

**Asian Black and Minority Ethnic Principals  
in England's Further Education Colleges:  
An Investigation into the Dynamics of their Leadership**

**by**

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**Asian Black and Minority Ethnic Principals in England's Further Education  
Colleges: An Investigation into the Dynamics of their Leadership**

**Abstract**

This study explores the dynamics of leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic (ABME) principals in England's Further Education colleges. It identifies and describes the motivations and characteristics of their leadership which propel and sustain it. The research outcomes suggest that their leadership is learner and community focused. It is aimed at improving fairness, equality and social justice. The principals are driven by their deeply rooted principles, passions and values flowing from their direct experiences of disadvantage, disparities and racial discrimination. Their personal up-bringing, socialisation and heritage have not only inspired and encouraged them to come into education, but have also energised them in their journeys as leaders.

The ABME principals' trajectories, however, have been mediated by a persistent tendency within the establishment to marginalise and underestimate their capabilities, compounded by FE bureaucracies and organisational impediments. They have taken these obstacles as challenges and seized opportunities for further formalising their passions and principles into leadership strategies for transforming their colleges and influencing the FE environment. This thesis is based on empirical evidence, collected from interviews with the first generation ABME principals: the class of 1998/9 – 2008/9, offering an historic snapshot of their experiences, within the conceptual framework provided by the review of literature on educational leadership, FE management, race and ethnicity.

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## Summary

This study explores the dynamics of leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's Further Education colleges. The findings of the investigation identify and describe the motivations and characteristics of leadership which have propelled and sustained them in leadership roles in Further Education. The research outcomes suggest their leadership is learner and community service focused - aimed at improving fairness, equality and social justice, which they see as the moral purposes of Further Education.

The thesis is based on the outcomes of empirical research conducted within the conceptual framework of the dynamics of educational leadership provided by the review of relevant and contextual literature. The empirical evidence was collected through interviews with the first generation ABME principals: the class of 1998/9 – 2008/9, offering an historic snapshot of their experiences. The thesis proposes that their journeys as educational leaders are distinctive in offering a new understanding and knowledge of their approaches, priorities and practices as FE college principals.

The composite argument of the thesis is that ABME principals are driven by their deeply rooted principles, passions and values which have developed from their direct experiences of disadvantage, disparities and racial discrimination. Moreover, their personal up-bringing, socialisation and heritage have not only inspired and encouraged them to come into educational leadership, but have also energised them in their journeys as FE



college leaders. They formalised their principles, social issues and concerns into a vision for Further Education, which strengthened their purpose of transforming their colleges and influencing the wider FE environment. They have taken the core purpose of their leadership role as an opportunity to make a difference in Further Education colleges by improving standards of employment and services through transformation of the college organisation and institutional practices.

This research underlines that ABME principals have turned their experiences of impediments and limits to their leadership at personal, professional, institutional and environmental levels into positive transformational strategies, adding impetus to the dynamics of their leadership. They have taken their role as principal, as an opportunity for improving the life chances of learners and social mobility in the community through their progressive leadership drive - despite many barriers of wasteful bureaucratic practices, managerial inhibitions and distracting structural and environmental changes.

The Literature Review indicates that this area of educational leadership is under-researched and under-theorised; however, some literature has appeared since the publication of the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003). This thesis offers a valuable and unique addition to the developing body of literature in the area of leadership in the field of FE colleges; its outcomes provide a seminal basis for further research and development of the study.

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## **Dedication**

My deep thanks to my wife Surrinder, formerly an NHS nurse, who has often sacrificed her own aspirations to provide me with the support and encouragement to achieve my writing, academic and career ambitions. Thanks also to my daughters Sukhdeep, Satpreet, Oprinder and Darvesh and the wider family for their care and support. They were so keen for me to complete this thesis.

## **Glossary**

ABME	Asian Black and Minority Ethnic
AoC	Association of Colleges
ACAS	Arbitration Conciliation and Advisory Service
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
BIS	Business Innovation Skills (Department for)
BLI	Black Leadership Initiative
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
CIF	Common Inspection Framework
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DCSF	Department for Schools, Families and Children
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DRCQ	Data Review Composite Question
E&D	Equality and Diversity
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FECs	Further Education Colleges
F&HE	Further and Higher Education Act 1992
FECS	Further Education Colleges' Sector
FfE	Framework for Excellence
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
IQs	Interview Questions
LA	Local Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning Skills and Development Agency
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
LSN	Learning and Skills Network
NbM	Network of Black Managers
NbP	Network of Black Professionals
NATFH	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NIACE	National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NFER	National Foundation of Educational Research
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PQP	Principals Qualifying Programme
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
T2G	Train to Gain
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UCU	University and Colleges Union
UKCES	United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills
YPLA	Young People's Learning Agency

**Chapter 1:**  
**Development and Formalisation of the Investigation**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This study explores the dynamics of leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's Further Education colleges. The thesis is based on the outcomes of empirical research conducted within the conceptual framework of the dynamics of educational leadership, provided by a review of relevant and contextual literature (Chapter 2). The composite argument of the thesis is that ABME principals are driven by their deep rooted principles, passions and values which have developed from their direct experiences of disadvantage, disparities and racial discrimination. The research outcomes suggest their leadership is learner and community service focused - aimed at improving fairness, equality and social justice for all, which they see as the moral purposes of Further Education.

This Chapter offers a background, rationale and preview of the thesis. The Section subheadings indicate the themes followed and the final subtext provides a summary and direction.

## **1.2 Origins of Interest in Leadership**

As noted in Sangha (1997; 2001) the origins of this interest in leadership and education lie in my early impressions of the roles of many inspirational national, regional and local leaders in post-independent India. They were endeavouring to make a difference, especially at local levels, by initiating, developing, leading and delivering education and welfare projects. My impression then was of a somewhat dynamic local community in my home



town of Jandu Singha, Jalandhar, Punjab, a microcosm of the wider educational community, in which some of our local 'servant leaders' were emulating the roles of regional or national leaders (Appendix 7.2.3a). Some of the local leaders were truly inspirational leadership role models as identified and described in the teachings of the Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib (1604), they were called 'seva centric' or selfless service providing leaders, a definition of educational leadership which is also presented by Harleen Singh (Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership..., 2010). This concept of educational leadership has similarly been described as 'servant leadership' in some of the contemporary literature, as for example Harris (2009, p11) suggests, "Creative leadership is a form of 'servant leadership' where the main leadership task is to connect different people, ideas and ways of thinking..." Leadership role models in the community, education or society may invariably be inspiring.

This investigation discovers the dynamics of educational leadership of the first generation Asian Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's FE colleges. It identifies and describes the drivers and qualities of their leadership in Further Education as 'learner service and community centred; pursuing fairness, equality and social justice.

Having migrated and settled in England, my early career in the West Midland's metal industry (between the late 1960s and 1970s) involved some leadership activities relating to industrial relations and trade union education. This formed my early impressions of Further Education. Sangha (1980) refers

to some of the activities often involving challenging work on health and safety, race discrimination, work based learning, wages and conditions of employment issues, Duffield (1988) has further explored the nature of these activities. This role brought me closer to the purposes and provision of FE colleges in England. The TUC, EEF and the Government were then promoting work related education, new technology awareness and negotiation skills for work place representatives. The context then was similar to the current priorities relating to an up-skilling of the workforce (UKCES, 2010). This early history enhanced my association with FE colleges and from the academic year 1980-01, I commenced my teaching career at an FE college, and progressed through the ranks of management and leadership positions in five FE colleges to become the first ever principal of Asian origin in England's FE colleges in 2002. This study then developed as a practitioner's professional and academic interest.

Initially I found this was relatively a new area of study in the field of FE college leadership involving ABME principals - the term ABME is defined in Section 1.8. At the time of commencing this investigation in 1999, there was little or no directly related or applicable research literature available on the theme of this study for the purposes of the literature review (Section 2.3). However, there was a growing body of publications - particularly from the 1990s - arising from the Government's education department and agencies, and individuals and groups covering areas such as Further Education policy, provision and management (Sections 1.5; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7). The position was not much different in other sectors of education either; Bush, Glover and Sood

(2006) raised this issue relating to the schools sector six years after my initial review of literature. They offered a multi-method approach to examining Black and Minority Ethnic Leaders in England's Schools, arguing that not only are Black and Minority Ethnic Leaders greatly under-represented in schools, but that this phenomenon is complex and under-researched. Therefore at the initial stages during 1999-2001, I relied upon literature relating to general and management of Further Education themes and some of the empirical EdD work which provided a notional framework for further refining the research proposal (Appendices, 7.2.3 c - h; 7.2.4.). In addition I also developed a collection of thematic articles from the educational press reflecting on the issues and concerns of leadership in FE colleges, to develop a conceptual context (Section 1.6).

### **1.3 Practitioner Interest and Research Literature**

During my FE college career, I have developed a strong occupational interest in FE college leadership and have formalised this into research through the EdD Leaders and Leadership in Education programme at the University of Birmingham in 1999. Initially, I explored the factors which inspire, stimulate and motivate FE college leaders into providing effective leadership, involving multiple and complex leadership decisions and actions. I then became keen to identify and describe the factors which propel, sustain and re-invigorate the FE college principals' drive in leading their institutions.

My experiential and practitioner's impression was that FE college leadership was under-explored and under-theorised. This position revealed itself further when I commenced a search for relevant literature during 1999-01 for the literature review. I found that there was little or no literature available relating the theme of this investigation (Sections 1.3; 1.6; 2.1). Whilst discussing the setting up of Cultural Studies, Hall *et al* (1980) noted that it was primarily concerned with neglected materials drawn from popular culture and the mass media, providing important evidence of the new stresses and directions of contemporary culture. This investigation has proven to be a similar case; it has used the evidence from unexplored and uncultivated experiences of ABME principals in Further Education, providing a new insight into the factors driving and sustaining their leadership.

Harper (2000) and the FEDA 1999 research conference in Cambridge noted the scarcity of research literature and publications on FE college leadership; Mackay and Etienne (2006) found little reference to the effects of race on the careers of Black managers in FE colleges; and Lumby (2008) observed at the BELMAS conference in Birmingham that research in the field of FE college leadership covering equality and diversity is still minuscule. As an educational leadership practitioner with a long and continuing association with FE colleges, this did not come as a surprise to me. Instead, it further raised my interest and commitment to pursuing and concluding this research. It was going to be a new, different and value adding academic contribution to FE college leadership study involving ABME principals; its outcomes would become an effective educational tool for thinking, strategising and organising

principles for fairness, equality and justice in FE colleges and in the wider society, as Warmington (2009) has convincingly argued.

During the initial phase of this study between 1999 and 2001, the scarcity of relevant and applicable literature for review became clear, though it was essential to carve a way forward for empirical research. I relied on post incorporation FE college management publications and Government documents (Sections 1.5; 1.6). The aim then was to identify some academic issues and arguments to develop and refine a notional framework for the research questions (Section 1.5). I compensated the deficit in literature by reviewing some relevant race and education related inquiry reports of the 1980s and 1990s. The initial EdD research assignments involved gathering some original information and data via interviews, observations and surveys (Appendices 7.2.3 a - h; 7.2.4). Professor Peter Ribbins (School of Education, University of Birmingham) then commented, “This is a fine piece of work on an area in which little has, as yet, been done” (Appendix 7.2.3h). Seven years on Lumby (2008) maintained at the BELMAS 2008 conference on ‘Equality and Diversity in Educational Leadership’ (at Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham) that research in the field of FE colleges covering this area of leadership, is minuscule.

A review of some of the government and FE college funding and regulatory agencies’ publications of the 1990s offered some direction and questions for research and interviews (Sections 1.5; 3.8). The findings of the initial EdD research including a national survey through the Association of Colleges

(AoC), complemented and validated the research aim and questions (Sections 1.5; 2.1; 3.7).

Gunter (2006) with reference to Ribbins' work has argued that good research in educational leadership aims systematically and critically to contribute to the advancement of knowledge on the subject. In so doing, it has the key purpose of informing leadership judgements and decisions in order to improve educational actions. It is evident from this investigation (Chapter 4; Appendices 7.2.2 Fig.3; 7.2.5) that leadership decisions, judgements and educational actions of ABME principals in FE colleges are underpinned by the dynamics of their leadership determined by the factors which propel and/or impede their initiatives and actions (Section 1.4). These often involved racial issues relative to institutional controls and micro-political struggles for status and authority in FE college organisations. Researching into the role of teacher leaders as arbiters of reform and by analysing the dynamics of authority in team-based professional development and teacher teaming, Spicer (2007) identified the influence of initiatives and ideas in the assumption of authority; Rosemary Campbell-Stephens and Rajinder Mann (Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership..., 2010) argued and presented the concept of an 'authentic-self' in leadership which is rooted in one's ideas and experiences and inspires initiatives and influence enhancing authority to provide educational leadership. In the case of this investigation it is evident (Chapters 4; Appendices 7.2.2 Fig.3; 7.2.5) that racially aware and conscious educational leaders' ideas, initiatives, activities and principles add a differential value to education provision and its organisation, ie the

contribution, role and leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges. In FE college organisations, leadership processes and practices are about their effectiveness in making an impact in improving outcomes for learners and teachers and thus determining quality and standards (Ofsted, 2006); in this context, the contribution of ABME principals is new, different and additional in pursuing the cause of fairness, equality and social justice through Further Education provision.

To develop a conceptual framework for pursuing the empirical research (Chapter 2; Section 2.11), I initially relied upon educational press articles, the findings of EdD linked initial research assignments (Appendices 7.2.3 a-h) and an FEFC (2000c) report which raised the issue of the absence and/or under-representation of ABME principals in FE colleges. The representation of ABME educationalists at senior leadership levels in the field of FE colleges continues to be lower than the profile of the general ABME population (10.6%). Despite their higher levels of qualifications, the proportion of ABME leaders is also much lower than the 20.9% proportion of ABME students (LLUK, 2007/08), The discussion arising from the FEFC (2000c) report and press articles Choudhari (2002), Landman (2002), Haydon (2003) and then the Commission for Black Staff Report (2003) raised the profile of the issue of under-representation of ABME educationalists at all levels of employment in FE colleges. This shows why the field of ABME principals for interviewing has been much smaller. However, the advantage is that I have been able to identify and interview almost all ABME educationalists in the most senior leadership positions.

It was vital to complete this investigation in view of the fact that this area was an under-investigated and under-theorised area (Sections 1.3; 1.6; 2.1). The undertaking of this research became a unique and pioneering challenge. It provided an opportunity to explore and reflect on the process of entry of ABME principals into the field, the challenges they faced in their career journeys and the ways they have tackled the complex leadership tasks, initiated actions and made judgements and decisions. To keep within the scope of this investigation and the research questions (Section 1.5) I have confined myself to examining the core theme of the dynamics of leadership in terms of the key propelling factors of leadership of ABME principals and the limits they have experienced. The issue of racial discrimination in employment and education provision in FE colleges has continued to surface significantly as evidenced in the Commission for Black Staff Report (2003).

The official documents including a large body of functional publications of the FEFC, FEDA, DfES, AoC and LSC were helpful in developing a functional and conceptual understanding of FE college institutions and environment. They provided the initial 'scaffolding' for building an intellectual framework which was further refined by the literature review in Chapter 2. It guided, assisted and underpinned the empirical investigation. The literature review has consulted a range of publications relative to race, ethnicity and education: the Rampton Report (1981) relating to the under achievement of Black children in schools and the state of their readiness for adult life; Education for All, the Swann Report (1985) investigating provision affecting all groups of children in terms of their diverse needs; and the Macpherson Report (1999) investigating the levels of institutional racism in the Metropolitan police and



other public services. These publications have reflected on the issues and concerns of fairness, equality and social justice in public institutions. The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (2003) pulled together evidence from FE colleges providing findings and recommendations for change including the transformation of leadership. Subsequent relevant publications provided a refreshed scope for updating the conceptual framework (Section 2.11) which enabled a contemporary context for interrogating and analysing the findings (Chapter 5).

The correlation between the quality of FE college leadership and performance has meant that 'good' leadership is effective in delivering 'successful' colleges. However, Gunter (2001) suggests that leadership effectiveness is also about impacting on improvements in organisational efficiency; the impact of these processes depends on the dynamics of leadership, which is the core theme of this investigation. Ribbins (2000) suggests that effective leadership can impact on improvement (of FE colleges) but any initiative could run into difficulties unless resources, infrastructure and institutional legitimisation are given. Gunter (2001) argues that organisational processes have a vital underpinning role in sustaining improvement. Therefore, the dynamics of educational leadership and its success cannot be researched in isolation from the overall organisational, institutional and environmental context of FE colleges. However, many other key issues and concerns involving the theme of fairness, equality and social justice in Further Education exercising ABME principals, hardly attracted a deserving profile or attention for debate and address.

The research approach adopted can be explained within the wider framework and typology outlined by Gunter et al (2007) in that it is broadly conceptual, interpretive and reflective. In identifying and describing the dynamics of leadership, the study has focused on the factors which inspire, motivate, sustain and therefore propel leadership. It has also analysed the factors which constrain, inhibit or limit the process, impeding and preventing the effectiveness of leadership. The nature of this research is therefore humanistic, involving the gathering of knowledge from experiences, biographies and personal and professional journeys (through interviews), to identify, understand, analyse and interpret the underlying processes of leadership.

Best et al (1983) noted that leadership is diffused and rooted in initiatives in organisations. The outcomes of this investigation, as previewed in the following Sections, show that leadership initiatives of ABME principals are often self-propelled within the framework of a competitive market culture of the post incorporation era of FE colleges, as Jephcote et al (1996) has analysed. However, the fundamental drivers of leadership of ABME principals, as the evidence in Chapter 4 shows, are their vision, values, ambitions and commitment to make a difference in the lives of learners who need Further Education most due to the disadvantages they may have encountered. The following Sections outline the main arguments of the thesis.

## **1.4 Preview and Focus of the Investigation**

This investigation shows that there are a range of deep rooted personal factors which play a significant role in attracting ABME educationalists to FE colleges and inspiring them for a leadership role as principals. This is despite many differential impediments such as institutional racism, racial discrimination and prejudice which they have experienced and encountered (Appendices 7.2.2 Fig.3; 7.2.5). A decade ago, when this research was commenced, the then Home Secretary Jack Straw published the Macpherson Report (1999), which investigated the 22 April 1993 Stephen Lawrence tragedy. This document was launched as one of the sustained drives against racial inequality across Government departments and public services, as noted by Travis (2010). However, Carter (2010) asserts that major employers were still reluctant to employ and promote Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic people, and in FE colleges discrimination in employment and barriers to career progression still continue. The LLUK (2007/8) Annual Workforce Diversity profile data, published in 2010 shows that staff from ABME backgrounds were less likely to be in senior management and leadership roles than their white counterparts. Recently Lee (2010b) reported that the position with regards to ABME women is even worse, as 75% have actually experienced barriers to progression.

It was in this historic context that the Network for Black Professionals in the FE colleges sector was established in the late 1990s by ABME educationalists for the purpose of addressing their under-representation at all

levels in FE colleges. It has provided an effective voice for ABME educationalists in Further Education and leadership development and career improvement opportunities. The Black Leadership Initiative has worked in conjunction with Government departments, funding and regularity agencies and colleges, providing leadership coaching, mentorship and work shadowing. The NbP (2009) vision, values and directions comprise of the very aspirations that have been voiced by ABME principals - the target group and respondents in this investigation - on this issue (Chapter 4): that FE colleges' workforce should reflect and celebrate ethnic, social and cultural diversity and that the institutional ethos should be rooted in integrity, social justice, educational excellence and dynamism. ABME principals have lobbied, liaised and formalised their concerns through the Network for Black Professionals and Black Leadership Initiative development programme to promote and pursue the idea and objectives of fairness, equality and social justice. A theoretical parallel to this development in the field of academic research is an analysis by Warmington (2009), which has introduced the notion that race should become a progressive educational principle and not just something to be overcome as a barrier to social progress, and this is what ABME principals have endeavoured to promote in practice, this study shows.

This study also explores the origins of the motives underpinning these positive principles. The accounts of Gates (1997), Handy and Buerk (1999) and Singh (1999) have promoted the idea of values driven personal factors which propel leadership rooted in positive motives. Their accounts claim that

these motives inherited and/or learned, flow from the passions and beliefs which they have gained from their parents, family, experiences, community or faith. Ribbins (1997) has described this process as early socialisation within agencies such as family, school and other significant reference groups which shape the personality, passions and values of educational leaders.

Handy and Buerk (1999) suggest that an educational leader is a philosopher in action; Kalpan (1990) proposes that leaders in education bring moral, ethical and psychological strengths to education, shaping thinking and developing actions geared towards their vision. Guru Granth - the Sikh Scripture (1604) - describes an educational leader as a 'servant leader someone who is creative and has a clear vision for the congregation or learners, is profoundly understanding, has knowledge of the way forward and inspires others to join in the journey; a leader is nothing other than these qualities. Harris (2009) has also subscribed to this idea and Cofield (1999) argued that lifelong learning should be led with vision and driven by values. The National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education has based its spiritual, moral, social and cultural good practice guide for FE colleges on FE educationalists' aspirations, as reported by Thomson (2009b).

In this developing field of research, the focus of this investigation is to identify and describe those common factors and their origins which underpin, drive, sustain, energise and steer the leadership of ABME principals in England's Further Education colleges. The purpose is to explore and analyse the nature and characteristics of those factors which are instrumental in attracting ABME

educationalists to FE colleges, and in determining and influencing the dynamics of their leadership. The investigation concentrates on exploring and reflecting on the personal principles and concerns of fairness, equality and social justice which have enabled and empowered ABME principals to question and transform the values of FE college organisations, structures and institutional and bureaucratic practices in view of the pressing needs and demands of disadvantaged and deprived learners and communities who depend on Further Education to progress their lives.

The outcomes of this investigation have been analysed and interpreted in view of conceptual framework provided by the relevant and applicable contemporary reports and literature (Chapter 2). The findings present and reflect on the dynamics of leadership and the propelling and impeding factors determining and influencing the FE college leadership of ABME principals. The evidence suggests that discriminatory institutional practices and structural factors limit the entrance of ABME educationalists into FE colleges and impede their progression in the sector (Chapter 4). The term principal refers to practising and aspiring principals in this study. The study shows that ABME principals have taken the impediments in their career journeys as challenges, and have endeavoured to transform them into strategic opportunities to transform FE college management and leadership practices. This process has enhanced and advanced their leadership and its scope to benefit learners, entrepreneurs and communities who need Further Education most to move on in their lives.

Initially I explored this area through some preliminary interviews with ABME educationalists and a general survey between 1999 and 2001 (Appendices 7.2.3 a - h; 7.3.4). The emerging data then provided a resourceful backdrop for further examining and analysing the subject. It was instructive in indicating that there are some deep rooted personal, professional, cultural and heritage factors, which are revived and renewed by the experiences and socialisation of ABME principals, encouraging and motivating them not to be intimidated by the discriminatory institutional practices. This process involved confronting the many impeding factors preventing them from accessing an educational leadership career, from entry to progression. The ABME principals' pioneering journeys and their contribution in the process has been distinctive; the outcomes credit the thesis as a new and different theory and practice of leadership in FE colleges. The outcomes of the initial study helped in terms of formulating thematic directions for searching relevant literature for reviewing, to develop a way forward for empirical research, and formulating a conceptual focus for analysis of the findings.

The initial study formed a basis for the research and review of literature (Chapter 2). This provided a conceptual framework for developing empirical research on the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals - a neglected area of research. I followed a process of collecting the rare evidence from the first generation of FE college ABME principals, the class of 1998/9 – 2008/9, and whatever it was possible to glean from then available publications relating to the focus of this investigation. Before then, the available research and publications provided little academic recognition of ethnic and racial

diversity in FE college leadership. Ainley (1993) rightly asserts that ethnic, national and religious differences in Britain were relatively insignificant following the partial assimilation of the Irish, Jewish and East European communities until the post war immigration of the Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic population.

The FE policy environment at the time of commencing this study was rapidly changing. Wicks (1999) was promoting the then new Labour Government policy for Further Education as a vehicle for developing social and economic prosperity underpinned by delivery of high quality skills, creativity and enterprise under the provision of Learning and Skills Act 2000 (DfES, 2000). The (DfES, 2000; 2002) vision for FE was that FE colleges were expected to meet the diverse and changing learning and skills needs of their diverse local communities within a global social and economic environment. The realisation and delivery of these aspirations and expectations have meant that learners should be enabled and empowered to gain skills and qualifications to be able to compete in a tough job market or to develop business opportunities. The changing policy environment for FE colleges then also influenced the initial focus of this study in terms of the role of college organisations and leadership. At this juncture the process of change refined and strengthened my focus and interest in investigating the dynamics of leadership involving ABME principals in this environment.

Although the FE policy context has continued to evolve, its fundamentals have remained intact as a DIUS (2007a) publication of the Government's



policy intentions in implementing the Leitch Review of 2006 suggested “We will work with ... colleges ... and individuals themselves, to break down barriers to opportunity and give everyone the best chance to make the most of themselves and their potential (p3) ... Our strategy on skills and employment will improve outcomes of equality and diversity. Gaining new skills and qualifications, learning and training are – alongside finding work – are the most powerful ways individuals can transform their life chances and those of their families” (p19). These policy elements also show some influence of the NbP lobbying process that was put in place by ABME educationalists before and after the publication of the Commission for Black Staff Report (2003).

## **1.5 Context, Aim and Research Questions**

This investigation is confined to the publicly funded and regulated Further Education colleges in England, operating under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and subsequent legislative amendments (DfES, 1992; 2000, LSC, 2002b; 2003b, DIUS, 2007b; 2008b; LSN, 2009). It was evident from the earlier stages of this study that the percentage of Asian, Black and minority ethnic student population in England’s FE colleges was then around 17%. However, there were no Asian principals and only one Black FE college principal at that time (Choudhari, 2000; Elliot Major, 2000; FEFC, 2000a; Goddard, 2000; LSC, 2002a).

Being a long serving Asian FE college leadership practitioner, I found this imbalance inconsistent with the idea of natural justice and social reality, especially in view of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the CRE's guidance and recommendations to the public authorities on equality and diversity (CRE, 2001). This was a matter of concern and worthy of investigation; statistically, the proportion of student population generating a substantial proportionate revenue for FE colleges then warranted around 60 Asian, Black and minority ethnic principals in some 380 plus FE colleges in England (LSC, 2002a; 2003a).

An overwhelming feeling and view amongst the few Asian and Black FE college leadership practitioners who attended the Association of Colleges' annual conference in the years 1998, 1999 and 2000, was that personal and institutional racial prejudice and racism were holding them back from progressing their careers towards senior leadership and principal positions. This, despite their higher proportionate contribution to FE colleges in terms of improving learner participation, innovation in curriculum, and development of diversity in learner services (Landman, 2008). This position was however substantiated by the evidence of The Commission for Black Staff in FE Report (2003) and The Commission's Legacy (2008); the former report was sponsored by the LSC and DfES. Russell (2009, p4) noted that "In 2003, No 10's Strategy Unit concluded that all minority groups – even those enjoying relative success, like the Indians and Chinese, are not doing as well as they could be, given their education and other characteristics." Recently Thomson

(2009a) has noted in the TES FE Focus that hurdles in promotion for ethnic minorities are letting their talents fall away.

However, instead of simply investigating the above symptomatic position and concern over the absence of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic educationalists in senior leadership positions in FE colleges, I considered it to be more beneficial, professionally and academically, to research the dynamics of leadership. I believe that the research findings will be of more academic and practical relevance, interest and value to research students, leadership aspirants and practitioners in FE colleges. The outcomes should also be of interest to funding, regulatory and FE support agencies and the Government policy makers.

The research aim is to identify and describe the factors which propel and/or impede ABME FE college leaders in the leadership processes impacting on their career aspirations and roles - including exploration of the initial attractions and/or distractions that they may have experienced of FE college organisations. Lam (2004) has argued that to appreciate the development of a learning organisation (in which the leadership has a significant core role) we need to explore such diverse sources as environmental, internal, personal and contextual factors to enable us to realise how an educational organisation evolves or in the case of this investigation, how FE colleges have developed and what factors have propelled (or enabled) and impeded (or limited) their leadership. Mitchell (1968) and Martenson (1989) have used the enabling and impeding factors, to identify and describe the dynamics

which facilitate or alternatively restrict progress in educational career progression. At the earlier stages of the EdD work, the research assignment linked studies identified and described the factors which might be significant in propelling and/or impeding the leadership of Asian and Black principals in FE colleges impacting on the overall dynamics of their leadership (Appendices 7.2.3 a - h; 7.2.4).

