMARY:**

There seems a problem in relationships between pupils and teachers, with part of this being due to teachers' undermining the pupils' self-worth. There was no evidence to suggest that these pupils were anti-school. The behaviour of 'acting tough', 'having a good laugh', or 'provoking teachers' was all part of a game in which the majority of the class participated, and the pupils who were seen as leaders or part of the 'gangs' were given some sanction. All these pupils were reported by teachers to be bright. Pupils felt that they faced racial discrimination.

All parents resented the notion of a permanent exclusion. Parents were concerned about their family pride in the community and shame brought to their reputation by exclusion of their

children from schools. Parents blamed their children's peer group for continual misbehaviour and racial discrimination on the part of teachers in the schools. There was enough evidence to suggest that communication between schools and parents was poor. Parents did not approve of the education provided at the Pupil Referral Units.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## EDUCATION SOCIAL WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES

### Introduction:

In this chapter I will discuss the perspectives of four different Education Social Workers on the increase or decrease of exclusions, the sanctions for the offences, the role of supporting agencies, training for teachers, school syllabus and educational provision for excluded pupils. Education Social Workers' views on communication and Asian role models will also be sought.

I interviewed four Educational Social Workers, one White Female (WFESW), one Asian Male (AESW), one African-Caribbean Male (ACESW) and one English (White) Male (WESW). I asked the same questions from these social workers to maintain the consistency. The idea was to choose the four different background social workers so that a balance of opinions could be sought. These four social workers were attached to four different schools where the majority of the pupils were Asians or African-Caribbeans. All the four social workers were interviewed individually and separately. [See Appendix 6 for a sample interview of an Education Social Worker].

Following are the answers on the question of **increase or decrease** in the number of **permanent exclusion:**

### AESW:

Yes, there has been an increase in the number of exclusions particularly of Asian males. The figures relate to two years ago. But in general the exclusion of Asian pupils (male) has been increasing.

On the same question a White Male Education Social Worker endorsed what an Asian Social Worker had said:

**WESW:**

It has been an increase over the last few years. I think, when the category ‘B’ is abolished, this may have some further effect.

African-Caribbean social worker differed in this respect and talked about his school. He stated:

**ACESW:**

In respect of this question, in my experience, in my school, I have seen the decrease in permanent exclusion. Since I have started two years ago (this interview was conducted on 30.5.95) where there was a significant number of exclusions. The reason for this I feel, is the collaboration with the school, i.e. a better line of communication and school’s willingness to work with me.

However, when I checked the figures for permanent exclusions from the year 1987/88 to 1995/96 it was a definite increase. e.g.

1987/88	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
167	185	206	228	235	249	295	348	382

However, the exclusion figures for the academic year 1996/97 was 355 and this was the first time that the exclusion has decreased in Birmingham.

White Female Education Social Worker also agreed with the above findings:

**WFESW:**

There was an increase near Christmas period but since then it has quietened down a bit. But in general they are on the increase.

By examining the figures for Asian for the years from 1990/91 to 1995/96, there was an increase.

1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
29	30	39	38	42	53

Exclusions of Asians for the year 1992/93 and 1993/94 are almost the same, with the difference of only one. However, in the academic year 1996/97 the exclusion for Asian pupils decreased to 41.

The above statistics are for the whole city.

**Year Group, Ethnicity and Gender:**

The question of year group, gender and ethnicity in exclusion was also asked from these social workers. Their answers were:

**AESW:**

Most of the exclusions were in Year 10 or Year 11 and they have to be Asian male.

**WESW:**

My school is full of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils and a few white pupils. So, the majority of the exclusions are of Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) pupils. There have been a number of African-Caribbean students but the school argued that these are 2nd exludees and pupils who come from other secondary schools mainly Year 10 and 11.

**ACESW:**

Yes, majority of permanent exclusions are centred around Year 10 because my schools and the locality of them, the majority are from within the Asian communities and they are all male.

Sassoon (1992a) also claims that most excluded pupils are in years 10 and 11.

During the analysis of 13 Exclusion Reports it came out clearly that the majority of pupils who are permanently excluded are in Year 10 or 11 and they are male. This is endorsed by these social workers. In Birmingham and nationally the permanent exclusion of African-Caribbean pupils is on the increase. The Female White Education Social Worker's opinions were also similar:

**FWESW**

Most of my exclusions happen to be African-Caribbean and male and I have not dealt with any Asian exclusions. The reason may be that the schools I am dealing with there are not many Asian pupils. Mainly the exclusion is in Year 10 or Year 11.

**INCONSISTENCY:**

The issue of different rules and punishments was highlighted during the Education Social Workers' interviews. They were concerned that there was a lack of consistency in sanctions.

**Me:**

Do the reasons warrant exclusion?

**ACESW:**

In some of the cases very much so. But in others there are question marks about the validity of those reasons. You may get one of those schools where the pupils are accused of being violent to teachers or to other pupils. In the same school another pupil can be excluded for walking out of the school without permission. That shows a blatant inconsistency within the criteria for exclusion.

Osler argued that:

Some evidence, for example that of Holland and Hamerton (1994), has suggested that even within schools there can be inconsistency in the types of offence for which pupils are, and are not excluded.

[Osler, 1997a:40]

It appears that there are no commonly agreed criteria as to what constituted an excludable offence or indeed clearly negotiated, understood and communicated school rules. It means the

decision is entirely subjective on the part of a teacher or the Headteacher. So there was room for inconsistent application of sanctions, and one which raised particular concern in relation to the way in which sanctions were applied against Asian pupils, in particular, in this study.

### **Support Services:**

The issue of not using the support services was revealed during the interviews and it appears that exclusion was used as an easy option rather than a last resort.

**Me:**

Do the reasons warrant exclusion?

**WESW:**

Schools think they do. I am not sure if the schools have used the support available to them before using the ultimate sanction i.e. permanent exclusion of a pupil. They have not used Behaviour Support Service, Education Psychologists, Child Advisory Service and Education Welfare Service.

What this Education Social Worker is implying is that if schools use all these supporting services then the permanent exclusions in those schools may be avoided. This is what the African-Caribbean Education Social Worker was stating earlier, that due to his close working with schools, permanent exclusions in those schools have reduced. Female White Education Social Worker also raised this issue:

One of the concerns I have is that children are excluded before they get any support from Behaviour Support Service and this is happening quite frequently.

### **‘Race’ and Cultural Issues:**

It is sometimes believed that teachers are dedicated professionals and therefore by definition fair to all their pupils and that schools are neutral places where all pupils have the chance to fulfil their potential. In addition to the naive faith expressed in the belief that a ‘professional’ would not be racist, this view also supported the notion that schools were neutral places where anyone



could succeed if they put their minds to it. It follows therefore that racism must by definition only be a deliberate act of malice and any decision to exclude must be based on a fair assessment of the 'crime' committed by the pupil. It is a view that cancels out any room for unfair treatment and also denies any of the invisible process which the pupil experiences through his or her colour. The issue of 'race' and culture was revealed during social workers' interviews. They felt that these are not taken seriously and teachers need to have more awareness of how to deal with Asian and African-Caribbean pupils sensitively.

WESW Stated:

I think it would be more helpful if the teachers receive more training on class management and cultural and 'race' issues.

AESW highlighted these issues further:

There have been cases where the exclusions are not warranted particularly when pupils make comments about teachers regarding 'race', religion and language. I remember one incident where a pupil responded to racist remarks by a member of staff for which he was excluded.

Here is the case where a pupil has been overpowered and oppressed by his teacher. The pupil had two choices: (a) to keep quiet and tolerate the humiliation (b) to fight back and get excluded. In both these options, it was the pupil who suffered and not the teacher. This is how the misuse of power affects the lives of (in this case) the pupils. Discussing the operation of oppression

Mullender and Ward argue that:

It grossly impairs the lives of all those whose experiences are constant reminders of their oppressed status, and leaves them only the choice either of adopting the values of the oppressor or of fighting back. So pervasive and powerful is the oppression, however, that, not infrequently, the former happens by default.

[Mullender and Ward, 1991:4]

AESW informed me:

One of the other reasons why the pupils are being excluded particularly in the area of racist name-calling when teachers have not responded effectively and pupils themselves addressing the issue by resulting into physical assault.

Gillborn highlights the problem of racist name-calling. He argued that:

Some teachers, schools and LEAs consistently underestimate the significance of the racial harassment which many ethnic minority pupils endure. Both the Swann committee and a report by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE 1988:18) have called on teachers and lecturers to recognise the 'extra crippling dimension brought to [name-calling and bullying] by a racist motivation'. The reports cite several cases which graphically illustrate the seriousness of the situation; the following extract is taken from an essay by an Asian fifth former:

I attended a middle school where approximately 90% of the pupils were white..... The Asians were constantly in fear of being attacked by the several gangs of white boys. As we ran towards the staff room a teacher would come out and disperse the white gang, throw us back into the playground and then walk back in as if nothing had happened. The teachers had no idea of what we were experiencing.

[Gillborn, 1990:77]

If that is the case, then there is no other option left for them but to join a group of supporters from their community.

Again, Gillborn argued that:

Within City Road, racist name - calling was almost totally restricted to White-Asian pupil interactions, generally Afro-Caribbean pupils were neither subject to nor the perpetrators of such attacks. By contrast racist attacks [usually, but not always, verbal] were a regular fact of life for most Asian pupils and this clearly influenced the strength of their friendships with other Asians in the school.

[Gillborn, 1990:78]

Gillborn continued:

Contacts with their Asian peers outside the school [ at the mosque and/or living in the same neighbourhood] and within City Road itself [ in lessons or as a defence against white attackers] were, therefore, an important factor which served to link all but the two Sikh boys in a complex friendship network which extended across the age group.

[Ibid.]

### **Peer Groups/Gangs:**

The current study reveals that Asian pupils were involved in Asian peer groups or gangs who supported them during crises. Sometimes these groups or gangs are seen as threats by teachers as revealed by White Male Education Social Worker:

I think African-Caribbean boys who are in minority in the school look to their African-Caribbean peers for physical and emotional support because they feel overwhelmed by the number of other groups. This could happen to Asian children where they are in the minority in school. Teachers tend to see these groups as threats.

Discussing about the support and meeting the cultural needs of ethnic minority pupils, Female White Education Social Worker expressed:

### **FWESW:**

In my experience African-Caribbean parents have quite strongly felt that the cultural needs of the pupils were not met. Very often facial expression and body language is misread and labelled as aggressive and rude.

These may be the reasons that Asian and African-Caribbean pupils end up in gangs for their identity and survival in the schools. The philosophy of these gangs is described succinctly by Mac an Ghaill when he discusses the ‘warriors’ (an Asian gang). Mac an Ghaill argued that:

A central element of the development of the warriors as a group was their resistance to racism, both within and outside the school.  
[Mac an Ghaill, 1988:126]

These gangs may be assisting the pupils to understand each other better and these pupils may feel confused and isolated from their own parents. White Male Education Social Worker stated:

Another point I wish to make is that there is a clash between a school culture and the peer group culture. With the Asian children, some of the families are very traditional in terms of culture and religion and children find it difficult to adhere to the parents’ wishes. Some Asian parents cannot speak English and there are some Asian children who can only speak English and no Asian language or

limited Asian language. This alienates children and parents which ends up in frustration and communication problems.

Dhasmana argued that:

The parents believed that the difference in values and attitudes between school and home confuses children.

[Dhasmana, 1994:27]

Probably to remove this confusion and create a better line of communication African-Caribbean

Education Social Worker expressed his views sharply:

In general, exclusions are just an excuse. They may help in short term by removing a difficult pupil but it fails to question the validity of the teachers, Headteachers and governors or parents of their responsibility to assist young people during their development. Exclusions can be used to discriminate against 'race' or colour by the use of stereotypes e.g. emotional difficulties [ a black child who has emotional difficulties can be labelled as being aggressive, rude, confrontational]. Behaviour can also be used to suggest exclusion is necessary e.g. non- verbal communication can be construed as confrontational, rude and aggressive. Therefore exclusions are seen as an easy option in avoiding cultural, emotional and behavioural differences by suggesting that a young person fits into the model rather than the otherway round. So failure to fit in the model can lead to exclusion.

It appears from the above discussion that Asian and African-Caribbean pupils do not necessarily behave worse than white pupils but behave differently and it is this difference that white teachers find difficult to deal with.

### **Communication and Role Models:**

This issue came out in Asian Social Worker's interview. He stated:

It is crucial that parents are kept informed of pupils' progress or any difficulty which may arise and this can only happen if appropriate language support is available.

In the past, some Asian and African-Caribbean social work assistants were employed by the Birmingham Education Authority under Section 11 of Local Authority Act 1966, to provide

language and cultural issues assistance but at present, due to financial hardships Local Education Authority have deleted all these posts since 31st March 1996. There were some other posts named ‘detached duty workers’ employed by the Authority for the same purpose under Section 11 and these posts have also been terminated at the same time. There are, at present, some posts of ‘school link workers’ again for the cultural issues and language support, and these posts may be terminated in the near future. The issues of equal opportunities, true partnership with parents and schools becomes a joke for those ethnic minority parents, in particular the Asian parents, who are not proficient in English language.

Dhasmana argued that:

In the past, the needs of this group of minority parents have always been neglected due to an ignorance of the needs of bilingual children and of parents’ perceptions and skills in their language and to the parents’ difficulty in communicating effectively with schools. The simplistic view held by schools was to see parents who had basic skill needs in English language as being inadequate educators compared with indigenous English speaking parents.

[Dhasmana, 1994:24]

The needs of the Asian parents, in particular, have been neglected and the imbalance of power remains. The concept of equal partnership cannot operate if there is an imbalance of power. This will end up in a mere paper exercise. There is nothing to ameliorate the problem of Asian pupils being excluded.

If Asian pupils relate some of their difficulties at schools to their parents to alleviate them and the parents cannot help their children because of inadequate English language proficiency, then the next step is to speak to some Asian teachers who may assist them. If there are not enough Asian teachers in the schools, it makes the situation more complicated and does not give any aspiration and motivation for studies to these Asian pupils.

White Male Education Social Worker stated about these pupils:

The children who are excluded permanently from school particularly in Year 10 and 11 have not benefited from education and end up with no real prospects of employment and success; result into anti-social activities, delinquency and flash behaviour to gain some sort of identity. They are at the bottom of the heap.

Asian Education Social Worker emphasised the needs for positive role models. He stated that:

In order to provide effective education, it is important that children have positive role models from similar background in the schools and Behaviour Support Service Units. [Pupil Referral Units]

I cannot agree more with the above statement.

### **Politics:**

It is thought perhaps, by some people that education is not influenced by any politics. But the Educational Legislation have influenced education quite heavily. On this issue I asked the social workers:

**Me:**

Do you think the exclusions have been used adequately?

**WESW:**

They have not been used appropriately. I think schools have made political decisions rather than individual decisions. Because schools wish to signal other pupils that the behaviour which is considered unacceptable will not be tolerated. Individual circumstances are often lost to the political points. Local Management of Schools, Children Act 1989, Education Act 1993 are uncomfortable bed-fellows, because statutory requirement is that children must be educated for their needs, culture and religion. Children's needs are paramount. This is incompatible with Local Management of Schools, League Tables and market place philosophy where schools only want successful pupils. Exclusions are devices used by the schools to get rid of unwanted pupils. In exclusion process, there is an imbalance of power to the detriment of the student. Often school evidence is inadequate, not well documented and not open to challenge. In my opinion, it is a pity that there is not a similar process to the unfair dismissal procedure as in the employment world.

The above comments are supported by Sassoon.

Sassoon argued that:

A separate observation worth making is that recent educational enactments are out of synch with the Children Act 1989 that took effect from 14 October 1991. In a number of cases that I am aware of, pupils have been excluded from schools without their being given an opportunity to make their cases and describe the circumstances that led to allegations being made against them. When parents do not appeal against an exclusion, the appeals committee seldom invites the excluded pupil to give her or his side of the story. This is astonishing, as it is common practice now for the court, undertaking a judicial review, to state that it is unfair for an authority to take action against an individual without hearing what he or she has to say in defence. The Children Act for the first time gives this taken-for-granted right of adults to be extended to minors who are capable of rational thought.