Pearsall and Trumble (2008) have defined the term 'dynamics' in the Oxford English Reference Dictionary as the force in an organisation which determines and produces change. In the context of this investigation (Section 2.2), it is the force that propels leadership to lead change, Spicer (2007) examining the dynamics of authority of teacher leaders in a secondary school undergoing reform across three distinct settings in the USA, identified and discussed the factors underpinning teacher leaders' authority developing from assuming the responsibility for fostering collaboration to the promotion of innovative ideas for reform surfacing from the team discourse of complex interactions and roles. Discussing the 'dynamics of leadership' Craig (2003) claims that these are what leaders do every day in leading people and motivating them to perform at a higher level than before, creating a shared vision by delegating power and being effective through team work. The leadership process thus involves on-going change. However, the discussion also cautions against the impediments to change which may limit or restrict the leadership process, causing de-motivation. It could be argued that such factors as pre-conceived personal and institutional ideas about leaders and leadership - rooted in the conscious or sub-conscious bias and resulting in

potential or actual personal, cultural and institutional prejudices causing exclusion or restrictions - can be problematic by impeding access and progression. Craig (2003) further asserts that leadership is not about how a leader looks, but the things a leader does or is capable of doing, the personal characteristics which determine the quality of leadership, and the authority that a leader develops through ideas, interactions and role responsibility, as noted above.

I have built on this analysis and understanding adding to the initial focus (Section 1.4) to identify and describe the factors propelling and/or impeding leadership. I have explored a variety of factors influencing the dynamics of leadership - some of which may be rooted in emotional, intellectual and social life (BBC Radio 4, 2009) - which motivate, sustain and support the principals' leadership drive, or frustrate it. To this end I have examined the perceptions, experiences and practices of ABME principals in FE colleges relative to the environment, organisation, culture, people and Further Education traditions which were most likely to affect them. The overall aim of the investigation within the dynamics of leadership involving the target group thus became the study of the factors attributes and dimensions which have propelled ABME principals to be effective as leaders. This has also involved examining the factors which have acted as impediments, limiting leadership processes and preventing the target group from making full use of their potential, experiences, skills and capabilities.

Initially, I planned to complete this investigation and submit the thesis by 2004. The plan was disrupted by changes in my circumstances - taking a new post in 2002, re-location to the North East of England in 2003, a serious health problem in 2005 and some significant expansion and infrastructure development at my college involving a colleges merger programme between 2006 and 2008. The University of Birmingham very kindly considered the circumstances and allowed me to resume the work, permitting me to submit the revised thesis by 29 November, 2010. I analysed the data during 2007-08 and in the process of analysing the findings, conclusions and recommendations, I have consulted relevant contemporary publications to ensure that the outcomes are located in the contemporary context.

The changing and contemporary environment of FE colleges over the period of this study has contextualised the research aim and questions for this investigation. The ontological aim is to explore the dynamics of leadership involving Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's FE colleges. The epistemological approach was initially a mix of surveys and interviews for collecting data, interpreted within the earlier conceptual framework (Section 1.8) relative to the focus of the re-current theme of this study. The revised Literature Review (Chapter 2) further aided and updated the research questions informing the interview and composite data review questions (Sections 3.8; 3.9). The core aim of the investigation has been aided and directed by the following research questions:

1. *What are the dynamics of leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic (ABME) principals in England's Further Education colleges?*
2. *What are the motivating factors which propel and sustain ABME principals in their FE college leadership roles?*
3. *What are the inhibiting factors which impede and constrain ABME principals in their FE college leadership roles?*
4. *What are the overarching attractions of FE colleges for ABME principals and what inspires (and/or frustrates) them to be effective (and/or ineffective) in making an impact in their leadership roles?*

## **1.6 The Case and Justification for this Research**

The outcomes of this research provide a new and unique seminal work for further academic development in an area of the study in the field of FE colleges which is under-researched and under-theorised (Chapter 6; Section 6.9). The resulting thesis is capable of raising further progressive questions not only on the theme of educational leadership, but also relating to wider issues of fairness, equality and social justice in Further Education and other public services. The study explores the role of leaders and leadership in FE colleges and their pivotal position in progressing the development and delivery of Further Education. Moreover, it provides a distinctive insight into the views, voices and experiences of the first generation ABME principals. The nature of the evidence and analysis are of historical significance, providing a body of knowledge for future research and academic development. The themes of fairness, equality, social justice and social

mobility in education and the wider society have been a running focus in the Post War history of public policy and welfare services. Ainley (1993), referring to the 1944 Education Act - which was passed by the then national Government and implemented by the Labour Government after 1945 - has presented FE provision as an important component in the development of the modern welfare state which remains an unfinished social project and the debate continues as the state welfare system has fallen short of providing universal equality in education and other public services. This research is a unique and distinctive contribution in this context.

This research commenced in 1999, coinciding with the introduction of the then new lifelong learning FE policy of the New Labour Government, who launched a series of successive policy initiatives. Cofield (1999) argued that lifelong learning policy initiatives should be for life and need to be led with vision and driven by values. Wick (1999) outlined the Government's new directions aimed at improving adult education and skills; Nash (2000) discussed Blair's new crusade against illiteracy and how FE colleges would have a crucial role in eradicating it; and McGavin (2000bc) reflected on Blunkett's skills crusade as then Secretary of State for Education.

In the preceding period Reeves (1995) had discussed the earlier changes in Further Education driven by the Conservative Government under the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992. Reeves reflected on the changing policy environment and organisation of FE colleges and argued that they were being encouraged to become business-like education ventures operating as



assembly-lines or retail industries, to provide and purchase commoditised curriculum. He believed that the market driven and accountancy dominated culture of Further Education is making colleges into commercial educational establishments. Educationally, Reeves argued, this was an unsettling process for people working in Further Education. The removal of local education authorities' democratic control of FE colleges meant that FE colleges were free from local social policy influence and arguably, the issues and concerns relating to educational and social equality slipped from the agenda. Elliott (1998) recognised the efficiency gains made by FE colleges, but argued that many colleges had lost sight of their *raison d'être* in their rush for change and adopted business values. Allen and Ainley (2007) argued that England's state schools, colleges and universities have shared the fate of other public services as the post war welfare state was at first slowly expanded and then, from the late 1970s onwards disbanded, with accelerating rapidity. Further Education policy provision has been at the forefront of on-going change reflecting the social and economic priorities of the Government of the day; it is, however, always at risk of losing and undermining its role in wider education for all and social justice.

As a long standing associate of Further Education and an FE college leadership practitioner, I have experienced and observed these changes and their impact (TES FE Focus, 1994). In order to benefit from the changing Government FE policy provision of the 1990s, the demand-led funding model of the Further Education Funding Council was being used by many FE colleges to grow their student numbers and maximise the inflow of revenue.

During the 1990s many ABME educationalists were able to access employment in FE colleges; they appeared to have been driven by their aspiration and ambition to work and progress in Further Education, demonstrating their passion for widening participation to advantage deprived and disadvantaged learners and communities. For many economically vulnerable FE colleges in urban multi-racial areas, this growth provided much needed expansion to stabilise their finances. The ABME FE educationalists, leadership practitioners and aspiring principals were able to strategise and implement some innovative initiatives to develop Further Education by reaching out to local communities and businesses. In the 1990s, therefore, they were able to make a significant contribution in some areas of FE colleges within the Government's funding priorities.

However, there was a growing body of anecdotal evidence around the late 1990s indicating a rise in issues and concerns facing ABME educationalists and leadership practitioners in FE colleges. By then, due to some contraction of Further Education provision resulting from changes in policy and funding directions of the New Labour Government, examples of job losses, promotional opportunities, personal and institutional prejudice, stereotyping and racial discrimination in employment and promotion were surfacing and multiplying.

As a long associate of FE colleges this development appeared significant and worthy of investigation. I decided to explore the implications of the changing Further Education environment, institutions and organisational culture and

their impact on employment and service provision. I was particularly interested in exploring factors which initially attracted and sustained ABME educationalists in FE colleges, and propelled and/or impeded their career progress as educationalists and FE college leaders. It became noticeable in various FE forums that despite their best endeavours, many ABME educationalists were unable to make headway in their career towards senior leadership positions. There were signs of a growing feeling among ABME FE educationalists that their views and contributions were being unrecognised, undermined and ignored by FE college institutions and support agencies (Sangha, 2001).

As a reminder it should be noted that throughout the period of this study, between 1999 and 2009, the change has continued. The arrival of the New Labour Government in 1997 triggered a process of implementing their policies. This was evidenced by a series of policy and funding strategy publications ranging from *Success for All* and *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* (DfES, 2002; 2003) to *Realising the Potential and Prosperity for All in the Global Economy*, resulting in the publication of the Whitepaper 'Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances' (DfES, 2006) and the Further Education Bill (DIUS, 2007b). The process of change continued under the Labour Government leadership from Blair to Brown (Bewick, 2009). For example, the change in the Machinery of Government first created two Departments out of the DfES, DCSF and DIUS, then transformed the DIUS into the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, responsible for post-19 Education and Skills. This resulted in reforming

policy, funding and strategic arrangements under the Apprenticeship and Further Education Bill 2009 (AoC, 2009; DIUS, 2008bc; LSN, 2009).

A renewed process of change is now further intensifying under the new Coalition Government's policy, funding and organisational directions (Her Majesty's Government – HMG, 2010), adding a further impetus to the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges. The BIS (2010a) consultation document outlines that the Government's key principles for skills are to build an internationally competitive skills base and to ensure that we have a skills system that supports progression. Only the time will tell how far this aspiration is realisable under a current economic climate of cuts in funding which leaves college leadership to micromanage their institutions.

The leadership role of FE college principals within this fluid context and dynamic environment has been critical and pivotal. There are frequent references to the significance of FE college leadership and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership has devised a programme to develop and strengthen the provision of a new principals' qualifying mechanism (CEL, 2005a; 2005b; Foster, 2005). The CEL supported by the DfES also involved the participation of the Black Leadership Initiative, to develop an equality and diversity perspective and practices in FE college leadership (Mann, 2004; CEL, 2007a).

FE college leadership has also faced competition from other providers of Further Education - ie Sixth Form Centres in schools, voluntary and private

sector training organisations and some universities. The Learning and Skills Councils were 'purchasing' post-16 provision from competent and quality providers; these developments have put the principals of FE colleges under pressure to further enhance their leadership effectiveness and impact on their college's improvement and performance to gain a competitive edge in the market place (Porter, 1985). The demands on principals have become greater ever since the process of change was triggered by the incorporation of colleges under the F&HE Act 1992 (DfES, 1992). FE colleges began to be funded directly by the FEFC, they assumed autonomy and independence as corporate bodies involving responsibility and accountability for policy, decision making, and the application of public funds within the law, to initiate, develop, promote and provide accredited post-16 education and training. This history brought a new public spotlight on the dynamics of leadership of FE college principals (Chapter 2: Sections 2.1; 2.4; 2.8; 2.9; 2.11).

Tuckett (2000), Crequer (2000) and Goddard (2000) raised questions about the quality of leadership in FE colleges and whether or not college leaders have been successful in meeting the new challenges and public expectations. My experience and the initial study (Appendices 7.2.3 e - h; 7.2.4) have suggested that the success and standing of FE colleges as learning and skills providing institutions, and their ability to maximise their access to resources, are dependent upon the effectiveness of their organisational and leadership capacity and performance. The principal's leadership qualities are also exposed to scrutiny in open competition with other private, public and voluntary providers of Further Education.

There has been a great deal of press coverage in the press of FE college leadership as I have extensively referenced. Nevertheless Gunter and Rutherford (2001) noted that information and data available from education journals, inspection and audit reports, and investigative press articles, could be of little significance or academic value unless subjected to critical analysis and transformed into theorised knowledge to enhance understanding for drawing new meanings and interpretations. Morrison (2008) claimed at the BELMAS 2008 conference that theorists have remained relatively uninterested in multiple aspects of identity and diversity and largely resistant to anything other than theory and research that is wedded to assumptions about homogeneous leadership and emphasis upon integration and consensus. In view of these issues and the relative vacuum in the availability of relevant research literature in the field of Leaders and Leadership in FE Colleges, this investigation is innovative in making a significant new contribution to trigger further interest in research.

Landman (2002) and Whitaker (2000a; 2005b) have highlighted the absence of information, data and literature relating to the presence and contribution of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic FE college leaders. This issue surfaced more significantly after the publication of The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003). According to an LLUK (2007/8) Annual Workforce Diversity Survey Report, the situation with regards to the representation of ABME staff in FE colleges has worsened. Landman (2009) and Craig (2009) claim that institutional racism is alive and thriving, there have been some small successes but the under-representation of Asian,

Black and Minority Ethnic people is clear, they have not significantly progressed into senior leadership positions. Moreover, they noted that minority population is growing faster than the UK population as a whole; however, due to policy and practice indifference of successive Governments, institutions and lack of political voice, racism continues.

In both the historical and contemporary contexts, this investigation will add a new and differential dimension to a body of knowledge and understanding arising from leadership practitioners' views, voices, and experiences. Brah (1996) suggests that the race and ethnicity aware study of lived experiences within other differences should create a space for minorities to create and construct their own reality, to develop connections with other people, agencies and institutions to exercise influence and power. This investigation provides evidence grounded in primary and original data offering a basis for further research. Lumby (2006) claimed that current educational leadership theory is complicit in underpinning the process of exclusion of research in this field. Therefore, the outcomes of this research should be capable of opening new research doors in the area of leadership in the field of FE colleges.

## **1.7 Potential Value of the Findings**

The findings, outcomes and conclusions of this investigation (Chapter 6) have the potential to add value and raise the profile of research into FE college leadership - particularly in the area of leadership relative to progressing the task of transforming Further Education organisations and provisions for

pursuing fairness, equality and social justice. The essence of the composite argument of this thesis is about enabling and empowering learners and their social mobility in the challenging current social and economic climate. This social priority fits the new and testing funding environment for FE arising from the latest policy change and transition from Labour to the new Coalition Government programme (Her Majesty's Government – HMG, 2010; BIS, 2010ab). This thesis is not only capable of plugging a gap in an under-researched and under-theorised area of study relative to the educational leadership of ABME principals, but also in providing a seminal basis for further research. The findings underline, renew and refresh the significance of the themes and issues raised by this and the body of publications which have appeared following the publication of the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003).

The research outcomes can be used for further interrogating the impact of the Government's changing policy, funding levels, structural arrangements and strategic directions influencing the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges. The impact of abolishing the Principals' Qualifying Programme, which was also contributory to the aim of making FE colleges more inclusive, diverse and cohesive can also be examined (DfES, 2006). The programme was endorsed by the Lifelong Learning UK - the Sector Skills Council for FE and Libraries - was to act as a requisite for the principal role. However, the new Coalition Government's view is that there are many different routes for entry to FE college leadership (Her Majesty's Government – HMG, 2010).



The Government departments, post-16 education and training agencies such as the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), the LSC's successor agencies SFA and YPLA, Ofsted, and not least FE colleges, can use the findings to assess and transform their strategic organisation and directions. The Network for Black Professionals (NbP), the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI) and the Human Rights and Race Equality Agencies aiming to support the implementation of the Single Equality Strategy can also use the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this research. The thesis can also be transferable and applicable to understanding ABME leadership and development processes in other sectors. The investigation's outcomes articulate the evidence based contribution of ABME principals to England's FE colleges which should have an inspirational value for aspiring principals and leaders in other public service sectors.

### **1.8 Definition of the Target Group: ABME Principals**

This Section offers a definition of the term 'Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic' (ABME) FE college principals who are the target group for this investigation. Sangha (2001) has argued and maintained that formation and development of individual and/or group identity is a dynamic social process. Reviewing Hall's discourse on the process of transformation of identity, Bulmer and Solomas (2004) hold that social identities articulate an experience of contemporary and changing views of racial and ethnic relations. These may be composed of multiple considerations reflecting social realities and underpinned by the complex construction of identities through time, place and social environment, resulting in the emergence of new forms of identities. FE

colleges use an evolving and extensive list of ethnic identities to monitor their performance and the impact of their equality and diversity policy, strategy and activities under the legislation and codes of practice (CRE, 2001). However, for the purpose and scope of this investigation the list would have been too extensive and un-manageable.

In Sangha (2001) I have referred to a single term 'Black' as identifying all non White European people who may experience racial prejudice and discrimination and may be treated less favourably in institutions and society on the grounds of race, skin colour, language, cultural appearance, religion or heritage. This term, socially and culturally, may have provided a simplistic and limiting view of the study because many would see the term 'Black' as referring to people of African and Caribbean origins only. Therefore the logic for using the term 'Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic' (ABME) in this research, in preference to more extensive terms of identity or the single word-term 'Black', is that the term 'Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic' is relatively comprehensive, inclusive and contemporary. It is being used increasingly in public policy documents, the latest example of which is in the new Coalition Government's policy and programme (HMG Government, 2010 p18), which has adopted the term though in a different order 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' (BAME). The Network for Black Professionals in FE has also adopted a flexible use of this term to express inclusion of all non White European minority educationalists in their policy and strategy discussions and documents.

In FE colleges, as of course in other fields of public service, ABME leaders come from diverse heritages, cultures and origins – ie Asian / African / Caribbean / Chinese; others – they may identify themselves using a term of their own preference. Even the use of the term ‘Asian’; as with the term ‘Black’, is dynamic and controversial, as many Asians prefer to identify themselves in terms of their nationality, faith or culture - as British Asians, British Sikhs, British Hindus, British Muslims and so on (BBC, Radio 4, 2004). However, the term ‘Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic’ has been used in this thesis as a term which socially, culturally and in terms of the origins and/or skin colours of the target group, is inclusive. It involves all FE educationalists who may be identified as non-White Europeans. The equivalent term in the USA, for example, is ‘people of colour. The theme of race and ethnicity is further discussed in Sections 2.9 and 3.4.

## **1.9 The Research Process: Summary and Direction**

In this chapter I have offered a background and introduction to the origins and development of my interest in the theme of educational leadership in England’s FE colleges involving Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals. I have previewed the focus and aim of this research and its approach. I have taken into account some of the initial EdD studies which have contributed to developing the research questions directing the literature review (Chapter 2), providing a conceptual framework for the empirical work (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). The focus of the research is to explore, identify and describe the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges involving ABME principals. I have set out the

research questions, outlined the aim of the study and the way it is being approached. The key components of the research process are the literature review, the empirical work involving biographical interviews (Chapter 4) and the subsequent review and analysis of the data using composite data review questions (Chapter 3 and 5). The final Chapter 6 triangulates the findings and pulls together the composite argument of the thesis within the framework of overview, conclusion and recommendations of the thesis.

The investigation is interviews based with the first generation ABME principals of FE colleges, the class of 1998/9 – 2008/9, providing an historic snapshot of their distinctiveness and unique experiences. Their life histories provide an understanding and knowledge of their personal and professional qualities, characteristics and the nature of their leadership. The findings show the quality of their contribution as educational leaders in FE colleges (Chapters 4 and 5). Their personal values, vision, passions and ambitions of fairness, equality and social justice for all, are the driving motivations. These have arisen from their direct experiences of disadvantage, disparities and racial discrimination. The findings show that ABME principals' up-bringing, socialisation and heritage have propelled and energised them into pursuing their aspirations of converting their educational and social concerns into positive strategies for change. These deep-rooted principles and personal factors have strengthened their resolve and sustained their drive in transforming FE college organisations and ethos to benefit deprived learners and communities and to make a difference in their lives. The research outcomes show that the nature of the personal, cultural, bureaucratic,

institutional and environmental barriers and challenges has added impetus to the dynamics of their leadership. ABME principals believe that FE colleges' leadership has an important role in improving the life chances of learners through further transforming FE college and their environment by injecting progressive values and practices across the colleges and FE provision. However, there are new and further challenges on the way, due to the looming cuts in FE public expenditure (Lee, 2010c). The impact of the prospective cuts on the dynamics of FE college leadership will be beyond the scope of this investigation, but provides a basis to develop it.

The investigation involved conducting 22 biographical field interviews with ABME principals working in a competitive environment of FE colleges across England. In the process, the principals' views, perceptions and experiences provided the hard qualitative data, and some applicable and relevant contemporary publications provided a conceptual framework for its analysis and interpretation. The findings have raised a range of issues and concerns (Chapter 4; Appendix 7.2.5) which provide hard evidence for analysis, interpretation and reflection (Chapter 5). The overall approach to the research design and strategy (Chapter 3) has involved a suitable and fitting methodology combining methods, tested at the stage of the initial study (Appendices: 7.2.3; 7.2.4). This investigation is based on qualitative research methodology, involving biographical interviews with the target group of ABME principals and aspiring principals using interview questions rooted in the initial findings and research questions led literature review. Arguably this was a safer, more reliable and valid approach to progress an investigation of this

nature (Gunter, Ribbins and Rutherford, 2000). The full account of the research design and strategy is provided in Chapter 3 and is suitably supplemented in the introductions to Chapters 4 and 5. Robson (1993) suggests a 'check and balance' approach in progressing the research, to keep within its aim and the perspective/s that might emerge from any findings from new and relevant research publications. The thesis has the benefit of this approach.

**Chapter 2:**  
**Review of Relevant Literature**

## **2.1 Background and Introduction**

This Chapter is based on review of relevant and applicable literature relative to the research aim and questions of this investigation (Section 1.5). It has reviewed relevant publications to develop a theoretical understanding and perspective, providing a conceptual framework for investigating the dynamics of leadership in England's FE colleges involving Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals. Much of the literature sourcing and review was carried out in the beginning of this study between 1999 and 2001 (Section 1.4), which then informed the development of the research proposal and methodology and methods adopted for the subsequent empirical work (Chapters 3 and 4). The work involving selection, analysis and interpretation of the evidence data determining and explaining the findings (Chapters 4 and 5) was done between 2007 and 2009 in view of a further update of the literature review and the conceptual framework. The literature review was finally revised and updated during 2009-10, by taking into account the latest publications on FE and relevant literature on the themes of race, ethnicity, Further Education and leadership. The literature review now provides an historic and contemporary context to this research and its outcomes (Chapter 6). However, the research aims, questions and the focus have remained consistent throughout the life of the investigation, and the extension to its timeline has been explained in Section 1.5. The literature review locates the thesis in a context which is historical and contemporary, whilst it retains the focus on the original theme and its aim.



This literature review thus provides a conceptual framework for exploring, identifying and describing the factors which underpin the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges. In a BBC Radio 4 programme, commenting on the topic of literature review, Salman Rushdie suggested that it is about taking people, their thinking and activities into uncharted waters (Wooldridge, 2009). Extending this idea to this review, it searches the available and relevant literature, reviews and evaluates it for finding a way forward to develop new knowledge and understanding on the theme, thinking and activities of the target group of ABME principals in FE colleges, to fill a gap and to raise further questions for research and development (Section 6.9).

The first Chapter in Section 1.3 has referred to a lack of relevant literature in the area of leadership in the field of FE colleges involving ABME principals, especially on themes such as their entry into the field, their progression and career journeys. This point is further discussed in Section 2.3, Nash (2000) however reported that there were signs of growing interest in research driven by the needs of identifying how FE colleges' staff, resources, management and leadership may be deployed more effectively in response to changing internal and external circumstances and environment of FE colleges. The AoC made a case in its journal the *College Manager* (2000), claiming that the FE colleges' sector is innovative and diverse, and research is crucial for its professional and institutional development. This debate coincided with the development of aims and objectives of this investigation - to identify, understand, interpret and explain the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges

involving ABME principals. One of the initial tasks was to define and establish the meaning of the 'dynamics of leadership' which has refined the interview and composite data review questions (Sections 3.8; 3.9) arising from the research aim and questions (Sections 1.5) which are determined by the outcomes of this review. This Chapter consists of ten Sections and each sub-heading explains the theme and Section 2.11 summarises the conceptual framework arising from it.

## **2.2 Defining the Dynamics of Leadership**

Winder *et al* (1993) define the dynamics of leadership as values, inner-drive, establishing relationships, pursuing challenges and also, involving any disabling, de-motivating or inhibiting factors in the process, which may impede leadership - whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic for a leader. Craig (2003) has viewed the dynamics of leadership as the ability to motivate people to deliver a higher level of performance and thus to achieve shared organisational goals. Referring to the impediments to leadership, Nadler and Nadler (2009) have discussed strategies for developing a new skills set and talents, to deal with the risks and rewards involved in removing the impediments and enabling a leader to lead. Spicer (2007) has discussed the dynamics of authority in a team of science teachers in a public urban secondary school in the USA undergoing broad reform, whilst inquiring the process of putting in place a research based framework for developing teaching and learning at the core of institutional practices. His research identifies the dynamics of authority as situation-specific factors that shape

collegial relationships and interactions relative to planning, ideas-led team leadership, and tools for learning from problematising and re-inventing own and others' practices. These definitions of the dynamics of leadership can be further analysed and synthesised for application, to understand and conceptualise the nature, characteristics and context of educational leaders and the processes of their leadership in FE colleges.

Arguably however, the above definitions consciously may not be inclusive of dimensions of race, ethnicity and education relative to such concerns as deprivation, disaffection, disparities, discrimination and exclusion of ABME communities from employment and services due to racism. In order to understand and analyse the notion of the dynamics of leadership relative to ABME principals in FE colleges, it is essential to recognise that race related social concerns are inextricably linked to the mainstream of education and social policy. Race is not a descriptive concept based on aggregation of ethnicities, rather as Warmington (2009) has noted, race is a central social practice in the midst of our everyday life experiences. This conceptual framework of the dynamics of leadership has enabled this investigation to identify, describe and analyse the dynamic views, voices and experiences of ABME principals in FE colleges reflecting their feelings, emotions, passions, impressions, interactions and activities within their social environment, institutional culture and organisation structure.

## 2.3 Limits of the Research Literature

The Further Education Development Agency (1999) Cambridge research conference proceedings confirmed my initial working assumption which I developed whilst sourcing and selecting relevant and applicable publications for the literature review between 1999 and 2001 that there was little or no relevant literature available directly relating to FE college leadership involving principals' and aspiring principals' career histories and biographies (Sections 1.3; 1.6; Appendix: 7.2.3 h). Moreover, there was little research based information and data available for reviewing the area of the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges involving ABME principals or aspiring principals (Sections 1.3). The 2001 national survey showed that only 14% of FE college principals felt that they were driven by the consideration of equal opportunities and inclusive diversity in their leadership processes (Appendix 7.2.3). Craig (2003) claims that only half a century ago it was assumed (in the USA) that genetics determined whether one was a leader or not. Stereotypically, a leader was characterised as 'White...male...smart...tall...with presence and greying etc.' Richard Branson (in England) however, challenged and destroyed this stereotype of a leader. Just over a decade ago a similar stereotype existed of an FE college principal, however during the past decade this image was challenged by successful Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic and women principals in FE college leadership, although the number of ABME principals was still disproportionately small reaching only around 2.7% of the total by the middle of the past decade (Landman, 2006). The absence of ABME educationalists

at leadership levels was also noticeable from the absence of any literature on this topic. This caused me to review some of the general and FE management literature alongside the EdD assignments based research - which was assessed as competent, excellent, scholarly and fine (Appendix 7.2.3 c - h). The preliminary work provided a logical basis for initiating this research by formulating its aim and research questions, to explore factors which propel and/or impede principals' and aspiring principals' leadership in their FE college careers (Section 1.3). This area of research still continues to be relatively new; however, it is now a growing area of interest since the publication of The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003).

Bulmer and Solomos (2004) have noted that whilst race and racism have become a huge area of study in the social sciences over the past two decades, nevertheless, little has been published that explores the methodological and practical issues involving researching race. Bush *et al* (2006) have argued that Black and minority ethnic leaders are greatly under-represented in schools as compared with the number of pupils from similar ethnic backgrounds. At the time of the initial literature review there were no significant references available for research publications covering the area of leadership in schools either, involving ABME Heads or aspiring Heads. Morrison (2008) noted that research in this area of literature remains scarce and there is little clamour for it from the FE college leadership who benefit from the existing power relations. It concludes that there is little interest in fairness, equality, diversity and social justice in FE colleges at leadership

levels, except in relation to the characteristics of diverse learners and their cultural and/or socio-economic 'deficit'. Lumby (2008) suggests that unlike the availability of literature on school leadership studies, there is no such equivalent body of research literature to support our understanding of leadership in FE colleges. Studies of FE college leaders have generally been small scale and largely dependent on self-reported data.

Following the publication of The Commission for Black Staff Report in Further Education (2003) however, the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) was established by the Government (DfES, 2003). The CEL initiated and published some general research into FE college leadership between 2004 and 2007 - before it was merged with its successor body the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS). Some of the CEL initiated and sponsored research added to the findings of the Commission's Report, Clancy (2005a,b,c,d) reported that institutional racism is rife in FE colleges and that the new CEL has reflected on this situation in one of its strategic documents, published at its second annual conference in April 2005. Such conference reports and the developing role of the Network for Black Professionals and the Black Leadership Initiative - formalised to pursue the conclusions and recommendations of The Commission for Black Staff Report (2003) - have raised the issue of fairness, equality and diversity in leadership of FE colleges. This development has also added a new dimension to the debate which has impacted on policy development (DfES, 2006; DIUS, 2008c). This thesis can form a gateway for further research, adding to a new body of publications involving leadership of FE colleges, especially relating to ABME

principals and aspiring principals. It is gaining a higher profile and has formalised the role of FE college leadership which has surfaced significantly in public policy. Ofsted (2008) has strengthened the self assessment of equal opportunities under the leadership and management aspect of the inspection process.