[Sassoon, 1992b:57]

Sassoon continued:

One of the key principles of the Children Act is that the agencies responsible for promoting the welfare of children operate with speed when a child is either at risk or in need. Given the comments I made above, the Department of Education and Science, one key agency, will have to work much faster when cases such as the ones mentioned are referred to them.

[Ibid.]

Not only the White Education Social Worker was concerned about the politics and the effect of legislation but the Asian Education Social Worker also had concerns. He stated:

It concerns me that the schools are becoming increasingly powerful and are sometimes excluding pupils because of the implications of League Tables. National Curriculum conflicts with the interests and needs of ethnic minority pupils, for example pupils feel excluded in History and Geography lessons where the achievements of Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) communities are not taken care of.

Two issues come out from the above, (i) Legislation e.g. League Tables and National Curriculum  
(ii) History and Geography which is taught in the schools.

The teachers in the schools are under pressure to carry out the duties imposed by the Government Legislation. This legislation may be beneficial to the people who belong to the majority culture in this country. The philosophy relating to this legislation may infer that all the pupils would benefit from it but it appears that pupils from ethnic minority communities are not having the same benefits.

Dalrymple and Burke argued that:

Legislation is the primary political instrument for bringing about social and economic change. The law is also a central element of social care practice. However, it can be argued that legislation is oppressive and disempowering to service users. If anti-oppressive practice is fundamentally about change, then it could be argued that the law is limiting in the way in which it can bring about real change in society as April Carter (1988:140) points out:

Ingrained attitudes based on historical social practices do change only slowly, and therefore laws may promote lip service to the principle of equal treatment and token gestures towards implementing it, without resulting in any fundamental alterations in the economic and social structures of society.

[Dalrymple and Burke, 1995:25]

The law is power and the power is controlled by the white majority. This is not a straightforward issue, on paper everything appears to be equal but in practice the results produced are different for different people. The problem lies in the implementation of these laws. Braye and Preston-shoot point out:

The law preserves the status quo within the power structures of society. Whilst predicated upon the rhetoric of freedom, justice and equality, the law colludes with inequalities between women and men, black people and white people, people with disabilities and able bodied people, young and old.

[Braye and Preston-shoot, 1993:16]

The second issue which an Asian Education Social Worker highlighted was of teaching History and Geography from the White people's view point and the achievements of Asian and African people are excluded. This practice negates the idea of multiculturalism. This does not assist



Asian and African-Caribbean pupils to feel proud of their background and identity. This does not help the Asian and African-Caribbean pupils to raise their self-esteem. They may feel devalued and degraded and to overcome these feelings they may join a support group of peers which can end up in gangs. On these issues Comer and Pouissant state that:

As the child grows older, learning black history and experiencing black culture can strengthen his pride and broaden his sense of identity. Teaching a child strategies to deal with racism and the negative feelings about being black that racism incurs is very helpful..... with such preparation black children are able to maintain positive feelings about themselves when growing up in racist environments, whereas those without proper preparation often have low levels of self-esteem.

[Comer and Pouissant, 1992:16]

### **Educational Provisions for Excluded pupils:**

The issue of providing education to excluded pupils was mentioned by the social workers. They were not happy the way these excluded pupils were treated once they were out of the schools or about the quality of education provided by the Local Education Authority.

White Female Education Social Worker stated:

Schools make referrals to Psychological and Behaviour Support Service and then exclude pupils before that support takes place. It worries me that so many children are being excluded and that they get only part-time provision of education. It means there are a lot of children in the streets and they are vulnerable. It also worries me that those schools who have vacant places are reluctant to take excluded children. It is quite difficult to get a straight answer from the schools, they want to know the background of the child before they commit themselves. In my experience, the majority of the excluded children do not get places in the main stream schools and they end up in the Behaviour Support Service Units [Pupil Referral Units] where they get education only two hours a day, four days a week.

The above is very much supported by Asian parents already discussed and I can endorse this on the basis of my personal experience working in the Education Welfare Service.

When I interviewed the Asian Education Social Worker, he gave me direction to a new possibility to handle this problem. He stated that:

I don't think exclusion is an appropriate way to deal with the problems. My own feelings are that there should be no exclusion policy. One of the obvious examples I can give is that in the Probation Service there is a policy of non-custodial recommendation. There is no evidence to suggest that exclusion addresses the issues. My personal opinion is that there should be units within the school with the appropriate resources to provide counselling and psychological support. I believe this approach may lead to a better support services and the pupils will not suffer a loss of education due to exclusion process.

In Birmingham off site units called Behaviour Support Service units are established but in-school units are lacking. In favour of Asian Social Worker the Warnock Report (1978) states that:

We recommend that special classes and units should wherever possible be attached to, and function as part of, ordinary schools, rather than be organised separately or attached to another kind of establishment.

[Warnock Report 1978, cited in Topping, 1983:61]

This seems sensible in theory but in practice can cause some difficulties.

Galloway et al (1978) report on some Sheffield Headteachers' arguments against special classes, viz:

1. Placing difficult children together encourages them to learn deviant behaviour from each other, 2. A separate group is an anomaly in a comprehensive school, for the same reasons that special schools are seen as anomalous in a non-selective education system, 3. The groups can lead to an unhealthy division between pastoral care staff and subject teachers.

[Galloway et al 1978, cited in Topping, 1983:61]

Asian Education Social Worker's suggestion of no exclusion policy is supported by Osler. Osler argued that:

The most radical way to reduce national levels of permanent exclusion would be to ban the practice altogether. Parffrey (1994) makes the point that schools in Canada and the USA do not exclude children, as schooling is seen as a basic human right.

[Osler, 1997a:38]

The other issues are of recruiting more psychologists and counsellors which, in the current situation of budget crisis, seem unfeasible. Labelling of these pupils will be difficult to avoid. On top of all this, the root causes of unacceptable behaviour of pupils may not be the pupils themselves, but the attitude of teachers and school systems which cannot be compensated by these on-site units. Here power and social change plays a vital role.

Giddens' analysis of social change can also be elaborated with reference to the school example. Let us imagine that over time a gradual process of 'gentrification' takes hold of the working-class areas that surround the school. After a few years the children of the professional classes become more numerous; the **milieu** that boys such as the 'lads' move in is progressively worn away; and those 'lads' who remain to continue the 'tradition' of resistance, are more easily marginalised. The balance of power moves strongly in favour of the school authorities and conventional educational values.

[Cassell, 1993:16, original emphasis]

## **SUMMARY:**

Education Social Workers [ESWS] felt that the number of permanent exclusions of Asian male pupils is on the increase and that there was a lack of consistency in sanctions. They also felt that they were becoming involved with pupils at the crisis [e.g. exclusion] level. They preferred to be contacted earlier; as well as the other supporting services e.g. Behaviour Support Service, Education Psychologists and Child Advisory Service. The ESWS felt that teachers lacked awareness in anti-oppressive practice and in the issue of 'race' and culture. Communication with non-English speaking parents and role models was also highlighted. The ESWS were concerned regarding League Tables, National Curriculum and History and Geography which lack Asian dimension. The provisions for the excluded pupils were also not acceptable to the ESWS.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **HEADTEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES**

#### **Introduction:**

In this chapter, I will discuss the Headteachers' arguments on Asian pupils' exclusion, reasons for it, the role of supporting agencies, training for teachers, educational provision for excluded pupils and the initiative taken by some Catholic Schools to decrease the permanent exclusion of pupils, in general.

Twenty schools were sent a questionnaire and twelve of them replied. Out of these twenty schools, eighteen Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers or in charge of pastoral care in the school gave me their interviews. Exactly the same questions were asked as of Education Social Workers so that a balance would be maintained. [See Appendix 5 for a sample interview of a Headteacher]

It will be difficult to put all the opinions of interviewees. However, some of the main themes featured in the interviews will be discussed.

At the outset of this research I was unaware of what would emerge. I have found that the whole area of exclusion is one of difficulty and enormous challenge when trying to understand the processes that take place before, during and after the exclusion.

#### **Increase or Decrease of Permanent Exclusion of Asian Pupils:**

Examining the Departmental statistics - the number of permanent exclusions of Asian pupils is on the increase except for the academic year 1996/97. This has also been supported by a number of Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers.

Headteacher of 'CHWBS[9]' school stated:

Definite increase and definite increase in the proportion from Asian background and the third thing, a distinct change in the sort of behaviour pattern that was leading to Asian young persons' exclusion. I think it was increase in the interpersonal violence i.e. boys between boys and boys between staff. The majority of white staff was used to certain set of behaviour from Asian boys and when that changed to being 'normal' the British spectrum of behaviour, and that was difficult for staff and other boys from other backgrounds to accept and then led to other problems and issues. Staff had got used to thinking creatively with white boys and African-Caribbean young persons but staff, as yet, had to develop a range of strategies to deal with Asian children and other backgrounds.

This Headteacher believed staff had to develop a range of strategies which they have never thought about before, but I am concerned if this school and the others in similar situations have taken any initiative as yet? Examining the response of the questionnaire, I was surprised to find out that this particular school did not return the completed questionnaire. In these circumstances it is quite difficult to know what initiatives or strategies have been developed. Or it could be that the school has not done anything and to hide this factor they did not return the questionnaire.

Another school 'CMS [15]'s Deputy Head stated:

It is a difficult question. We are 85% Asian pupils [When I verified this figure this was 80%]. Any increase in the exclusion, will increase the Asian students. The answer is yes, on proportion, it is disproportionate.

What this Deputy Head is implying that proportionately exclusion of Asian pupils is not high rather low.

Another school 'CSACE [16]' which has 50% population of Asian pupils has highlighted the issues of support available to the exclusion rate. On my question of decrease or increase of permanent exclusion of Asian pupils, Headteacher stated that:

At this moment, there has been no change. However, it is about to change , because of the way the Behaviour Support Service works. In the past, if a child was failing he/she was spending sometime in Behaviour Support Service [now

called Pupil Referral Unit] thereby avoiding exclusion. The limit now is of possibly four weeks. In September, pupils used to go to 'BC' [one of Pupil Referral Units] for four weeks. Now there are some children who cannot be taught at 'BC' and when they return to the school, they will be excluded. So it is going to be increase.

A Senior Teacher of a school 'CWS [20]' highlighted the issue of changing in the laws of exclusion categories and how this can contribute to the increase in exclusions. She stated to the same question:

We are stable on the number of permanent exclusions. However, there have been an increase in the category 'A' [old]. This could have led to permanent exclusions. This year particularly, we had a lot of support from outside agencies to the advantage of pupils.

This particular school was covered by an African-Caribbean social worker who claimed the decrease in exclusions was because of his support to the school. This confirms the African-Caribbean Education Social Worker's and pastoral care -in charge - Senior Teacher's statements. This also makes us aware that exclusions can be reduced if enough support is provided to the pupils at the appropriate time in an appropriate way.

However, there were more than half the Headteachers or their representatives who stated that the number of Asian pupils' permanent exclusion is not increasing. There could be a number of factors for this i.e. they may not have many Asian pupils in their schools, or the support system is adequate.

Senior Teacher [in charge of pastoral care] of 'CWS [20]' highlighted the importance of support systems to reduce the permanent exclusions of pupils. She stated that:

In the past 1992/93, code of practice had not been established and therefore it could be difficult to get the help from outside agencies. Now the step by step approach is available and you can get support. In the past, support was not adequate and therefore permanent exclusion was more likely.

One of the factors for not excluding a pupil was an indirect pressure from the Local Education Authority. This may be the case in those schools who claimed that they have not excluded pupils from their schools.

Headteacher of 'CHHS [12]' mentioned about indirect pressure from the LEA and criticised the supporting agencies e.g. Psychological Service, Behaviour Support Service. He stated that:

LEA attempts to put pressure on schools not to exclude children. The message from LEA is not direct but indirect.

Criticising the supporting agencies he commented:

I don't think LEA agencies have resources and skills to do any good to reduce exclusions. Psychological Service and Behaviour Support Service have not been helpful. Outside agencies cannot help us.

This was the Headteacher who did not have very good relationships with the Education Welfare Service. But recently a new social worker was allocated to his school and the social worker developed a good workable relationship with the Headteacher and the other teachers. It was with the assistance of the social worker, I was able to manage the interview with the Headteacher otherwise, he did not respond to my several phone calls. Again, this Headteacher did not return the completed questionnaire despite a number of reminders to his secretary. When I approached the social worker to explore this matter, he was informed by the secretary in confidence:

Headteacher was given all the messages from Mr. Mehra but he is not going to return his questionnaire as he has said to me: If I have to complete all these questionnaires then the only job I will do is to return these completed questionnaires and not that of a Headteacher. I am not bothering to reply to Mr. Mehra.

So his comments should be seen in the context of research impinging on school duties and responsibilities. However, discussing about indirect pressure from LEA, a Deputy Headteacher of 'CMS [15]' endorsed this view stating:

It is a difficult one, not because of the League Table. It is significant the pressure from LEA indirectly to reduce the exclusion rate. We only did six exclusions last year.

I was curious how the LEA put indirect pressure on schools not to exclude pupils. Probably my curiosity was quenched by a Senior Teacher (Head of Pastoral Care) of 'CHHS [8]' school. He stated that:

When a child is excluded, the LEA wishes to know that everything else was exhausted to rectify the behaviour.

But my understanding was and is that before any pupil is excluded permanently, all the schools must exhaust everything to rectify the behaviour of the pupil.

Some Headteachers agreed that they had excluded a few pupils in the past but there is a possibility, that the rate of exclusion will increase.

Headteacher of 'CAMS [2]' school stated that:

In the last eight years, we have excluded only two pupils and there is no increase. But exclusion may increase in the future. Climate is becoming such to exclude the children who are difficult. We have very good support system. But teachers are getting impatient now. There is a lot of pressure on the teachers and sometimes they can't cope.

Another Headteacher of 'CAIRC [1]' school blamed the Education System as a whole including the legislation. Headteacher commented:

The problem with many schools and the Education System is that we put all of them together and that's the fault of the Education System. Generally the way the



law has changed, there is a danger that we will exclude children. It has become far too sharp. Some people will abuse the system.

It was quite interesting to hear from a Headteacher of 'CSACE [16]' school, how to reduce the exclusion rate. This Headteacher did not mention about climate, legislation, or supporting agencies that they are the main causes of increment in the exclusion rate but stated:

If you don't have lunch time, you can reduce your exclusions dramatically.

When I heard these comments, I thought it was a joke. But on reflection, there may be some grain of truth in that statement as most of the fights, arguments, bullying and harassment may be happening during the lunch hours.

Regarding permanent exclusions in general and nationally, the Guardian Newspaper's [14.5.96] Education correspondent Donald MacLeod wrote under the Heading of 'Schools are expelling more pupils': As the numbers of pupils being expelled rocketed from fewer than 3000 in 1990 to more than 11000 in 1993, the Government clarified the law to make local authorities responsible for educating children outside school and regularising the position of a hodge podge local units. There are now 309 pupil referral units in England'.

This particular report is based on Carol Hayden's (1997) book: 'Children Excluded From Primary School'. She has done the study on primary school pupils but as from our previous discussion permanent exclusion of secondary school pupils is also on the increase.

### **Year Group, Ethnic Minority Group and Gender:**

The majority of the Headteachers agreed that the permanent excluded pupils are mainly male, in Year 10 or 11 African-Caribbeans and Asians. Headteacher of 'CHS [11]' school stated:

They are predominantly male i.e. 2/3 to 1/3 and predominantly Asians because they are in the majority and in Year group 10 and 11.

Similar views were also expressed by the Headteacher of 'CHHS [12]' school. Headteacher informed:

More male than female, certainly the upper higher kids in Year 10 or Year 11. Because of the school population, more excluded children are Asians.

The Headteacher of 'CHWBS[9]' school differed a bit on the trend and emphasised a different dimension among Asian communities itself. The Headteacher replied to my question, 'Are the exclusions isolated to a particular year group, ethnic minority group or gender?'

No, apart from an emphasis on Year 10. As far as ethnic minority group is concerned there appears to be a worrying increase in the number of exclusions which originate in the breakdown of Muslim families i.e. boys out of control from their families and schools.

Regarding Muslim families the Headteacher of 'CHS [11]' school commented that:

Among Muslims, Father is missing and single parent [Mum] copes with youngsters, where it becomes difficult for her.