This literature review has developed a focused conceptual framework for the empirical research (Section 2.11; Chapters 4 and 5) taking into account the main messages of the findings and conclusions relative to the research aim and questions of this investigation (Section 1.5). Rhodes (2008, p5) suggests, that "...the literature review is an integral part of the research and should be structured around the research questions." This Chapter and the subsequent research and analysis strategies in this investigation broadly reflect this approach, modelling Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in the way that they formulate and support the outcomes of this thesis (Chapter 6). In this Chapter, for example, each section revolves around the research aim and questions (Section 1.5) reviewing publications to enhance and refine the emerging ideas, concepts and approaches contributing to the points which have formed the interview and data review composite questions (Sections 3.8; 3.9). This Chapter has provided a conceptual and theoretical direction, and framework for the empirical work - reflecting one of the core objectives of the literature review. As Rutherford *et al* (2006) have argued the literature review must develop a conceptual framework reflecting the points of the research to underpin and interpret it (Chapter 5).

Section 2.4 and 2.7 analyse and reflect on some of the background and environmental considerations, contextualising FE college leadership of ABME principals, it draws on industry, trade unions and FE colleges related experience, knowledge and study (Appendix 7.2.3 h). The Section also relies on Deming (1993b) papers and the ensuing conference discussion in Zurich, Switzerland, which took place in the 1990s after the incorporation of FE colleges in 1992 (DfES, 1992). The purpose of this conference was to explore and discuss the dynamics of leadership in industry and education, particularly identifying similarities and variations in the leadership processes. During the 1990s FE colleges were searching out and developing organisation structure and leadership models and practices conducive to efficiency, effectiveness and raising of standards. The colleges were actively seeking to learn from business and industry to develop and further improve their performance, leadership strategies, quality systems, processes and approaches to success.

The subsequent Sections of this Chapter explore the motivations and passions which inspire and propel leaders to achieve their goals and/or impeding factors that prevent them from so doing. The following Section also briefly reviews the environmental dimensions which influence and impact on FE college leadership by way of policy, funding, bureaucratic and strategic mechanisms affecting the dynamics of the leadership. The ensuing Sections have explored the implications of changes and their significance for the dynamics of leadership. The penultimate section reviews some of the core issues and challenges which determine the nature of the dynamics of



leadership that the ABME FE college principals may have experienced, viewed and observed. The Chapter is complemented briefly with a review of an ABME educationalist's experience of a college leadership practice from a USA Community College, due to the absence and lack of availability of similar UK based ABME biographical literature at the time. Finally, the Chapter provides a theoretical and conceptual framework for the subsequent empirical research (Section 2.11).

## **2.4 Environmental Dynamics of FE College Leadership**

Sangha (1997; 2001) has explored some aspects of ABME leadership experience involving industrial and trade union work in the West Midland's metal industry relative to Further Education between the late 1960s and early 1980s. The industry was then undergoing a complex transition, race and industrial relations tensions were intensifying, health and safety expectations were changing and new technology was being introduced with an emphasis on the need for up-skilling the workforce. Duffield (1988) has analysed the changing industrial relations environment in which 'Black radicalism' was rising and the campaigns of organisations such as Indian Workers Association for race equality in employment, were taking root in the trade unions. This phenomenon indicates that the characteristics, role and identity of ABME activists in industry, trade unions and Further Education were changing - assuming leadership in pursuit of change and transformation for fairness, equality and social justice. In addition to social concerns of race discrimination, there were issues of skills shortage, under-investment,

industrial decline, poor strategic directions and leadership, which were causing tensions, disruptions, and sluggishness, impeding the process of transformation and modernisation in industry. There were though growing examples of employer organisations and the trade unions engaging with FE colleges to plug the skills gap through work based and day release learning. However, access to these programmes for ABME workforce was a serious concern. The nature of Government intervention and the levels of funding support for FE and skills training were being questioned, although three decades on the contemporary environment is not much different either. For example Lee (2010c) reported that the new Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning told him that when the Prime Minister David Cameron appointed him to the job, he made it very clear that he saw skills as a priority. The Prime Minister wanted him to drive it through, because, they as a new Government were wholly committed to the connection between training and economic recovery, which was critical for the future growth. However, the issues of fairness, equality and social justice relative to Further Education in view of the Chancellor's statement in the House of Commons on 20 October 2010 presenting deep cuts in public expenditure through the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), would raise questions and further intensify the issues (TES, 2010c; Lee, 2010d). The impact of Government policy, priorities and funding strategies on the dynamics of FE college principals' leadership is further reviewed and analysed in Section 2.7, however, the likely effects of the recent CSR is beyond the scope of this investigation and is a question for further research and development ( Section 6.9).

The present policy environment (BIS, 2010ab) relative to FE colleges is not significantly different at interface involving employers, trade unions, industrial organisations and the Government agencies involved in economic transformation and growth - skills provision continues to be a high priority. The economic circumstances of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century involved employers and workforce leaders heavily in negotiating job security, wage levels, terms and conditions of employment, health and safety provision, employees' welfare, skills training and trade union education. This process relates to the Post-War development of the welfare state, which depended on sustained economic growth when successive Governments needed the support of a large social block of population to maintain the momentum for this, and to stay in power. The re-distribution of some national wealth collected through taxation was being invested in public sector employment and provision of education, health and social support services. Ainley's (1993) analysis suggests that this social block of population included not only the mass of the non-manual middle class proliferating into professionalism at its top and into clerical administrative in the burgeoning bureaucracy at the bottom, but also a suitably skilled manual working class. The needs and expectations of the later section of the social block have progressively made the role of FE colleges pivotal in terms of delivering the social policy and socio-economic strategies of the successive Governments.

UKCES (2010) national skills audit report has recently re-emphasised a mismatch between supply and demand of skills. Reeve (1995) identified FE colleges as agencies for contributing to the urgent Government business of

raising and matching the skills level and the mix. FE colleges' leadership operates in a complex local and wider national environment in which, in addition to the needs of disadvantaged ABME population, a large number of unemployed people possess no or a mix of unsuitable or inapplicable and/or redundant skills. In addition many employers continue to possess and exercise prejudices in employment relating to age, gender, disability, ethnicity, culture and race factors - this area is further explored in Section 2.9. FE college leadership challenges involve anticipation, identification, understanding and articulation of the context in which they initiate, develop and deliver education and training. The leadership has to be able to assess whether or not a solution would be capable of delivering the desired outcomes in terms of learner success measured as entry into employment, business, or progression to higher education. A consultation process is well recommended as good practice by Government (ACAS, 1977) to maintain good industrial relations to prevent any avoidable disruptions or disputes; FE colleges' leadership, in providing education and training and work related workforce development programmes, has to be aware of the circumstantial issues in their localities in conjunction with employers and trade unions.

FE colleges, however, were not necessarily well equipped to deliver needs and demands related education and training to ABME learners. Many ABME employees as well as workforce representatives were disadvantaged and experienced exclusion from FE due to barriers of language, culture, ethnicity and race. Nevertheless they felt that FE colleges, in many cases with the support of the Industrial Language Training Service, Adult and Continuing

Education and TUC Education, could play a beneficial role by enabling and empowering them to move on in their lives (Duffield, 1988; Sangha, 1980; 2001). However, the issue of exclusion of ABME people from the mainstream of education and employment was a serious issue and concern, even the supportive interventions on their behalf appeared as cosmetic and marginal. There were many instances of industrial unrest where ABME leadership took workers on industrial action to raise issues of unfairness, inequality and race discrimination. However, the power and authority structurally resided with the senior and designated leaders where ABME representation was none or marginal. This is an under-explored area in the history of ABME industrial workforce and their leadership's aspirations and activities. The decline of the metal industry encouraged some of the ABME industrial and trade union activists/leaders to assume community leadership, some went into business or public service and, some felt inspired to go into Further Education. They were driven by employment needs, career ambition but moreover, they were motivated by the cause of fairness, equality and social justice through Further Education. They believed that FE colleges could be effective in providing social mobility, equality of opportunity and social justice to ABME population. This perspective contextualises the development of ABME FE college leadership over the 1980s and 1990s relative to the history of their involvement in the community, industry, trade union activities and Government policy, which was under-researched. The initial EdD study and the practitioner interest in this area, contributed to conceptualising the research aim and questions (Sections 1.2; 1.3; 1.5; Appendix 7.2.3 h).

## **2.5 Institutional Dynamics of FE College Leadership**

The early 1990s incorporation of FE colleges under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (DfES, 1992) clarified and reinforced the socio-educational and economic role of FE colleges. The institutional identity of FE colleges was established in law. Reeves (1995) noted that the Government will fund Further Education through the Further Education Funding Council in pursuit of national economic renewal and development. FE colleges will operate locally to deliver national targets, however, Reeves argued that the context in which the colleges were operating differed widely in terms of social classes, racial, ethnic and cultural mix of population, geography, occupational structures and economic aspirations of the local areas. The national political steer and the statutory framework removed local authority controls and funding was linked to specific provision and learner numbers. FE colleges' governance, leadership and management became autonomous though without any local democratic accountability.

In the 1990s FE colleges were expected to go for growth in student numbers, raise quality and standards and achieve cost efficiency and they emerged as key driving factors for principals. In view of the changing focus, to develop knowledge and awareness, I attended a conference in Zurich in July 1993 on the role of leadership in developing quality, productivity and competitiveness in industry and education. My impression then was that Deming's transformational theory and practice arguably enabled industrial leaders to rescue and develop the Japanese Industry (Deming, 1993a; 1993b) and that

the conference was a good opportunity to learn first hand about the approach in practice and to examine its transferability, relevance and applicability to FE colleges.

The underlying theme of the conference was that industry and education were facing increasing competition through globalisation. In an expanding world market, goods and services must gain and retain their competitive edge and companies and educational organisations must be fast in responding to any crisis. For this, industrial and educational leaders must transform themselves and their organisations, because competition between people, teams, departments, divisions, students, schools and faculties within organisations is destructive. The overwhelming conference message from my perspective was that for everybody to win what is needed is consultation, co-operation, and inclusive partnership within FE colleges to achieve transformation to be effective; institutions must be capable of making an impact. This emphasis on achieving effectiveness within an organisation through the development and use of knowledge based collaboration and communication, offered a promising strategy - that FE college leadership and management must operate systemically to reform policies, strategies, procedures and codes of practice to foster change and continuously improve educational experience and outcomes for learners. On the whole FE college leadership, organisation and management must be about adopting practices and processes to be more successful through a better understanding of the dynamics of organisational leadership.

In the early 1990s as in 2008-09 (Bewick, 2009b), the economy was in recession although the circumstances were different (LSIS, 2009b; Cohen, 2009). Trade and industry faced growing global competition and the issue of raising productivity and skills levels was in debate (LSIS, 2008; Bewick, 2009a; Turner, 2009). The Conservative Government policy in the 1990s, like Labour government policy until May 2010 (Sargison, 2009; Bewick, 2009b), encouraged FE college leaders to be competitive, be growth driven, set higher demand-led student out-turn targets and raise the effectiveness of colleges by obtaining better value for money ((LSIS, 2009a; The Guardian Weekend, 2009; Turner, 2009). However, this policy and practice has been under criticism from the outset in the 1990s, as has been the case during the recent past decade. Elliott (1998) analysing the Kennedy Committee Report (FEFC, 1997c) argued the consequences of such policy and practices as fine for growth and in achieving the targets (FEFC, 1997b), but, as having little impact on widening participation. There was a real concern that disadvantaged working class people, disaffected, women, ethnic minorities, demographically and geographically dispersed social groups were falling through the gaps in the new nationally driven corporate management culture of FE colleges. Ainley (1993) argued that government by quango and the franchising model of state induced enterprise make leadership and staff as holding sub contracting agencies that can be expanded, contracted or disbanded, in the process of centralisation and bureaucratisation of the funding mechanisms, the local democratic accountability has been lost.



Jephcote *et al* (1996) noted that in FE colleges the managerial culture driven by competition, growth, targets and cost-cutting brought principals' leadership under the spotlight. Factors such as quality, productivity and ongoing improvement were beginning to drive college leaders and managers. However, to achieve these goals the development of co-operation, collaborative systems and evidence based quality improvement and innovative growth within educational and industrial organisations were challenging tasks. It contrasted the Deming (1993a) theory and practice that for everyone to win and to be successful within a system, industrial or educational, it is crucial for leadership and management to achieve co-operation. Reviewing Deming (1993a; 1993b) some thematic points have the capability of contributing to the empirical work aimed at exploring the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges:

- Effectiveness, nature and appreciation of an FE college organisation
- Knowledge about the college organisation's external policy, circumstances and funding environment
- Actual and potential variables within an FE college organisation which can impact the effectiveness of its performance
- Production and use of evidence based knowledge and innovation
- Psychology of organisational leadership.

The dimensions of analysis in this Section have contributed to conceptualising, refining and forming some of the key points of the empirical work – the interview and data review questions (Section 3.8; 3.9).

The leadership challenge according to Deming (1993a), is to create consistency of purpose throughout an industrial or educational organisation, integrating various sections or departments. These must interact in pursuit of an overall vision; without them leadership cannot be complete. Stacy (1993) asserts that it is the set of outcomes of a leadership's vision - through the organisation's effectiveness in delivering on the initiative - that determines the nature of FE colleges' success and their accountability. The college organisations should not deviate from their core purpose of Further Education provision notwithstanding the leadership focus, as Best *et al* (1983) described, stretching to corporate considerations of profit and profitability, product and productivity, price and targets, this however explains the post incorporation behaviour of some FE college organisations.

## **2.6 Personal Dynamics of FE College Leadership**

In an organisation the role of individuals as leaders, activists and/or team members is significant for research, and exploratory conversations are an obvious vehicle for it. Gronn (1999) has argued that some innovative theorists of 'Leaders and Leadership in Education' have built their work on the subjective turn of social sciences by accessing educational leaders, and potential leaders' experience through conversations and interviews. They have studied, analysed and tested the data to develop generalisations upon which theoretical models such as 'typical pathways for school leaders' are based. Ribbins (1996; 2000), Gronn (1996; 1999) and Weindling (1999) developed approaches involving the study of individual leaders' experiences.

This is invaluable in terms of providing a scope for analysing the ethnographic information and data to develop areas for further research. However, as discussed previously (Sections 2.1; 2.3) there was a gap in the literature in terms of availability of the ABME educational leaders' life histories for reviewing, there were no publications in existence which contained data noting and reflecting the lived experiences of educational leaders relative to race and ethnicity in the field of FE college leadership. However, Brah (1996) noted that this does not necessarily mean that all minoritised ethnic or raced experiences will possess a natural understanding of power relations. Although Elliott (1998) review of the Kennedy Committee Report (FEFC, 1997c) recognised that there was expertise and knowledge within FE colleges to reach out and support under-represented communities in Further Education, this was indicative of the ABME leadership initiatives that the initial empirical study had established (Appendix 7.2.3 e - h).

Learning from Gronn (1999) proposition about the making of leadership characteristics, and the factors which shape an individual educational leader's character, are rooted in families - their modes of upbringing, schooling and educational agencies - and a variety of peer and reference groups. These biographical stories are suitable for research because they provide expressions of experience which can be interrogated against a set of conceptual criterion, compared, contrasted and analysed. The deficit in relevant research literature covering the area of this investigation caused me to extend the field to include aspiring principals and some relevant international literature on educational leadership. Gunter (2001) suggested

that in such cases, it is fine to draw on the wider intellectual resource to develop a way forward.

As I have briefly noted in the introduction to the thesis (Chapter 1), in India, the concept, quality and characteristics of educational leadership are significantly rooted in the idea of 'stewardship/servant leadership', hence a belief and values system which champions education as a noble cause, that entails and supports the wellbeing, welfare and provision of learning as a super responsibility. To offer leadership in learning and upholding good values is a supreme duty (Guru Granth, 1604, p354). Mahatma Gandhi's view was similarly based on the philosophy that education is the key to social welfare and the leadership of education should be regarded as an important aspect of the drive for good; it is "an expression of a good man [leader]... the goodness test has to be applied with ... [an]... uncompromising moral rigour to analyse and assess the motives of a leader and the consequences of the leader's actions" (Biswas, 1990, p365). Singh (1999) articulated the practices of leading values driven education in the biography of the late principal Dr Bhai Jodh Singh, who led Khalsa College, Amritsar which is one of the premier colleges in India. He noted that Dr Singh was raised by his grandfather who instilled in him the principles of Gurbani/the Sikh Scripture and the ethos of community service, which became the key factors in propelling his life as an educational leader.

Weindling (1999) discussed the passage of entry into the leadership role, the struggle in taking hold of the position and the subsequent reshaping and

refining of the institution, which he argued can be traced back to early life inspirations and values. Handy and Buerk (1999), attributed the dynamics of his leadership to the event of Handy's father's departure, when he realised the extent to which he was inspired by his father's religious and community work and the difference that made in the lives of so many people, 'Thanks to my father ...I am what I am' (Handy and Buerk, BBC Radio 4, 28 December, 1999). In the USA, addressing a conference of American Community Colleges leaders in 1997, an African American Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates reminded his audience of the origins of many of his own motivations and the sources of his passions and beliefs. He said that he was fortunate enough to have an excellent family; his father, an English teacher, encouraged him to learn and stimulated his interest in literature. He found the 1960s' social phenomenon of the Civil Rights Movement for equality and social justice and the intellectual case to end racism inspirational. Gates (1997) emphasised that college leadership has an important role to play in connecting people to education, helping them to discover themselves so that they can address the social issues of concern to them.

Many leaders of Catholic schools and colleges have attributed their career development to their early up-bringing, family values, community considerations and their religious faith. Handy (1993) noted that for the principals in Catholic schools, there is also an important spiritual dimension to leadership, the spirituality is manifested in the language of the learning community that principals use to describe their school and the actions, as they work to achieve the goals of the community. Gronn (1999, p88)

asserted, “An [Educational leader]...is a philosopher in action, and his or her craft is best thought of as an art...values are the wellsprings of human actions and the motivating force behind everything that people choose or choose not to do...expression of values, then, are statements of work which individuals input to features of their everyday reality and experience”.

The Sunday Times’ editorial of 4 March, 2007 claimed that each year 120,000 children under five watch their parents split up; many will never know a stable, two-adult relationship again. This provides a challenge to FE college leadership because in order for the learning to be effective for learners from such backgrounds, the colleges must fill the gap by providing a caring and supportive environment. Deming (1993a, p14) wrote, “...the loving mother, the kind teacher, the patient coach can through praise, respect and support for improvement, reinforce a child’s dignity and self esteem.... Their work is meaningful and they will make improvements in what they do”. The principles and values in the lives of educational leaders, therefore, play a key role in driving them, notwithstanding the variation of the countries and communities across the world. Good and effective educational leaders are driven by their values, vision and morals. This analysis concurs with the conclusions of my initial study, suggesting the ideas and questions for further research, as noted in Sections 1.4 and further developed in 2.7.

Immergart (1988) concluded after reviewing extensive literature that the traits of intelligence, assertiveness, self-confidence and high energy activities were most often associated with successful leadership, but Fidler (1997) argued

that these findings were inconsistent. The success in educational leadership, in my experience as a practitioner, also depends on the context and circumstances in which an educational leader is operating, the measures being applied and the extent to which one is willing and resourced to pursue the educational leadership goals. However, the personal characteristics of a leader play a significant part as Gronn (1999) has noted. Kaplan (1990, p419) has argued that, "It is in this formative period, from infancy to early adulthood, that the scaffolding of a character structures the essential moral, social and psychological properties (are formed) of people who hold and want institutional responsibility (the leadership)". In summary, this section has suggested that such primary factors as parental influence, socialisation, the influence of significant role models and values, have a lasting impact on the lives of aspiring and practising principals.

## **2.7 Contextual Dynamics of FE College Leadership**

The contextual changes affecting the dynamics of FE college environment, organisation and leadership have been reviewed in the previous Sections relative to the focus of this investigation. The aim of this Section is to review and analyse the cultural framework for leadership and management to be effective in achieving a higher performance in order to determine and influence the nature of the impact that FE colleges make relative to their respective missions. Jephcote *et al* (1996) reflected on how FE colleges have changed after the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 (DfES, 1992). They interviewed fifteen FE college principals - all White European - to

investigate the dimensions of the culture of change in management, Elliot and Crossley (1997) analysed the underlying tensions and conflict involving lecturing staff and the senior leadership and management. Gleeson and Shaine (1999) examined the changing relationships within the new managerial culture looking at the role of middle managers as mediators who were leading the change. This study was based on interviews with twenty-five middle managers over a period of 18 months. The study period and the analysis of data coincided with the initial field work which I undertook, the variation was that all my respondents were ABME middle managers in a leadership role and almost all of whom aspired to be an FE college principal (Appendix 7.2.3 h). However, a commonality was that they were all in middle management positions which were pivotal for the college's performance. Harper (2000) concluded the study of organisational cultures and structures in FE colleges through a survey of formal documentation to identify patterns of change after the incorporation in the 1990s.

These individual research initiatives were independent and freestanding, however, their contextual review from the perspective of this investigation reflects a conceptual framework that FE colleges were undergoing a dynamic change. In the process of this change, the leadership roles were vitally significant in terms of the colleges' cultural development and their strategic directions. Bridge (1994) asserted that principals should provide role models, even if they do not manage to change the culture and directions significantly. They still influence the role of their managers and determine the way forward as educationalists. The Elliot and Crossley (1997) case study involved one



FE college and is limited for generalisations, though complementary for review as Stenhouse (1978) argued that this kind of research can provide an in-depth analysis which can become a sound basis for making some generalisations.

The findings of Jephcote *et al* (1996) investigation into the change in FE colleges suggest some interview questions: whether or not FE colleges have become purely market driven, abandoning their basic values, ethos and concerns for local communities' needs and demands, including that of the deprived groups of learners. Because, many social groups may not have capacity to buy into Further Education provision, and the extent to which principals' initiatives and perspectives carry weight in impacting the institutional priorities in view of the national policy and strategies. The value of reviewing the above publications at the time was that they provided some clear indications about the dynamics of FE college leadership as to how FE colleges' environment, culture, organisation and priorities have been changing after incorporation, transforming them into independent corporate education business units, designing, developing and delivering curriculum determined by the funding, supply and demand mechanism. Many concerns were also being expressed that Further Education should be used to unite workers – the contemporary term of course is community cohesion, for which the last Labour Government in its later years used Further Education strategically (DIUS, 2008b) - who have been socially divided in other ways through age, educational levels, gender, race, ethnicity and religion (Ainley, 1993).

The available research however, does not extend to investigating the full implications of change and the impact of the 1990s' funding model of demand-led growth in FE colleges, providing an opportunity for many aspiring women and ABME principals to be innovative in developing and delivering curricula meeting the diverse learning needs in local communities. However, the demand-led funding model increased FE colleges' revenue and many progressive FE colleges were able to develop and deliver suitable new Further Education provision. This happened despite what Jephcote *et al* (1996) showed that the principals were then pre-occupied with such corporate issues as the FEFC's new funding methodology, competition, assets management, financial and human resource issues. This reflects two dimensions of FE colleges as the previous Section noted that regarding the corporate priority of FE colleges being to raise productivity, efficiency, accountability and efficient management for this purpose. However, on the other side as Gleeson and Shaine (1999) have shown, the middle managers were mediating between lecturers and senior managers and were leading change in terms of the core mission of FE colleges, namely teaching and learning and learner support. The study has shown that the new culture was though uncomfortable for educationalists – lecturers and their leaders in particular - as the institutional culture and priorities like corporate ethos, profitability, units of resources and performance indicators gained prominence and a higher profile over teaching, student support and curriculum development.

Jephcote *et al* (1996) maintained that principals were concerned more about how the market driven colleges' economy might shape the existence and future survival of colleges, whilst many FE principals took advantage of the then new funding methodology to maximise revenue for their colleges by supporting initiatives arising from the middle ranking leadership of colleges achieving a sharp growth which in many urban multi-racial FE colleges was led by ABME managers in leadership positions. As TES (1994) reported, the market-led entrepreneurship initiative was driving college leaders to maximise advantages for disadvantaged ABME communities. They attracted deprived and disadvantaged groups of students by reaching out to social groups in deprived socio-economic areas providing a model for the widening participation policy. The principals and vice principals who supported their middle management led development, advised other colleges to "Do it if it's driven out of your mission and values...Do it if it's credible...We're creating a market for the FE sector as a whole" (TES, 1994). Some principals, however, saw the development as a threat, whilst others took it as an opportunity - the then funding formula was punitive to those colleges that were over cautious (Nash, 1994).

Fifteen years on the framework and culture priorities for FE colleges remains relatively similar, although funding levels, mechanisms and strategic priorities have been changing. For example, the TES (2009) reported that the Government was providing £20m of new funding to support community groups and volunteers in encouraging grass-roots learning. LSIS (2009 ac) was promoting the idea of FE colleges' responsiveness to the needs of each

of its learners, seeking to raise their aspirations within the framework of quality of provision, equality and diversity. The DfES (2000) then new policy framework of the Government steered FE colleges' leadership in the direction of widening and extending participation. Originally, the idea of inclusive Further Education to attract disadvantaged social groups was initiated in FE colleges by the middle ranking ABME women, aspiring and progressive principals, who invented partnership based new strategies for extending Further Education to advantage communities from the demand-led growth and response funding culture. Within this framework, many of the middle ranking managers in leadership roles progressed through the ranks, a significant portion of them were the respondents for the initial study providing some vital evidence for the research and interview questions (Section 3.8; Appendix: 7.2.3 h).

Elliot and Crossley (1997) examined the FE college leadership context chronologically from the 1944 Education Act. Their findings suggest that FE colleges have radically changed due to the new market orientation. Jephcote *et al* (1996) further demonstrated that the move transformed FE colleges and their leadership was expected to bring them out of LEA dependency and into entrepreneurial independence. The change brought more emphasis on efficiency, decentralisation, performance monitoring and accountability, thus causing new hostilities and tensions. Gleeson and Shaine (1999) argued that middle managers found themselves sandwiched between staff expectations and the corporate constraints that the college principals were under. The middle managers were left to mediate between senior management and the

lecturers. The principals' preoccupation with corporate issues and the lecturers' priority for students and learning was the main source of conflict and tension. The findings of Jephcote *et al* (1996), Gleeson and Shaine (1999), Elliot and Crossley (1997) respectively show that the tension between the public service ethos and market driven philosophy of education was forming the underlying new dynamics propelling the leadership of FE college principals. The findings demonstrate some concurrence with the factors which propel leadership in the private sector of industry as Section 2.2 analysis has evidenced.

The Elliott and Crossley (1997) argument of 'contested value' in FE colleges adds significant value to the analysis and understanding of the tensions within the core drivers of leadership, also adding value to the direction of this research (Section 2.7; 2.8; 2.9). Elliot and Crossley (1997) suggested that being a vice principal was becoming increasingly difficult because of conflicting and competing priorities and demands; on the one hand there was pressure from staff, and on the other hand there was pressure from the principal. However most of the respondents felt that there were a lot of things that could still be done to improve and benefit learners and the community. Gleeson and Shain (1999) found the idea of 'willing compliance' to the new corporate managerial culture as one of the three orientations which drove middle managers to perform in the way they did. They argued that the underlying motive for the middle managers was career development and progression within or outside FE colleges. Most of these, as previously mentioned, happened to be women, ambitious men and, as my study has

shown, Asian and Black aspiring principals in urban multi-racial FE colleges - the newly promoted ambitious group taking up opportunities to demonstrate their talent and loyalty towards the organisation in the new corporate culture. This, however, may not have been the case with all middle managers in FE colleges. Those who were unwilling players, sceptical or disenchanted with the new ethos were sidelined as Casey (1998) claimed. They were critical of senior management pandering to external pressures, instead of taking a stand for the core purpose of FE colleges - teaching and learning. Those who took this position were also passed over for promotion.

As an FE college leadership practitioner I was aware that some of the urban multi-racial FE colleges enjoyed comparatively the largest growth in student numbers in the 1990s. These colleges were able to expand their provision to the maximum and benefited financially by stabilising their financial health after incorporation - advantaging from the then demand-led funding methodology. Such growth in provision in deprived areas and disadvantaged communities needed investment in the infrastructure to sustain, refine and improve its quality. However, the ensuing change of approach in the funding of provision in the late 1990s under the New Labour Government led to some strategic contraction and rationalisation, causing redundancies. Some middle managers, who were aspiring principals, also became casualties of the college mergers related rationalisation. Thomson (2010bcd) reported a similar challenge surfacing now under the New Coalition Government that in view of the cuts and austerity measures, many jobs will be lost in FE colleges further impacting negatively on the gains of the last decade in terms of

representation of ABME which still remains low at senior leadership levels. Lord Ousley advised ABME educationalists at the May 2010 NbP conference in London that they should believe in themselves, widen their skills and experience and start looking beyond the FE colleges. The next section will address the differential experience of ABME managers in FE colleges - how during this period of intensive audit, bureaucratic agency regimes and inspections impacted on ABME educationalists when power, authority, mandated initiatives and influence resided with the specialist senior managers such as accountants, heads of personnel, estates, audit and information THES (2000).

## **2.8 Changing Dynamics of FE College Leadership**

The review and analysis of relevant and applicable literature thus far, and that of the review of some of the initial research outcomes (Appendix 7.2.3) have shown that FE colleges' circumstances, policy environment, funding and bureaucratic arrangements, organisation, managerial culture of relationships and expectations about the performance have continued to change. These changes have impacted on the dynamics of leadership at all levels in FE college institutions. Within this evolving environment and changing context (Section 2.4; Appendices: 7.2.3d-h; 7.2.4), the literature review has identified and described that the following factors have propelled FE college leadership to succeed and impact on learners, communities and the localities' economies. These points capture the key factors emanating from the preceding review and analysis underpinning the dynamics of leadership:

- FE colleges' leadership increasingly opted to reform the internal organisation and developed partnerships with external organisations to maximise learner numbers, to achieve growth and funding;
- The leadership concentrated on enhancing and strengthening their corporate strategies and management, and improved the marketing mechanisms to be competitive for securing and expanding a share of Further Education provision;
- The leadership developed appropriate competencies to manage external funding, regulatory and control bureaucracies; and
- The leadership endeavoured to improve the educational support structures, operational efficiency and the ethos of effectiveness to achieve better standards and outcomes for learners.

However, within the initial study (Appendix 7.2.3) and review of literature in this Chapter, some significant variations can be identified in the dynamics of leadership relative to the ABME educationalists. This dimension needs further exploring and reflecting on in order to formulate an informed conceptual framework for the empirical research to be followed. The ABME leadership has identified and described some unique, new, different and additional factors - these factors are distinctive in their experience - which differentiate their contributions and determine the nature of their leadership, often involving challenging the progress impeding factors and the transformation of these factors into improvement, development and transformational opportunities. The interpretation and meanings of the main factors identified and described are as follows:



- Non recognition and marginalisation of the ABME leadership contribution to FE colleges;
- The undermining of their roles by bureaucratic mechanisms and controls, devaluing their leadership role and achievements;
- Lack of authority, real influence and resources to be more effective;
- Lack of evidence based research authenticating the impact of their work in college improvement;
- Doubts about the prospects of their career progression to senior leadership level; and moreover,
- The racial prejudice and stereotyping, institutional racism and discrimination.

All of the ABME respondents in the initial study made similar points providing the above dimensions, however in contrast, in so far as the outcomes of the national survey were concerned (Appendix 7.2.3; 7.2.4), only 14% of all principals who responded, identified and described equal opportunities, diversity and racism as issues of concern for the leadership in FE colleges. It was this variation, which made a compelling and convincing case for me to pursue the theme of this investigation in order to plug a gap in the research literature (Chapter 1, Section 1.6; 1.7; Chapter 2, Section 2.1; 2.3).

## **2.9 Race Dynamics of FE College Leadership**

This is a relatively new area of study in the field of FE colleges both for White European and ABME educationalists, academics and practitioners. Bulmer

and Solomos (2004) maintained that the great majority of early scholars conducting social science research about race and racism were White European. However, this is no longer the case, Warrington (2009) has argued that academics and activities concerned with race and racism have rightly coalesced to refute biological conception of race and have rightly asserted the position that race is a social construct. Hall (2000, p223) claimed “Conceptually, race is a political and social construct. It is the organising discursive category around which has been constructed a system of socio-economic power, exploitation and exclusion...ie hence racism”. The subject of ABME leadership in FE colleges therefore cannot be researched and analysed without taking into account the environmental – political and economic factors - institutional exercise of power, organisation structure and resource management. The cultural – personal and professional relationships and ethos – the mission and objectives of an FE college organisation have to be taken into account. It was within this framework Mackay and Etienne (2006) found that ABME managers in FE colleges were feeling isolated, they experienced being treated differently and were concerned that as educationalists, managers and leaders in their institutions, they would be judged not by their contributions and actions, but by their race or ethnicity. These findings verified my initial findings too (Appendix 7.2.3 h) that many aspiring ABME FE college leaders were experiencing and perceiving considerable impediments in their leadership career, preventing them from being effective in making an impact, and are being failed from making the most of their capabilities and potential.

In the absence of any biographical literature on the ABME leadership of FE colleges for reviewing for this investigation in England, I sourced the field in the USA and identified a publication - 'Names We Call Home' by Thompson and Tyagi (1996) - which came closest to the theme. This compilation of autobiographical essays by people of colour, which is the USA's equivalent to the Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic population in the UK, provided a conceptual framework for the empirical study.

Thompson and Tyagi's (1996) biographical work was college related – Sangeeta Tyagi was the only faculty leader of colour in her college. Sangeeta Tyagi, a sociologist, did her PhD from an American university and was working as a Director at Wellesley College. Her thesis is inextricably linked to the politics of exclusion in the education profession due to race, ethnicity and nationality which, she argued, prevents many talented people of colour from making career progress into senior leadership. Incidentally, this may explain the establishment of some Black colleges in the USA. At least two of the interviewees / respondents (Chapter 4) have made references to this topic in the data discussing the educational needs and value of role models for ABME people in England's FE colleges.

Tyagi also explored other contributors' experiences which verify and theorise her own experience and perceptions about racial identity and discrimination. She analysed the experiences of people of colour in terms of their political, intellectual and emotional journeys in the field of college education and leadership. The search for a 'home' becomes a metaphor for the finding,

establishment and creation of a professional space for interaction, activities and for developing an identity as a professional and the nurturing of social and cultural life. The factors which propelled Tyagi (1996) in her career in education explain the strategy she adopted to advance the issue of racial prejudice and discrimination. This analysis raised the questions about the origins of the ideas and values which propel ABME educational leaders in their career; it raises inquiries about the role of a leader's heritage, socialisation, life experiences and perceptions, the impact of the dimensions of race, culture, identity and language. These factors have driven the empirical research to identify and describe the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in England's FE colleges (Chapter 3, Section 3.8; 3.9).

Thompson and Tyagi (1996, p43) note that "...identity is also about how I am perceived by others, how do these aspects of identity hold together under racism?" This adds some further points to the investigation, in the absence of the continuity of a history of identity for people of colour, the contributors to this book re-rooted themselves into the new history of the USA. This provided them with a contextual motivation and re-construction of their identities and consequent empowerment. They would have taken strength from recent historical events such as the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and various role models in the United States' progressive modern politics - led by the likes of Kennedy, King and Obama. In the British context the identities of Black African and Caribbean communities would have been characterised by the histories of inequality, exploitation, racism, segregation and slavery (The Open University, 1982). There has been an on-going debate about the focus

of research in view of the Civil Rights movement and idea of Black Power in the USA and the rise of Black consciousness in South Africa (Bulmer and Solomos, 2004). Within the wider social context of ABME communities and the sense of varying identities driving different ABME social groups, Brah (1996) reminds that it is useful to distinguish historical differences also as markers of the cultural distinctiveness within collective histories, and the variations in personal experience inscribing the individual biographies. Social identities however are dynamic. Bulmer and Solomos (2004) as analysed Hall (1991) hold that changing and new identities articulate a view of contemporary racial and ethnic relations as composed of multiple identities, complexly constructed through time and place, often resulting in the emergence of new forms of identity in a complex, urban multi-racial and ethnic environment. FE colleges in England provide such varying socio-economic, demographical and geographical environments in which personal and professional identities of ABME educationalists may continue to transform and evolve. However, at core, as Modood and Ackland (1998) discussed, the participation of ABME communities in higher education continues to be highly motivated and determined sharing the parental and heritage values and believing that progression to a higher career is the most effective way of combating racism in the employment market.

Sangha (2001) noted that the process of the formation of a new common identity for Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic people in England is based on their day to day interactions and experiences of racial prejudice, discrimination and institutional racism. To combat this, many people draw

strength from the history of their ancestors' struggle for independence from the British Empire. The perspective analysed in this Section adds a new dimension to the conceptual framework for exploring and analysing identity related issues, which is an essential dimension in the dynamics of educational leadership according to Thompson and Tyagi (1996). The issue of identity relative to ABME educationalists and its implications for Further Education and leadership was not investigated and theorised until the time of the literature review between 1999 and 2001, for example Smithers and Robinson (2000) conducted a comprehensive review of Further Education, offering a collection of accounts discussing the then state of Further Education and where it might be heading. They reflected on FE policy development, governance, management, leadership and the funding of colleges after incorporation under the F&HE Act 1992 (DfES, 1992). However, the compilation made no reference to the issues of fairness, equality and diversity, and the role of ABME leadership in FE colleges in this connection.

In contrast however, Sanderson's (2001) introduction to the LSC's Strategic Framework to 2004, emphasised that the raising of participation by young people and adults - equalising opportunities through better access to learning and improving effectiveness, efficiency and quality as key features - unequivocally highlighted the kind of dimensions which inspire educationalists and leaders in FE colleges, although there was little emphasis on equalising opportunities for ABME educationalists and leadership practitioners.

Barnsby (2001) argued, referring to an FE college that it was one of the most important deliverers of education to ABME communities in the country; its closure was a gross act of institutional racism. Tuckett (2001) noted the government's intentions to make lifelong learning and widening participation for excluded communities a key policy and the LSC's statutory duty to promote it. Crequer (2001) wrote in TES FE Focus that the government has set a target of having 750,000 fewer adults suffering literacy and numeracy difficulties. However, Ruddiman (1998) argued that the bureaucracy of the Further Education Funding Council had stifled such initiatives, smothered enterprise and damaged staff morale. At its formation the question arose whether the LSC would take a different approach and allow FE college leadership to develop and deliver provision, meeting local needs and demands. Similar questions were raised recently in view of the last act of the last Labour Government involving bureaucratic Change in the Machinery of Government resulting in splitting of the LSC into the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency (DIUS, 2008a; AOC, 2009; Sargison, 2009).

In reviewing the above theme I briefly examined the issue of corporate leadership in the USA with regards to people of colour. Daft (1999) argues that Asian Americans who aspire to leadership are often frustrated by a stereotype that they are hard workers but not leadership and executive material. They are perceived as too quiet or not assertive enough. Daft (1999) also argues that prevailing corporate attitudes towards people of colour are invisible obstacles to their advancement. In the USA Americans of colour are

clustered at the bottom levels of the corporate structures; the top level corporate culture in most organisations is still populated by white male Americans, who often hire and promote people who look, act and think like themselves. Their unwritten rules and operational norms exclude people of colour and professionals from minorities.

Daft's (1999) argument that in the USA, the glass ceiling is a major barrier for minorities to making progress to leadership positions is also being discussed in England (Russell, 2009). The report 'Race and Ethnicity in Further Education: Making a Difference' (FEFC, 2000a), resulted in the recommendation that FE College governors should have sufficient data on race and ethnicity to implement changes in the ethnic balance of the senior leadership in their colleges. The issue of under-representation of ABME principals in England's FE colleges has become one of the key points in this investigation which was further taken up by The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003). The following Section puts this report in an historical and contemporary context of studying race, ethnicity and education to briefly examine and analyse its contribution and steer for further research.

The Rampton Report was one of the first public inquiries in England which collected and assessed evidence of underachievement of Black children in education. The report analysed the factors contributing to the problems and the support that teachers need, recommending a programme of action to be followed (Rampton, 1981). This report also reviewed issues of links between school and the community, and the preparation of children for adult life - the themes of racism, curriculum, equality, approach and special provision



underpinned the conclusions. The inner-city disturbances of 1980, 1981 and 1985 followed similar public inquiries, the Scarman Report recommended that the main task is to tackle the issues of racial disadvantage and inner-city decline (Scarman, 1981). Swann (1985) in the Swann Report entitled 'Education for All' was comprehensive in providing analysis of Ethnic Minorities, Race and Education and covered concerns of language, identity, culture, multi-cultural education and further studies, and employment of ABME educationalists and one of the recommendations was that the change would depend upon the effectiveness and ability of different local and national public agencies working together to bring about change.

Macpherson (1999) published the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry findings and lessons to be learnt from the stabbing to death of Black youth Stephen Lawrence on 22 April 1993 and the failures of the Police to thoroughly investigate the murder for the prosecution and conviction of six White youths. The report emphasised and concluded its analysis of the evidence by signifying the recurrent theme that the personal and institutional motivations surrounding the circumstances show that unwitting personal and institutional racism are the main causes of lapses in public services and it acknowledged that racism, institutional or otherwise, is not the prerogative of the Police Service. The report underlined the message that other public service agencies including education, also suffer from the same disease. There is an historic continuity and consistency in the outcomes of these reports highlighting the issue of race. There is a seminal analysis of the issue of race in Further Education referencing previous similar public inquiries in the

proceedings, examination and publication of the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003). In addition to taking direct evidence from Further Education practitioners the report has built its perspective and analysis on the outcomes of the previous publications of the inquiries. The ABME witnesses from FE colleges included many of the educationalists who managed to progress to leadership positions in FE colleges over the last decade, who have met many barriers on the way but their experience is an authentic source as their views and observations reflect their reality in view of the circumstances of their lived careers in recent history.

The nature and history of social and economic deprivation and disparity in urban multi-racial areas of Britain have influenced and shaped the lives of many professionals who have roots in this background, their experiences have developed and moulded their passions, values, vision and aspirations as this investigation has shown. The accounts of ABME educationalists formed the basis of the Commission for Black Staff Report in Further Education (2003), as the accounts of ABME principals have formed the basis of this investigation. The previous public inquiries are well known for raising the issue of educational under-achievement of many ABME pupils and therefore it has been falling on FE colleges to tackle and, as far as possible, complete the schools' unfinished education business with many young people. The linkage between this investigation, the Commission's report and the previous public inquiries covering the areas of race, ethnicity and education is a continuity of the theme and similarities in the outcomes. The key findings of the Commission's report underlined the recurrent and familiar

points that ABME staff are under-represented in individual colleges, and at local and regional levels as compared with the ABME learner population. Moreover, ABME educationalists are significantly under-represented at management and senior leadership levels with only 1% being principals. The report showed that many FE colleges have no ABME governors or corporation clerks. There is though an over-representation of ABME staff in part-time and hourly paid lecturing staff. ABME lecturers are concentrated in certain curriculum areas, particularly continuing education, which includes basic skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages and to a lesser extent in mathematics, science and occupational areas. Some progress has been made and the proportion of principals has reached 3%, however, the question that remains is how far any such improvement may be sustainable.

Thomson (2010b) reported Lord Ousley the former Chairman of Race Equality Commission as saying at the May 2010 Network of Black Professionals in FE conference in London that ABME people are more likely to be disproportionately affected in recession in terms of job losses which will undermine any progress made in improving representation of ABME educationalists at senior levels in FE colleges. Significantly, more ABME staff are educated to at least first degree level than their White counterparts. There are very few ABME Ofsted inspectors, auditors and regulators and the report also found that in overall terms ABME learners continue to underachieve as compared with White learners. Macpherson (1999) conclusion was that racism at personal and institutional levels is the main reason for discrepancies in public services but recommended that the culture of an

organisation is an important vehicle for the transformation of negative stereotypes, views and assumptions. Warmington (2009) has argued that this kind of transformation is essentially dependent on the process of enlightenment, involving individual freedom rooted in the ideology of race equality as a mediating force which aims to construct a racialised justice in a post racial society, transcending skin colour, cultural traits and descent - an ideology driven by conviction and principles.

## **2.10 Complexities of Researching Leadership**

This review shows that there was little or no identifiable body of published literature containing biographical or autobiographical accounts of ABME educationalists and leaders in the field of England's FE colleges (Section 2.3). This review has relied on reviewing relevant literature in the areas of general Further Education and management which initially contributed to contextualising and formalising the research aim and questions (Section 1.5). Much of the published research literature reviewed in this Chapter related to leadership in schools, some from higher education, health and Government reports and inquiries. Nevertheless, the literature review has analysed publications which cover the areas of race, ethnicity and education (Section 2.9) which has added value in formalising the conceptual framework for the empirical research (Sections 2.11; 3.8; 3.9). Gronn (2000) suggested that as compared with schools, FE Colleges are large, complex and leadership driven, rather than driven by a single leader (ie head-teacher or a principal). A principal will not necessarily be effective without the support of an effective

leadership team, although by virtue of the legislation, it is the principal who is also the chief executive with power and authority and who is ultimately accountable - internally and externally - for the college's affairs as chief accounting officer. The areas of management, leadership and division of labour are often fluid and less clearly defined. Although Bush *et al* (2006) have expressed concerns even about the research deficit in the field of school leadership involving ABME educationalists. Reflecting on the theme of racial prejudice Bush, Glover and Sood (2006) have identified and explained that racial prejudice still remains a major barrier in promotion to leadership. Discussing the nature of raced boundaries and relationships within higher education, Warmington (2009, p290) asserts "...a White British and a Bangladeshi professional may sit alongside each other in an office performing more or less identical tasks; in applying for promotion boundaries may thicken". One of the core messages of this review is that White decision makers, educational leaders, managers and educationalists have to recognise and acknowledge that their Asian Black and Minority Ethnic colleagues can be successful as FE college principals and senior leaders in education. Unlike schools, FE colleges' student intake and participation is voluntary and the student population tends to be much more diverse in terms of their educational levels, socio-economic needs and backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, ability and age. In addition to students' achievement and success levels, many other college performance and improvement measures such as widening and extending participation, recruitment, retention, progression to employment/business/ higher education, independent living skills and various value-added factors are taken into account. The role of an FE college leader

is challenging and significant in terms of the local community's and economy's cultural and social life. A study of the dynamics of FE college leadership itself is a dynamic endeavour, contextualised by an ever changing policy framework (Lee, 2010a).

In FE colleges the leadership role is strategically and operationally dispersed. Leadership is often exercised, for example, by a range of professionals such as course tutors, curriculum team leaders, departmental and faculty heads, assistant, vice and deputy principals. A distributive and shared leadership model is promoted by formally accredited leaders such as principals of colleges, to legitimise the distribution and delegation of their responsibilities and accountabilities in large institutions (Gronn, 2000). The power, authority, mandate and concentration of resources may still reside with college principals and chief executives unless delegated to nominated senior leadership staff (Sections 2.4; 2.5). Foster (2005), underlining the theme of quality of FE college leadership, asserted that whilst so many principals and senior managers are impressive, there is also evidence in Ofsted reports that there is not a good enough supply of them, capable of getting the best out of their staff and managing a highly complex business ... FE colleges need very able, experienced and influential managers, firmly focused on priorities, quality, reputation, learners and outcomes.

Sangha (2001) has argued that this kind of approach was adopted in the 1990s enabling many ABME middle managers and aspiring principals in urban multi-racial FE colleges to develop and establish their leadership

qualities through widening and extending participation strategies advantaging colleges and benefiting local communities. The then 'demand-led' funding mechanism of the FEFC had enabled colleges to reach out to communities. Some innovative and committed FE College leaders took the opportunity to include excluded communities in FE Colleges. However, Grace (1995) questioned who actually benefited most from this development - the colleges or the disadvantaged communities; this is an issue for further research but is beyond the scope of this investigation. A philosophical case to explain the behaviour of such 'voluntary' leaders on educational grounds assumes leadership to provide and improve provision positively impacting on learners is a good cause in its own right. Human beings and their qualities can be transformed through the process of teaching and learning by sustaining and expanding opportunities for enlightening society (Sodhi, 1993), who also argued that such claims can be empirically tested through research, using scientific methodologies. However, these methods have their limits of time, scope and circumstance. I initially used two questionnaire surveys to make sense of the dynamics of the respondents' leadership, to understand and reflect on the motivators which enables them to be effective as educational leaders in their colleges (Appendices 7.2.3 h; 7.2.4). Hoyle and Wallace (2005) have maintained that this kind of study can be productive in understanding the behaviour of people in organisations, in this case providing and refining the interview and data review composite questions.

Gronn (1996) argued that those who have emotional commitment to their vision, whether or not they get the opportunity to communicate and enact it,

are capable of building a wider emotional commitment and strive to get support to realise it. This phenomenon also continues at a larger scale, for example in the USA as Sullivan (2009 p4) comments on Obama's leadership, "Obama is...at his core, a community organiser. Community organisers do not...start bossing people around. They begin by listening, debating...inspiring, delegating...explain options...empower others...try to build real change from below". Nilekani (2008) reflecting on the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's reformist approach and policy leading to a sustained economic growth commented that a politician (from a minority Sikh population of India), could not be more different in his quiet demeanour and soft spoken speech, but who has nevertheless as much a belief in the power of ideas for social and economic development and the role of people as entrepreneurs and social mediators in it to bring about the transformation. These are distinctive personal leadership qualities, but are they attributable to ABME FE college leadership practitioners? As most of them came into an FE college career with some community and voluntary work background (Sangha, 2001), the nature of this distinctiveness differentiates their career trajectories as educational leaders forming an obvious line of investigation.

## **2.11 Summary of the Literature Review**

The literature review has provided a conceptual framework which supports and guides the empirical research and its outcomes (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). The review has identified a research gap in the literature relative to the theme of this study which this thesis has potential to fill (Sections 1.3; 2.3). It has



identified and described the idea of the dynamics of leadership as a process of leading ongoing change and transformation in organisations such as FE colleges (Section 2.2). A vision and values driven and service centred leadership can achieve desirable social and educational outcomes, to advantage learners and communities (Section 2.6). The review suggests that FE colleges as institutions have potential and are well placed to maintain and improve their drive for being more effective in meeting the changing needs and demands of learners and in fulfilling career aspirations of educationalists, by transforming the college organisation into a fair, equitable and socially just system (Sections 2.5; 2.6). The literature review has shown that social science research into race and racism has increasingly identified it as a social and political phenomenon. Therefore, it has been argued that solutions to issues and concerns of racial disadvantage, disparity and discrimination must be in making appropriate changes involving legislative, policy, strategy, resourcing environment, implementation and monitoring mechanisms (Section 2.4; 2.7). In the context of this investigation, the review suggests that FE college institutions would have a significant role in making improvements to advantage learners and the wider community, however, it would require on-going organisational transformation (Sections 2.8; 2.9).

Winder *et al* (1993) maintain that core human values, relationships and challenges, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, are the key personal factors which drive leaders. Craig (2003) has emphasised that the ability of leadership to motivate people in order to achieve and deliver higher performance and institutional goals in organisation is a core stimulant. Spicer (2007) study has

discovered that functional factors such as innovative ideas, nature of interactions, problematising and reviewing of own and others' practices underpin the dynamics of authority in educational leadership. Nadler (2009) has proposed that leaders' personal and professional skills, talent and strategies are the essential strengths for removing impediments in the leadership processes.

In so far as this investigation is concerned however, in addition to the above framework of the drivers of leadership, are those unique and additional driving factors of race and ethnicity (Sections 2.8; 2.9), which are inextricably linked to the leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges. The literature on race, ethnicity and education including various public inquiry reports has discussed the issues of racial disadvantages and institutional racism (Section 2.8; 2.9) which provide a conceptual framework for investigating this area. Warmington (2009) analysis enables further interpretation of these personal and professional dynamics of leadership as being central to underpinning of the social practice, which flows from their personal enlightenment and sense of freedom flowing from the ideology of race equality, which is a focus of investigation (Chapters 4 and 5).

After the incorporation of FE colleges in 1992, 'Race and Ethnicity in Further Education: Making a Difference' (FEFC, 2000a) was the first report to recommend that FE college governors should have sufficient data on race and ethnicity to implement changes in the ethnic balance of the senior leadership in their colleges. Reeves (1995) contextualised the preceding

Government's policy as driven purely by business considerations to raise the skills level for the economic renewal, that policy however was not dissimilar to the current priorities as UKCES (2010) has reported that there is the skills mismatch in the economy which needs addressing. BIS (2010b) the new Coalition Government's consultative document outlines the policy intentions for FE colleges in terms of their functional role in the economy. Before implementation of the New Labour Government's social policies in 1997, Jephcote *et al* (1996) discussed the rise of competition and market forces dominating FE colleges since their incorporation under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Elliot Crossley (1997) analysed the tensions and conflicts which had propelled the college principals' leadership in the 1990s, Gleeson and Shane (1999) explored how and why some middle managers willingly complied with the new corporate culture. Harper (2001) discussed the different organisational structures which might be needed for effective running of FE colleges, though there was no suitable single model available for this purpose. In organisations, whether industrial or educational, initiatives for success are the core propellers in the leadership processes. They may be aimed at gaining profitability or higher performance to achieve better educational standards - Deming (1993a) has argued in favour of evaluating an effective system, efficient delivery mechanisms and good communication in terms of having a profound working knowledge, awareness and understanding of a system, which is pivotal for an effective performance. In much of the FE management literature in the 1990s the above considerations were dominant in driving FE college leaders and leadership. The findings of the national survey into the dynamics of leadership (Appendices 7.2.3g – h;

7.2.4) concur with this model of behaviour which provides a conceptual appreciation of the general dynamics of FE college leaders and leadership.

Lumby's (2003) concept of distributed leadership suggests that leadership initiatives are dispersed and diffused in such complex organisations as FE colleges. They provide a scope for aspiring leaders to take initiatives and make their mark as leaders. Best *et al* (1983) noted that leadership in practice is diffused and rooted in initiatives which are frequently dispersed, depending on an organisation's circumstances. The characteristics and quality of leadership and the leader's initiatives however are influenced and determined by their values, vision and passions which drive and motivate them as educationalists argued Ribbins (1996; 2000), Gronn (1996; 1999; 2000) and Weindling (1999) discussing career pathways of school leaders and how their personal qualities contribute to developing their roles. However, there was no literature available for review covering this area, in the field of FE colleges involving study of career pathways of ABME principals. Gunter (2001) has argued it is fine in such circumstances to draw on wider literature and intellectual resources. I extended the review to some of the literature from India and the USA which identified and confirmed very similar underpinning issues and the qualities and characteristics of successful educational leaders (Sections 2.6; 2.9).

It was significant to note that many ABME aspiring principals played a key role in urban multi racial FE colleges in the 1990s in leading growth and development of FE provision under the demand-led funding arrangements

(Nash, 1994; TES 1994). Elliot and Crossley (1997) argued that FE colleges had become independent innovators and entrepreneurs to advance their mission. In this context, the role and contribution of ABME educationalists has remained under-researched, the review of general literature however offers a methodological framework for this inquiry (Chapter 3). The DfES (2000) paper entitled 'Colleges for Excellence and Innovation', argued a case for inclusive FE college provision for local communities, involving staff reflecting the local community's profile. This is an inextricably linked area for further exploration in terms of the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges involving the themes of Further Education provision and employment.

Thomson and Tyagi's (1996) account of their experience provides an indication of the kind of issues involving the dynamics of identity, which may have supported, sustained and driven ABME leaders in England's FE colleges. Daft (1999) however asserted that in the USA Asian-Americans were frustrated because they were stereotyped as quiet and hard working but not leadership material. However, they were seen as abrupt and tactless when they practised their professional assertiveness. Section 2.5 noted that there was some discontentment among ABME principals in terms of institutional response to their contributions in FE colleges. They were being passed over for promotion due to institutional and racial discrimination. This theme forms a part of the investigation together with exploring and describing the factors which have enabled, empowered and/or impeded ABME principals to develop a strategic vision and authority to pursue and realise the educational goals and their leadership potential and aspirations.

A clear theoretical conclusion of the literature review in terms of the aim and research questions of this investigation (Section 1.5), is that principals' leadership in FE colleges has been driven by their personal and professional qualities and characteristics – comprising of their vision, values, passions, principles and conviction. However, they operate within the FE colleges' institutional constraints and the Government's policy, legislative, strategic, resourcing and regulatory environment. In the case of ABME principals though, there are further unique and additional factors of race, which also impact on the dynamics of their leadership (Section 2.9).

The literature review has identified, explored and described the sources of educational leaders' motivations and strengths, which inspire and drive their leadership, being their early influences, up-bringing, socialisation, heritage, culture and history. Gronn (1999), Handy (1999) and Ribbins (1996; 2000) have provided a framework for exploring this area by identifying factors which shape educational leaders' personality and characteristics flowing from their parental influence, family and community to their wider personal, professional and societal experiences. Jephcote *et al* (1996), Gleeson and Shaine (1999), Elliot and Crossley (1997) and Harper (2000) offer a functional and institutional framework for exploring drivers and impediments of FE college leadership - reflecting on tensions between the leaders' public service ethos and their market driven philosophy for FE provision.