Headteacher of 'CSHS [5]' school also blamed Muslim boys:

When we get a large number of Muslim boys they seem to lead the system. They start kicking against their parents and the society they are in. Mainly Muslim boys find themselves in conflict with the families. They find difficulty coping with them. Sikh pupils seem far more adaptable to change and far more flexible.

If this is true, what these Headteachers were saying, then these factors need to be explored further. Headteacher of 'CSACE[16]' school also expressed similar views:

It is beginning to be the case that many Muslim families are becoming out of control. Single Mothers are on the increase among Muslims like Afro-Caribbeans. Muslim children are out of control for those Mothers. The Muslim religion or the community is not helping those youngsters.

**Table No: 11 Percentage of Ethnic Minority Communities of Birmingham pupils  
[1993]**

	Primary	Secondary	Total
White	62.5%	61.0%	61.9%
Pakistani	15.7%	16.6%	16.1%
African-Caribbean	9.0%	8.2%	8.6%
Indian	6.9%	8.8%	7.8%
Bangladeshi	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%
Mixed Race	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Other	2.3%	1.7%	2.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Based on a survey of pupils aged 5-7 in primary and 11-13 in LEA maintained secondary schools.  
[Source: Birmingham Education Committee: Statistical Report 1993/94 p.21].

To know more about this issue, it needs a more in-depth, specific and thorough study. However, my current study has revealed that out of 13 exclusion cases 11 [85%] pupils were Muslims and two [15%] Sikh pupils. When I examined the pupils’ population (See Table No: 11), Indian pupil population was 8.8% whilst the Pakistani 16.6% and Bangladeshi 3.1%. These figures were secondary school age pupils. In addition, these figures were for the whole of Birmingham city and not of only central area [the area under study]. Despite all this, Muslim pupil population [Pakistani 16.6% + Bangladeshi 3.1%] was equal to 19.7% compared to 8.8% Indian [Sikh and Hindu pupils]. So Muslim pupils were nearly more than double compared to Indian pupils. But the exclusion rate was nearly six times greater in central area in this study. In exclusion numbers Headteachers were right. This is endorsed by the 1996 OFSTED survey.

OFSTED revealed that:

An increasing number of LEAs are aware of and concerned about the disproportionate numbers of minority ethnic pupils, in particular boys of Caribbean and African heritage [but increasingly also boys of Pakistani heritage], being excluded.

[OFSTED, 1996:27]

Making the case against Muslim boys Headteacher of 'CAMS [2]' school stated:

There is no strong role models. A lot of single parents, most of these women are from African-Caribbean and whites. Among some Muslims, there are some families, who are on their own and no more support. There is more than one woman in the house and there is no stability. It happens among Bangladeshi rather than Pakistanis.

This is another dimension, which this Headteacher has highlighted in the already complex enough issue.

This particular Headteacher continued:

Young boys are not being controlled by the women who are singles in their own homes and the age of these youngsters is another factor. Fourteen to sixteen years is a rebellious period. Those Mothers may not be speaking English and may not be aware of the systems in this country.

As I discussed above, these issues need a thorough in-depth and specific study to find out the actual problem but strange enough this particular Headteacher did not return the questionnaire from which I could have found out what provisions had been established in the school to communicate with those Asian Mothers who cannot speak English. In addition, what had been done in relation to racial equality matters and cultural issues by this school? It is very easy to pin point the blame on others without examining our own failings in school. Probably similar sort of blame was allotted to Muslim families by a Deputy Headteacher of 'CMS [15]' school:

A number of Asian kids come from families where there are family problems and no male figure and are single parents or in some cases a Father has two or three women in the same house. The children have an identity crisis because they claim that their parents do not understand them. Some children who have

adopted Islam. may have some direction. But it is difficult for children to fit into the society.

I wonder, how far these statements made by various Headteachers, were accurate. Did they do any research or survey in their schools? No study on this subject has been made to date, by the Education Department of Birmingham.

Robinson argued that:

In the literature on Asian families in Britain, one can see that the key concepts within which the pathology of the Asian family is embodied are: Identity crisis, cultural conflict and language and communication problems.... existing research suggests that young Asians are no more alienated from their parents than any other group of young people.

[Robinson, 1995:72]

Discussing the poverty of knowledge of some of the teachers and Headteachers, a Senior Teacher

[Head of Pastoral Care] of 'CWS [20]' school attacked them stating that:

... I am constantly surprised that many staff know so little about the life and culture of many of our pupils. A lot of them are stuck in the middle class mentality where they expect books and facilities for students' studies to be readily available. This week [13.7.95] in the 'Evening Mail' there was a report regarding housing conditions in Small Heath and Saltley where it stated that many residents are living in inadequate housing conditions. The situation was desperate and yet we expect perfect behaviour from children whose background and life style we know so little about. They possibly need love and support rather than continuing harassment from the school. Another thing, I find a little insensitive that they are asking Hindu and Sikh children why are they not celebrating Eid [Muslim festival] at home? This sort of insensitivity could lead to minor confrontation or just feeling devalued which is not useful in education process.

The Headteacher of this school did not return the questionnaire or allow me to interview.

Probably, it may be due to the reasons described by the Head of Pastoral Care, the Headteacher thought it was best to ignore my requests.

As far as the issue of permanent exclusion of African-Caribbean male pupils was concerned that was stated by a number of Headteachers during the interview and they were concerned that their rate of exclusion was disproportionate to their populations in the schools.

Lansdown stated that:

A report published in 1992 by Wolverhampton Race Equality council found that between 1986-1990, pupils from minority groups comprised 40.8% of total of those excluded. The percentage of the local population aged 0-15 years from ethnic minorities is 26%.

[Lansdown, 1994:3]

This is true in Birmingham also.

### **Supporting services and alternatives:**

A number of Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers or Heads of Pastoral Care of the schools were not happy with the supporting services. They had different opinions: some had extremely negative views, like the Headteacher of 'CHHS [12]' school that these supporting agencies are not any good to the schools and some Headteachers or their representatives felt that these agencies are under resourced and are not the answer to reduce exclusions.

Headteacher of 'CAIRC [1]' school stated that:

B.S.S. [Behaviour Support Service], EWS [Education Welfare Service], and Psychological Service have not got the resources and time enough to provide adequate services.

Similar views were expressed by the Headteacher of 'CSACE [16]' school:

The B.S.S is underfunded. It has not got enough resources e.g. difficult children should get full-time education. It is going to be worse than better. Neither B.S.S or Psychological Service are related to the individual needs of the pupils in the school. In general, I believe the Education Welfare Service should concentrate on attendance rather than to duplicate the social work service. If this is not to be

then money should be delegated to schools so that schools can employ someone to do the job. There is no point in having duplicate social work service.

Deputy Head of 'CYS [21]' school was also not very happy with the Education Welfare Service.

Deputy Head commented:

We are not happy with the EWS concept of 'exceptionality' works in some schools, in some authorities, that means for some serious offences, exclusion does not happen.

Headteacher of 'CHWBS[9]' school was also critical of the supporting agencies:

In my opinion, pupils needed more help but that was not provided. There was a lack of resources e.g. supporting services and that was the biggest disappointment.

However, not all the Headteachers or their representatives were disappointed with the supporting services. Some of them were pleased, like a Head of Pastoral Care of 'CWS [20]' school:

I feel our behaviour support does an excellent job. They try to educate the excluded pupils and get them new schools but they are fighting a losing battle and excluded children get only 8-10 hours education.

Headteacher of 'CHTRC [13]' school considers Behaviour Support Service very helpful and gives credit for reducing exclusions in the school but also pointed that they are under resourced.

However, this Headteacher was critical of Education Welfare Service, Headteacher stated:

B.S.S is very helpful to us because we have worked very closely with B.S.S, that is one of the reasons, exclusions have dropped. The culture and environment in which you live may breed violence but that is not accepted in the school and pupils are aware of it. Support services are also very stretched. It means they need more resources. Support services have been good but they have not got enough resources and time. EWS is variable. I feel that rather than working with schools, they side with parents. Education Social Workers say that they are working for schools and the quality of service you get varies. We could have benefited if we could have employed our own full-time Home liaison Teachers.

I think, here in lies the danger of autocracy. Education Social Workers are disliked by some Headteachers because they listen to the pupils and their parents and then advocate for them. Education Social Workers empower the pupils and parents to argue their cases during the process of exclusion and the Headteachers think, this is a challenge to them. As we all know, there is not a scarcity of those parents who may not understand the bureaucracy of the Education System and they may not be articulate enough to deal with Government Officials effectively, and there are parents from Asian and other minority ethnic communities, who may not have sufficient command of English language to argue their cases. If all these parents do not get available support [adequate or inadequate from EWS] then Headteachers may dictate the terms. Headteachers already have enough powers compared to the parents who are supposed to be equal partners in the education of their children as advocated in the 1993 Education Act of 'Choice and Diversity'. Suggestions by some Headteachers to wipe out the Education Welfare Service has got vested interests.

Mullender and Ward argued the issue of power:

It well suits the vested interests of those who benefit from oppression to see the effectiveness of those who would oppose it diluted and neutralised by competing claims to the position of 'most oppressed'.

[Mullender and Ward, 1991:5]

If views are not taken into consideration, it will be a one sided story, it will be a version from only the Headteachers and teachers without the pupils' perspectives.

It may not end in fair play and justice. Elton (1989) enquiry 'Discipline in Schools' stated:

Headteachers and teachers should recognise the importance of ascertaining pupils' views..... encourage active participation of pupils in shaping and reviewing schools behaviour policy.....



LEAs should regularly evaluate [behaviour] policies in relation to ... the perception of.... pupils'. In Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Poland and France considerable efforts have been made to involve children in the management and running of schools. In the UK by contrast, the limited rights that did exist for pupils to be represented on governing bodies were abolished by the Government in 1988.

[Lord Elton 1989, cited in Lansdown, 1994:6]

It appears that the Headteachers and the Government do not wish to take any notice of the 'Elton Enquiry' and also what happens in other European countries. Osler in her recent study recommends pupils' participation in drawing up school's behaviour policy.

Osler recommends that:

Pupils should be involved in drawing up a code of conduct which outlines principles of good behaviour and sets out the system of rewards for good behaviour and sanctions against unacceptable behaviour used at the school. Once drawn up, it should be prominently displayed in every classroom.

[Osler, 1997a:68]

As far as the supporting agency issue is concerned there were some Headteachers or their representatives who advocated for supporting services within the schools. Headteacher of 'CSJWRC [18]' school stated that:

We have our own behaviour support unit and the children are referred to that unit after consulting with parents. We are also running training to raise the awareness of the teachers. Every school has a nominated staff who is attached with the support unit. That member of staff has got the responsibility to care for that pupil. This started only this September 1995. It is a partnership with the schools and Local Education Authority.

Deputy Headteacher of 'CHS [11]' school is in favour of allocating all the supporting agencies to the schools and then schools can manage the exclusions. Deputy Headteacher expressed the views:

It is a failure of the system. There is no provision for those children whose emotional needs are not being met. Those social and emotional needs, behavioural needs may occur once in their lives. It may be due to their

childhood. To manage that behaviour, the skills don't exist. We do not have facilities. If the schools have the means to intervene:

1. They continue to be the agency who manages the child. Most chances to resolve the difficulties of the child remains in the school.
2. There is continuity with the parents. Family does not have to go through the difficulty. It is a stigma to the child. It should remain in the school. Exclusion process is the only measure left to the school. Exclusion does not resolve the problem. It is only moving the problem somewhere else. B.S.S and other supporting services should be given to the schools.

It appears the problem is more complex and the solution is not so simple.

Senior Teacher [Head of Pastoral Care] of 'CWS [20]' school suggested another alternative to this problem:

Once the child is out of main stream school, they find it incredibly hard to get back in another school. They have often been labelled and are not given another chance. So I feel something should be put into place to support them. For example, I am very much in favour of the system used by 'BC' [one of the Pupil Referral Units] They call it 'Sale' or 'Return'. They negotiate with the school for a place and will accept the child back if there is difficulty. Also offering them support in school. This means the school does not feel so pressurised and is more inclined to give the child a chance.

This system seems fine in theory. The question can be posed that how many Headteachers will accept this system i.e. accepting an excluded pupil as they always had the pressure of League Tables and the reputation of their schools? If this system is successful, then Birmingham schools should not have any problem of exclusions. But that is not the case and the current study confirms this. The question also arises regarding the resources in these supporting agencies e.g. Pupil Referral Units as in my experience, and the Headteachers in this study clearly show that these agencies are under resourced. Criticising the system a Deputy Headteacher of a 'girls only' school 'CHWGS [10]' stated that:

There is a need for carefully planned system. A lot of children are coping with so many disturbed children. The system is not helping the professionals and the children. There is need to have a centrally retained system, where difficult children and special needs children can go and get help and then return. Giving additional money is a total 'cop out'.

If the above suggested system could have been working then the current arrangement of Pupil Referral Units should have been sufficient but that does not appear to be the case. Another point to note is that the girls' schools do not have the problems of exclusion so numerous and serious compared to the 'boys only' schools or 'mixed' schools.

This Deputy Headteacher is probably contradicting herself, when she commented:

The larger amount of girls we have trouble with, come from other schools and those are the ones who have been excluded. The children who attend Behaviour Support Service are often spoiled.

So, the pupils who are in attendance of Behaviour Support Service are spoiled and the 'trouble maker' pupils are those, who have been excluded from other schools, then how can the centrally retained system of 'spoiled' and 'excluded' pupils rectify their behaviour? Also which school would be ready to accept these pupils who already had earned a reputation?

Headteacher of 'CSHS [5]' frankly admitted not to accept any excluded pupil and not to join with any other school in any sort of partnership because it can tarnish the reputation of the school.

Headteacher stated:

We are heavily subscribed and not very keen in taking excluded children. This creates a problem for the waiting list pupils. We are not party to any partnership with any school. We can lose our reputation with such agreement. We have a very good reputation and that's where the League Tables come in.

Nine Catholic Secondary Schools have created a system of partnership of which the 'CSHS[5]' school's Headteacher was commenting upon. These Catholic Secondary Schools believe that their system is working and the excluded pupils do not lose their education for which they are entitled.

Headteacher of ‘CSJWRC [18]’ school stated that:

We do not like permanent exclusions. The children who were permanently excluded were immediately assisted to find another school and they did not miss any education. In nine Catholic Schools we have formed a partnership and we have set up our own behaviour unit. We try to be proactive to avoid exclusion and put some supports. We have taken some pupils from other Catholic Schools and vice versa.

This particular Headteacher was critical perhaps of the Local Education Authority when he argued that:

What is the incentive for schools to keep a pupil in the school? It is disincentive. So there is no point to keep a child in the school who is at the verge of exclusion. If there is incentive to keep a child, then I will take a child e.g. we should receive in the first six months £2000, then £1500 and then £1000 and then normal rate. Because the child has a special need and it is a lot cheaper than keeping a child in the Pupil Referral Unit. By this, you can reduce exclusions by 10 to 15%. The number of exclusions are rising and the pupils are going to exclusion units and there is more and more pressure on the staff there. It is an advantage to exclude those children who deserve it and this helps the League Table. Grant-Maintained schools may be doing this and that helps their League Tables.

It appears that the Catholic Schools readily take excluded pupils from the other Catholic Schools in partnership but not any other excluded pupil from non-Catholic School. This Headteacher was suggesting to accept non-Catholic Schools only if Local Education Authority would provide them with additional money but Deputy Headteacher of ‘CHWGS [10]’ school argued that, ‘Giving additional money is a total cop out’. It could be that these Catholic Schools are short in funding. However, their system of not excluding any pupil is commendable though the issue of not accepting any non-Catholic pupil seemed to be contradictory to the Christian principle of treating all people the same.

Headteacher of ‘CLMCE [14]’ school made a suggestion of vocational training and criticised the city council:

There needs to be a unit, where pupils are engaged in vocational training. No imagination has been given in the city. The curriculum is too narrow or book orientated. What is needed is more stimulation. Only 16% of time is spent in the school. The city should organise a place where practical activities can happen. A lot of disturbance is due to personal trauma or single parents. There is no structured programme for the excluded children. There are not enough resources.