The literature review has provided a differential dimension in the conceptual framework for investigating challenges and opportunities that ABME

principals have experienced in terms of the race factors (Section 2.9). These factors in terms of Warmington (2009) proposition inspire principled thinking, strategies and activities for equality, and also offer insight into educational leaders' motivation and drive for a greater fairness, equality and social justice to which Gunter (2001) humanist perspective has also subscribed .

**Chapter 3:**  
**Research Design and Strategy:**  
**The Investigation Process**



### **3.1 Introduction**

This Chapter outlines the research process adopted to achieve the aim of the investigation (Sections 1.4; 1.5). It outlines the methodology and methods used for empirical research to collect, select, interpret, analyse and present information and data - exploring, identifying and describing the dynamic of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges. In their compilation of a selection of academic papers, Bulmer and Solomas (2004) have discussed methodological approaches and methods used in research relating the theme of race, ethnicity and education which includes the interviewing. They have however argued that research in this area is pulled in different directions - it can be servicing policy, involve academic theorisation, socio-political activism and action oriented. They conclude that there has been a proliferation of theoretical and empirical research approaches and designs - acknowledging that there is little consensus on the suitability of methodology and methods for developing this field of study.

In view of this unsettled and ongoing debate and the scarcity of literature relating this area of study (Section 2.3), it was logical to opt for a realistic and fit for purpose research design and strategy. To make up for the literature deficit in the field covering this area, initially, I reviewed some relevant and applicable literature (Sections 1.3; 1.4) and conducted a field research to develop and formalise the research proposal and questions (Sections 1.5; Appendices: 7.2.3d-h; 7.2.4). However, for this investigation in the main, I have relied on a continuing process of literature review and adopted the

interviewing method, to collect life histories and circumstantial information and data comprising of the views, voices and experiences of ABME principals relative to the dynamics of their leadership in FE colleges (Chapter 4; Appendices: 7.2.1; 7.2.2). This research process has consistently focused on developing knowledge and understanding from the experiences of the target group relative to the aim of the study (Section 1.5).

The overall research design used in strategising this investigation can be described by a ten steps process – ranging from establishing the focus of the research, right through to the outcomes (Appendix: 7.2.2, Figure 2). Robson (1993) research methodology offers a qualitative and interpretative approach - suggesting that the overall focus of the research and its aim, should drive the research design and approach. Unlike the increasing concentration of research aimed at formal reforms, whether led by Government, its agencies or FE colleges, this investigation is about learning from what ABME principals as leadership practitioners are actually thinking, experiencing and doing in FE colleges (Morrison, 2008).

No strategic barriers or inhibitions were experienced in applying the methodology adopted in managing this investigation. It was an advantage for me as a researcher and interviewer, to be able to interview peer ABME principals as a leadership practitioners - the relationship worked well in terms of contact, access and openness. This dimension should have enhanced the quality, reliability and accuracy of the data due to mutual awareness, understanding and knowledge of the field. As a researcher I have outlined the

origins of my interest and motivation for this study (Sections 1.2). Gunaratnam (2003, p95) reminds that "... there is little theoretical and methodological knowledge to draw on to guide the development of interviewing practices (on the experiences of ABME interviewers)...and on the methodological concern of being...side tracked into a narrow focus..." which I remained conscious of, so that this investigation does not get marginalised as just another race discrimination study. Moreover, I concur with (the rejection of) an analysis of epistemology of race from an episode by Warmington (2009, p291) "...that black respondents might give different answers to black researchers (can be reasonable assumption)...that answers given to white interviewers should ...be taken as the more reliable... (cannot be a reasonable assumption)". However, these concerns did not compromise this empirical investigation, the quality of the research outcomes is not compromised due to race, ethnicity, gender or professional identities and professional relationships involving interviewer and interviewees.

Mackay and Etienne (2006) have used a similar qualitative and interpretive model to study the career aspirations of ABME managers in FE colleges. However, as indicated before at the time of this investigation (Section 2.3), there were hardly any directly related examples of research models to base this study on which related to the area, the target group and the field. Rutherford and Gunter (2001) preferred that in such circumstances, it can be appropriate to use suitable 'mix and match' methods within a methodology, to meet a particular research need. This perspective prompted me to be innovative and experimental in adopting the research design and approach,

which worked well and is summarised by the ten steps strategy (Appendix: 7.2.2, Figure 2).

### **3.1.1 Selection and Make-up of the Sample**

This Section briefly explains the selection and make-up of the sample – the target group of ABME principals in FE colleges who participated in the field research. Sections 1.8, 1.9, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 also make reference to this topic. At the time of commencing this research, all known thirty seven ABME principals/potential principals were contacted in writing requesting a one hour interview. Twenty two of them - from 16 FE colleges in ten English towns and cities - responded and agreed to an interview (Appendix 7.2.2).

The characteristics of the participants in terms of their gender, ethnicity and role identity, consisted of 16 males (73%), six (27%) females, of which 13 were Asian (59%) - 11 Indian, one Pakistani and one Asian Other - four (18%) African Caribbean, one (4.5%) African Caribbean Asian, two (9%) African and two (9%) African Asian. The group also consisted of five (23%) principal/chief executive roles – representing 100% of the then ABME principals – five (23%) vice/assistant principals and eight (36%) other senior leadership roles.

Due to the nature and focus of this study on the dynamics of leadership involving under-represented ABME educationalists at senior levels in England's FE colleges, the decision was made to select a manageable number of 14 interview transcriptions within the scope of this investigation,

covering the most senior corporate leadership role holders – principals and aspiring principals. Thus the empirical data used for review and analysis in Chapter 4 represents 14 recorded and transcribed interviews relating to the most senior FE college corporate leadership practitioners - who were selected on the merit of their seniority. The active sample of participants represented ten (71%) males and four (29%) females. There were six (43%) Asian - five Indian and one Pakistani - three (21%) African Caribbean, one (7%) African Caribbean Asian, two (14%) African and two (14%) African Asian. The sample consisted of five (36%) principals and chief executives, five (36%) vice/assistant principals and four (28%) directors/ aspiring principals.

### **3.2 Reliability and Validity of the Design and Strategy**

The overall size of the sample for this investigation was small, it was a concern for the empirical research in 2001. This concern was also raised as an issue in the outcomes of the Commission for Black Staff in FE (2003) Report and six years on, the Lifelong Learning UK (2007) Workforce Development Plan further verified that ABME staff continue to be under-represented in the FE colleges' workforce. As compared with the ABME learner proportion of 17%, the FE colleges ABME workforce was 6.2%, Mann (2003) noted that only 1.2% of principals were ABMEs. However, this issue added to the significance of this research, it progressed in stages by checking and balancing the approach against circumstances and in view of the contextual and conceptual framework provided by the literature review

(Chapter 2). Gunter and Ribbins (2002) discussed the idea of mapping leadership study as conceptual, critical, humanistic, evaluative and instrumental. This area of investigation was hitherto unexplored, the design and strategic approach had to be relatively innovative in collecting and analysing data, to develop a way forward for producing valid and reliable outcomes. Edwards (2000) argues that the research process should be developmental by interpreting and making sense of the emerging data and information. I analysed, decoded and interpreted the data by interrogating it using the three standard composite data review questions (Section 3.9) in order to categorise the findings into the typology of knowledge domain within the conceptual framework (Section 2.11), for presenting the outcomes thematically (Chapter 5).

Gunter, Ribbins and Rutherford (2000) point out that indicative data and information lay forward a passage for realistic analysis, the purpose of which should be to further interpret and explore the meaning of the findings. The nature of experience and obstacles to their leadership which ABME FE college principals were indicating in the initial study (Appendix 7.2.3d–h), provided a focus for further research and analysis to achieve the aim of this study. This process signposted the research for identifying, analysing and describing the emerging data, as showing inhibitions and limitations affecting the progress and effectiveness of ABME principals' leadership. The indicative data and information influenced and contextualised the presentation of the findings and directions (Chapters 4). In the interest of consistency in the investigation process, all information and data was reviewed against the data

review composite questions, to identify factors which impact on the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges.

To have an initial and informed position based on experience and the initial study in this research has been valuable, it provided real building blocks to develop, formalise and refine the methodology and methods (Sections 1.2; 1.3). Coleman and Briggs (2002) provided the steps which can be followed in the qualitative research involving data selection and analysis of findings. They argued that this is not necessarily something that is only to be considered at the end, it should be used to build on as a developing notion - keep reforming the approach for analysing and presenting the data. They argued that researchers are constantly faced with a series of choices and options about research methods - the issue is less about making the right choice and more about making the best suiting choice in the circumstances in which they find themselves. Coleman and Briggs (2002) suggest that the task for new researchers is to take what they can from their past and present experiences, adopt what fits the circumstances best, adapt what can work and reject irrelevant or uncomfortable aspects. This research process has taken a decisive path (Appendix 7.2.2. Fig. 2), maintaining an adequate reflection on the suitability of the methodology and methods, to enhance the standard and quality of the empirical work (Chapters 4 and 5).

### **3.3 Ethical Issues and Methodological Justification**

As noted in Section 3.2, the target population for this research was disproportionately small, the investigation involved a degree of sensitivity

towards the respondents to protect their identity. The empirical investigation in the main was interviews based involving the first generation ABME principals, the class of 1998/9 – 2008/9 in FE colleges, providing an historic and significant snapshot of their distinctive experiences. Their life histories have provided a unique understanding and knowledge of their personal and professional journeys, the qualities and characteristics of their leadership and its approach priority. The investigation has aimed to identify and show the motivations, which have driven them as educationalists and leaders in FE colleges. The majority of principals who participated in this research are still in service as leading educationalists and leadership practitioners in the field of Further Education. Their personal and professional identities must be protected as information and data could be attributed inappropriately to individuals. Therefore it was not advisable to go beyond their collective identity as a target group of ABME principals in FE colleges. The target group though small, however, is diverse and is comprised of distinguishable educationalists in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, location, heritage, culture, professional identity and so on. A further research can be rewarding to analyse the outcomes of this investigation in terms of a differentiated comparative study, however, it can only be a recommendation but is beyond the scope in this study.

In terms of methodology and methods used for this investigation, it was an advantage to be able to interview the peer group of ABME principals, no inhibitions or barriers were experienced in the process. Referring to the research in the USA Gunaratnam (2003) noted that the research participants



are less willing to tell interviewers from another ethnic/racial group what they really think with regards to their attitude, opinions and experiences about such topics as this investigation has followed. No such issues or inhibitions were applicable, however, due to lack of methodological modelling and analyses in using the interviewing method by an ABME involving ABME participants, the issue of further reforming, improving or re-modelling the approach was not a consideration. In the absence of any comparisons and contrasts in research design and strategies in this area, Gunaratnam (2003) maintains that in Britain, despite increasing numbers of academics from ABME backgrounds, the number of researchers is still relatively small, especially in the social sciences. It can be argued in the context of this investigation that the number is insufficient in the field of Further Education, as Weindling (1999) has also shown in terms of secondary schools that there were too few women in headship/school leadership positions to make reliable comparisons. FE colleges are far more diverse in terms of their provision, circumstances, situational profile, socio-economic conditions of the localities and the demographic factors including ethnicity and race. The advantage of leadership interviews with ABME principals was that they have also provided an opportunity to explore an overview of the cultures, ethos and organisation of FE colleges - reflecting a totality of the dynamics of their leadership. Bridge (1994) suggests that principals and senior managers provide the role models, even if they do not determine the colleges' overall culture but they significantly influence the roles and directions of their staff and managers.

Moddood and Acland (1998, p106) noted that “While the orientation of the most research on race and education to date has been in seeking explanation of why minorities are not doing as well as their white peers, it has not engaged with questions that could explain why some ethnic minority groups not just individuals but groups might do better than their white peers...”. The process of this study though has progressively advanced in this direction of finding out what unique - new, different and additional - ABME principals have done as principals in FE colleges, despite many impediments that they may have encountered as compared with their White European peers (Appendices: 7.2.2; Figure 3; 7.2.3e-h; 7.2.4, Sections 2.9). The findings and outcomes of this investigation will have captured and analysed relevant factors which have driven the leadership of ABME principals to be effective in their performance. Some of the anecdotes which would have to be anonymised to protect the individual identity and his/her place of work would suggest that they have been innovative in addressing the progressive issues of fairness, equality, diversity, inclusivity and social justice in Further Education ahead of the policy and legislative development which have provided the present Single Equality Framework (Ofsted, 209b). I have received a good level of support with a degree of curiosity and expressions of interest in this research and did not experience any moral and ethical tensions in completing this investigation; rather academically it has been an elating and enriching experience.

The outcomes of this research would be relatively new and should make an original contribution on the theme of leadership study in the field of FE

colleges. Not only is this investigation a production of new knowledge, it has potential to impact on the Government's changing and developing priorities for Pre and Post 19 education (AoC, 2009; LSN, 2009, HMG, 2010; BIS 2010ab). It has potential to influence the policies and strategies to tackle employment and skills issues (Bewick, 2009), debate on resourcing of FE colleges and decisions relating to developing an inclusive and diverse multi-racial leadership for Further Education. The overall methodology adopted is advantageous in exploring the successive Governments' policy and strategic priorities which have involved commitment to raising of skills and widening participation in Further Education, to provide an inclusive education to enhance community involvement to achieve greater social cohesion, fairness, equality and social mobility (HMG, 2010; BIS 2010ab). The forthcoming reductions in public expenditure on Further Education as a result of the recent comprehensive spending review (CSR) would pose new challenges for FE college leadership in general and ABME leadership in particular (Lee, 2010d, TES FE Focus, 2010c).

### **3.4 Context, Interview and Data Review Questions**

The contents of the interview questions and the data review composite questions, flow from the research aim and questions (Section 1.5) which are grounded in the initial study (Sections 1.2; 1.3) and the conceptual framework provided by the literature review (Sections 1.4; 2.11). The interview questions and the composite data review questions have worked as a tool for making connections between different elements of information - collecting, selecting

and analysing data, aiding its interpretation and presentation in terms of the findings. Gunaratnam (2003) has argued in favour of this methodology as the process of this study is about making connections methodically between the lived experiences of the respondents - not only to understand and enhance the data, but also to ensure its accuracy and reliability. Having finalised the ten thematic interview questions, I wrote to all known thirty seven ABME principals and aspiring principals requesting a one hour interview across England in twenty FE colleges. The contextual information and the contacting facility available through the Network of Black Professionals' national meetings and annual conference listings proved helpful in locating the target group (AoC, 2000). Twenty two FE college ABME principals and aspiring principals responded and agreed for an interview. The rest of them had either moved from their known FE college locations, left the sector or may have chosen not to respond. The interviews were arranged by phone and confirmed in writing together with the purpose and aim of the research. I visited sixteen FE colleges in ten towns and cities during 2001 and three interviews were held at agreed other venues (Appendices: 7.2.1; 7.2.2).

Each interview commenced with a briefing on the research, its scope, aim and focus (Sections 1.4; 1.5). In all cases respondents agreed to my using a mini tape recorder and to taking some notes. I confirmed to the respondents that all data and information would be anonymised. Having completed the field interviews during 2001 with the principals and aspiring principals, the recordings were transcribed with the assistance of one of my former secretaries, who possessed appropriate occupational experience, skills and

qualifications in producing transcriptions of the audio-recorded materials. The transcriptions were then reviewed and analysed in terms of the composite review questions. The focus of the data review was on identifying, extracting and interpreting the factors which play a significant role in attracting, motivating and sustaining ABME principals in leadership roles in FE colleges. The aim of the data analysis and interpretation is to develop knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of their leadership energising, enabling and empowering them to pursue and transfer their values of social justice into the FE college organisation and leadership practices. The objective also was to capture and analyse from the accounts of ABME principals experiences, activities and approaches, whether their leadership has managed to achieve any institutional transformation that they aspired to achieve in view of many impediments impacting on their leadership. This strategy has enabled the findings to be analysed and interpreted meaningfully within the scope of the conceptual framework (Sections 2.11).

The following Sections of this Chapter and introductions to Chapters 4, 5 and 6, also include some further detail about the process applied in data gathering, analysing and interpreting to refine findings and draw conclusions. I commenced this study as a longstanding educationalist and FE college leadership practitioner (Sections 1.2; 1.3) at a time, when the sector's environment (Section 2.2), college organisation (Section 2.5) and cultural context (Sections 2.6; 2.7; 2.8) were rapidly changing. The literature review in Chapter 2 has analysed the changing national policy, funding, strategic priorities and planning mechanisms, and how they have been impacting

continuously on the dynamics of FE college leadership (Sections 2.4; 2.8). The regulatory bureaucracy was expanding and becoming interventionist to an overwhelming extent, the concerns for the core purpose of Further Education were growing and FE college leadership was also coming under scrutiny (Chapter 2, Section 2.4; Foster, 2005). This context has continued to influence the analytical and conceptual framework, showing that FE colleges are changing and dynamic organisations, and so is their leadership (Sections 2.2; 2.8).

Moreover, in addition to these general considerations there is the inextricable dimension of race and ethnicity, which has impacted on the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals (Section 2.9) influencing this investigation, its aim and research questions (Section 1.5). This dimension was initially explored in Sangha (2001; Appendices 7.2.3; 7.2.4) informing a variation from many of the conventional drivers of leadership identified by Collins (2008) and by the initial EdD study, that leadership is about having a vision, being strategic to achieve its purpose and objectives and being effective in devising, developing and delivering corporate goals for Further Education provision through good management and staff teams across the organisation within the resources available. The Further Education funding agencies' publications have also focused on FE college leadership in recent years that it is about inspiring, empowering and enabling the college organisation to design, develop and deliver values driven quality teaching and learning, meeting or exceeding the national standards and benchmarks (LSC, 2007a; 2007b; Section 2.2; 2.6). For an FE college leadership to be effective, it is imperative

that it continuously raises the bar of learners' aspirations and teachers' expectations of them and that it is able to maximise impact on the progress, improvement and performance of the college (Ofsted, 2006; Section 2.2).

The dynamic context of FE colleges influenced the analytical framework for the research design and strategy for this investigation. The literature review in Chapter 2 has also identified, located and placed the leadership of ABME principals in the history of race, ethnicity and education (Sections 2.3; 2.8; 2.9) showing the differential effects of this dimension. The target group of ABME principals for this research was a small one, though socially it is distinctive in terms of participants' identities, experiences and approach due to race discrimination, disparities and disadvantages. This was one of the key variations reflected by the literature review (Section 2.3; 2.8; 2.9) to be further investigated, initially Landman (2002) and the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education Report (2003) had indicated that only around 6% of FE college staff and 1% of principals were ABME. In the circumstances, it made good sense to take all aspiring ABME principals who happened to be in a leadership role at the time in FE colleges such as deputy, vice, associate and assistant principals, faculty directors and departmental heads, as principal research respondents. There was little specific tried and tested research literature available for methodological guidance, however, the Commission for Black Staff Report (2003), CEL (2005 ab) and Mackay and Etienne (2006) research methodologies had also used the interviews as one of the main methods, to collect data for reviewing and interpreting to develop findings and draw conclusions.

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership covering the area of leadership development in the field of FE colleges had also commenced its activities and publications (CEL, 2005a; 2005b). One of its earlier projects involved interviewing 50 FE college principals forming 12% of the target population which was entitled 'Career Paths, Hints and Tips': how individuals make it to the top? (TES, 2005). It was based on a snapshot survey of views acquired through telephone conversations, using half a dozen questions. As compared with the CEL methodology, the overall design and strategy for this research has been comprehensive, contextual and longitudinal - building on the initial study and the continuing literature review for developing the research aim and questions ( Sections 1.4; 1.5; Appendix 7.2.3a-h), determining the directions for the empirical work. This process contributed to the development of 10 interview and 3 data review composite questions (Sections 3.8; 3.9) for face to face interviews and the subsequent analysis (Chapter 4; Appendices 7.2.1; 7.2.2). Statistically, I interviewed around 60% of the possible target group in 2001, though comparatively from a much smaller number of the 37 ABME principals and aspiring principals in the field.

### **3.5 Data Selection, Interpretation and Analysis**

The process of data collection and review has been introduced and discussed above (Sections 3.1; 3.2 and 3.4). This Section briefly focuses on the data selection, interpretation and analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) take qualitative research as interpretative in its approach to achieve a better fix on the subject matter. I reviewed and provided reflective conclusions "aimed at



interpretation rather than scientific explanation” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986 p.86). The interviewees – ABME principals - may or may not have exactly reconstructed their personal and professional biographies, as there could be a degree of innovation and creativity in their responses to interview questions. Therefore the data selection and review process required a due caution and expertise in identifying, selecting, using and analysing the scripts as Powney and Watts (1987) have argued. This method though can be the only reliable way to get directly closer to the reality of the lived experiences of ABME principals to collect realistic evidence, to draw conclusions for developing this area of leadership study. The uniqueness of an individual ABME principal’s experience is invaluable in terms of providing a scope for analysing the data and information for theoretical conclusions and to ascertain themes for any follow up research. Therefore the biographical stories obtained through this method are suitable for the purpose of this investigation. They provide expressions of experiences which can be interrogated, explored, reflected on, compared, contrasted and analysed for further research and development beyond the scope of this study (Section 6.9).

Gronn (1999) justifies this approach arguing that some innovative theorists of ‘Leaders and Leadership in Education’ have built their work using this method. Their approach has advantaged from the subjective turn of the social sciences that has taken place over the second half of the last century. They have accessed educational leaders and aspiring leaders’ experiences through conversations and interviews. Ribbins (1996) established a theoretical model - the Typical Pathways for School Leaders – using this

research design and strategy which explored, analysed and tested the data on school leadership, providing theoretical understanding for generalisation.

### **3.6 Presentation of the Findings**

The composite data review questions worked well as an interrogation and review tool for extracting, collecting, analysing and presenting the relevant and applicable research data. The introductions to Chapters 4 and 5 have further covered this aspect to clarify the approach. This approach has laid forward a suitable process, design and framework for setting out the directions for analysing and interpreting the findings. I used a colour coding system in terms of the data review composite questions, to identify, categorise and select the research relevant and applicable data, from the text of responses to the interview questions. I used this method to code the response transcriptions of the interviews to facilitate the analysis, for interpreting the core findings for their thematic clarity. To keep to the scope and limits of this research, I confined myself to selecting, coding and categorising only the most relevant and applicable data arising from the responses.

The value or lack of discrepant and minority evidence in the data however has been taken into account and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. However, the key objective was to remain focused on the point of analysing and presenting the core data as Edwards (2000) suggests that an analysis of the research data is its deconstruction into meanings, accounts and anecdotes as I have done in Chapter 5. The task thus has involved interrogation and

discourse with the data for its construction into meaningful ideas, notions, concepts and knowledge categories in terms of the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges involving the target group. In this process the principles of analysing the data by coding the ideas, which Gunter and Ribbins (2002) applied for mapping their leadership studies in education to aggregate, analyse and categorise the findings into a typology of knowledge domains. This method certainly helped, but the scope and constraints of this investigation dictated that I should confine and narrow down the findings to the core aim of the research (Section 1.5). The interviewees were open in their responses to the questions and they freely and extensively expressed their views and experiences relating the key issues.

The conceptual framework (Section 2.11) aided the analysis of the findings in selecting and clustering of the responses into themes, determining their relative typology of knowledge. This of course is not the only way of looking at and analysing the data, just as there are many ways of seeing a work of art and understanding it, interpreting and theorising it for critical analysis and explanation (Moorhouse, Fisk and Montague display at Tate Modern, London). This approach, however, provided the tools to identify, analyse and discuss the key findings to reach conclusions. The complexity was in identifying and pinpointing the extent to which certain factors propelled and/or impeded the ABME leadership and where did the key motivations come from and, where did lay the impetus for action in FE college ABME leadership.

### **3.7 Overview of the Research Process**

The ten steps research design and strategy (Appendix 7.2.2, Fig. 2) enabled the investigation to progress at different times through different stages, using the mix and match methods within the methodology. The process has worked well from the initial stages of determining the research aim and directions, right through to the literature review for developing the interview and data review composite questions for analysis and reaching conclusions. This process suited and fitted the needs and purpose of this investigation. The initial study and practitioner interest (Chapter 1) suggested the research aim and questions; the literature review (Chapter 2) provided the conceptual framework for interviews, data analysis and interpretation (Chapters 4 and 5). Robson's (1993) model recommended keeping of a check and balance on the progress being made on the research theme - the research aim and questions have kept this investigation on track.

Chapter 6 has taken into account the totality of the approach and the research process. It summarises the findings and conclusions, providing recommendations for further enhancing the dynamics of FE college leadership, adding to the effectiveness for continuing improvement through the progressive transformation. This approach and strategy has provided a suitable and fitting methodology, consisting of methods offering a better scope for initiating, testing and concluding the investigation. This empirical research is based on biographical interviews with the target group – the FE college ABME leadership practitioners, within the context of the aim and

research questions, which are rooted in the initial study and the literature review offering a conceptual framework for collecting, selecting, analysing and interpreting the outcomes. This was a safer, reliable and valid strategy for collecting information and data to draw conclusions.

### **3.8 The Data Collection Interview Questions**

The following ten data collection interview questions and three data review composite questions have flown from the research aim and questions (Section 1.5) and the conceptual framework of the literature review (Section 2.11):

1. Please tell me something about yourself as a person and educationalist, and what are the sources of your motivations?
2. What is it that drives and sustains you as a professional in a leadership position in Further Education?
3. What attracted you to an FE college leadership role as principal and do you think you been effective in making a difference in your organisation?
4. Have you been able to apply your experience, knowledge and skills in your college for example in policy, planning and decision making?
5. Thinking of what you enjoy and wanted do most in Further Education, how far do you think you have been successful in your pursuit and could you have done even better?
6. What are the key opportunities and challenges that you have experienced in your leadership role and how do they propel or impede the progress of any institutional transformation that you may have intended to achieve?

7. Unless you already are, what is the scope of you becoming a principal and do you envisage any organisational, attitudinal or behavioural limits?
8. What do you think is the balance of your experience as a professional in Further Education - is it all good and positive, mixed or negative and are FE colleges moral, ethical and legal in treating ABME educationalists and learners?
9. Have you been able to contribute fully and achieve your leadership goals as an FE college principal in terms of being effective in improving the college performance?
10. What can make a difference in further transforming FE colleges in terms of their contribution to developing fairness, equality and social justice via employment opportunities, learner experience and their success?

### **3.9 The Data Review Composite Questions**

1. What attracted the 14 respondents to Further Education and FE college leadership, what motivated them to make a difference, sustained their interest, and face the challenges that they experienced in this process?
2. What were the organisational and environmental opportunities and challenges which the 14 respondents faced enabling and/or frustrating their approach and practices to be effective, in progressing the institutional transformation?

3. What differences have the 14 respondents made or endeavoured to make, to improve Further Education and performance of their college and, what factors propelled and/or impeded their effectiveness in impacting on FE?

## **Chapter 4:**

### **The Views and Voices of ABME Principals**

#### **Interview Data: Selection, Analysis and Review**

## 4.1 Introduction and Approach

The approach and strategy adopted in producing this Chapter within the constituent parts of Chapters 4 and 5, includes the collection and selection of research data - it reviews, analyses and present the findings which this introduction contextualises. This Chapter reviews the interviewees' responses to the interview questions (Sections 3.8; 4.2; 4.4), focusing on the most relevant and significant points which relate to the research aim and questions (Section1.5).

Gunaratnam (2003) refers to interview responses as accounts of lived experiences and has argued in favour of using theoretical insights in analysing them. Chapters 4 and 5 have drawn on the literature review (Chapter 2) and apply the conceptual framework to interpret, analyse and reflect the information and data collected from the interviews with ABME principals. Their views and experiences have also included their own reflections on the formation and development of their identity, interactions, activities, trajectories and the nature of influence that they have been able to generate. Broadly this investigation can be seen as similar to a study involving an investigation into the dynamics of authority - within a project based educational team of teachers, although operating in a different educational and social setting in which Spicer (2007) has analysed it as a complex setting of interpersonal interactions, enabling understanding of the nature and patterns of ideas and behaviour emerging within a group of teachers. The study reflects on such aspects as team collaboration, changes



in productivity, effectiveness and the development of authority through assertion of ideas in their roles. The focus of this Chapter is on analysing the dynamics of leadership by studying the ideas, interactions, activities and experiences of ABME FE college principals within and outside FE college organisations.

The dimension of race however differentiates this empirical investigation in terms of the identities of the target group. Warmington (2009) has discussed the concept of race as a social construct and a mediating tool, which should enable understanding and examination of the lived experiences of ABME principals. This strategy aims to identify, describe and analyse the factors which underpin the development of their leadership – their drive, its core principles, aspirations and motivations, sources of their inspiring transformational ideas, their strengths, values and vision and nature and patterns of their influence, interactions and activities. The literature review (Chapter 2) has provided a conceptual framework and the social context (Section 2.9) for analysing the empirical evidence and outcomes, to make sense of the dynamics and limits of the leadership of ABME principals' leadership in FE colleges relative to transforming individuals, groups and institutions to achieve fairness, equality, respect for diversity and social justice.

Miles and Huberman (1994) have discussed the logistics and approach to data analysis as a process, which involves data reduction, data review and analysis for drawing research aims related conclusions. This Chapter

concentrates on extrapolating some of the core themes emerging from the issues and concerns identified in the data, relating to the purpose of the investigation. The findings of this Chapter (also summarised in Appendices 7.2.2 Fig 3; 7.2.5) contribute and lead to presenting and refining of the outcomes in Chapter 5. This Chapter is based on intensive reviewing of the transcripts, the initial objective was to achieve a substantial reduction, prioritisation and presenting of the most relevant, applicable and significant data - fitting the aim and research questions of the investigation (Sections 1.4; 1.5; 3.8; 3.9). This approach has provided a clear direction for selecting evidence consistently as Rutherford (2006) has outlined; to present the experience, views and voices of all, or of most of the respondents, identifying and describing the most common and frequently occurring issues and concerns. To identify and develop thematic connections between emerging messages, the conclusion and direction (Section 4.5) have drawn on the core evidence in Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. The concluding Section 4.5 also refers to the research significance of any minority and discrepant evidence.

Arguing in favour of the data reduction Miles and Huberman (1994) have recommended that the process should involve selecting, extracting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming of the data from the written-up transcriptions. The outcomes of the literature review in terms of the conceptual framework informing the interview data review composite questions (Sections 3.9) have enabled this process. The focus of the following condensed questions has remained rooted in the thesis research aim and questions (Section 1.5), which essentially are further refined and

transformed by the outcomes of the literature review (Section 2.11). The following interrogative questions therefore have been applied as criterion in reviewing the interview data to identify and describe those factors that have constituted the dynamics of leadership in the views and experiences of 14 ABME FE college principals.

## **Data Selection, Review and Analysis**

Within the framework of the approach outlined in the introduction, the following three composite questions - arising from the research aim and questions (Sections 1.4; 1.5) and refined by the literature review (Section 2.11) - have been used to review the data for extrapolating, analysing, refining and presenting the findings:

### **Composite Question 1: People and Cultural Factors**

What attracted the 14 respondents to Further Education and FE college leadership, what motivated them to make a difference, sustained their interest, and the face challenges that they experienced in this process?

### **Composite Question 2: Institutional and Environmental Factors**

What were the organisational and environmental opportunities and challenges which the 14 respondents faced enabling and/or frustrating their approach and practices to be effective, in progressing the institutional transformation?

### **Composite Question 3: Effectiveness and Impact Factors**

What differences have the 14 respondents made or endeavoured to make, to improve Further Education and performance of their college and, what factors propelled and/or impeded their effectiveness in impacting on FE?

This Chapter essentially presents the interviewees' research aim and questions related lived experiences, interactions and activities, and the meanings that they attach to them within and outside the FE college organisation and environment that surround them as ABME principals. Chapter 5 builds on this work by presenting the most common and significant findings on the subject. The common, recurring and frequently emerging issues have provided the connecting factors propelling and/or impeding the FE college ABME leadership. It has made sense to adopt Rutherford et al (2006) suggestion to analyse and present responses and discussion on the findings separately in two Chapters. For reference and to inform the conclusions however, a condensed summary of the most frequently occurring issues, concerns and themes has been offered as evidence (Appendices 7.2.2 Figure 3; 7.2.5). In terms of the overall research design strategy, Chapters 4 and 5 remain inter-linked; with the latter identifying, exploring and

reflecting the factors determining the underpinning dynamics of leadership within the conceptual framework which the literature review has provided. Finally Chapter 6 offers an overview of the thesis, presenting a summary of the outcomes in terms of the findings, recommendations, suggestions for further research and conclusion.

## **4.2 Exploring People and Cultural Dynamics of Leadership**

**Analysis of responses to the interview questions (Section 3.8) is reviewed against the composite data review question 1 (Section 3.9), which incorporates essence of the research questions 1 and 4 (Section 1.5)**

The following analysis of the responses to the interview questions, their presentation and discussion relates to the key points of the investigation. As it has been outlined, the review of the data focuses on identifying and describing the factors which have propelled and/or impeded the processes and effectiveness of leadership of the target group. The analysis for the purpose of extracting the core data was confined to the strategy of studying the transcripts from the perspective of the three composite review questions (Section 4.1). In essence the composite data review questions embody the research aim and questions. Each of the three questions contains the following dimensions respectively, however, they are not mutually exclusive:

- People and cultural factors
- Institutional and environmental factors
- Effectiveness, performance and impact factor

Under each of the three composite data review questions, I have briefly presented and analysed the relevant and significant points, which have arisen from the review of the respective responses of each of the 14 respondents in the data.

**Respondent A**, being an experienced and long established FE college leader, felt driven by a set of early career personal encounters and experiences of working in a large local engineering company. That experience has resonated very strongly with A and has continued to motivate, stimulate ideas, develop initiatives, take actions, develop new strategies and has led to contributing to a wide variety of leadership initiatives and decisions. A said, *“When I was working in an engineering factory, there were 12,000 people working in it but there were only three Black people in the factory and I was one of the three... it was an extreme isolation. I was the only Black apprentice in the whole of the factory; I was born in this city ... and there was a sizeable Black community in this area. (After some time) when I came back to work here in the youth service there were very few Black people in the service. I have had passionate belief in trying to improve the situation for young Black (and likewise) as a transferable strategy, I have been doing so for all other deprived and disadvantaged groups in the community. People*

*have been my drive.... I have just been lucky in becoming (an FE college) principal.”*

In A's view of FE colleges there was also then little culture of conscious inclusion of Black people in teaching, learning and leadership which added to A's passion to take up the issue of the gross under-representation of Black people first in industry, then in the youth service and finally in FE colleges. A asserted that the vast majority of Black people in this city were not immigrants, they were born and brought up here. The Scarman Report (1981) after the Brixton riot had published its account asserting that there were deep social and economic problems in predominantly Black areas – high unemployment, high crime, poor housing and no amenities – the police were strongly disliked, as they were seen as reactionary and distant. An attempt at proactive crime control and an intimidating presence including mental and physical abuse to those seen as second class citizens in their own place of birth did much to create tensions.

On the other side in the public services such as FE colleges and related Agencies, A observed that Black young people's access to apprenticeship, work based learning and occupational studies were all problematic because FE colleges appeared not to be inclusive of Black young people in terms of their enrolment on such courses as more likely to lead to employment, often colleges can be seen as excluding or not doing enough to include Black people on economically beneficial studies and the referral agencies were not

proactive and responsive to the needs of Black people by promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

For A one of the challenges therefore was the inclusion of Black people (and for that matter other deprived and disadvantaged people) in the vocational and occupational areas of Further Education, otherwise they will also continue to be under-represented amongst the respective teaching and leadership groups in FE colleges. A's passion over the years became the removal of any direct or indirect impediments of a discriminatory nature, to make the college inclusive in teaching and learning, employment and leadership opportunities. A has been known in the FE colleges' sector as an effective campaigner for the cause of equality, diversity and inclusion.

However, one of the frustrations which A expresses was that the then external FE funding, inspection and support agencies were underestimating the capabilities of Black FE college leaders. The external agencies' strategies were often disjointed, competing and duplicative causing confusion and opportunity cost. There was little or no direct resource available, to develop role models, coaching and work shadowing practices to encourage participation and progression of under-represented social groups in teaching, management and leadership of FE colleges. The Commission for Black Staff in FE Report (2003) findings reported there were few Black managers to act as role models and mentors for Black and White learners and staff.



Similar issues had arisen from **Respondent B's** life and career journey, who personally struggled and had to be single minded to learn and make progress after a serious injury in an accident. B experienced a deep sense of isolation and alienation during the injury but has been noting and internalising other people's resilience, despite their disabilities, to make progress in their lives. B developed a deep sense of empathy for people with disabilities who needed education and training most to move on in their lives and this is what brought B into FE colleges. B believes that FE colleges are an excellent vehicle for transforming people's lives despite many direct or indirect disadvantages, discriminatory views and practices. B talked about his experience saying "*I had a major injury in ... (that country) at the age of 17 and had to re-learn to read, write, walk and talk all over again. (The nature of my injury)... necessitated me to learn to write ... rather than naturally with ... as I used to do before the injury. This kind of experience allowed me to empathise more with people who have disadvantages due to disabilities. However, I have always worked on the basis that people have capabilities and that education and training provision in FE colleges must ensure that they are enabled to realise their capabilities.*" FE colleges have been seen by B as enabling institutions, especially for those people who need education and skills most and/or have had their flow of life disrupted, or may simply need a new top up qualification.

B valued FE colleges' role in the local communities and discussed some of the difficulties involved in achieving the local objectives underlining some of the barriers in terms of the attitudes and behaviour of people working in and

leading FE colleges. A had called them direct or indirect discriminatory practices and/or absence of strategies for inclusion of disadvantaged social groups. Reeves (1995) has identified these exclusions as the neglect of the diversity of the community because the provision of education and training is approached from the point of view of industry but not from the point of view of a community differentiated by disability, gender or race.

Like A and B, **Respondent C** talked about the similar disadvantages whilst appreciating the contribution of education in developing life opportunities and the role of parent/s in one's upbringing and the values that they can instil. C regarded the contribution of education as integral to developing people and providing them with a way out of poverty, deprivation, low paid work and worklessness. C also underlined concern that too many young people were dropping out of education at the school leaving age and some disaffected youngsters were going off the rails altogether. C's professional passion was to bring those young people into Further Education who were neither in education, training or employment. Relating to own background C described the experience as *"I grew up in a poverty stricken area surrounded by an under achieving working class culture of low expectations and self esteem and my dad had left school at twelve. He first went straight into (on and off) manual work, then into taxi driving and eventually opened a corner shop and worked from 6.00 am to 9.00pm. But he always made sure that we as kids had everything despite the fact that I think my mum ... There was though a strong religious tradition in the family, which kept the family together, taught us some of the basic values of education, hard work, and etiquette, looking*

*after others and being part of the community. I think I ended up with my dad's work ethic and my mum's caring commitment and spirituality (which were very much our cultural and inherited values)."*

The meaning of the above assertion was clear in the context of the wider points of the interview highlighting that many disaffected young people are victims of poverty and broken family backgrounds, they may lack motivation, role models and a supportive home environment and their potential remains under developed. FE colleges have a crucial contribution to make by providing them with an opportunity for catching up with their education. This issue of pro-active partnerships between schools, colleges, referral and social support agencies needs to be more effective in identifying problems and finding appropriate solutions.

Allen and Ainley (2007) claimed that 2.2 million children growing up in workless households amongst the 12 million Britons are still at or below poverty level, and despite Gordon Brown's working family tax credits for the deserving poor, this remains a major challenge...Ironically, education and training has played a big part in constituting this 'underclass' through worthless vocational qualifications. Paradoxically, remedial efforts to overcome social exclusion often only confirm it. C had passionately made the point that the integration of parental (or similar other social support), continuous education, instilling of ethical values, opportunities and ambition must be a driving imperative.

The issue of social isolation due to race continued to surface in **Respondent D's** experience. D felt that schools were not doing enough to prepare Asian, Black and minority young people sufficiently for life at university and at work, where people's attitudes and behaviour are not subject to school-like checks and balances, and who instead require a degree of self-discipline. In addition to the lack of general support in preparing young people to take advantage of opportunities and face many of the challenges, D believed that there were crucial issues of direct and/or indirect racial discrimination which undermine and intimidate many in their life journeys. D was confident that FE colleges can play a significant role as institutions of continuous education and lifelong learning in the process; *"I had a miserable time at ... (that) university. It was of course in those days completely a White English university where there were no students who looked like me with an exception of some overseas research students."*

Although by the 1990s as Modood and Acland (1998) have noted, the overall representation of ABME students in universities had continued to grow significantly. Singh (1998) in the same publication has cited an increase in the number of Industrial Tribunal cases involving racial discrimination. These cases raised the question of the state of equal opportunities policies, practices and institutional environment of the universities among the academic and administrative staff. In the 1970s however, D experienced a different life at the university *"It was an isolating loneliness and an unhappy time (my school never prepared me for it)... I stayed there for a year and left. I decided to do my degree in this (city) university and moved on to doing my*

*teacher training ....and eventually got into an FE college.....”* D’s view is obvious that FE colleges are better placed in preparing young Black learners for university life and they complete the schools’ unfinished business well. It was argued that schools must be capable of developing all pupils with appropriate awareness of issues of racial prejudice and racism and those teachers and senior staff must be personally and professionally developed to tackle racial prejudice and racism and this should be paramount.

The Swann Report (1985) emphasised the key role of teachers and head teachers in the education system by being more responsive to the diverse needs of ethnic minority pupils. The report had concluded that in the field of initial teacher education no teacher training institutions appear to have succeeded in providing a satisfactory grounding in multi-cultural education for all. The great majority of students were entering teaching having received little or no guidance on how to adopt a broadly based approach to education which takes a full account of the presence of ethnic minorities in our society.

**Respondent E** said to have just ‘stumbled’ into FE college life as an adult student but claimed to have fallen in love with it for its role in providing education to people who are not privileged enough to achieve a suitable qualification to go to university or find a suitable job. Despite E’s previous qualifications he/she was unable to make headway until the completion of a course in FE college and then decided to put back into FE what he/she had gained from it. *“I was teaching more hours than most of the full time lecturers. I taught unsocial hours including some evenings but I enjoyed the experience;*

*this was in early 1989, so I wandered into teaching and eventually into FE college management...I developed a deep appreciation of what FE colleges do for people without the necessary skills and qualifications...Though my experience also is that many people in this country still do not value the facilities and take advantage of the opportunities available to them.”*

E developed a strong view about the value of FE college provision in the local community and assumed an authority in the process by promoting the idea of learning at the college by reaching out to potential beneficiaries. Spicer (2007) has conceptualised this kind of association between ideas and social role as ideational authority. To an extent this is not a dissimilar point to what some other respondents have made, for example C had asserted the idea of inherited values, parental and cultural support for education and emphasised that FE college leadership work is a mission which enabled him/her to reach out to people, who otherwise may not have come forward to realise their potential. This purposeful role and interaction within and outside the college organisation provided an assumed authority to ABME educationalists.

**Respondent F's** FE leadership career developed out of similar social challenges. He/she progressed from school to FE college with 'hard to reach students', and strove to take them forward and transform their lives. F had some of the worst behaving pupils in the class at school but his/her sense of purpose, dedication and hard work in partnership with parents, teachers and the local community paid dividends. F stated, *“In my early career, the class I was given was challenging, three teachers had resigned because of some chaos with this particular class. To be honest it was really a tough class. I had*

*no experience of teaching a tough class such as this one. I will give you an example, on one particular day many of them as a group went round bullying a disabled man, followed him to his home and then started bricking up one of his windows...it was a tough area and challenging to work in, especially in view of the kind of behaviour and attitudes most pupils displayed.”*

However, F persevered and the work resulted in the same pupils reforming themselves and won the praise of the head teacher and an award from the local consortium of local schools. F's inspiration and motivation was to follow them through college life to see them succeed in achieving a qualification worthy of employment. F witnessed an FE college making a difference in learners' lives and witnessed their transition in terms of their success and progression. The Swann Committee Report (1985) had concluded in respect of West Indian children that as a group they were underachieving in relation to their peers.

**Respondent G**, like F and some one third of the respondents, started teaching in the school sector and progressed into the FE sector. G's particular interest developed as he/she realised that FE colleges offer opportunities to people to achieve their GCSEs, A levels, vocational or work based qualifications if they were not able to achieve them at school. In addition there were examples similar to D's experience of the university which attracted G in the direction of FE.

Sharing the experience G said, *“I was a mature student at that time so I was used to living on my own and looking after myself. There were two things that*

*made me want to leave this campus, one was the overtly racist environment and secondly it meant living in digs or in the hall, I just didn't find that bearable. A friend of mine and I went to the student bar, it was a college dominated by sports and domestic science students and the rugby club was singing racist songs in the bar and I did not feel I was welcomed there. So I transferred back to... city to do PGCE and ended up doing supply teaching and at that time I had a friend and we were living together. My friend who was White got onto... this LEA teaching list and I didn't and that was my first experience of the racist impulse in education. It was quite clear that I had a better degree than the friend, yet I ended up on supply and the friend ended up on the approved list... to an extent this is what shaped my journey into FE."*

Gunaratnam (2003) has interpreted such interactional and emotional stories as contributory to forming conceptual relationships between the individual and the social context in which race can be witnessed at play. An FE college became an attraction for G's career, and to work for racial equality and to combat racial and cultural prejudice and stereotyping.

No surprise that **Respondent H** was also deeply inspired by his/her own values and routes which he/she regarded as the cornerstone of success. These values and routes provided him/her with emotional and spiritual strength and commitment, enabling him/her to make a difference to people's lives through education. H firmly believes that FE colleges are the places that offer solutions. They do not only provide education to young people but also



to adults from a wide variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. H argued that many individuals, families and neighbourhoods have no culture of ongoing learning for improving life and employment opportunities. H claimed, *“I saw first hand how education can help families break out of a cycle of deprivation. It is this value of education that attracted me to this post, being responsible for lifelong learning and giving people the opportunities to learn throughout their lives wherever they are in their learning. I am fortunate to be able to make a difference to students’ lives.”*

However, Allen and Ainley (2007) have cautioned that forcing young people from deprived and discriminated against backgrounds into education that has systematically failed and excluded them from the earlier ages, is inherently contradictory. Gronn (1999) had introduced the significance of such factors as the shaping of an individual notably by home life and upbringing, schooling and the work of educational support agencies. In so far as the FE college leadership role is concerned in this context, Bridge (1994) has argued that principals provide role models even if they do not change the learning culture. They can influence the role of relevant others and by triangulating these points with those raised by H and C, we can see the discussion progressing in the direction of promoting better liaison, co-ordination and integration of home, support agencies, school and college in the best interest of learners. Arguably in this context FE college principals can have a key role in their local areas by influencing the culture, subject to the prevailing environment of policy, strategy, institutional and resource

provision. This area has been further explored by the respondents in the following sections.

In practical terms H claimed to have developed and used a similar positive approach to win a wider support for the college's provision, notwithstanding the usual managerial limits and the speed of the progress, H experienced difficulties of race, *"I have worked with colleagues who I know have had some serious prejudices and that has affected the work of the college due to the way they have treated me, communicated with me and supported me or otherwise."* These difficulties had to be overcome and tackled. This is where H's personal values and commitment motivated him/her to press ahead with the college leadership tasks superseding and indeed taking on any other issues as barriers to be overcome in the pursuit of the cause of making a difference in learners' lives.

Talking through his/her experience **Respondent I** partly focused on the way he/she had been received, perceived and approached in FE colleges despite the fact that he/she was born and brought up in England, has an English education and speaks with a usual accent. I's view was that it boils down to the colour of his/her skin. I took the approach of turning the experience on its head and saw it as a curiosity on the part of White, Black and Asian students, that they were 'fascinated' to see me in this 'unexpected' leadership role. *"White students get surprised to see me in this role...when I used to be at a college where there were no ethnic minority faces,(but) it used to feel quite threatening...(however) now I think what an opportunity it has been to be able to be a role model for different reasons for different groups of students. I*

*myself look to other principals as role models and I compare myself to successful White principals - as there are not many Asian and Black principals - in terms of their skill. I like watching colleagues who are highly skilled at what they do and try to learn from them. Of course in education established White principals are experienced, intelligent and skilful and I love watching them in action and my job allows me to do that.*" The Commission for Black Staff in FE (2003) Report established that there was a noticeable under-representation of principals and senior managers at senior levels in FE colleges and the point that I made was that there are few Asian and Black leadership role models at principal and senior management levels for staff and students to see, emulate, or draw inspiration from for senior leadership roles.

Ironically however, almost all the initial and the majority of all appointments achieved by ABME principals, were not at multi-racial but mainly at all White FE colleges serving predominantly White communities and this should make an interesting theme for a further investigation. What will this research tell us about the ABME principals and the appointing FE corporations?

**Respondent J** raised the issue of some of the FE colleges' leadership in urban multi-racial areas tolerating poor quality provision and depriving students from the education and experience that they deserve to move on in their lives. J is proud of individual and some selective achievements but is deeply frustrated with the level of racial discrimination in the system. *"At the time when I joined in my role there were very few Asian and Black lecturers*

*let alone managers within FE colleges. After my appointment it also dawned on me that as well as being in management within my college, I also became a role model... It is disappointing that in this enlightened age, where we have a race relations support infrastructure, Acts of Parliament and are not supposed to discriminate, this openly happens within FE college organisations...What FE colleges need to do is to recognise and utilise the strengths of what Asian and Black staff can bring to their roles and develop their potential for the benefit of students and FE organisation.”* J was reinforcing and raising the issue of the existence of systemic problems of race which is not getting addressed despite legislation and policy consensus on equality and diversity for achieving social justice for all. This calls into question the culture of complacency, the level of confidence and competence relating to this area among FE college corporations and related agencies.

The Elliot and Crossley (1997) argument of ‘market orientation’ of colleges may explain the situation to an extent that race equality and diversity were not a priority for the new FE corporate culture in the 1990s.

Like the points of a significant proportion of respondents above, **Respondent K’s** issue was that the school culture had almost failed him/her. K made a career move into joining this FE college to make a contribution to the learning of inner-city learners who do not get a fair deal. The Swann Report (1985) considered the details of various factors, both within the education system and outside it, which have been said to lead West Indian children to underachieve is racism.

K said, *“I am very committed to people having equal opportunities, justice and ensuring that if you have the ability you should be able to achieve your potential regardless of class or any racial issues. I have acquired these values through my family members, my mother, my father, my extended family, aunts, cousins and in particular my grandmother. My school experience was a very interesting one; the schools in this local town were failing Asian and Black pupils. I failed my 11 plus which was interesting, I went to the local comprehensive Church of England school where I spent three years in the bottom set of the class in that comprehensive with pupils who could not read and write, although I came from a top class primary school. But I spent all those three years reading the story of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and various other influential heroes. That was how I stopped myself from getting frustrated in the school culture. The work was easy enough so I used to get away with doing very little, so I used my ideas in other ways and my parents always encouraged me to read. Eventually teachers realised I had some ability and I was moved up, I never thought I would go to university so I was quite surprised when I got my ‘A’ levels. A love of reading got me through the exams and made me realise I had some ability. I went to teacher training college and eventually ended up in an FE college career.”* Many of these points are similar to those of other respondents asserting that there is a culture of low expectations among some racial minority students. There are not many role models in schools and colleges to inspire the under achieving young people, to enable them to move on in their career by making the most of the opportunities available to them and that students without the appropriate home and family support

suffer multiple disadvantages. These points raise questions about the responsiveness of FE colleges and pose a variety of complex challenges as will be explored later.

The points raised here are self-explained and well illustrated above. **Respondent L** was interested in pursuing a career in education. His/her entry route was through community and local authority work where L developed a deep working knowledge, understanding and awareness of the issues of inequality.

L used this knowledge and experience in his/her work in FE colleges; it guided L's work, *"I thought I would specialise in youth and community work but I took up a mainstream post in this City Council working as a youth and community officer. Whilst I was doing that I became interested in race equality in education and I did my Masters in this field. I became involved in policy making and went into a local authority's equalities unit, but I was still involved in education; the subject I had qualified in. I feel that education is the key in people's lives which empowers them"* and enables them to break out of the cycle of deprivation. L saw FE colleges as a better vehicle for driving young people out of their sense of disaffection and social disadvantage into recognition of their potential. L saw the need for inclusion in FE as best addressed through social and education policy.

**Respondent M** had to go abroad to work because he/she was unable to get into any of the English universities for employment despite his/her higher and

research qualifications. Eventually M was able to find work in an FE college and developed his/her career and progressed into management and leadership. M was driven by the idea that FE colleges are open, accessible and offer second, third and more chances for learners and teachers to succeed, his/her values fitted with the colleges' purpose and they enhanced the motivation of leading one's self and others to excel in life and career through FE teaching and learning.

M asserted and continued with his/her point that *"FE college worked for me in terms of getting me back in the learning system, otherwise I would have left with a sense of a failure although having tried extremely hard. It was my initial FE college involvement. The second entrance into FE was working as a senior lecturer under the LEA with this college...I then travelled and taught in a university abroad, returned to England to work in a school but then an offer in an FE college came along and I was successful. It was a job dealing with management and leadership of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic education on one side and that (on the other side) I could keep my specialism in languages but also move into senior management of the college, so that was an entry really for the purposes of employment...and I felt working below my potential."*

It is obvious that the college has not only met M's employment needs but also enabled him/her to be responsive to others. This is relative to a career satisfaction story, however, Reeves (1995) posed a question as to whether FE colleges are adequate for the purpose of providing a general emancipator education for the mass of the people.

**Respondent N's** story is the story that has been told time and again by other respondents. N switched career from social work to FE college, teaching and then into management and leadership. Instead of dealing with symptoms of social problems rooted in relative poverty and deprivation, N decided to equip and enable people through Further Education to take control of their own life journeys enabling them to make a difference in their lives. N set out to "*... make a positive contribution to people's lives. I was taken on as a trainee social worker by a local authority but within a month or two of this I realised that the social work career was not for me. It was too painful seeing the level of deprivation and helplessness. So coming into FE it was not an escape but an opportunity to do something positive and practical for individuals ... I do feel that FE colleges offer people a real second or third opportunity. I enjoy opportunities to be able make a difference in the lives of mature students; I feel that I contribute to their development ...*"

#### **4.2.1. Guiding Conclusion: People and Cultural Factors**

An overall conclusion of this section is that ABME principals' personal and professional values, vision, ambition, commitment, belief and reliance on FE colleges' ability to make a difference in the lives of deprived, disadvantaged, disaffected and discriminated against learners, are the core factors which have inspired and propelled their leadership. Their motivation and commitment for this drive flows from their own experiences of racial and/or disability discrimination and that of relative poverty, which have stimulated them to further influence and transform FE colleges. They claimed to have



been basically inspired and strengthened by their up-bringing and socialisation – involving parents, family, community, heritage and the sense of history that they identify with. Their core principle and belief is that education is pivotal for learners' life chances which can enable them to realise their potential. ABME principals feel that they have a duty to be inspiring role models for all learners and educationalists. The salient issues and concerns arising from the experiences of ABME principals have been further summarised for reference in the Appendices 7.2.2. Fig 3; 7.2.5.

### **4.3. Exploring Institutional and Environmental Dynamics of Leadership**

**Analysis of responses to the interview questions (Section 3.8) is reviewed against the data review composite question 2 (Section 3.9) which incorporates essence of the research questions 1 and 2 (Section 1.5)**

Section 4.2 reviews and analyses the data against the composite data review question 2, mainly but not exclusively focusing on the institutional and environmental factors - propelling and/or impeding ABME principals' leadership. The respondents' experiences identify, describe and show the factors which have been helping or hindering their leadership in terms of being effective in impacting on their college organisation.

**Respondent A** talked about the closeness of the FE colleges' sector at senior levels which makes access to opportunities at leadership levels difficult, especially for Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic FE staff who would not normally have direct contacts and networking opportunities with principals, chairs and governors. One of A's challenges was to do whatever possible within the limits of his/her role and the national policy and strategy, to campaign for and encourage the opening up of FE colleges institutionally, to diverse leadership at all levels. *"The biggest problem in FE colleges is that the sector is very closed and has a tight environment, and the leading governors and principals who have been there long also appoint others fitting their view of FE colleges. They tend to be exclusive and this is a serious barrier to getting short-listed for the senior leadership positions especially if, for example, a candidate's name is not identifiable as being White European sounding and or having overseas qualifications. They are not able to see if Asian and Black people can be successful principals. In my experience as a principal, both staff and other professionals continually under-estimated my ability."* Not only was there an experience driven passion that was pushing A to contribute to the national agenda for greater equality and diversity in FE colleges, but at the same time A had to do the very best at his/her own college. To deliver a good quality leadership, often encountering the stereotypes that inadvertently lead to the under-estimating of the capabilities of Asian and Black principals and deputies.

**A** illustrated the above point by emphasising *"... the FEFC's opinion of me as a person and professional was less favourable...I think in their minds perhaps*

*an Asian or Black principal is not up to certain standards. I have been unhappy with the treatment that I have had from the FEFC for a period. The inspectorate, I think came with certain expectations and you have to quickly change their perceptions when they are being negative... I am very blunt and to the point and people get to know you for that. I make sure that I have got around me a senior leadership and management team that I can trust, as it happens my senior management team are all white. But they are the colleagues whom I can trust. No principal can afford to rely upon a team that cannot be trusted."* A suggested that the level of familiarity and understanding on the part of FE agencies, their perceptions and expectations of Asian and Black FE college leaders are different. Unfortunately there are not many role models for them to look to and coaching and work shadowing opportunities are rare.