The suggestion of vocational training appears reasonable as the academic education may not be the answer for all the children. Some politicians and the ‘think tank’ for the education system in this country, do talk about this and now there is some hope as the Government’s recent White Paper, ‘Excellence in Schools’ states that:

We failed to lay the foundations of a mass education system at the end of the 19th century as our competitors - France, Germany and the USA - were doing. They recognised that a strategy for national prosperity depended on well-developed primary and secondary education for all pupils, combined with effective systems of vocational training and extensive higher education.

[DfEE, 1997:10]

### **Needs of the pupils:**

Pupils, like adults, have emotional needs. Some of these needs are: self-esteem, to be valued, to be listened to, and to be taken care of. Some Headteachers or their representatives, mentioned about the needs of the pupils. They openly admitted that schools may not be able to meet their emotional needs and some highlighted a variety of pressures the pupils may be under. Deputy Headteacher of ‘CHS [11]’ school commented:

Time is a valuable resource. A child’s emotional needs may not be met in the school. This is quite a difficult and complex area. Many teachers may not have the skills to meet the needs of some difficult children.

Senior Teacher [Head of Pastoral Care] of ‘CHH[8]’ school talked about the various pressures:

It always happens at the age of 15 and 16 years probably because of hormones. There is a lot of pressure from parents, school and the peer group. The messages come from all sides and it becomes difficult for them to cope with all this. The brighter kids get pressure from teachers and parents to have good results. A lot of

parents put pressure on their children to achieve what they wished to achieve themselves but were unable to.

The psychological analysis provided by the teachers, above; compounds when it is applied on Asian and African-Caribbean pupils. The dimension of 'race' and culture complicates it further and these pupils experience further pressure than the normal white pupils in the contemporary society of Britain.

To understand the pressures of these Asian and African-Caribbean pupils, there is a need to be aware of racial and cultural issues and how they affect them. Senior Teacher [Head of Pastoral Care] of 'CWS [20]' school did reveal some of these issues, where this Senior Teacher advocated sensitivity, love and support rather than raising voices at these pupils. Staff attitude is crucial to bring any change as the Headteacher of 'CHWBS [9]' school maintained:

..... without any change in the staff attitude the problem will always exist.

Headteacher of 'CAIRC [1]' also endorsed the above views:

..... it is a cry for help. For some children it is difficult to cope with the school environment.

Discussing the teacher-pupil relationships Gillborn highlighted these issues in his study of City

Road school:

Just as they did in relation to Afro-Caribbean pupils, City Road staff often held generalised images of South Asian cultures. Although some were sensitive to variation within the Asian community, on the whole, teachers' views seemed to reflect a mixture of popular misconceptions and white media images of South Asian pupils. For instance, many teachers saw their Asian pupils as suffering through overt strict, sometimes 'destructive' traditions within their communities.

[Gillborn, 1990:79]

Being concerned about the misconceptions Gillborn suggested to teachers that:

All teachers should be aware of multicultural issues and sensitive to possible bias, regardless of their various subject specialisms and the ethnic origin of their pupils.

[Gillborn, 1990:150]

Similarly, the Rampton Report (1981) also argued that teachers should be prepared to examine their own attitudes and actions and be prepared to take a stand against racism.

In short we are seeking teachers to play a leading role in seeking to bring about a change in attitudes on the part of society as a whole towards ethnic minority groups.

[Rampton 1981, cited in Martin Straker-Welds, 1984:224]

It may be that some of these factors frustrate some of these pupils in the schools though they may be intelligent as revealed by a Deputy Headteacher of 'CHS[11]' school.

Pupils who have been excluded were intelligent but their behaviour came in the way.

Similarly, Headteacher of 'CLMCE[14]' school agreed that these children were able children, Headteacher stated that:

My impression is that some of the pupils who have been excluded were potentially able but their backgrounds and values disaffected. This tends to be the pattern.

The above comments are a typical example of a Eurocentric approach that pupils should adopt Eurocentric values and we are not prepared to learn about different racial and cultural needs of these different pupils. This study has revealed that this particular Headteacher has no Asian staff, no Asian Governor but still claimed that training was provided to the staff on multicultural issues, on equal opportunities, anti-racism and racial harassment. If, after training, the Headteacher maintained the above views, then what could be expected from the other staff? This

reminds me our former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech in 1988 when she stressed the:

Common experience of Europeans who not only explored and colonised the world, but also civilised it.

She called it:

An extra-ordinary tale of talent, skill and courage.

Joseph Michael - the Belgian interior Minister puts it much more crudely and without shame when he said:

We run the risk of becoming like the Roman people, invaded by barbarian peoples such as Arabs, Moroccans, Yugoslavs, and Turks, people who come from far afield and have nothing in common with our civilization. [Quoted in the Guardian 27 December 1988].

Now, we must ask, what future is there for black teachers in Europe? But more appropriately one should ask, what is to become of all our efforts to alter teachers attitude to black children in British schools?

[Duncan1992, cited in Arora 1992:40]

I fully support Duncan's views, that if our leaders and Headteachers hold the non-sympathetic attitude to ethnic minority people and pupils then we still have to go a long way to bring the real changes for a better education system and ultimately a better society.

### **Politics:**

Discussing about the politics, a number of Headteachers expressed their concern that in exclusion of pupils, politics played a vital role.

Headteacher of 'CHWBS [9]' school was probably very honest to state that:

I think apart from one isolated case all the exclusions from my school were political; they were done for the sake of the rest of the school.



Headteacher of ‘CSACE [16]’ school was a bit more specific in eliciting the factors:

The legislation has led to the increment of exclusions. League Tables, exams, statistics, National Curriculum have contributed to this. Plus market forces have made your school unattractive to the parents.

Senior Teacher of ‘CHHS [8]’ school also mentioned about League Tables and attendance figures:

League Tables put pressure on the schools. Attendance and punctuality also reflect on the school.

The above factors were important for the schools in the political environment where market forces were heavy and the Government was encouraging schools to opt out from the Local Authority control. To keep their image and maintain the reputation some schools may be excluding the pupils whose needs could not be catered for or the ones who do not fit in the school regime. This was an easy option for schools and probably this was the only way, they thought, to survive. But in all this pupils’ education and careers suffer. A Deputy Headteacher of ‘CYS [21]’ school criticised the DfE [now DfEE] for its guidelines and highlighted the issue of Grant-Maintained School; that - that cause some problems:

DfE guidelines should show some parity, Grant-Maintained Schools are saying that this is not acceptable to us. I find things in Birmingham are lax. There seems to be conflict between Local Education Authority and the guidelines by DfE.

From my experience, I know that the Education Department in Birmingham was concerned that some Grant-Maintained Schools were excluding pupils more frequently in comparison to the Local Authority schools. In addition the Department was concerned that Grant-Maintained Schools were reluctant to accept the excluded pupils.

Politics and market forces were quite serious issues to the Conservative Government and the schools were really under pressure. From the Government point of view; it was the accountability of teachers' performance in educating the pupils and this was a priority and it was this accountability that teachers did not like. The Government was also propagating that it was very concerned about the quality of education we provide to the pupils and we must maintain a high standard. The Conservative Government was trying to introduce League Tables for primary schools as well. The biggest teachers union [TUC] called their members to boycott this on 23.5.1996. This was a confrontation between teachers and the Government which was being accused of playing the League Tables. It appeared that the Conservative Government was being threatened by the poll gains of the labour party.

### **Educational Provision for Excluded Pupils:**

Out of the 18 interviews of Headteachers or their representatives, only three specifically mentioned concern about the educational provision for excluded pupils, one of the Headteachers blamed the LEA for this:

It is the duty of the LEA to provide alternative systems. The LEA should provide adequate services to the excluded children. In schools, we are employing a number of people to assist us.

[Headteacher of 'CHHS [12]' school]

Headteacher of 'CSACE [16]' school was also concerned regarding the education of excluded pupils and the other pupils. Headteacher stated that:

..... in most cases it does not lead to full-time education and around here it leads to numerous children wandering around the streets. But if there is no alternative, what can schools do? I must say that there are a large number of children who are disruptive and have not been excluded and they are still in the school causing problems for other pupils. What we need, is not exclusion but alternative education for difficult children. St. Paul Community school has a special

provision for difficult children and this is a better provision. Exclusion does not provide full-time education for them. Excluded children are going to get only six hours of education per week. In LEA schools exclusion is the last desperate thing, which is opposite to some Grant-Maintained schools. We could avoid exclusion if there is an alternative provision. Exclusion is a dreadful experience for everybody.

This is quite a difficult balance to keep. On the one hand Headteachers and teachers are concerned about the education of the majority of the pupils in the school, on the other hand they are in a difficult position to meet the needs of a few difficult pupils who are disrupting the education of the majority of pupils in the schools.

Lansdown argued the case:

Clearly, LEAs, Governing Bodies and Headteachers are often faced with the need to balance the needs of the individual child against those of the rest of the children in a class or in the school as a whole. They have responsibilities to all the children within a school or Local Authority area. It is therefore necessary that the welfare of the child is seen to be the 'primary' and not the 'paramount' consideration as is the case under the Children Act. This principle would ensure that the interests of the child must be considered in all circumstances but recognises that there will be occasions when the best interests of an individual child cannot be met without damaging the interests of other children.

[Lansdown, 1994:5]

A Deputy Headteacher of an 'only girls' school 'CHWGS [10]' was also worried about the education of the excluded pupils:

..... that child needs full-time education. Excluded children do not have enough education.

To have a full-time education is the right of all children including excluded pupils. But what concerned me was, that apart from these above mentioned, three Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers, the rest of the Headteachers or their representatives seemed not to be bothering at all, what would happen to the education of the excluded pupils. What sort of caring and

responsible attitude is this, particularly from those who are a main people to the future generation of rulers and administrators?

Doyle argued that:-

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that pupils cannot be suspended from school for refusing to accept conditions contrary to the ‘philosophical conditions’ of their parents. To date, opposition to corporal punishment is the only philosophical conviction to have been considered under article 2 of the First Protocol of the European convention on Human Rights, which states that: ‘No person shall be denied the right to education’.

[Doyle, 1986:25]

Doyle further argues that:

Governors and the LEA together should collaborate in ensuring a speedy transfer to another school. Suspension in itself should never be a pretext for referral to special education or a disruptive unit.

[Doyle, 1986:26]

It appears from this study that governors of Birmingham schools and the LEA itself has not been successful in following Doyle’s advice.

**Reasons for Exclusion:**

Regarding the permanent exclusion of pupils, the main reasons given by respondents were: violence, challenging behaviour, bullying, failing to comply with rules and regulations of the school; to get the support; and drugs.

Headteacher of ‘CSACE [16]’ Christian School stated that:

Exclusion is virtually exclusively for violence towards other pupils. There is very rare exclusion for other behaviour. Exclusion happens for fighting, bullying etc. and very rare for disruptive behaviour.

It seems that Christian Schools are very hard on violence as stated by ‘CHTRC [13]’ school’s Headteacher as well:

In the present context of education and sanction, exclusion is the only sanction and we are very hard on violence, not only actions but words as well. If it is used in the context of seeking education, the majority of pupils don’t like to be excluded, ones who cause problems to the system anyhow. I do think schools need to be supported. Law is on the side of parents.

This Headteacher appears to be protective of the system and asking for support to maintain that. What it clearly says is that if you do not fit in the system, then keep away. How is the law on parents side? I could not understand this. It is the pupils and their parents who are the victims and get sanctions, not the Headteachers, then how is the law on parents side?

Duniko argued that:

Parents... insisting their child’s misconduct is a direct result of the treatment they receive by their instructors in the educational system. It has fallen to the educator to be accountable for the reasons and solutions.

[Duniko, 1985:13]

Discussing the reasons for exclusion Headteacher of ‘CLMCE [14]’ school commented:

Usually bullying, aggression towards other teachers, completely failing to comply with rules and regulations of the school. Aggression towards other pupils is the major one and challenging staff.

Headteacher of a Catholic School was also very firm on violence:

We have a very firm policy on violence. So, persistent violence and drugs end up in exclusion. So all the ones who were excluded were for violence except one who was excluded for drugs.

[CSJWRC [18]]

Violence is not approved by anyone and it needs to be explored. Why were these pupils violent? Some of the reasons could be that they were not listened to, their needs were not met, low morale.

family background or they were unfairly treated. There may be some other reasons too. A Senior Teacher [Head of Pastoral Care] of ‘CHHS [8]’ school informed that:

Most of the permanent exclusions happen where a member of staff is assaulted. We have two cases where we recommended permanent exclusions but they were turned down by the governors.

If the gravity of assault was serious then why had the governors not accepted the recommendations? It appears that there may be a story from the other side which this particular Senior Teacher did not share with me. Teachers are a powerful body and they belong to a powerful union. If any injustice happens to them, they can threaten to go on strike. But pupils and parents have no union which can threaten any strike action to accede to their wishes.

Headteacher of ‘CHHS[12]’ school was of the opinion that not only children from secondary schools be excluded but from primary schools as well. He was surprised that why this is not happening. He argued that:

I think it should be used more in the primary schools. I am surprised that not many children are excluded from primary schools for their poor behaviour. It seems that there is an accepted understanding that children should not be excluded from primary schools. The number of personal assaults on the teachers is on the increase and that happens in the primary schools, as well.

This Headteacher could not provide me with any statistics for assaults on teachers and Headteachers in primary schools in Birmingham. If this is true, what this particular Headteacher was stating then the situation is worrying. But in my experience working for the Education Department and living in Birmingham for a number of years, I have not come across any serious incidents of assaults on the teachers in primary schools. Another point to note here is: do the schools meet the needs of some pupils who may be considered difficult?

Deputy Headteacher of the ‘CYS [21]’ school stated that:

There is no provision to meet the needs of challenging behaviour pupils in the school.

Headteacher of ‘CAIRC [1]’ school was honest and frank in admitting that:

Sometimes to get the support we have to go through that process.

Here in this process, it seems, that pupils are being used as fish-bait and not much concern is shown regarding their future.

Duniko argued that:

A child or individual’s behaviour can be modified when the environment surrounding him is manipulated to constitute the desired results. Implementing a behavioural program is a time-consuming process which necessitates all of the appropriate techniques. Much like a recipe, omit one single ingredient and the end result will not be as one had intended to be. Often the disruptive student is behaving inappropriately to obtain some self-gratifying need. It may be the attention of his teacher, attention and/or approval from his peers, or possibly an avoidance/escape from assignments with which he may be bored or unsuccessful.

[Ibid.]

Duniko’s arguments need attention that despite all the pressures, teachers should take responsibility for the school environment to modify the behaviour of the pupils to reduce the exclusions.

## **SUMMARY:**

The Headteachers themselves view permanent exclusion as a last resort and felt that the exclusion of Asian male pupils [Year 10 or 11], particularly of Muslims, is on the increase. Some of the blame was apportioned to lack of resources; time and the Government’s pressures e.g. League Tables, Attendance Figures; National Curriculum and Market Forces. Some Headteachers were concerned that due to all these pressures they could not meet the

psychological, racial, and cultural needs of some pupils and there may be some teachers who may not have the necessary skills to deal with pupils from a different 'race' and culture. The main reasons for exclusions were: violence, challenging behaviour, bullying, failing to comply with the rules and regulations of the schools and drugs. It appears that there are more sanctions than positive reinforcers or rewards for acceptable behaviour. There was very little evidence to show the operation of anti-oppressive practices in the schools.

A number of Headteachers were not happy with the supporting services e.g. Behaviour Support Service; Education Welfare Service, Psychological Service and Child Advisory Service and they were of the opinion that these services should be allocated to schools under their management. They also felt that the provision for excluded pupils is not adequate. However, some Catholic Schools have created a system of partnership between themselves to contain the excluded pupils.



# CHAPTER TEN

## QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

### Introduction:

In this chapter the results of a questionnaire regarding Asian teachers both in mainstream and Section 11 will be discussed. The discussion will also encompass Asian Governors, provision for interpretation and translation, equal opportunities policies and training issues.

### Asian Teachers in the Main Stream:

The questionnaire results revealed [See Table 12 page 289] that there was a serious lack of Asian teachers in those schools where the majority of the pupils were Asians e.g. in ‘CHS [11]’ school 80.6% Asian pupils and 12.2% were Asian teachers, in ‘CMS [15]’ school 80.1% Asian pupils and 10% were Asian teachers, in ‘CSJWRC [18]’ school 80.6% Asian pupils and 2.6% were Asian teachers, in ‘CYS [21]’ school 54% Asian pupils and 9% were Asian teachers, in ‘CHHS [8]’ school 67% Asian pupils and 12.2% were Asian teachers, in ‘CHWGS [10]’ school 50.4% Asian pupils and 15.6% were Asian teachers and in ‘CSACE [16]’ school 50% Asian pupils and there were no Asian teachers.

A lack of Asian teachers has an effect on Asian pupils as they do not have educational role models. A Eurocentric school ethos and a white teacher’s culture may not support the best interests of Asian pupils. Even those few recruited Asian teachers may not hold high status positions in the schools.

What could be the reason? Is it low pay or lack of aspirations? Is it career choices or low morale? Or is it discrimination and racism which are the responsible factors for this? Or the combination of all of these factors, mentioned above which discourage Asians to choose teaching as a career?

C.R.E. [1988] found in a survey in eight Local Education Authorities about ethnic minority school teachers:

The overall picture.... is that ethnic minority teachers are few in number .... they are disproportionately on the lowest salary scales....They are concentrated in subjects where there is a shortage of teachers or where the special needs of ethnic minority pupils are involved. They do not enjoy the same career progression as White teachers, even when their starting salary and length of service are similar, nor do their Headteachers encourage them in the same way as they do White teachers... over half of the ethnic minority teachers believed they had personally experienced racial discrimination in teaching.

[C.R.E. 1988, cited in Arora, 1992:36]

A shortage of Asian teachers may lose the trust and confidence in the schools, not only in the eyes of pupils but also the parents. They may think that these schools, where the majority of pupils are Asians should have more Asian teachers to provide a cultural example.

Osler argued that:

Part-time teachers responsible for Indian music and Urdu indicate how the school organisation served to diminish their status and that of their subjects in the eyes of pupils and staff.

[Osler, 1997b:51]

If there is a lack of Asian teachers in these schools, Asian pupils and their parents may feel that these schools are ignoring their cultural and racial needs to fully understand them and therefore are not providing appropriate education and development to meet their needs. Parents may also

feel that if any incident of racial harassment or racist abuse occurs then the white teachers may not have the same empathy as those by Asian teachers who come from the same background, ‘race’, culture and experience.

Dhasmana revealed this sort of an experience in her study:

Another parent talked about the sad experience of her two older children, who suffered a great deal of racist abuse and harassment in a school which took no effective steps to stop it. The two children always hated school and have very sad memories of their school life.

[Dhasmana, 1994:27]

Asian parents, traditionally relate well with Asian teachers. They can speak to them in their own mother tongue and can feel comfortable about discussing sensitive cultural issues. Asian parents generally, respect teachers but more so of Asian teachers in the school for the reasons discussed above. Sometimes this may cause some difficulty to Asian teachers as they may not be able to match the expectations of Asian parents because of different rules and ethos of schools, where they may not have enough powers to bring major changes. A small minority of Asian teachers face a number of problems which are highlighted by Singh in the major enquiry report, ‘Asian and White Perceptions of the Teaching Profession’. Singh revealed some of the issues and racism seems to be the major one:

The views of the Asian respondents differed significantly from those of their white colleagues on the presence of racism among pupils and teachers in schools.

[Singh, 1988:20]

Singh further revealed:

The experience of racism in schools as described by the practising Asian teachers in the group discussion sample reinforces this perception of the Asian students.

[Ibid.]

Some other difficulties highlighted by Singh's studies are: lack of adequate academic and professional support from advisors, Headteachers and other colleagues, unwillingness to accept the presence of racism and a racist attitude, unrealistically high expectations of ethnic minority teachers than white teachers, to use Asian teachers for languages interpretation and translation and not recognising the 'bilingual' skills in terms of rewards i.e. promotions, to use them for multicultural policies and anti-racist work which made them unpopular among the colleagues, a sense of total isolation, they always felt they were being tested and the minor mistakes were not given any allowances whilst white colleagues' serious mistakes were too often over looked, an Asian accent was viewed negatively, traditional Asian dress was acceptable only on 'special occasions' and praying at school was not welcomed. With all these difficulties racism was still on top of the list. Discussing the plight of Asian teachers Singh stated that:

Racism in schools, overt and covert was one of their major concerns and made them seriously wonder about recommending teaching as a career to young black people.

[Singh, 1988:31]

Osler argued that:

Painful personal accounts and a significant amount of research evidence indicate that at all levels black children and adults are forced to challenge racism as part of their everyday experience.

[Osler, 1997b:54]

Despite all the above mentioned concerns, Singhs' study showed that the presence of Asian teachers in the schools where the Asian pupils are present, is crucial. Singh argued that:

They were of the view that to initiate even a minimum change in the present situation the presence of black teachers in schools, even at a high cost to black teachers, was essential. They felt that their presence in schools was of significance in raising the confidence of black children in schools and helping them to be successful.

[Ibid.]

In the above discussion, I would like to contribute to the debate and practice in Birmingham schools and Local Education Authority in redressing this imbalance. One of the steps to increase the employment of Asian teachers, can be taken by schools and the LEA, under the 1976 Race Relations Act as the ‘1976 Race Relation Act s5 [2] d section on racial grounds is allowed in certain jobs where being of a particular racial group is a genuine occupational qualification for that job. For example, where the holder of a particular job provides persons of a particular racial group with personal services promoting their welfare and those services can most effectively be provided by a person of that group’. [C.R.E. Code of Practice, 1995:32-33]

**Section 11 Asian Staff:**

The situation of Section 11 Asian staff was also not very sound for example ‘CHHS [8]’ school had employed four Section 11 staff but none of them was Asian though 67% of the pupils in the school were Asians. [See Table 12 page 289] Similarly, ‘CSJWRC [18]’ school had 80.6% population of Asian pupils and they did not employ any Asian Section 11 teachers. Instead, they employed two Vietnamese and one Chinese. Even in the mainstream out of 38 teachers, there was only one Asian teacher. Is that a good role model for 478 pupils in the school? ‘CHS [11]’ school had 80.6% Asian pupils and only two Section 11 staff were Asians. Six Asian staff were from the main stream, so in total eight Asian staff, where the number of Asian pupils was 688.

Similarly for ‘CMS [15]’ school there were three Section 11 Asian staff and eight from the mainstream staffing. It meant eleven Asian teachers for 80.1% population of Asian pupils in the school. The situation in ‘CSACE[16]’ school was quite interesting. In the questionnaire, the Headteacher did not complete the column for total number of pupils (when I checked out from the Departmental sources, the number was 373). Similarly the column for total staff and Asian

staff was also left blank (which I completed later on from the Department's sources). But in the column of Asian Section 11 staff, the Headteacher put 50% and the column for total Section 11 staff was left blank. This **massaging** was revealed when I checked the column for mother-tongue of Section 11 Asian staff, where it was written 'others'. It meant none of the Section 11 staff was Asian. Not only that, this school did not have any Asian staff in the mainstream either (as I checked from the Department's sources).

I am concerned about what sort of cultural values were being imparted to the pupils in this school?

In 'CYS[21]' school three Section 11 staff were employed, none of them Asian whilst the population of Asian pupils in the school was 486. However, there were five Asian teachers employed through mainstream funding. So, the five Asian teachers were considered enough as a role models for 486 pupils in the school.

Not only this, the situation of Section 11 staff is very unstable as the central Government has now reviewed this funding [previously it used to be 75% and then in the recent years, it was reduced] which was available under the 1966 Local Authority Act Section 11, to meet the needs of the commonwealth citizens.

'The lack of commitment and policy development by the previous government has created a vacuum which has allowed attention to be distracted from what has been effective provision', says a discussion paper on Section 11 funding by the National Association of Language Development in the curriculum. [NALDIC] and the National Association of Support Services for Equality and Achievement [NASSEA]. The paper highlights concern about the uncertainty of the future of Section 11 funding.

[The Runnymede Bulletin July/August, 1997:3]

So whatever, a small number of Asian teachers were employed under Section 11, they would lose their jobs. There is no possibility of replacing these jobs as the Local Authorities including Birmingham is in financial crisis and asking for voluntary redundancies and early retirements to save money. That is why the situation is very gloomy in respect of recruiting and retaining Asian staff either through mainstream or Section 11. In addition, the Local Education Authority needs to have definite policies against racism and racial discrimination; and for the teacher training institutions to increase their 'access' course provision, provide more effective support to the ethnic minority pupils whilst on courses and to target their recruitment policies at the pupils of Asian origin. Anti-racist training and multiculturalism needs to be taken seriously in the teacher training courses as this does not seem to be the case as Singh's study has revealed:

The group felt that teacher training courses treated multiculturalism in a tokenistic manner. There was a great amount of rhetoric but very little firm commitment in practice to match it. Practical aspects of 'anti-racist' education in schools were treated superficially. Not much advice was provided on some key aspects of school work, such as how to organise an anti-racist curriculum for delivery, how to deal with parents, how to deal with colleagues and headteachers who are not sympathetic to this approach. Students were left to their own devices when their own ideas failed to work, and the only option they had was reluctantly to 'give up'. Asian teachers faced great difficulties in trying to fit into white criteria.

[Singh, 1988:30]

Discussing racism one newspaper, viz. 'The Birmingham Post' reported that:

Racism is a greater problem today than it was five years ago, say one third of black, Asian and white people questioned about their experience of racism, six out of ten blacks and four out of ten Asians said they had suffered physical or verbal abuse, according to a survey by Harris BMRB. But nearly two-thirds of black and Asian people had not reported attacks because they thought 'nothing would be done'. Many white and black people agree there is a lot of prejudice against blacks [55% and 49% respectively] But Asians are less inclined to believe that, with only one-third thinking there is a lot of prejudice. Differences emerged in the survey between white, black and Asian beliefs in how much prejudice exists. More white and black people feel there is a lot of prejudice against Asians than Asians do themselves. 61% of whites, 49% of blacks but only 31% of Asians believe there is a lot of anti-Asian prejudice.

[The Birmingham Post, 28th May 1996]

[The figures come from research commissioned by Radio 5 Live for its 'Race Around the UK' season, starting on June 1.] The above news also appeared in 'The Guardian' newspaper on 28th May 1996.

The above survey speaks for itself but still there may be indirect and institutionalised racism which these kind of surveys may not be able to pin point. For that kind of information a serious and in-depth study is required to measure the problem for Asian pupils, Asian teachers and Asian people in general. To counteract any discrimination I would like to contribute in formulating some strategies to promote Equal Opportunities in Birmingham Education Department and Schools because:

..... historical legacy of inequalities is apparent in all British social institutions including teacher education and schools. Despite the progress that has been made in the past, the last decade or so has seen a conscious effort to back track on initiatives which promote equality in education. The new right have attacked educational policy on equality and labelled it 'political', 'left-wing' and 'loony'. This discourse has been well rehearsed elsewhere. (Ball, 1990, Domaine 1988, Crozier and Menter, 1993)

[Verma, 1993:89]

Siraj - Blatchford argued that:

The recent political climate has thus made it increasingly difficult to promote equality issues which are not only deemed marginal, efforts have actually been made by some on the right to take them completely off the agenda. The majority of teacher education students in Britain continue to be drawn from the suburban middle classes. If students have less time to reflect upon issues of 'Race', gender and class, who are they being prepared to teach? The majority of our school population are female and/or come from working class and/or ethnic minority backgrounds.

[Siraj - Blatchford, 1993:90]



If the number of Asian staff is not adequate in Birmingham schools and on top of that, as Siraj-Blatchford argued above, then what are the possibilities to provide equal treatment to Asian pupils in the schools? More precisely, what are the chances of getting fair treatment in the process of permanent exclusion of Asian pupils in the schools under study?

**Table 12: Number of Asian pupils, mainstream and section 11 Asian Staff and Governors in the case study schools.**

School Code	Total pupils	Asian Pupils	Total staff mainstream	Asian staff mainstream	Total Sec 11 staff	Asian Sec 11 Staff	Mother-tongue of Sec 11 Asian staff	Total No. of Governors	Asian Governors
8 CHSS	889	67.0%	57	12.2%	4	-----	-----	16	25.0%
10 CHWGS	755	50.4%	51	15.6%	4	3	Panjabi Urdu	15	26.6%
11 CHS	853	80.6%	49	12.2%	6	2	Panjabi Gujrati	15	26.6%
15 CMS	1320	80.1%	80	10.0%	5.5	3	Panjabi Urdu	15	26.6%
16 CSACE	373	50.0%	26	-----	-----	-----	-----	12	-----
18 CSJWRC	593	80.6%	38	2.6%	2	-----	others	15	-----
21 CYS	900	54.0%	55	9.0%	3	-----	others	15	20.0%

**Asian Governors:**

As shown in the Table 12, the situation of Asian Governors is also bleak. In ‘CHS [11]’ school where 80.6% pupils were Asian but the make up of Asian Governors was only 26.6%. Similarly in ‘CMS[15]’ school for 80.1% Asian pupils, Asian Governors were 26.6%. The situation in ‘CSJWRC[18]’ was worse, where the Asian pupils make up was 80.6% and the school did not have a single Asian Governor. Similarly ‘CSACE[16]’ school had 50% Asian pupils but did not have any Asian Governors.

‘CHHS[8]’ school had 67% population of Asian pupils but only 25% Asian Governors. In ‘CYS[21]’ school 54% pupils were Asians and there were only 20% Asian Governors. The only

‘girls school’ ‘CHWGS[10]’ had 50.4% Asian pupils but the make up of Asian Governors was 26.6%.

Governors are the final body to exclude or reinstate a pupil in the school. Governors are the managers of the schools and they also have a responsibility for the ethos of the school, maintaining high standards of discipline and supporting the Headteacher and staff.

The Governors of the schools are adults from the community and these adults have their own strengths and weaknesses like all of us. The Governors have their own value systems like other adults and we all have our prejudices. Therefore there are concerns about balanced decision making during exclusion process. Taylor argued:

It is hard for Governors to avoid subjectivity and bias when dealing with exclusions. We all have our prejudices. There is plenty of evidence to show, for example that black pupils are more likely to be excluded than white ones for similar offences.

[TES 27 November 1992]

This seems to be the case in this study when comparison was made of 13 Asian pupils’ exclusion with 13 English pupils. In addition, in this study many Asian pupils and their parents felt that discrimination and racism operated in the exclusion process.

When people feel that they are unfairly or ill treated, they generally feel hurt and in these circumstances they develop their own coping or avoidance strategies to overcome their feelings. One of the strategies to empower Asian pupils and their parents could be to increase the number of Asian Governors in the schools particularly in those schools where the majority of the pupils are from Asian backgrounds. For this, we have to explore a number of avenues, for example, do

the schools and LEA pass on enough information to Asian adults in the community regarding the governors' role in the schools; how is the information imparted and what are the incentives to become school governors?

Many Asian people may not have office jobs and they may be employed in industry and working shifts. In addition, their employers may not allow them paid leave to attend governors' meetings and training. Some adults may not be interested to take additional responsibilities on top of their current employment. Some people may argue that why should they do this voluntary unpaid work, when they are already paying enough taxes to provide them services: (including education), Police, Fire and Environment services. I am aware that Birmingham Education Authority has now taken some initiatives to recruit more Asian Governors in the schools in the hope that - that may help to reduce the exclusions of Asian pupils and bring a more fairer system. In the meanwhile, training on cultural and racial issues to all the existing governors could be a step forward to overcome this issue of lack of Asian Governors in Birmingham schools.

In her recent study Osler also recommends that:

All governors should receive training on good practice in the use of exclusion. This should include discussion of racial equality issues, a briefing on the LEA's monitoring of exclusions, what involvement and information governors should expect, and what to look for in assessing their own school's record and procedures.