However, one of the evident strengths of ABME principals has been their objective understanding of society that Ainley (1993) has argued in favour of, principals like A have been innovative in converting their subjective experiences into mechanisms for objective change in FE colleges and their social environment. They have been able to create strategic alliances, networks and lobbies for interacting with policy and decision makers to generate influence in support of equality and diversity at all levels in FE colleges.

In the case of **Respondent B**, his/ her account shows that B was appointed to a problematic college which was heavily reliant for its revenue on

franchising under the then FEFC's demand-led-growth funding system. In order to be successful in realising one's own dreams about what must be done for students, staff and the local community, the college had to be made self sufficient in terms of its campus provision. Outlining the situation B went on to say *"The college was extensively engaged in external franchising of its provision, in fact it was 47% when I was appointed. My first meeting with the governors was a residential for planning. I alerted them to this heavy reliance on franchising which subsidised the costly direct provision at the campus. My previous experience as a vice principal taught me that the senior leadership roles are complex and polarised, they may have different directions to follow influenced by internal and external issues... In my view being a vice principal was even more difficult - you have conflicting demands; on one side there is a pressure from staff and on the other side you have pressure from the principal. However, I think there are a lot of things you can still do as a vice principal which improve and benefit learners and the community. For example, I was very heavily involved with the community in developing links and was instrumental to establishing a business forum in the town"*.

B is, however, clear that despite these limits, the institutional authority placed in senior leadership roles can enable individuals in leadership positions to set the agenda, choose the strategic direction for the college, take initiatives and lead development. This no doubt can only happen within the government's funding priorities which may conflict with local communities' changing needs but as Schuller and Watson (2009) have underlined, FE colleges have a

valuable contribution to make in developing local social and human capital which ABME principals have been championing.

Intimidatory external intervention was one of the core concerns that **Respondent C** raised that certain types of people in society aim to undermine ABME FE college principals as they appear to them to be in the senior positions 'against their stereotypical expectation'. Talking about this as a kind of unnecessary but time consuming distraction from the role, C said, *"If you are an Asian or Black FE college principal or senior manager one is never far from others' unexpected interventions, as for example, a retired army colonel wrote to me telling me to go back to where I have come from, because English people ruled people like me ... originally coming from a rather different part of the world I could just laugh it off as another (racist) stereotyping of me."* Warmington (2009) has called race a mediating tool which shapes the way human beings interact in a dynamic world, in which concepts such as race, do not only shape the world but they are also internalised differently forming cultures and dispositions.

*In addition to me being a college senior leader, ironically the local people had also elected me to a public office in the locality, so many of course also complemented my contribution and the calibre that I have brought to the role. There were people of all races there and often white English people would come to me with issues to resolve because I had a reputation of getting things done... but so many others do not see it this way."*

The issue for ABME principals and senior managers is that they have no choice but to respond and deal with this kind of additional, distractive and differential workload which arguably White principals and senior managers do not have to deal with. The White principals and senior managers can concentrate on the key tasks of their role without having to be so concerned about the burden of such distractions and barriers to getting on with the normal leadership role.

Talking about his/her challenges **Respondent D** was frustrated that having substantially contributed to the college development so far and despite his/her aspirations and potential, there were limited further opportunities, leadership scope and support for taking the college's development further. For D to be able to build and expand on his/her experience, knowledge and strategies, and to be able to progress his/her career, the only way forward was to apply for principalship at another college. *"My view at that time was that the college's funding would be reduced over time and the FEFC would try and equalise the funding. We would have a squeeze on resources so we had a very slimmed down management model ...I wanted to influence policy but the principal there would not let me go in that direction. There wasn't space for both of us and we both recognised that the time had come for one of us to go. This principal post was the first job that came my way. My weakness in applying for other jobs in bigger colleges was that I did not get an opportunity to experience strategic and policy development work and being a relatively smaller college we did not have a major curriculum portfolio to manage. I was*

*worried about my lack of experience and thus settled for the principal job at this particular college.”*

D was in no doubt that his/her skills, competencies, experiences and capabilities were under-utilised. Unlike White principals and senior managers he/she did not feel that the external environment was conducive to career development. There were little or no professional networking opportunities to link-up with others in similar positions to enhance leadership skills for progressing to the position of principal in FE colleges, despite being ambitious and prepared for realising the potential.

**Respondent E** was not sure why his/her colleagues were failing to see E's capabilities, experience and qualifications as strengths. Instead E's colleagues were more concerned with the college's equality policy under the legislation. There was some funding attached to the equality and diversity strategies, hence his/her promotion. Their stereotypical view may have been that E being an ethnic minority person, had been favoured for promotion over White colleagues due to equality and diversity strategy and funding. *“When I got the job, this candidate stopped even speaking to me. I did not know why this colleague would turn the other way in the corridor. Somehow there was a feeling amongst the colleagues that I was not experienced and qualified for the post. Why anyone should make assumptions without knowing what my experience and qualifications were was surprising.”*

However, E complemented that the governing committee and governors were showing a genuine commitment to bringing about changes. *“I think at this*

*college governors were bold enough to make the decision of short listing and interviewing me and recognised my commitment and strengths. The external assessors also felt that I should be appointed.*” E felt that well trained, aware and conscious governors are able to deal with their own and those of others’ popular racial and cultural stereotypes and are able to recognise an Asian or Black candidate’s strengths and competencies.

**Respondent F** alluded to the distance franchising issue involving a lack of appropriate infrastructure and investment to support the effectiveness and quality of education provision which F claimed was driven by the then FEFC’s demand-led funding policy. Some urban multi-racial cash strapped colleges used this for generating much needed revenue for survival. Often many of these initiatives were the result of external policy and strategy initiatives which F suggested were implemented without the involvement of and consultation with FE colleges, but which have been diverting college leadership from focusing on the core task of teaching and learning. F was very clear about this issue, *“I think the hindrance to progress was the distance factor for the franchised provision, I think you can talk on the phone or e-mail as much as you like but if the institutions had been closer, the partnership would have been even more effective.... I think colleges depend more on leadership than just leaders.* Jephcote et al (1996) showed that principals were preoccupied with corporate issues and concerned with market driven strategies which ABME leadership developed and drove in some FE colleges to reach out to disadvantaged learners in the community. However, the colleges were not able to provide adequate infrastructure and support to



transform and sustain this provision like open and distance or established community based learning.

*Like schools they are about staff motivation and everybody has an important role. It is a jigsaw and all the pieces have to come together. It isn't about me as the leader, but what colleagues see in me as a leader that is something you would have to ask them. If I am being totally honest we have had our ups and downs, it has been a roller-coaster... We had our Ofsted inspection; the HMIs were complementary about our values, commitment and the quality of teaching. They noticed that we were very seriously under resourced, they realised that the building needed a lot of work done to it. What impressed them was the motivation of our teachers and learners and that contributed to their academic success.”* The issue for F was to lead the college despite the limitations of resources and dependency on distance franchising in the interest of eventual transformation of the college.

**Respondent G** did not think that FE colleges were well equipped to meet the needs of a diverse community. G questioned whether FE colleges were institutionally geared up to serving the educational needs and demands of Black and minority ethnic learners. Even the then FEFC's national demand-led strategy based on competition, G said, was unable to meet the needs due to lack of adequate investment and facilities. *“I would have liked to be in a position to set up a Black college to be honest. I have said it in the context of the FEFC's and now the Learning and Skills Council's approach to encouraging contestability. It would be a great opportunity if it were possible*

*to set up an institution like those Black colleges in the USA. I think it is important for Black people to see themselves as being able to identify and look after their own needs effectively. I am using the term Black in a political sense. I think it is going to be a long haul to get the mainstream providers to be genuinely responsive to Asian, Black and ethnic minority communities....”*

Reeves (1995) giving an historical account outlined that local authorities had traditionally provided a primary, secondary, further and continuing adult education service to meet the varied needs of all sections of the local population but now it was subject to supply and demand, regulations and resourcing priorities. G suggested that Asian and Black principals and senior managers, given their small number and limited influence, are unable to do much in this direction as they are scattered all over the country and lack an effective networking strategy.

G added, *“If you look at the White female principals, there has been significant growth in White women principals. Only recently did we get some half a dozen Asian and Black principals. I personally lobbied the FEFC for setting up a new leadership initiative to support aspiring Asian and Black principals to get coaching and develop a network. Having been on the programme myself, I know that I can call upon a network of friends and colleagues for help and advice ... Historically White male principals have operated like a mafia.”*G asserted that empowerment of individuals and communities is a vital strategy to pull them out of the margins of society or the institutions as the case may be.

**Respondent H**'s points have further articulated and illuminated some of the issues which have been raised by other respondents and they have also offered some strategic suggestions along the lines of the recommendations of the Commission for Black Staff in FE Report (2003) that *"We should be sitting together as a group and setting ourselves some strategic targets, currently the percentage of Asian and Black principals is 0.8% (at the time of the interview in 2002 -03, now it is around 2% in 2006); what we should be aiming for is about 8 percent, equivalent to the proportion of the Asian and Black population of England. Although, the student population in FE colleges from Asian, Black and minority ethnic communities is much higher at around 16%."*

*"We need to start lobbying, pressuring and targeting the key national agencies and the DfES. I think that the Network of Black Managers has been performing that role to an extent. It hasn't had enough principals to deploy but I think that there is enough grass root support; I don't expect to be the principal of Ludlow College speaking metaphorically, but I could imagine becoming a principal of a college in Birmingham, London, Manchester, Leicester, Newcastle or Coventry . But we must not allow our own community turf wars to get in the way, we need to stop seeing ourselves as Indians, Pakistanis, Caribbeans or Africans; in political and policy terms we need to see ourselves as Black British and one individual's success should be our collective success."*

**Respondent I** similarly commented on the much debated franchising policy and strategy. *"I would say that my approach at the college was different*

*because we didn't do a lot of franchising and I take no credit for that because I had nothing to do with that. It was actually the principal's policy decision...I was strongly encouraging the principal to do it because everyone else was going it. The work that I did involved the local communities to work with us and also the college to work with the communities, and for them."*

Respondent I had clarity about the nature of franchising as an exploitative model. Many colleges were enticed to adopt it to earn cash, but it had become controversial. On the other issues I's response was clear through comments such as "*... there are not many Asian and Black senior managers in leadership in education anyhow, whether it be in colleges, schools, universities, LSC, or DfES. It's encouraging to see people as role models and to emulate them if they also say that you can also do it ... I feel that it is very important.*" It is much better than "a team of middle class White colleagues telling ethnic minorities what to do to be inclusive. That does not work." For many Asian and Black potential FE college leaders, the 1990s community based growth of FE provision, became an opportunity to realise their potential and some emerged as role models.

**Respondent J** discussed the implications of post franchising rationalising and the downsizing of FE colleges resulting in many claims of a disproportionate and negative impact on Asian, Black and minority ethnic staff and managers, including those who were in relatively senior leadership positions. There is evidence of disproportionate impact of unemployment on ethnic minorities during downsizing due to recession or funding cuts, the Open University (1982) documented discrimination against ethnic minorities

during recession as their jobs are most vulnerable as the economy runs into difficulties. Travis (2010) has shown the disproportionate impact of recession on minority ethnic communities – the rate of unemployment increases sharply among them as compared with the White population. J claimed, “... *that upon merger it was difficult for me as a senior ethnic minority manager to work with my counterparts on the other side – who were all White and commanded the support of the principal ...But after the restructuring I was removed from the post, which was given to a White colleague who had less experience and had never managed the student services budget or led the service for a multi-ethnic student population.*” J would like to see a structure whereby staff who feel they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by the college have a process where they can approach external agencies and put their case to them...Otherwise, through more formal approaches, careers became damaged and the process creates enemies within the college organisation...Whistle blowing does not enhance one’s career and within the FE colleges sector it can become an act of self harm if you are high enough ... “*They can make sure that you never get appointed to a significant role*”. J thinks individuals who have an issue should be enabled to seek external professional guidance, arbitrary and conciliatory support without having to go through the damaging formal channels. But this is only possible if FE corporations and the senior leadership of colleges have a degree of maturity, self-confidence and corporate competence.

**Respondent K** highlighted the issue of the limits as to what FE college Asian and Black managers in leadership positions can achieve, with examples such

as “... by giving unrealistic targets with inadequate resources... you are almost set to fail and then there are other barriers to success ...The bureaucratic audit processes and procedures were put in place hindering rather than helping FE colleges.” Jephcote et al (1996) reflected on how the FE college sector had changed after the F&HE Act 1992 (DfES, 1992) “...In the circumstances, there was also some unwillingness of colleagues to comply and that created further problems, which took up a lot of time and energy and consequently made it more difficult to push through things...Ironically we needed greater flexibility and more resources as education particularly with many younger Asian, Black and minority ethnic people, is difficult ... They have adopted the White working class ethos around education and work, whereas the previous generation were keen and interested in education for getting employment. The future groups of young people that are coming through may not hold on to the traditional values. If colleges perpetuate those values, we are doing a disservice to those groups of people...FE colleges should celebrate differences because that is a key to saying to people that they are important and good for the wider community.” Having almost set them up to fail then, instead of looking at these students’ personal and professional qualities, many will see them through their racial prejudice claimed K.

**Respondent L** reflected on a situation in which L felt stripped of his/her initiatives, deprived of resources to deliver the widening participation strategy and forced to adopt almost a survival leadership strategy, “I was in a vulnerable position. By this time my ideas had been used up, my contacts

*had been utilised, no resources had been given ...the widening participation unit was going to be set up in this college and they advertised a managers post, but this post was on a grade below what I was on.”* L claimed to have initiated, developed and led the widening participation project. However, structurally in this college it was going to be passed on to someone else to lead, through restructuring. There was no guarantee L was going to be appointed to manage it. Even if L had applied for the new post, it was being advertised at a reduced salary. L was quite disturbed that the college structure and strategies were not transparent and that staff did not reflect the local communities which in turn reflected on student participation, their success and the focus of staff.

L went on to suggest, *“I would have liked a transparent system and structure to ensure that staffing reflected the needs of the local communities. I would be servicing the local community and trying to ensure that equal opportunities are put into practice rather than just producing, updating and now and then circulating the documents.”*

**Respondent M** is highly qualified and experienced but was unsuccessful in getting an academic post in the university sector in England. M worked abroad to enhance his/her capabilities and then gradually managed to get into the FE sector and moved up to a senior position. M is equally critical of FE colleges in that their institutional practices are just as discriminatory. They take in Asian and Black staff to develop new or marginal initiatives primarily to

achieve growth through widening participation in urban multi-racial areas. This creates funding and subsidises the mainstream campus provision.

However, some Asian and Black managers have used these opportunities positively - reaching out to disadvantaged communities, and endeavouring to compete for senior leadership positions. M asserted that this was a struggle and that, *“The jobs with excessive degrees of stress and difficulties are occupied by Asian and Black people and then those colleagues are not even given an opportunity to professionally benefit from their achievements. So the problem is more about the colonial (institutional practices and) mind in relation to us...some may say it is all class but it still comes to the same thing...“I worked for two senior Black managers, one certainly was very hawkish and another was very dovelike and I found that both of them were being undermined by staff and I left always with this perspective, that in fact they were being undermined partially because they are Black and not because the things that they say and do were crazy or bad ...”* M suggested FE colleges should define a clear budgetary basis for their activities which is not temporary and which is not by favour, but is part of a clear policy backed by strategies...Bring in more members of Black and ethnic minorities staff, not as tokens or people who can be contained, but as people to offer a professional view and leadership.

However, it was also suggested that FE colleges are ahead of other government sectors ...The colleges' self-evaluation, improvement processes within the Ofsted's inspection regime are driving up standards ...The skills



agenda is seeking to link colleges with the local economy which is creating new opportunities and challenges for college leadership and management to engage with local communities.

Reflecting on the complexity of recruitment and promotion practices in FE colleges involving Asian and Black staff, M said, *“What is partly true in a sense is that even when there was a genuine inclination on the part of the principal to recruit Black senior managers, they were blocked by the next tier down because white managers didn’t want to be challenged by the new Black intake. I wouldn’t look at the principals, it was the next tier which to my mind blocked the progress. The principals are often removed from the day-to-day leadership and management. FE colleges’ institutional unfairness is also not unknown.* “M claimed that if you have people in certain positions like community education, when the franchising gets chopped who is thrown out? It is usually the Asian and Black staff... There aren’t that many opportunities to get such management and leadership experience; you get stuck at certain stages of it.

Asian and Black staff didn’t realise that to get on, they needed to develop their skills ...You have to keep up with the funding methodology, information and data systems and also you have to develop people management and leadership skills. M’s perspective has provided a broader summary of the view and experiences of most of the respondents involving barriers they encountered entering FE colleges and beyond.

**Respondent N** felt that FE college institutions still lack strategies in offering opportunities to minority ethnic staff to develop as role models and thus make a difference in many disadvantaged learners' lives. They are *"....excluding groups of people who would be very good for the FE colleges sector, not only because they relate particularly well to students but also the people across the board need to have aspiring role models to relate to...from different backgrounds. I just wish that FE culture wasn't as dismissive of black people. It forces us to function within set parameters. I am not sure whether this is FE colleges in general, because management jobs across the board have perceptions attached to them. They have specific race connotations. I would say we really need to give people genuine opportunities to show how good they are and that they are welcome."*

This section has analysed institutional and environmental opportunities and challenges experienced and encountered by the respondents - the data reveals some of the enabling and obstructing factors. The following section examines the effectiveness of the principals' performance and the nature of the impact that they claim to have made, or the inhibitions that they have experienced.

#### **4.3.1 Guiding Conclusion:**

##### **Environmental and Institutional Factors**

An overall conclusion of this section is that in the experience of ABME principals, FE college institutions have under-estimated and under-valued

their leadership potential and capabilities. They have been imaginatively innovative, in developing growth of FE provision, educational activities and in generating financial revenue. However, FE colleges have not sufficiently engaged ABME educationalists in the mainstream of Further Education including senior leadership roles and tasks, and have thus been depriving them of occupational experience, professional development, causing their exclusion and marginalisation. FE colleges have been slow in tackling racial discrimination and stereotyping of ABME educationalists. Funding issues, restructuring processes and organisational streamlining have disproportionately affected ABME educationalists, often disadvantaging them in promotion and career progression opportunities.

However, in the main during the last decade some progressive FE Corporations have recognised the leadership potential and strengths of ABME educationalists. A small number of FE Corporations have appointed them to senior leadership roles which provided an opportunity for ABME principals to demonstrate their leadership capabilities and skills in developing and transforming their colleges. They claim to have influenced Government policy, strategy and agencies' practices affecting contextual and environmental changes conducive to their objectives of achieving fairness, equality and social justice. Despite scarce resources, stretching targets and testing circumstances, ABME principals have been successful in delivering their leadership remit. Moreover they have used opportunities available to them to tackle institutional impediments to making progress. The salient

points arising from this Section are also summarised for reference in Appendices 7.2.2. Fig 3; Section 7.2.5.

#### **4.4 Exploring Effectiveness of Performance and its Impact as the Dynamics of Leadership**

**Analysis of responses to the interview questions (Section 3.8) is reviewed against the data review composite question 3 (Section 3.9) which incorporates essence of the research questions 1 and 3 (Section 1.5)**

This section concentrates on factors relating to leadership drive covering areas of quality improvements, raising of standards and making performance more effective in FE colleges. It also identifies any of the impediments which limit this process and thus impact on the leadership effectiveness of ABME principals. Gunter (2006) has argued that the challenge for educational organisations is to resist any harmful activities and structures which compromise the promotion of equal opportunity rights, and emphasis on diversity. This process can be pursued to an extent through education and training provision which values and respects all, who make up the community, and support it - in this case the development of an inclusive FE college community.

An inclusive FE college community would involve all participants and stake holders in the college's effectiveness and performance improvement

processes. **Respondent A's** account however has claimed that governors and senior managers who have power and authority to make senior appointments in FE colleges, are not necessarily familiar with the culture and strengths of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic leadership practitioners because most of them may not have had any experience of working with them or seeing them as successful leadership roles.

Unlike under local authority control until 1992, A said that the incorporated FE colleges' culture of equal opportunities was under developed. In the course of time equal opportunities for staff and students – in employment, teaching and learning – emerged as strong concerns. A said, *“ I have many examples from colleagues who feel they have been badly done by in the FE colleges system ... Prior to the incorporation of colleges the number of Black managers in FE was far more than it was ten years after incorporation. This is because certain local authorities tended to be passionate on equal opportunities and therefore, appointed Black people on merit to some key jobs. When the FEFC was set up the colleges were no longer part of the local authorities and the system got dismantled and Asian, Black and ethnic minorities lost out.”*

The effectiveness of equal opportunities policies, strategies and practices was seen in terms of diversity in employment at all levels and in the college organisation under local authorities' control. After incorporation, there was neither enthusiasm nor support for the idea of returning FE colleges to the local authorities who led and managed equality initiative programmes before 1992. Respondent A was critical of the colleges' then funding body the FEFC

and that of the college corporations for their lack of policy, strategy, action and accountability on issues of institutional racism and discrimination. A said, *“The democratic checks and balances had gone and the self appointed college corporations did what they preferred within the new rules with their principals and senior managers. That was the biggest loss to Black people after the incorporation because it had taken them back ten years in trying and getting the issues of race and equal opportunities back on the agenda at all levels in FE colleges”*.

Other respondents have raised similar points. However, with the emergence of the LSC in the beginning of this decade, some initiatives had begun to materialise within the new framework of race equality legislation. A strongly believes in taking initiatives at different levels for developing strategies for equality and diversity. For example, A mentioned that: *“We have set up the Network for Black Managers which is trying to deal with these issues. There is also the Commission for Black Staff in FE Research (in progress) which has researched the situation confirming (at earlier stages) basically what we thought was the case.”*

This assertion endorses many of the common issues of race equality as a measure of FE colleges' effectiveness raised by most of the Respondents. A, however, warned that prejudice, discrimination and institutional racism should not be used as excuses for not trying our level best to make progress. A strongly suggested, *“In terms of advice for Asian, Black and ethnic minority colleagues, they need to understand that they do not need to hang everything on the racist hook. There are also dangers in this. For Black colleagues to*

*assume that if for example someone has made a mis-judgment or somebody has said something about them, it doesn't mean that it's all about racism. It can be about a professional view on a particular issue. We need to be big enough to accept that that if my governing body puts me through a lot of pain in terms of analysis and scrutiny, it is not about racism, it is about the fact that they care passionately about the college, its welfare, students and staff. There are no quick fixes and if Black colleagues hang everything on the racism hook that will cause diversion from the real professional goals of self development and, moreover, the development of the college to benefit learners because ultimately this what it's all about."*

In discussing the quality, standards and performance of FE colleges as a broader measure of success, the dimensions of college effectiveness and the impact of leaders' roles in the continuing improvement process is important, most of the respondents felt that the issue of access to FE colleges for learning and employment, and as exemplars of equality, diversity, justice and fairness must be at the heart of the dynamics of FE college leadership.

It was claimed that the level of familiarity and understanding on the part of FE agencies of the contribution of Asian and Black college leaders varied significantly, as did their perceptions and expectations. A and most of the other respondents felt similarly about the nature of FE colleges' provision in terms of its relevance and impact on learners. The issues arising from the interactions between ABME principals as individuals and FE colleges as institutions, their personal and professional aspirations, the contextual priorities in terms of learner related concerns emerged as recurrent issues.

Therefore, instead of presenting and repeating almost the same or similar data from each of the 14 transcripts, I will briefly survey and analyse aspects of the remaining data for any new, different or additional points affecting the dynamics of leadership relative to the effectiveness, performance and impact factors.

Reflecting on his/her contribution to the college, **Respondent B** talked about some of the projects which were developed to add value to the college's effectiveness in supporting staff and students. B emphasised the pride and pleasure which his/her project gave in terms of student satisfaction – particularly to the benefit of many female students with family commitments. B exemplified the work by saying, *“In the early years of post incorporation of colleges it was about improving the college performance in terms of its marketing, to attract new learners and to get them involved in learning. I was instrumental in developing a new childcare provision which ensured that people with children had access to Further Education and that this wasn't a barrier...I was involved in a whole host of things, many innovative projects such as about ten years ago we developed 'CADCAM' training for women at home using computers, the telephone line and tutorial support long before the internet and online learning came on stream. We structured a programme with some City Council funding to look at the diversification of trades within the Asian community to encourage economic entrepreneurship. This resulted in a number of success stories. So these are the kind of things which as a Vice Principal one could do which were different and successful in their own ways.”*



The point to note from the data review is that in B's previous position as vice principal - before the appointment as principal, despite initiating and developing exciting new projects, contributing significantly to the college development B remained on the margins. B was limited in so far as close involvement in the college's corporate policy, strategy and planning were concerned. B's external work, however, added to developing some pragmatic initiatives providing new and better opportunities to mature learners. These initiatives provided a differential access to FE college provision for women with family commitments and minority ethnic businesses trading on the margins of the economy.

In view of the continuing and heightened inequities in education as Allen and Ainley (2007) have discussed, these micro college-led initiatives in localities do benefit disadvantaged social groups despite the policy trend of appeasing beneficiaries of economic restructuring than protecting those who have least benefited or have lost out in the process.

Ainley (1993) has argued that since the late 1970s both statistical evidence and everyday life experiences, particularly in cities, attest that extremes of wealth and poverty have increased. This has reversed the previous slight narrowing that has occurred since 1945. FE colleges are in the social frontline in encouraging and supporting people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to engage in learning to maximise their potential to improve their life chances, social and economic circumstances by gaining relevant skills and qualifications. This is an empowering motive for ABME principals as

educational leaders as **Respondent C** said his/her contribution to the college's effectiveness and impact was through building its capacity and capability in attracting learners, assessing their needs and converting them into demand for appropriate courses.

Respondents A and B successfully made an impact by developing FE college work with a diverse range of social groups and organisations. C was also more keen to talk about the advantages of being able to gain experience of work with a number of different organisations, *"it is exciting having a college that will actually run some basic education and skills classes in community settings, A levels, equivalent programmes to do vocational, work based/related learning and GNVQ /NVQ programmes, and also now a Bachelors degree and an MA. I think it's fascinating that I can be principal of a college that is providing opportunities and leads on a wide range of Further Education activities. All this is a privilege; a big advantage of FE to the public, which is why FE is so thrilling. We don't just deal with one sector; we actually deal with every sector ranging from the community organisations to industry."* The responsiveness of FE colleges is integral to their effectiveness and community impact.

Offering an insight into a further dimension of leadership **Respondent D** talked through his/her instinctive initiative for motivating and attracting a wide variety of students from different faith backgrounds to Further Education. The underlying challenge was to keep the college free from communities linked religious tensions in the interests of good external relations and to enhance

what is now being termed by the government as 'community cohesion' (DIUS, 2008). D was transferring his/her community experience into the college leadership work by being inclusive but without compromising the interest and reputation of the college by safeguarding the integrity and quality of the provision. *"I had that vision of what would be successful, what would work and had a feeling that if we can directly access and persuade parents to send their youngsters to the college then it would be a great success for the college. Through togetherness with parents we would make a positive difference to the success of students. I think that was a fundamental belief but also I have had a real fear of how trivial community based tensions could cause conflicts and wreck organisations. I think the other thing that made it so successful was our refusal to allow any separate communal groups to develop. We would not allow a separate society of Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Christian students and there would be no student organisations built on a communal basis at all.*

Pursuing a similar theme **Respondent E** was driven by lack of interest in learning and a low regard for the value of education in many community groups and neighbourhoods, where people needed Further Education more than most to improve their life chances. This is where E thought college leadership can make an impact by endeavouring to change attitudes to the learning of hard to reach people. Further Education colleges can help people to break out of a cycle of deprivation, unemployment and disaffection is the most commonly made argument by the majority of respondents. The Rampton Report (1981) for example recommended, amongst other

measures, that as a matter of urgency the government should institute a high level inquiry into the causes of underachievement of ethnic minority children. Now thirty years on, Travis (2010) noted that White boys are falling behind and doing worst in education. The Swann Report (1985) linked underachievement in education to unemployment, deprivation and discrimination.

The respondents as educational leadership offered and as far as possible implemented their own micro solutions by reaching out to disadvantaged groups and raising awareness about FE college provision. Believing, as E went on to add *“The ability to take people forward and learners to improve, to be able to take them from one level of understanding to a different and possibly a higher level of knowledge, awareness and understanding to acquire qualification is the challenge. To help people make progress and to move them forward, enabling them to learn, is what FE is about.... My experience is that many people do not value education; I think many White people do not value education ...You have to get a mindset of progress through learning. Having said that, broadly speaking people in history have had much good teaching but I don’t get the impression that the support and facilities that we have here are available to this standard everywhere.”*

The breakdown and decline of family and community life due to poverty and deprivation, as the majority of Respondents have suggested, is depriving so many young people of their stable early socialisation (Gronn, 1999). As a result they also suffer from a values deficit and may lack the enrichment that

one's family heritage can provide. The key point is that all of this makes the role of FE colleges even more vital as second or third chance institutions.