[Osler, 1997a:73]

Table 13 Experience of Staff Training on Equality and Language issues In Case Study

Schools

School Code	Training	On which policies	Training given since when	Which staff attended training	Background of the trainer	Communication	Further comments
1 CAIRC	Yes	EO,RH,SH, AR, B	2 - 5 years ago	Do not have details	-----	All English Speaking	-----
4 CNRC	Yes	EO, B.	0 -2 years ago contradicts	White staff, EO = 2, B = 5, MC = 3	EO = UKE, AC B = White MC = White, AC, A	-----	The exclusion of Asian students is not really an issue. We have not excluded an Asian child in the last five years, the referral to RH,SH, AR, training indicates a need within our school policies
5 CSHS	Yes	EO, B	2 - 5 years ago contradicts	UKE EO = 85	-----	By Asian pupils	-----
8 CHHS	Yes	EO, SH, AR, B.	0 - 2years ago 2 - 5 years ago 5 + years ago	Record of INSET would not include these details	Again no record was kept of background of INSET trainers	By Asian pupils. By Asian school staff. By interpreters when required	-----
10 CHWGS	Yes (in some more than others)	EO, AR, B	0 - 2 years ago 2 - 5 years ago	EO = UKE B = UKE MC = UKE, AC	EO = AC, B = UKE AR = AC, A MC = AC, A	By Asian pupils By Asian school staff	In the case of girls - could be far reaching consequences unless careful liaison with home
11 CHS	Yes	RH, AR, B	5 + years ago	-----	EO = UKE, A B = UKE, A RH = UKE, Ac, A, O AR = UKE, AC, A, O MC = UKE, AC, A, O	By Asian pupils By Asian school staff Others	-----
13 CHTRC	Yes	EO, RH	0 - 2 years ago	-----	-----	By Asian pupils. Not really a problem	-----
14 CLMCE	Yes	RH, AR, B	2 - 5 years ago	B = 18 UKE RH = 3 AC SH = 3 AC AC = 3 AC MC = 19 UKE 2 AC	B = UKE RH = UKE SH = UKE AR = UKE MC = AC	By Asian pupils	-----

School Code	Training	On which policies	Training given since when	Which staff attended training	Background of the trainer	Communication	Further comments
15 CMS	Yes	EO, B	0 - 2 years ago 2 - 5 years ago On going	EO = All B = All RH = NA SH = NA AR = All MC = All	EO = UKE, A B = UKE, AC, A All staff involve wide range in delivery	By Asian pupils By Asian school staff Education Social Workers	-----
16 CSACE	Yes	EO, B.	0 - 2 years ago	-----	EO = UKE B = Others	By Asian school staff. Others	In proportion to the school population as a whole, there are fewer exclusions of Asian children than might reasonably have been anticipated
18 CSJWRC	Yes (Not all staff recent appts.)	RH, AR, EO, B	2 - 5 years ago	I do not know	EO = UKE, A RH = UKE AR = UKE MC = UKE	By Asian pupils By Asian school staff	-----
21 CYS	Yes	EO, AR, B	0 - 2 years ago 2 - 5 years ago	-----	-----	By Asian pupils By Asian school staff	-----

**Key:** UKE = UK European, AC = African-Caribbean, A = Asian, N.A = Not Applicable,  
O = Others

EO = Equal Opportunities, RA = Racial Harassment, SH = Sexual Harassment, A.R = Anti-Racist, MC = Multicultural, B = Bullying.

**Communication With Non-English Speaking Asian Parents:**

On this question the response from the Headteachers was very clear that mainly Asian pupils and Asian staff were used in communicating with non-English speaking Asian parents. [See Table 13]

None of the schools in this study had employed any interpreter or translators for this exact purpose. Asian teachers may be used for interpreting and translation purposes but their bilingual

skills may not be rewarded. This may be additional work which may not be in their job descriptions and they may not be being paid an additional salary for this. The use of Asian pupils for this purpose may be considered an abuse and it may be inadequate to fulfil the gap of communication with non-English speaking parents. For example Asian pupils may not be proficient in their mother-tongue; there may be a number of issues which may be sensitive e.g. sexual abuse which may be directly related to them and due to cultural and technical reasons of the language itself, children may not be able to interpret appropriately what is being said to them or asked of them; there may be some behavioural issues directly related to themselves or their class mates which can cause a number of difficulties in interpretation i.e. children may not communicate appropriately or may deliberately distort the facts for their purposes. In this way very little or wrong information may reach to the parents. This process can create a number of assumptions and misunderstandings on both sides.

The Education Act 1993 'Choice and Diversity' refers to the partnership between schools and the parents. If there is no adequate and appropriate arrangement of communication with non-English speaking Asian parents, then how can this partnership be maintained? Birmingham Education Authority's document 'Education for Our Multicultural Society: Equality Assurance' notes that:

Heads and Governing Bodies will need to:

- \* Ensure that the school seeks out and listens to the perceptions of minority ethnic parents, pupils and communities.
- \* Make reference to the Birmingham Curriculum Statement on delivering entitlements by formulating policies which address equal opportunities in a diverse society.

- \* Develop and implement these policies through a whole school approach involving Governors, teaching and support staff, parents, pupils and the local community.
- \* Involve parents and the Local Community in contributing to and evaluating the resources and learning experiences provided by the school.

[1991:19-22]

It appears from the current study that Birmingham schools and the Local Education Authority has not taken enough notice of the Education Act 1993 and its own policy statement mentioned in the document, ‘Education for our Multicultural society: Equality Assurance’; as the Section 11 ‘detached duty workers’ and the Section 11 ‘social worker assistants’ the only resource available for cultural and language issues were terminated in March 1996 and there was no replacement of these facilities. In these circumstances, how can the true partnership develop between the schools and the non-English speaking parents? Using Asian pupils is not a compensation as discussed already. Again regarding the use of Asian pupils, another question can be raised: If some English parents may have decided to live in France and they did not know the French language, would they allow their children to be used by the French schools to communicate with them? If this happens, there may appear a headline in the National and International Newspapers. But the situation remains different, when this sort of unequal and unfair treatment happens to ethnic minority people, in this case to Asians. Some of these Asian parents may remain silent and this may be a coping strategy of this inequality and oppression.

Nayak argued that:

Silence is then both the produce of ignorance by communities to confront racism, and a survival strategy by ‘victims’ to cope with everyday experiences of oppression.

[Nayak. 1993:78]

Nayak further argued that:

..... these silences are not simply reducible to ignorance but are closely related to a politics of shape and the ability to create meanings. These complexities suggest that public and private underground and open, individual and collective relations are all significant in shaping European racism.

[Nayak, 1993:81]

**Table 14: Policy Development on Equality Issues in Case Study Schools**

School Code	Equal Opps	Bullying	Racial Harassment	Sexual Harassment	Anti-Racist	Multicultural
	Since When	Since When	Since When	Since When	Since When	Since When
1 CAIRC	Yes 2 - 5 years ago	Yes 5 + years ago	Yes 2 - 5 years ago	Yes 5 + years ago	Yes 5 + years ago	Yes 5 + years ago
4 CNRC	----- 5+ years ago	----- 2 - 5 years ago	Not separately within bullying and Equal Opps			
5 CSHS	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	No	No	No	No
8 CHHS	Yes 5+ years ago	Yes 2-5 years ago	----- 2-5 years ago	----- 2-5 years ago	----- 5+ years ago	----- 5+ years ago
10 CHWGS	Yes Being developed	Yes +5 years ago	PART OF EQUAL		Opportunities 5+ years ago	5+ years ago
11 CHS	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 5+ years ago	-----	Yes 5+ years ago	Yes 5+ years ago
13 CHTRC	Yes -----	Yes 5+ years ago	ALL IN OUR SCHOOL CODE INCLUDED			
14 CLMCE	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 2-5 years ago	Part of bullying 5+ years	-----	Part of bullying 5+ years ago	Yes 5+ years ago
15 CMS	Yes 2-5 years ago	YES 0-2 Years ago	WITH ALL POLICY			-----
16 CSACE	Yes 2-5 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	-----	-----	-----	-----
18 CSJWRC	Yes 5+ years ago	Yes 5+ years ago	Yes 5+ years ago	-----	Yes 5+ years ago	Yes 5+ years ago
21 CYS	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago	Yes 0-2 years ago



**POLICIES: Equal Opportunities; Bullying, Racial Harassment, Anti-Racist, Sexual Harassment and Multicultural:**

All the twelve schools which returned the completed questionnaire claimed that they have Equal Opportunities and Bullying policies in their schools [See Table 14 page 296].

Two schools e.g. ‘CAIRC[1]’ and ‘CYS[21]’ claimed that they have Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-racist and Multicultural Policies as well, in their schools. Other two schools e.g. ‘CHS [11]’ and ‘CSJWRC [18]’ claimed that they have Racial Harassment, Anti-racist and Multicultural Policies but not Sexual Harassment Policy.

It needs to be noted that school ‘CHS [11]’ had 80.6% Asian pupils, also ‘CSJWRC [18]’ school had 80.6% Asian pupils and school ‘CYS[21]’ had 54% pupils from Asian background.

‘CSHS[5]’ school and ‘CSACE[16]’ school revealed that they did not have Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-racist and Multicultural Policies in their schools. [See Table 14] ‘CSHS[5]’ school had 3.3% Asian pupils whilst ‘CSACE [16]’ school had 50% pupils of Asian origin.

Situation of ‘CHHS[8]’ school was quite interesting. The returned questionnaire left the columns of Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-racist and Multicultural blank but underneath it stated that these Policies were implemented 2-5 years and 5+ years ago. This school also claimed that training was provided to all the staff on all these policies but in the column ‘Which staff attended training’, it stated: ‘ Record on inset would not include these details’. Again in the

next column where it was asked ‘Background of the trainer’, school stated: ‘Again no record was kept of background of inset trainers’ [See Table 13 page 292-293].

Similarly school ‘CYS[21]’ and school ‘CAIRC [1]’ did not have any details of which staff attended training and the trainers’ background column was left blank [See Table 13 page 292-293] though both these schools claimed that they have all the policies i.e. Equal Opportunities; Bullying, Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-racist and Multicultural.

School ‘CHWGS[10]’ which had 50.4% Asian pupils claimed that Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-Racist and Multicultural are part of their Equal Opportunities Policy [See Table 14 page 296]. School ‘CHTRC[13]’ claimed that Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-Racist and Multicultural are ‘included in our school code’. Similarly, school ‘CMS[15]’ claimed that Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-Racist and Multicultural are ‘with all policy’. School ‘CLMCE [14]’ stated that Racial Harassment, and Anti-Racist are now ‘sub-part of bullying’. School ‘CHTRC[13]’ left the column of ‘staff attendance’ and ‘background of trainer’ blank. Whilst other schools did provide some indication in these columns [See Table 13 page 292-293].

In the column ‘Training Given since when’ all the schools claimed that on these policies training was provided between two and five years ago [See Table 13 page 292-293]. When I checked from the Departmental sources regarding ‘Inset Training’ only one member of ‘CHS[11]’ school attended Equal Opportunity training once. This particular school had 80.6% Asian pupils and in the column ‘which staff attending training’ it left blank.

Departmental sources revealed that they had not run any training on Bullying, Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Anti-Racist and Multicultural issues but only on Equal Opportunities since 1995. Then, the question arises from where had these schools had their training on these policies? Is it they arranged training on these policies by themselves from their own budget? Or did they not provide any training on these policies but had added a few points on some of these policies in their schools' Behaviour Development Policies, but returned to me the completed questionnaire stating that they have some of these policies and the training has been provided to the staff.

Another point to note here is that I used to provide training on Equal Opportunities; and cultural matters from the training section of the Education Department and in my experience of three years, I have never come across any teaching staff who attended these training sessions. The only people who attended these training sessions from schools were a clerk/typist and receptionists who did not have teaching responsibilities. I also remember that DfE [now DfEE] in 1995 provided a video pack on 'Bullying' to all schools and schools may have used that themselves to make themselves aware of the issue and took it as a proper training because bullying is considered as a serious problem. The Daily Mirror reported that:

Bullying has reached nightmare proportions in Britain's state schools, said a report published last night by the National Confederations of Parent Teacher Associations. Three out of five parents now say their children are affected.

[The Daily Mirror, 28 March 1996]

Examining the background of trainers from the Table Number 13 page 292 - 293, the majority of them were UK Europeans. I am not sure if the issues of racial matters like discrimination and racism were thoroughly integrated in the training [if we accept that training was provided to the teaching staff]. In addition, it is possible that some schools may have Equal Opportunities

Policies [ I was provided an Equal Opportunities Policy by ‘CMS[15]’ school only] and their public commitment to equal opportunities may be nothing more than an exercise in image management: their need or desire to present to the public a socially desirable or acceptable image of themselves. A major concern which seems to typify many schools is the desire to be seen to be doing something about equal opportunities, about ‘race’, sex, disability, cultural matters and other social disadvantages. The adoption of an equal opportunities policy, or pretending to have one, is often seen as useful in this endeavour because, if such policies are, or appear to be, implemented, however clumsily, they can help to protect the school and those in position of responsibility within it from charges of discrimination and racism. I am not sure if the schools are aware that the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission codes of practice came into force in 1984 and 1985 respectively and schools who may be aware of this may have shown some interest about equal opportunities policies.

Mehra argues that:

Jenkins (1989) points out that the pursuit of equal opportunity as a formal statement only has symbolic value creating an image of success. It is important that the policy statement is combined with strategies of implementation. He emphasizes that although a voluntarist approach (i.e. organizations and agencies etc. taking steps themselves to adopt equal opportunity policy) is vital, it has severe limitations. He argued that equal opportunities can only be solved by recognizing that it is a political problem. For example, we need to look inside the boundaries of individual organizations since individuals within organizations are influenced by popular racism and the way equal opportunity and anti-racism are portrayed as something that will disadvantage whites.

[Mehra, 1996:85]

The majority of the schools in this study have revealed that they did not have anti-racist policies hence anti-racist teaching. The same was true for multiculturalism.

Wright (1986) for the Eggleston Report ‘Education for Some’ argued that:

Any school with an anti-racist multi-cultural curriculum, but which does not have a clear and active policy on racial abuse and racial incidents is likely to be

defeating its own aims, and possibly colluding with the very racism it seeks to combat.

[Wright 1986, cited in Ruddell, 1990:28]

Wright's arguments apply to those schools which have 'anti-racist multicultural curriculum' but the situation of those schools could be worse (as in this study of Birmingham's schools) where 'anti-racist multicultural curriculum' seems not to exist. Discussing about equality of opportunity in education Eggleston highlighted that:

If education is to provide real equality of opportunity then all the understandings and misunderstandings have to be examined. Such re-examination can best be begun in the teacher-training course and the school-practice classroom. To do it teacher trainers need awareness of social and cultural backgrounds and a willingness not just to recognise but to understand and value alternative forms of knowledge, language and culture so that they can base the work of the classroom upon a positive analysis of all the children in it.

[Eggleston, 1993:13]

### **Reflection Intended Action:**

No doubt, schools are under various political pressures and they have to do well in League Tables to come up with the public image and therefore may come down hard on those who would not fit into the schools' regime, but the racial and cultural dimensions are important as well. The teachers willingness and commitment to racial and cultural matters is important to devise equal opportunities and related policies and then clear strategies to implement them and monitor those policies to provide a fairer education to all the pupils in the schools. I would like to give input in the INSET training courses, in writing these policies, in formulating strategies to implement them and to create a monitoring system with Birmingham schools so that the increase of permanent exclusions of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils can be prevented.

**SUMMARY:**

The response to the questionnaire has clearly revealed that the schools lacked Asian teachers not only in the mainstream staffing but also in Section 11 provision. The majority of these schools had a high population of Asian pupils. These schools had a shortage of Asian governors and lack of provision for interpreters and translators. The response to the questionnaire has revealed that schools lacked equal opportunities and anti-racist policies and related training was not provided for the teachers.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In this chapter I will develop the conclusions from this study and then put forward some recommendations for Birmingham Education Authority. In the end I will develop some recommendations for future research also.

Pupils who come to the attention of teachers with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems need a great deal of support to maintain their places in mainstream schooling. This, in turn, requires both financial and human resources and awareness of racial and cultural issues, in order to be a positive and successful experience. Ultimately this also depends upon the ethos of the school and the commitment of its teachers and governors. Funding and training in general, and racial and cultural issues in particular, are a core requirement in order to bring about the changes necessary to ensure that these pupils can succeed in our system.

It seems to me as my research has revealed, that we should evaluate the practice of teachers and governors more often. It can be a threatening thing to do but it will enhance the teacher/pupil relationship and make pupils feel more valued. Teachers must take on the responsibility of making and maintaining good relationships with pupils. I believe that self-esteem is of fundamental importance and teachers and 'significant others' should be aware of this and take into account how low self-esteem can affect behaviour. Every gesture and word can have a profound effect upon another person and negative messages will be internalised by those with a poor self-image.

There is also the fact that giving of self may be seen as threatening, especially when the pupils have so little and are afraid of losing the little they have. While all may wish to be part of a school, some may express anxiety about their acceptability and loss of identity. All pupils need to develop self-confidence and a sense of self-worth, so alongside the development of identity equally important is self-esteem. Since discrimination of all kinds is an everyday reality in many pupils' lives, every effort must be made to ensure that school services, rules and regulations, policies and practices do not reflect or reinforce it. If the pupils happen to be Asians then the discrimination issue becomes more complex, even more so, if the schools have no well planned strategies to implement, and then monitor policies and practices closely so that Asian pupils in schools are dealt with appropriately and sensitively.

My research suggests there is a culture of an 'excluded' which gets moulded and reinforced at certain stages in the pupil's life. From my sample of pupils, it appears that they were not aiming to disrupt schools nor were they anti-school but they were aiming to hold their position with their peer-groups. The sampled pupils did not necessarily actively set out to seek arguments with their teachers but situations in which arguments took place, caused pupils to speak their minds. For example, defending themselves when accused, or even, ingenuously, to impress other teachers. They sometimes confronted teachers to gain kudos from peers, on the basis that such kudos took precedence over the upset feeling of the teacher.

The excluded pupils' behaviour is reinforced by other pupils who are either frightened of them or go to them for advice or to ask them to fight their battles. The teachers also reinforce 'the bad child' by humiliating that child in front of the class or in-front of the whole school or make huge issues of a trivial incident.



Parents who encourage their children to be independent by telling them to stand up for themselves find that their children are labelled and reinforced as ‘naughty’, ‘disruptive’, ‘bad’. Excluded pupils display their behaviour very much like actors who act and perform on the stage. Whether or not these pupils made that link when they were acting ‘tough’ or ‘having fun’, seeking attention for ‘stardom’, ‘fame’ or even to boost their ‘self-esteem’; the school is viewed as a safe environment which also offers an audience and spectators and is an ideal setting in which to act out frustration and anger and ‘to have a good laugh’. What they do is of some value to them. Striving for self-praise or self-recognition, these pupils go to school for both social aspects and education, and Gearing (1973) argues that:

It is the overwhelming anthropological experience that culturally patterned bizarre behaviour does in the end make sense. It is also anthropological experience that, when men [sic] keep looking and look well, respect and the like tend to follow; in any event it is then and not before that thinking men are able meaningfully to ask whether that behaviour is good.

[Gearing 1973, cited in Verma and Bagley, 1979:118]

I think schools are agents of socialisation, reflecting the white, middle-class values of our society and intrinsically valuing those pupils who are born into such homes. I believe that schools should be making a more sustained and overt effort to truly value cultural and racial diversity as cultural and racial capital which is of vital importance when looking at success and failure in our schooling system.

I have also looked at education policy in my study and raised several concerns that I have about ramifications of the Education Acts, in particular of the 1988 Education Act, the 1993 Education Act and the 1997 Education Act. The National Curriculum, S.A.T.S, performance related pay and the publishing of results can only lead to a situation where teachers are severely overloaded with work and record keeping, leaving them with far less time, energy and inclination to deal

constructively with behaviour which threatens their authority. I fear that the drive towards the ‘privatisation’ of education through LMS (Local Management of Schools) and GMS (Grant-Maintained Schools) will make pupils with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems less attractive to schools. Having a good ‘reputation’ will become increasingly of paramount importance in order to attract those pupils who will put the school at the top of the League Table.

Policies such as those concerning integration appear to be made, not necessarily to meet the needs of the pupils, but to meet the needs of the pupils as perceived by other people. This in not the same thing. Yes, it is good to keep the majority of pupils in mainstream education, but this does not always mean that they have to be educated in the same schools. Such pupils do succeed and achieve in other schools (as is the case in Catholic Schools in this study) where their socialising can take place in the main body of the school but in a different environment.

The market place economy for education has meant that schools must attract a certain type of pupil in order to survive and maintain their reputation. Pupils with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems may be seen to require too great an input for no guarantee of success. There is a real danger that such pupils may consequently be rejected by schools much as ‘soiled goods’ are also rejected in the market place.

All of this seems to make a mockery of the concept of equal opportunity. How equal can it be, particularly in the current economic climate, if pupils have no sense of self-worth, no real sense of their ‘race’, identity and culture being valued and a Government which seeks to legislate against their success?

The Education Reform Act 1988 clearly ignores racial, sexual and class disadvantages in education. The National Curriculum ignores perspective on equal opportunities and education is very much influenced by the market economy. Racism, sexism and class inequality cannot be isolated if we are committed to provide education for all children in this country but that does not seem to be the case at the present time.

Minhas (1992) echoes my views by arguing that Education Reform Act 1988 and the National Curriculum lack an equal opportunities perspective and do not acknowledge the existing racial, sexual and class inequalities in education. The existence of two important statutes; the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and the 1976 Race Relation Act are also ignored by the Education Reform Act. Market forces have created more inequality in education and anti-racist, anti-sexist and class struggles seem to have lost at the inception of National Curriculum. There is still time and opportunity to convince future education policy makers of the crucial role of ‘including’ all its people in future UK education legislation and policy, and this thesis serves part of this influence.

I have asserted that pupils with [peripheral or minor] behavioural/discipline problems may have a low self-esteem because of damaging experiences at home or in the school environment [having no clear cut policies on equal opportunities, anti-racism, anti-sexism and multiculturalism and no strategies to implement and closely monitor them] and living in a society where all sorts of discrimination prevails, are we not compounding that damage in our present schooling system and if so, how do we compound that even more by excluding them from school? Is this not blaming the victims and victimising the victims even further?

Sometimes some teachers who may not be aware of racial, cultural, equal opportunities and related policies' issues may defend themselves that they are professionally trained and they know what they are doing and may hide their lack of knowledge in the name of professionalism.

Howard discussed these issues in a social work context but I believe her arguments are relevant to teachers as well.

Howard argued that:

Many of the theories you are taught are not relevant - Western psychology just does not apply and without a thorough understanding of the culture, distortions in the assessment of cases are easy to make. It is arrogant of white social workers [and teachers - I think] to think that if they have been trained professionally they can deal with any problem from an ethnic community.

[Howard, 1980:9]

Howard continued:

White social workers [in this context teachers] have to rely on translators [when communicating with non-English speaking parents and using children who may not be able to translate appropriately and accurately for various reasons as revealed in this study] and if it is a complex family problem it can get very distorted by the time it is translated. What the eye does not see the heart does not grieve after, the old wife said as she swept the dust under the carpet.

[Ibid.]

If we throw pupils out of our schools rather than valuing them and working with them [keeping in view their racial, cultural and emotional needs] to raise their self-esteem what do they do in the long months in which they are waiting for another educational placement? Many of the pupils in my study have been out of school for several months because of the lack of educational provision for the excluded pupils and where piecemeal [only two hours a day for four days a week in one of the Pupil Referral Units] arrangements were made, denying the pupils from their entitlement of full-time education. Lack of, or part-time educational provision for these permanently excluded

pupils led them to loiter around aimlessly which may have ended in offending. This is not to say that these pupils may not have offended before but to be out of school with little or nothing on offer and a feeling of resentment and rejection is surely not going to make such occurrences less likely. In addition, Asian parents' dignity and pride was heavily tarnished as revealed in my study, because of the lack of educational provision for excluded Asian pupils' who [whilst] stayed in their homes; as family friends and relatives started making stories and blamed the parents. It will be more so, if these pupils happened to be involved in any offence.

I believe that using an interpretative and qualitative research design has allowed the experiences and perspectives of my pupils to emerge and has enabled me to gain insight into their lives in a way which would not have been possible using other data collection techniques. At the onset of my research I would have expected school rules to be of greater significance to the pupils than they, in fact, are. Had I been using a questionnaire I believe that my analysis would have followed a different avenue than the one which the interviews with the pupils has led me to pursue. Using unstructured interviews has meant that I have been able to gather data in order to accurately record the views and issues of excluded pupils as far as I am able and to include mainly their perspective of the situation.

The findings of my research suggest that pupils who are set in a particular kind of personality are pretty much experiencing the same kind of exclusion. Pupils whom I interviewed came across to me as being articulate in spoken language, having a charisma which attracts others to get close to them, very much a magnetic type of personality which could result in them being seen as 'posers' or 'show offs' presenting themselves as always right and possible leaders or potential leaders.

depending upon which point they are at on the continuum. If a pupil is boisterous, exuberant and a challenge to authority it is possible for that pupil to fit into a culture of exclusion.

Another way of challenging authority is a 'don't care' attitude because in their experience everybody puts them down [teachers and in some cases parents] and that may be the reason they join in the gangs where from they get recognition, identity and self-worth, so that a new sanction is another strand of schools' rejection towards them. Another rank towards their cap. In some cases it is very much like a competition 'who dares wins', pupils versus authority, pupil versus pupil. For the 'known child' silly pranks [may be to seek attention and to be valued] are a pathway towards exclusion.

Pupils' view of the school is one of a place in which to meet friends, have a laugh and gain a qualification. Their behaviour, which may be perceived as disruptive by teachers, is not recognised as such by the pupils. So, there are three realities of school, parent and pupil. The largest differences are about desirable norms, the purpose of school and learning and gains from school experience. These realities have their own validity and rather than apportion blame to one party or another, these need to be bridged so that shared agreement between three sets of players - pupils, parents and schools, addresses academic/social learning and lessens disruption and exclusion - all of which can be a rewarding challenge. So far there appear not to be enough shared values and agreement between schools, parents and pupils. Development of that partnership possibly holds the key to these rising concerns of exclusions.

The factor which must not be ignored, is that these pupils, above all, have a real need to be treated with respect, to have trusting relationships and to be in a situation where adults have a

true commitment to valuing the pupils' 'race', culture and psychological needs in the context of current state of environment in the school [ where there is a lack of Asian teachers as role models and Asian Governors to keep in check the discrimination in the exclusion process; as revealed in my study] raising their self-esteem and their achievement. Teachers may be failing these pupils if they do not give them the positive regard that we all, as human beings, need. Excluding them from our schools is merely perpetuating the vicious circle of failure in their lives, engendering the feeling within them of being worthless and sending them out into life without the necessary skills to cope. By excluding these pupils I believe that we are colluding in the construction of their 'deviancy' and creating future generations of pupils whom schools cannot educate.

The most crucial and underlying factor in all this which came out very clearly in the comparison of English and Asian pupils' permanent exclusion; in the interviews of sampled Asian pupils and their parents and Education Social Workers, was of racial discrimination and racism. This matches one of my purposes of this research that '... there is racial or cultural [or both] discrimination by the teachers/Headteachers and/or Governing Bodies in carrying out the permanent exclusions of Asian pupils from secondary schools'. Other research purposes e.g. (i) To establish whether there is an increase in the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils. [This is the case as findings in my study has shown. There is a concern that this may particularly be the trend among Muslim pupils rather than Sikh or Hindu pupils]. (ii) To evaluate the processes that are giving rise to the increasing number of Asian pupils being permanently excluded from secondary schools. [This is shown by findings of my study that there is a lack of consistency in the reasons behind the excludable offences and the sanctions for them; lack of awareness of racial and cultural matters; lack of policies and training on racial and cultural matters and no strict system of monitoring the strategies to overcome this problem; there is also a lack of Asian

teachers and governors and the education policies of the Government which put pressure on the schools in the climate of market economy]. (iii) To identify factors which are responsible for distorting the education of pupils excluded from secondary schools. [The findings of my study have shown that there is no consistent system in all the Birmingham schools like the Catholic Schools in the city and lack of resources in the schools and Pupil Referral Units and the legislation of the Government which prevented schools to accept the ‘excluded pupils’ in the fear that they may not damage the school reputation.]. (iv) To evaluate the response of the excluded pupils and their parents. [This study has revealed that the majority of the pupils and their parents felt that racial discrimination and racism played a significant role in the permanent exclusion process].

Finally this study has revealed also that education in this country is not neutral but heavily influenced by politic factors viz.: Educational Legislation; League Tables; Local Management of Schools, Opting Out [Grant-Maintained Schools,] National Curriculum; S.A.T.S, Unauthorised and Authorised Absences.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: FOR POLICY CHANGE IN BIRMINGHAM**

The findings of this research have important implications for teachers, school governors and Birmingham Educational Authority to tackle racial discrimination and racism among teachers. Local Authority officers and school structures. ‘Race’ may be more/less important to the same person at different times in different contexts, particularly in professional contexts. There must be a sign of investigation in educational contexts to seek out racism.



Training on behaviour management, mutual esteem in school, and appropriate ethos with regard to backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, 'race', culture, religions and languages of Asian people, in particular is important. Anti-racist training is crucial for teachers, school governors and Local Authority officers to change their attitude towards Asian pupils.

The education system, as part of a wider system of structural and institutional racism, helps to promote the educational failure to Asian pupils through teachers' attitudes and expectations and the routine processes and procedures of the school culture.

Changing attitudes of teachers and others concerned may not be easy and I do not claim that anti-racist training will eradicate individual and institutional racism. But this is one way of improving the situation.

I believe that racial discrimination and racism is embedded in many people's lives and therefore it needs to be tackled as part of a much broader project by schools, to help all concerned to understand their own lives, experiences, ideas, relationships and social behaviour.

Schools need to formulate 'race' related policies e.g. anti-racist and racial harassment policies and then develop class strategies to implement them. To achieve the agreed targets, it is important that these policies are reviewed and targets are monitored on a six monthly basis to overcome any difficulties.

Gaining the trust of the community is crucial to establish a purposeful partnership by providing adequate and appropriate interpreters and translators for non-English speaking Asian parents

and by running seminars and conferences to attract more Asian Governors and students to take up teacher training courses to become fully qualified teachers.

### **Recommendations For Future Research:**

Research is an essential part of education in most of the British universities but its scope and development seems to have been curtailed, at least temporarily limited, because of the effects of the public expenditure cuts at all levels. In spite of all such limitations the ongoing research in education affects directly or indirectly various aspects of the school curriculum. It should be stressed that research in the permanent exclusions of Asian pupils from secondary schools is still in its infancy in Britain. This field of educational research certainly requires more encouragement and resources at different levels.

Therefore, there is a need to have an in-depth study to find out why the Muslim pupils of Pakistani origin are being excluded more so in comparison to Sikh and Hindu pupils. In general, male exclusions exceed female exclusions and more so amongst Asians, what are the reasons behind it? If Birmingham's nine Catholic Secondary Schools have created a partnership to contain the permanently excluded pupils from their schools, there is a need to find out the success and failure of this partnership and reasons for it. If successful, how can this be applied to other schools? Can vocational training in the secondary schools reduce the permanent exclusions of pupils? Or the schooling up to 14 years of age could assist exclusion? All these issues need to be explored.

Also, lack of consistency in the sanctions and the excludable offences need to be researched thoroughly. Finally, if secondary school pupils are involved in the management of schools, would that decrease their exclusions from schools?

It is to be hoped that this research carried out in schools in Birmingham can be used as a basis for further research and reconstruction for schools in similar situations throughout the UK. There is an urgent need for the re-evaluation of exclusion procedures and its practice, in relation to Asian pupils, in all UK schools.

## APPENDIX 1

### A Sample Interview with a Pupil ‘TD’

**Me:** What do you think of the exclusion?

**Pupil:** It was fair but Headteacher, is a bit of racist. In 1993, at Diwali time, during the breaktime an Afro-Caribbean boy used some fireworks but he immediately blamed a group of Asian boys. But later on, we told him that it was an Afro-Caribbean. He interviewed him and then let us go free.

**Me:** What do you think of the future?

**Pupil:** I am at LC [one of the Pupil Referral Units] and wish to become a motor mechanic or engineer.

If I could have stayed in the school, then things could not have improved as I have a load of friends. But at LC, there is only a group of 3-4 boys who are taught by a teacher. [He paused for a few moments]

I was never given any warning that if I do another mischief, then I could be expelled permanently.

**Me:** Do you think, you have let down your parents?

**Pupil:** Yes, I feel ashamed what has happened and I want to prove now that I can study in another school and achieve.

Another thing, that Deputy Headteacher always picked on me. I was sitting quietly once, in the class, and a school teacher approached the Deputy Head that some pupils in the class are messing about. When the Deputy Head came, he blamed me for it. [He paused. . . ] There are only 2-3 Asian teachers and there is no Asian Governor in the school.

**Me:** Did you damage the walls?

**Pupil:** Yes I did damage the walls. They said they have seen me on the video but video was never shown to me. The other boy who was with me is still in the school and the school never took any action against him.

Allegation of 21st September 1995, I disagree with this that I was smoking but all the other incidents are accurate. Some damage to the walls was done by African-Caribbean boys but I was never believed. I think I was set up.

At the governors' meeting, I was asked some questions, which I did not understand. When I asked, what do you mean, the Headteacher said, 'you know, what I mean'. I could understand the English language but did not get the actual meaning of the question.

**Me:** How many years have you studied in this school?

**Pupil:** Four years.

**Me:** Did you encounter any other difficulty in the school?

**Pupil:** No, but I could not understand the science lessons. I never told this to my parents. I tried to understand myself and then at the end I left doing anything about science.

**APPENDIX 2**

**A Sample Interview with Parents**

**Interview with ‘AS1’s Mother - First Time** [redacted]

‘Date of Birth of pupil ‘AS1’ = [redacted]

He was permanently excluded from school = [redacted]

Governors’ meeting made, a decision to exclude ‘AS1’ permanently from school on [redacted]

Mother of ‘AS1’ was interviewed in the presence of ‘AS1’ and the Educational Social Worker. ‘AS1’ belonged to a Muslim family and that’s why a Social Work Assistant from the Muslim background was taken along with me for the interview, so that any cultural issues can be addressed. Though I come from an Asian background but I am not a Muslim.

Me: Do you think ‘AS1’s permanent exclusion from school has tarnished your family's name in the Asian community particularly in the Muslim community?

Mother: He was always picked on and I feel very depressed that my child does not attend school. Whenever any visitor come to visit us, I asked ‘AS1’ to leave the room otherwise I had to give explanation regarding ‘AS1’s stay at home. As a family we are very concerned about his exclusion and try to hide from the other members of the Muslim community.

Me: Do you think ‘AS1’ was discriminated against?

Mother: As I said before, he was always picked on during his stay in the school. No-one listened to him. At one occasion, he was hit by a teacher with a tray without any apparent reason. No-one took any action against the teacher.

I give you another example: last year, outside the school, some girls threw some eggs at him and when he retaliated, the teachers followed him and he was blamed. He got into trouble without his fault. He was blamed for somebody else's faults. On another occasion, he was insulted. Teachers informed us about him only 2 - 3 times since he has joined this school. He has been picked on so many times, we now, feel that he should not have been sent to this school.

He is being blamed for those incidents in which he was not involved at all. This is not fair and he is being discriminated against out rightly.

Me: If 'AS1' does not get a place in any school, then would you send him to Behaviour Support Service Unit?

Mother: What we have heard about the Behaviour Support Service Units is that they provide education only for two hours a day and I don't think that's enough. It is better for him to stay at home. He watches television and sometimes studies on his own. In addition, he is reluctant to attend any school because of his bad experience at school. The school has excluded him but they never bothered about his studies. He was ignored most of the time and whenever we tried to find out from the school, the reason for ignoring him they never gave us any satisfactory



answer. Instead, the school blamed him that he does not do anything and does not listen to any teacher.

Mother gone silent for a few moments and said, 'He has destroyed himself by joining a group'. At this stage the mother became very sad and was about to cry.

Me: How are his relationships with other members of the family?

Mother: He is the youngest child in the family and he should have been liked by everyone. But the situation has become quite opposite - no-one likes him.

Me: He is being blamed that his behaviour is very much sexually explicit. Do you wish to make any comment on this?

Mother: We have no problem at home. He has never behaved sexually explicit at home. Whatever he did, he did along with his friends. The result of all this is that his friends have not suffered but he has been excluded from school.

### **Issues Arising from the Above**

- 1 Family name in the community
- 2 Discrimination.
- 3 Attitude of the teachers.
- 4 Joining a group.

- 5 Relationships in the family.
- 6 Explicit sexual behaviour.

**Interview with ‘AS1’ Mother and Father - Second Time**

Me: When ‘AS1’ was excluded from school, what did you feel?

Father: We felt it very much and I feel very strongly that he was made a target because he was an Asian. I contacted each and every teacher and the Headteacher to rectify the decision but no-one listened to me. I appealed against the decision and if need to be I will take the case to the court. My child was made the target. Even the Headteacher turned against him. If the other children do any injustice, I can tolerate and understand but this made me very angry to know that teachers have discriminated against him.

[Mother]: you know, in this country, you can’t hit any child but my child was assaulted with a knife at school and no-one took any action against the perpetrator.

We are thinking of taking this matter to the court. We have discussed the matter with our solicitors.

Me: When ‘AS1’ was excluded from school did you discuss this exclusion with your relatives?

Father: Yes, we have discussed the matter with some selected relatives and friends.

Me: What did they say?

Mother: They were with us. But you know, it was quite difficult for us to talk with them. We felt so ashamed of this episode, that whenever anyone visited us and saw 'AS1' sitting at home. the question was always asked - why doesn't he go to school? We had to tell lies about the situation. For example I used to say that he is not feeling well and he has to visit the Doctor or we are visiting someone and that's why he stayed at home. We were trying to keep our dignity and respect in this way. You know, that if people could have known about this, then it is a disgrace. The good English family must also be feeling in the same way that if their child is excluded from school, then they may have felt insulted.

Father: I made personal requests to the teachers and Headteacher not to exclude 'AS1' and if they think that 'AS1' has done something wrong then they should give him another chance but no-one took any notice of my feelings and the child's education and his future.

Mother: Whenever we went to school they ignored us completely.

Me: Did you make any arrangements for his education at home?

- Father: I used to teach him myself. Whatever I could I did and then he was admitted at the Centre - attending the Centre only for two hours.
- Mother: Education at the Centre is not a proper education. It is education for the sake of a name. That is not education at all. It is a waste of time.
- Father: It was a matter of only a few months for him to complete his studies at school but he was excluded.
- Mother: The whole school was after him. As I informed you previously it was the fault of the school and not of his. When some girls threw eggs at him a teacher came to our house to accuse him rather than the girls. I showed his clothes to the teacher that the girls have thrown eggs at him. The teacher still did not believe it and carried on accusing him and left the house.
- Me: Did the school contact you about his exclusion? (At this stage father had to leave).
- Mother: The school telephoned us that 'AS1' has been excluded and you can collect him. 'AS1' tried his best to pursue the teachers but no-one listened. One of the teachers warned 'AS1' consistently that I will not stop till I kick you out from the school. He was really after him.

Even after the exclusion, if 'AS1' happens to go near the school, the teachers warn him not to come near the school. We have to go that way and the teachers say to him that you cannot use this way. So the school is still troubling us. They have really made us upset. We feel very bad and we have kept everything to ourselves that nothing could be done. They have destroyed the life of my son and he is now 15 years old and has not even passed the school. None of my other children have gone through this and he is the only one who has ended up like this.

One day he was late from college and we telephoned the college to find out what has happened. I was worried and my other children started making a big issue out of this that I worry too much and I said to them that he is still a child and as you know the circumstances are such that anything could happen to anyone at anytime. I told him clearly that you can't stay late at college because of your age.

Me: How is his studies now?

Mother: He is alright now.

Me: What are his future plans?

Mother : He will join YTS, and probably will learn skills to gain employment. Because school has already destroyed his education and there is no other option left for him you know. once some teachers came to our house in the car. our neighbours

and other people on the road started asking us the next day: ‘Why did the teachers visit you?’ It was so embarrassing and humiliating. Our next door neighbours are English people and none of the teachers have ever visited them. They have their school age children. Teachers visited us only because we are Asian.

### **Issues Arising from the Above**

- 1 Discrimination.
- 2 Attitude of the teachers and the Headteacher
- 3 Disgrace in the community particularly among relatives.
- 4 Education provided at Behaviour Support Unit [Pupil Referral Unit] by LEA.
- 5 Last days of ‘AS1’s schooling.
- 6 Victimisation and harassment.
- 7 Embarrassment and humiliation.

APPENDIX 3

A Questionnaire To Secondary Schools

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions:

- 1

What number of Asian Children attended your school in the academic year 1993/94?

Total number of pupils

Asian pupils
- 2

What number of the school teaching staff (mainstream) are Asian?

Total number of teaching staff

Total number of Asian teaching staff
- 3

What number of your teaching staff are funded under Section 11 of 1966 Local Government Act?

Total number of Section 11 teaching staff

Total number of Section 11 Asian teaching staff
- 4

Of the number of Section 11 staff, the mother tongue is...

Panjabi

Urdu

Bengali

Gujarati

Hindi

Others
- 5

On your Governing Body, please state how many of the governors are of Asian Origin?

Total number of governors

Total number of Asian Governors
- 6

How many Asian children were excluded permanently from your school in the academic year of 1993/94?

7 Which of the following listed policies are being implemented and since when?

Equal Ops	<input type="text"/>	0-2 yrs	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>
Bullying	<input type="text"/>	0-2 yrs	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>
Racial Harassment	<input type="text"/>	0-2 yrs	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>
Sexual Harassment	<input type="text"/>	0-2 yrs	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>
Anti-Racist	<input type="text"/>	0-2 yrs	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>
Multi-cultural	<input type="text"/>	0-2 yrs	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>

8a Has training been given to any of the staff in relation to the above polices?

Yes	<input type="text"/>
No	<input type="text"/>

8b If yes, which policies?

Equal Ops	<input type="text"/>	Bullying	<input type="text"/>	Racial Harassment	<input type="text"/>
Sexual Harassment	<input type="text"/>	Anti-Racist	<input type="text"/>		

8c When was the training given?

0-2 yrs ago	<input type="text"/>	2-5 yrs	<input type="text"/>	5+ yrs	<input type="text"/>
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8d How many UK European/African Caribbean/Asian teaching staff attended the training in relation to the above? Number of teaching staff?

	UK/European	African/Caribbean	Asian	Other
Equal Ops				
Bullying				
Racial Harassment				
Sexual Harassment				
Anti-Racist				
Multi-cultural				



9      What was the background of the trainer for the above courses?

		UK/European	African/Caribbean	Asian	Other
Equal Ops	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bullying	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Racial Harassment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sexual Harassment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Anti-Racist	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Multi-cultural	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

10      How does school staff communicate with non-English speaking Asian parents?

By Asian pupils	<input type="text"/>	By Asian school staff	<input type="text"/>
By Agency Interpreters	<input type="text"/>	Others	<input type="text"/>

11      Have you any further comments or suggestions to make on any issue particularly to the permanent exclusion of Asian pupils?

Thank you very much for your time.

Please post to:



## **APPENDIX 4**

### **A list of Questions to Interview Headteachers and Education Social Workers**

- 1      From your general practice, have you seen an increase or decrease in the number of permanent exclusions of Asian children?
- 2      Are the exclusions isolated to a particular year group, ethnic group or gender?
- 3      Did the reasons warrant exclusions?
- 4      Do you think the exclusion has been used adequately?
- 5      What are your opinions on exclusion in general?

**APPENDIX 5**

**A Sample Interview with a Headteacher**

**Interview with a Headteacher**



Me: From your general practice, have you seen increase or decrease in the number of permanent exclusion?

HT: Definite increase and definite increase in the proportion from Asian background and the third thing, a distinct change in the sort of behaviour pattern that was leading to Asian youngsters' exclusion. I think, it was increase in the interpersonal violence i.e., boys between boys and boys between staff. The majority of white staff was used to certain set of behaviour from Asian boys and when that changed to being 'normal' the British Spectrum of behaviour, and that was different for staff and other boys from other backgrounds to accept and then led to other problems and issues.

Staff had got used to thinking creatively with white boys and African-Caribbean youngsters but staff as yet had to develop a range of strategies to deal with Asian children and other backgrounds

Me: Are the exclusions isolated to a particular year group, ethnic group or gender?

HT     No, apart from an emphasis on Year 10. As far as ethnic group is concerned there appears to be a worrying increase in the number of exclusions which originate in the breakdown of Muslim families (boys out of control from their families and school).

Me:    Do the reasons warrant exclusion?

HT:    I think, apart from one isolated case all the exclusions from my school, were political; they were done for the sake of rest of the school

Me:    Do you think the exclusion has been used adequately?

HT:    No, it was not adequate for the individual pupil. In my opinion, pupils needed more help but that was not provided. There was a lack of resources e.g., Supporting Services and that was the biggest disappointment

Me:    What are your opinions on exclusion in general?

HT:    We should not have to exclude and if necessary, we should have a special provision at a school or a group of schools and that will help boys to change the attitude and behaviour. Such a place could be a centre for staff development because without changing in the staff attitude problem will always exist.

### **Issues arising from the above**

- (1)     Increase in the exclusion of Asian children
- (2)     Interpersonal violence between boys and staff
- (3)     Exclusion in the Year group 10

- (4) Increase in the exclusion of Muslim boys
- (5) Exclusions are political and children are excluded for the sake of rest of the school
- (6) Pupils needed more help which was never provided
- (7) Special provision for the boys who have behaviour problems but not to exclude. Special provision must be in a school or group of schools
- (8) Staff attitude needs changing and staff need training

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **A Sample Interview of an Education Social Worker**

#### **Interview with A White Male Education Social Worker -**

Me: From your general practice, have you seen increase or decrease in the number of permanent exclusion.

SW: It has been an increase over the last few years. I think, when the category 'B' is abolished, this may have some further effect.

Me: Are the exclusion isolated to a particular year group, ethnic group or gender?

SW: My school is full of Asian and African-Caribbean pupils and a few white pupils. So, the majority of the exclusions are of Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) pupils. There have been a number of African Caribbean students but the school argued that these are second excludees and pupils who have come from other secondary schools are mainly from Year 10 and 11.

Me: Do the reasons warrant exclusion?

SW: Schools think they do. I am not sure if the schools have used the support available to them before using the ultimate sanction i.e. permanent exclusion. They have not used Behaviour Support Service, Educational Psychologists, Child Advisory Service and Education Welfare Service.

I think it would be more helpful if the teachers receive more training on class management and cultural and 'race' issues. I think African-Caribbean boys who are in minority in the school look to their African-Caribbean peers for physical and emotional support because they feel overwhelmed by the numbers of other groups. This could happen to Asian children where they are in minority in a school. Teachers tend to see these groups as threats.

Another point I wish to make is that there is a clash between a school culture and the peer group culture. With the Asian children, some of the families are very traditional in terms of cultural and religion and children find it difficult to adhere to the parents' wishes. Some Asian parents cannot speak English and there are some Asian children who can only speak English and no Asian language or limited Asian language. This alienates children and parents which ends up in frustration and communication problems.

The children who are excluded permanently from schools particularly in Year 10 and 11, have not benefited from education, end up with no real prospectus of employment and success, result into antisocial activities, delinquency and flash behaviour to gain some sort of identity . The are at the bottom of heap.

Me: Do you think the exclusion has been used adequately?

SW: They have not been used appropriately. I think schools have made political decisions rather than individual decisions. Because a school wishes to signal other pupils that the behaviour which school considers unacceptable will not be tolerated. Individual circumstances are often lost to the political points.

Local Management of Schools, Children Act 1989, Education Act 1993 are uncomfortable bedfellows, because statutory requirements is that children must be educated for their needs, culture and religion. Children's needs are paramount. This is incompatible with LMS., League Tables and market place philosophy where schools want successful pupils only.

Me: What are your opinions on exclusion in general?

SW: They are too many and used inappropriately. Exclusions are devised used by the schools to get rid of unwanted pupils. In exclusion process, there is an imbalance of power to the detriment of the student. Often school evidence is inadequate not well documented and not open to challenge. In my opinion it is a pity that there is not a similar process to the unfair dismissal procedure as in the employment world.



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