FE colleges being a post compulsory voluntary sector of education as **Respondent F** has argued, they have to constantly deal with the problems of a shortage of resources and inadequacy of infrastructure to support personalised learning of students who underachieved at school. *"I know I myself and the rest of the staff learned a lot when we introduced advanced GNVQ qualifications, which were much more coursework based but no way an easy option. It was a challenging and most difficult adventure for staff and students but we were all determined to make it work. I think I am correct that in year one of the new GNVQ Science syllabus, only about 25% of the students nationally had passed. But here at our college, despite the limited and constraining infrastructure, all our students passed ..."*

As a teaching and leadership practitioner, F demonstrated that despite the limitations of resources, personal commitment, dedication and professional perseverance can make a difference. He/she enabled the college and led the situation based on the belief that students deserve a chance. Reeves (1995) has argued that the new Further Education is defined largely in terms of its function of improving the skills of workforce. The government has ruled out the possibility of paying for non-vocational education. The pressures have been growing and Elliott (1999) asserted that the funding arrangements for Further Education have been instrumental in progressively reducing both the actual contact time between teachers and students.

**Respondent G** did not think that the post incorporation era was good for Asian and Black staff as many FE college corporations were not confident in appointing minority ethnic staff to senior leadership positions. But those few who were successful in achieving senior positions had to work extra hard to establish their credibility as being role models. They were under extra scrutiny for their performance and they could not do anything wrong. G made the point that, *“A successful college will be the one whose principal has been able to build up its long term relationships with the external environment and has been able to lobby to project its positive and quality institutional image. I have shown my lobbying skills at national level, I became an effective lobbyist and very good networker. But I constantly come up against such issues as (FE college) governors’ perceptions that I am not experienced enough, being a Black person. The appointment panels will always say that you are inexperienced or that you don’t have financial experience or you need more exposure with this that or the other; the sort of things that White candidates don’t seem to have a problem with. There are a number of inexperienced White principals; I just can’t believe that there are only half a dozen or so competent Asian and Black senior managers in the country capable of principal positions. I can’t believe that between 1993 and 2003 they could only find four suitable candidates for appointment as principals.”*

Marley (2009) article on barriers to school leadership based on a recent Manchester University research claimed that our society is failing to create a multicultural leadership in schools and that this is really worrying as discrimination, disproportionate workload, stereotypical attitudes of senior

colleagues, ethnicity and access to leadership programmes continue to be some of the many impediments to school leadership. Like schools, FE colleges need good and aspiring ABME leadership role models providing encouragement and enthusiasm to others for taking up challenges, but there are few around in so far as aspirants are concerned.

**Respondent H** thought that his/her college had lots of potential but it was not going anywhere, the college wasn't analysing its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of meeting the local community's Further Education needs and needed to develop options in order to make some hard strategic choices for success. *"I initiated and developed the relevant provision at the college which really wasn't going anywhere in terms of its responsiveness to the local community"* claimed H. Learning from the past experience, he/she said, *"I developed the provision in the way that it became fundamental to the college structure rather than it being another initiative on the periphery...I am proud of the way I actually changed the then college organisation, its culture and ethos - the college began to work differently with communities."* The point is that any challenging transformational initiatives are best taken by college leaders who have a passion to make a difference in learners' lives and are confident that they have the support of the corporate decision makers/governors whose awareness of issues and experience should be complementary.

**Respondent I** was very keen to put something back into the community despite many limits and barriers. FE colleges, I asserted, *"Lack PR (public*

*relations) and there is a real lack of it... when the government are trying to encourage women to come into teaching, invariably they have picture of women (as role models). Wouldn't it be great to have the same thing in principals training to promote Asian and Black teachers and say they could become principal one day? I think there is a lack of networking and what we did was by accident. I have got to know a lot of senior managers through this accident, the network is now there. I have emails, I have telephone numbers of people whom I can trust and call. We set up the Black Managers Network and the Commission for Black Staff - the FEFC/ LSC and the DfES have put money into it and it has been supported by the AoC, ACM and NATFHE."*

However, FE support agencies were not then readily prepared to support the development of suitable programmes providing mentorship, work shadowing and coaching opportunities for those aspirants who wished to be FE college leadership role models.

**Respondent J** seemed passionate about delivering students their entitlements and stressed the importance of committed college staff and management who must themselves possess suitable qualifications and be experienced to meet the diverse needs and demands of the student population. J believes that the college's success depends on delivering Further Education fairly and objectively, which gives its leadership a greater influence over the funding and regulatory support agencies. Otherwise J points out that external interference can be a major barrier to how the college leadership prefers to drive the institution. That interference also has a marginalising effect on the leadership. J had strong advice for the external



agencies, suggesting that their disproportionate and directive intervention results in the marginalisation of college leadership. *“...the planning and funding strategies for colleges must take on board the issue of racial discrimination. The LSC needs to address the issue of racial discrimination within its own organisation also and then engage with colleges to tackle it...Again, it is disappointing that in this enlightened age where we have race relations procedures, laws against racial discrimination it still happens. Organisations are structured in a way that there is nothing that a manager or a lecturer can do (without damaging one’s own career prospects) if they perceive they have been treated unfairly short of going formal. Often the structures and the authorities within a college do not deliver their race equality remit effectively with commitment and honesty.”* One of Macpherson (2001) report conclusions was that the majority of the police officers who testified before the committee accepted that an element of the disparity was the result of racial discrimination and The Commission for Black Staff in FE Report (2003) had also reached similar conclusions with regard to FE colleges.

**Respondent K** was exercised by the issue that often FE college staff, management and leadership do not reflect the local communities that they serve. Their vision, drive and provision do not mirror the local challenges that communities face and they do not have full appreciation and understanding of the nature and patterns of deprivation surrounding the colleges. K’s solution is that *“I would have liked to ensure that the profiling of the teaching staff and management reflected the community; I think that was a must in*

*ensuring the continuation of the college. I certainly would have wanted to make an impact in that. I also would have wanted to look more closely at the curriculum mix that was offered to make sure that the people were really being offered appropriate opportunities and not just the same fodder turned out year after year. ...I would like to provide better facilities to our students. I think they have been hard done by, we should not be offering the basics, we should be offering the best. Even things like refreshments and canteen facilities needed an overhaul, we should have made them more appropriate for our student groups. What we have is often not suitable and culturally appropriate; things like this could improve the college for the local communities...I feel that education is the key to making a difference in people's lives and in empowering them. I enjoy the face to face contact and interaction with communities and for me education is about interacting with people and you feel that you have the skills through this profession to empower them."*

The personal and professional qualities of FE college staff and leadership are crucial for providing appropriate educational provision for the local communities. However, this is only possible if as most of the respondents mentioned, the funding regime is conducive to doing so and external FE agencies' intervention is supportive rather than directive. Schuller and Watson (2009) have argued that FE college values and mission should be inclusive and pluralistic, offering a comprehensive and diverse curriculum for a diverse population.

**Respondent L's** core point was identical to what J and K were saying. L said, *"I would have transparent systems and structures to ensure that staffing reflects the needs of the local communities. I would be servicing the local community and try to ensure that equal opportunities are put into practice rather than just producing documents that you refer to. I will be putting the needs of the learners at the forefront, but at the same time having the quality of staff to be able to meet those needs to ensure that there are positive role models in and around the institution that I am leading clearly and transparently."* This also helps the process of inspiring student participation, their success and focus of staff. Schuller and Watson (2009) reinforced the point that FE colleges should meet the needs and demands of local individuals, families and communities.

**Respondent M** discussed the issues and complexities involved in raising and educating young people in our multi-racial society. M claimed that in his/her experience often motivations and stimulants work differently with different groups of people including the staff in FE colleges, for example, people of African, Caribbean, Asian and European heritage would not necessarily respond to an incentive in the same way. FE colleges are not sensitive to these issues, *"There needs to be some kind of duality, which promotes and helps sustain measures to ensure that Black staff can develop in FE as it exists, but at the same time, I would also be encouraging across the land, black-led student intake institutions. I think that way one gets a balanced perspective in terms of education and development of people, bearing in mind that present policy really is about people doing more things for themselves"*

*and the state is moving away from an interventionist approach. So it is far wiser to say that we ...develop in the mission of the Learning and Skills Council to widen and extend opportunities, but led by people themselves within their own communities...We would need a mentorship programme appropriate at various levels in order for people to be able to interface in the areas that they have not been able to go into due to prior disadvantage. There needs to be some kind of in-service for existing White staff in order that they can be helped to move on from a system of all White values and power into one which has a genuine diversity. In a place, if most students are Black, senior leadership and powerful staff are all White. Suddenly the talk of diversity is going to appear very odd...Bring in more members of Black and minority ethnic staff, I don't mean as tokens or people who can be contained, but people who can offer a professional view on FE colleges within multi-racial areas...I would prioritise staff development of Asian, Black and ethnic minorities. For a lot of them its not qualifications and further training that they need, it's the opportunity. There are quite a number of people in FE as senior lecturer and on basic management grades who basically are stuck - with down sizing they were the first to be sidelined or pushed out".* Travis (2010) commenting on the impact of recession on ethnic minorities adds that the number of Asian and Black people becoming unemployed is increasing at a faster rate than White people. M said, *"I think these people need to be brought back into the system at deserving levels in accordance with their abilities but not as tokens."*

M suggests that the issues for aspiring Asian and Black leaders do not only appear at the entrance into FE college leadership, but they also continue in

different forms in their subsequent career. M's comments, however, are self explanatory in making and complementing the points that most of the respondents have made.

**Respondent N** maintained that the FE colleges' system is still far too compartmentalised into many 'go' or 'no go' learning and employment areas, as gainful learning and employment cannot be disassociated from the occupational area. Having switched career from social work to Further Education N outlined his/her experience by saying that *"FE isn't that open to Black people. I don't think we are seen as normal if you like. I actually think it's sad because FE is excluding a group of people who would be very good for the sector, not because they are relating to students but people across the board, need to have role models to relate to. So for our students in general its a good thing to see people from different backgrounds aspiring. I just wish that FE culture wasn't as dismissive of black people. It forces us to function within set parameters. I am not sure whether this is FE in general because in the management across the board there are perceptions attached to those jobs. They have specific race connotations."* Further Education colleges need to be comprehensive and inclusive to be able to serve the whole community of learners notwithstanding their circumstances.

#### **4.4.1 Guiding Conclusion: Effectiveness and Impact Factors**

An overall conclusion of this section is that ABME principals have been motivated and driven by the imperative that FE colleges should be further

transformed and strengthened as open, accessible, responsive, inclusive and equitable organisations both for education provision and employment. FE colleges must be effective in tackling unfairness, inequity and social injustice for all. Better opportunities should be created by engaging with employers, universities, schools, communities and agencies to enhance learning, employability and entrepreneurship. FE colleges can be effective in engaging with diverse communities, to encourage cohesiveness and integrity within diversity. FE colleges should be learner driven institutions providing second, third and continuing opportunities, enabling them to improve and gain appropriate qualifications throughout their lives. ABME principals claim to have impacted FE colleges' funding, standards and regulatory systems and processes through networking, lobbying and liaison. A differentiated approach is argued for meeting the varying educational, social, cultural and economic needs of diverse local communities within a wider and changing context. These are some of the salient points arising from the views and voices of ABME principals in this Section, which have been further summarised in the Appendices 7.2.2 Fig 3; Section 7.2.5.

#### **4.5 Overview and Direction**

This Chapter has reviewed the interview data selecting the most frequently occurring evidences which, in all or most cases is relevant and attributable to the research aim and questions of the investigation (Section 1.5.). The composite data review questions (Section 3.9) have enabled the process of interrogating, disaggregating and re-aggregating the information against the

thematic dimensions of the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals – people and cultural factors, institutional and environmental factors and effectiveness, performance and impact measuring factors (Sections 4.2; 4.3; 4.4). The data review has remained consistent and thematic within the framework of the conceptual themes (Section 2.11). A condensed review and analysis of the most frequently made responses by the respondents is available for reference in Appendices 7.2.2 Fig 3; 7.2.5. The interview transcripts have contained some revealing information and data, which is further reviewed, analysed and discussed in Chapter 5, to bring out, interpret and highlight the meanings of the key issues and concerns arising from the experiences of the ABME principals.

This Chapter presents ABME principals' lived feelings, emotions, aspirations, views, voices and activities relative to their interactions and activities as FE college leaders. Despite the diverse demographic, social, economic and geographical settings of the FE college organisations in which ABME principals work, the evidence shows that the nature of their experiences is similar. In so far as minority and discrepant evidence is concerned within the findings, despite its significance it is less relevant and applicable in terms of its actual application, which is about and in favour of setting up publicly funded separate USA style Black colleges in England. For example an argument was raised that some differential educational needs of Black learners and fairer employment and promotional opportunities for Black educationalists can only be better secured through an interim separate development of FE colleges in England. Respondent M argued that there is

little scope of ABME educationalists realising their ambitions and potential in FE colleges and that prospects of progressing on to senior leadership roles are very limited. It was further asserted that some of those who manage to progress, often find themselves marginalised, undermined and the roles they occupy are difficult and stressful.

However, respondent G's suggested solution to the problems of race discrimination and exclusion in Further Education is that, *"I would have liked to be in a position to set up a Black college ... (taking advantage of) the LSC's approach to encouraging contestability...it is important for Black people to see themselves as being able to identify and look after their own needs effectively."* However, most respondents have aspired to seek, develop and pursue their educational and leadership ambition within the mainstream of FE colleges' system. They have taken a resolute transformational approach to make progress in the area of leadership by mobilising support and influence for change in the field in so far as their efforts could stretch at institutional and environmental levels. Their vehicle for this has been the Network for Black Professionals in FE (the NbP).

The next Chapter further explores, identifies, describes and interprets the findings of this Chapter by building on the theoretical narrative and conceptual framework of the literature review, to understand the motivations and activities which drive ABME principals' leadership. This Chapter shows that the nature and characteristics of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges have been influenced and formed by their personal and professional



experiences - comprised of their feelings, emotions, views, perceptions, motivations, activities and influences – which have propelled them into working for institutional change and transformation in order to realise their objectives and aspirations for fairness, equality and social justice. In most cases the ABME principals' identities have transformed in the process from them being community, trade union, social work, business, and welfare workers, activists or campaigners, or race equality educationalist to being FE educationalists. Despite varying challenges and barriers of FE corporate culture and bureaucratic managerialism, AMBE principals have remained inextricably linked to their passions, principles and vision flowing from their experiences and backgrounds.

The evidence in this Chapter shows that the origins of ABME principals' basic values and vision beyond their lived experiences flow from their respective up-bringing, socialisation, the histories and heritage. In terms of race discrimination Asian principals see it as less favourable treatment, due to their language, culture, religion and the colonial past, where as African Caribbean principals have also referred to the colour of skin and the history of slavery which offers a differentiation within the range of experiences and/or perceptions. However, all ABME principals have seen race discrimination as a social, political and economic issue. Therefore the solution to a greater extent can only be in policy, institutional transformation, resourcing strategies and funding levels. The evidence shows that ABME principals have taken the internal and external leadership inhibiting factors as challenges and have endeavoured to transform them into opportunities for progress, adding to the

dynamism, which has propelled and sustained their leadership. In the process their experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination have though caused strong emotions, feelings and reactions which they have converted into positive motivations and actions for change - by inspiring, campaigning, lobbying and strategising for transformation of FE colleges. This argument though has to be located, positioned and presented in a wider social and historical context involving politics of race equality, changing legislation, policy development, academic work and a critical mass which has been gaining momentum - as the literature review has outlined in Chapter 2.

All respondents have seen FE colleges as a vehicle for achieving their vision to realise their values and aspirations. FE colleges have enabled them to realise their leadership potential and have provided opportunities propelling them towards their goals. However, one of the most common and recurrent issues has been their perceptions and experience of racial prejudice, direct or indirect race discrimination, disparities, disadvantage, deprivation, disaffection of young people, disability and/or under achievement of learners. The organisational and external interventions involving impositions of bureaucratic and regulatory measures interfere in the educational leadership drive for change and transformation. However, ABME principals have prioritised to make a difference in the lives of learners, so that they can better themselves, to improve their life chances and social mobility. In essence, this is what FE colleges' leadership effectiveness and impact is about – learners' success and progression aimed at providing 'Better skills, Better jobs, Better lives' (LSC , 2007). Appendices 7.2.2 Fig 3; 7.2.5 provide a condensed

summary of the findings supporting the above overview - the recurrent issues from this Chapter which have identified and described the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals - their abilities to inspire and motivate individuals, teams, and the college organisation effectively, to transform the negative factors into positive opportunities for change.

There is a stronger body of evidence that despite the impediments to their leadership, Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic FE college principals have refused to be separatists in their approach as a very small minority of respondents have argued, and they refused to be the victims of racial discrimination and exclusion. Instead, they have engaged in transforming the impediments into opportunities for success and progress. They have networked their transformational efforts through the NbP and BLI, who have strategised the process of change and development with the support of progressive FE colleges, Government departments and FE support agencies. The next Chapter aims to reconfigure, aggregate and triangulate the issues which have arisen in Chapter 4, into thematic categories. The outcomes of the investigation have been further analysed and concluded along the following thematic points, which have also been validated by relevant contemporary publications in Chapters 5 and 6:

- Identified and described the significant issues and concerns underpinning the dynamics of leadership;
- Provided the related evidence in the form of direct assertions and/or quotations illustrating the above;

- Provided some of the common and core messages whose meanings have been analysed:
- Apply conceptual insight to theorise the emerging factors explaining the dynamics of leadership.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Conceptualising Findings as the Dynamics of Leadership: Addressing the Research Aim and Questions**

## **5.1 Introduction**

This Chapter addresses the research aim and questions (Section 1.5) by reviewing, analysing and interpreting the research information and data (Chapter 4) which is compiled against the interview and data review composite questions (Sections 3.8; 3.9). It explores, identifies and describes the salient findings in terms of the conceptual framework established by the literature review (Chapter 2). It brings out the core outcomes relative to the dynamics of leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's FE colleges involving the factors which underpin, drive, sustain and/or impede their leadership. The Chapter aims to achieve it by analysing and synthesising the findings relative to the nature and characteristics of ABME principals' views, interactions, activities and relationships within the conceptual considerations summarised in Section 2.11.

This Chapter builds on the literature review (Chapter 2) and the empirical work (Chapter 4), it synthesises the theory and practice, triangulates the findings and conceptualises the core outcomes of the research. The final Chapter offers an overview and conclusion of the research within the historical and contemporary context, in view of the latest perspectives from research, Government reports and education press articles relative to the dynamics of leadership of ABME FE college principals. The focus continues to be on exploring, understanding and interpreting the factors which propel and/or impede the dynamics of leadership - the most frequently appearing and/or common drivers and/or road blocks for leadership which have been

identified as influencing its nature, quality and characteristics (Section 2.2). It is the experiences, views and voices of the first generation ABME principals – the class of 1998/9 – 2008/9 – that provide a unique and authentic insight into their lived personal and professional lives as educational leaders (Section 1.3; Brah, 1996). The core factors identified in the last Chapter relating to the dynamics of leadership have been analysed and synthesised thematically, to make them meaningful in addressing the research aim and questions of the Investigation (Section 1.5).

## **5.2 Approach and Preview**

Review and analysis of the research information and data in the last Chapter and the synthesis of the findings in this Chapter offer thematic outcomes of the investigation within the supporting and guiding framework of the literature review (Section 2.11). The outcomes of the investigations have been contemporarised by examining and validating them against the emerging conclusions and directions of the latest reports and research publications relative to the theme (Chapters 5 and 6). The findings indicate the nature, characteristics and quality of ABME principals' leadership, identifying their upbringing, socialisation, culture and heritage which have shaped and influenced their aspirations and motivations as leaders. Their experiences have given them the cause of fairness, equality and social justice by making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged learners and social mobility in the local communities. This is a significant dimension in the evidence (Chapter 4; Appendices 7.2.2 Fig 3; 7.2.5) that despite many barriers of race in

progressing their careers, ABME principals have advanced by adopting a strategic and principled approach in tackling the impediments to their leadership.

Chapters 4 and 5 show the principals' experiences in relation to their leadership journeys in FE colleges within a wider historical, social, institutional and environmental context (Chapters 2 and 6). At the time of the initial literature review and empirical work between 1999 and 2002 (Appendix 7.2.3d-h), in the absence of directly related and applicable research literature until the publication of the Commission for Black Staff in FE (2003) Report, the conceptual framework for evaluating the views, voices and experiences of ABME educationalists relative to their leadership of FE colleges was under-researched and under-developed, notwithstanding the availability and value of general and management literature in the field of FE. This study remains an original and pioneering research aiming to broaden and deepen the knowledge and understanding of the factors which propel and/or impede ABME principals' leadership (Section 1.6; 1.7). The evidence in Chapter 4 and the thesis outcomes in Chapters 5 and 6 therefore formulate an historic snapshot, reflecting many significant dimensions of the experiences of the first generation ABME principals. The past, present and changing dynamics of ABME principals' leadership determine and influence its effectiveness in improving and transforming FE colleges. Winder *et al* (1993) presented the dynamics of leadership in terms of values, inner drive, establishing relationships and pursuing challenges, discussing racial dimensions and its paradoxes. Warmington (2009) has argued that racial practices are social



and historical constructions, the problems and solutions they raise are not static but dynamic and they are ever changing and open to interpretations in varying and wider context. .

Having talked through their experiences - constructing a reality around the factors which they see as contributory to propelling and/or impeding their leadership – ABME principals were reflective and open in sharing their hopes, hesitations, expectations, fears and doubts about their leadership roles in view of racial discrimination (Chapter 4). Gunter et al (2007) have referred to research which is rooted in views and lived experiences as a significant contribution, Gunaratnam (2003) has noted such outcomes as the material involving emotional and inter-actional stories that individuals tell about their lives, which help them in constructing a theoretical relationship between themselves and their social environment as valuable. This Chapter shows that educational leadership is about impacting on the performance of FE colleges for improving outcomes and standards for learners by tackling barriers which prevent progress. Lewis (2002) has described the effectiveness of FE college leadership as the process which places teaching and learning quality at the centre, focusing on learners' attainment and in meeting the individuals' and employers' needs. FE college leadership role plays a central part in young people's transition from school to self-dependency, employment, business, or university. The following analysis triangulates and synthesises the findings and conceptualise them thematically (Chapter 2; 2.11). Each theme is validated by evidence from the data, literature review and/or a relevant contemporary publication.

### **5.3 Addressing the Research Questions**

Regarding the process of addressing the research aim and questions involving analysis, interpretation and conceptualisation of the findings, Rutherford *et al* (2006) observed that to identify and present the common and identical findings thematically, they should be arising from the views, voices and experience of all (or most) of the respondents on the particular questions. The following sections conceptualise those issues and concerns, which are based on the most frequently raised points by the respondents (Chapter 4). The conceptual framework (Section 2.11) enables capturing and synthesising of the core findings, which are rooted in the leadership issues and concerns identified in the preceding review, analysis and discussion of evidence data in Chapter 4 (Appendices 7.2.2, Fig 3; 7.2.5). The following Sections addressed the research aim and questions (Section 1.5) in terms of the above approach and in essence, present the core factors underpinning the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges.

### **5.4 Conceptualising the Findings:**

#### **People and Cultural Factors as the Dynamics of Leadership**

Given the nature of the findings of this investigation, it would make sense to locate them in an historical context, the Swann Report (1985) summarised evidence from the various sources and showed considerable underachievement, for example by West Indian pupils in relation to their

White peers. The report evidenced the 1980 ILEA Literacy Survey demonstrating that at 15+, this was still the case. FE colleges thus have a pivotal role in developing and providing suitable post school Further Education to prepare all learners who attend college for life, work and/or higher education. At college level Elliott (1991) has argued that the teacher's role, and I would add on the basis of the data of the last Chapter that educational leaders' roles, are key in supporting student learning. These roles are best carried out by directing the students' attention to how they can learn in different contexts when faced with different learning tasks. Extending this point a little further to FE college leadership, principals have a vital role in leading educationalists and provision to cater for mixed ability, often disadvantaged learners from diverse backgrounds. The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that ABME principals' passions have been a powerful propeller, as evidenced by all respondents' leadership journeys, that they have aimed their efforts at making a difference in learners' lives. Most of the respondents asserted that education is about interacting and communicating with learners and teachers and that the FE colleges are an excellent medium for this. However, it was suggested that FE colleges have some way to go in reforming their systems and structures which need to be more open, transparent and responsive. The staffing arrangements, the provision and organisation should reflect the local individuals, families and communities and their needs (Chapter 4). Interestingly, five years on from an earlier analysis of 1993, Elliott (1998) also examined some of the policy initiatives of the successive governments and argued that regardless of the political colour of

their origin, education policies have failed to live up to the rhetoric of the policy texts and pronouncements that accompany them.

However, the evidence of this investigation has suggested that irrespective of the systemic, organisational and policy impediments, the target group of ABME principals has relied on their own initiatives to reinforce the importance of FE colleges in providing learners with the appropriate learning support in order to make participation in FE colleges more inclusive (Chapter 2). Typically, respondent N said “...*I do feel that FE colleges offer people a real second or third opportunity. I enjoy opportunities to be able to make a difference in the lives of ... students ... I feel that I contribute to their development.*” Commenting on equal opportunities policy and practice issues it was claimed that they should not just be about the production of suitable documents that colleges can display and refer to; rather they should reflect a passion, commitment and culture.

ABME principals claim to be driven by the values rooted in their heritage in being open and inclusive in improving student participation in learning and enabling them to succeed in achieving a qualification. To develop and maintain this culture in the organisation, they have argued that college leadership and staff have to be mobilised, so that they are focused and supportive in raising the college organisation’s effectiveness. Gronn (1999) suggests that those leaders who have emotional commitment to their vision, whether or not they get an opportunity to enact it, are capable of building a wider emotional commitment to their vision in organisations. The evidence in

Chapter 4 has shown that aspiring ABME principals have been passionate and committed in inspiring, energising, motivating and mobilising staff to be focused in driving up teaching and learning standards along with the widening student participation strategy of the 1990s. Although Grace (1995) questioned who actually benefited from that early work after the incorporation of FE colleges, the colleges as institutions, or the disadvantaged communities? This area though is beyond the scope of this investigation and deserves further research.

However, the majority of the respondents have striven for improved learner achievement rates despite the challenging conditions of disadvantage, deprivation and disaffection that many students suffer. They have also made many successful bids for curriculum development and capital grant support funds to enhance teaching and learning facilities and to improve the profile of the colleges' provision (Chapter 4). I have examined relevant Ofsted Inspection Reports of half of a sample of FE colleges led/co-led by the respondents to verify and validate their claims.

The target group of ABME principals maintain that FE colleges' success depends on good leadership and not just on good leader/s – for this a team based leadership approach is recommended. The college Ofsted/ALI inspection outcomes or internal measures of success were quoted as evidence by the respondents for underlining their college's success. These were linked to learner and teaching staff motivation and commitment, in addition to resources, finances and formal management support. It is claimed

that team work and team leadership can sustain good work and success and there is now a conception of leadership that shapes the organisation's directions, which is a product of the deliberate and emergent intentions of a host of players in educational leadership (Chapter 2). Respondent L asserted, "I will be putting the needs of the learners at the forefront but at the same time having the quality of staff to be able to meet those needs to ensure that there are role models in and around the college that I am leading ... within a clear and transparent system" (Chapter 4) .

The analysis of responses in the last Chapter (Appendix 7.2.5) suggests that the personal and professional competencies, combined with the determination, commitment and strengths of character are some of the key factors, which have sustained and progressed Asian and Black FE college leaders in their roles. However, there is another significant dimension that the respondents have identified and emphasised which tends to challenge and inhibit their progress. That is that many White FE college staff and agencies still do not understand and recognise their leadership intentions and qualities (Chapter 2; Appendix 7.2.5). Respondent A's representative assertion claimed that White colleagues - internally and externally - continually underestimated him/her because they focused on skin colour and/or cultural appearance, instead of their capabilities (Chapters 2 and 4). Mackay and Etienne (2006) found that ABME FE college managers feel judged not by their actions but by their ethnicity. This is where their role acquires a new, different and additional dimension in that they have come to terms with this different reality, whereby often, they have to overcome their own emotions,

views and impact of stereotypical racial and cultural prejudices. In this process ABME principals have often taken a team and distributed leadership approach - as Lumby (2003) has analysed this concept, though in a different context - to instil confidence, generate wider support, to raise awareness and understanding about what needs to be done and why to take the college forward in the interest of learners. By this strategy, ABME principals have been able to deliver the senior leadership and principal roles with some success. If Warmington (2009) analysis is applied to explain this process, it can be seen as a race-conscious ABME FE educationalist's strategic use of race as an organising and operational tool for leadership, to bring about change to make progress in terms of fairness and equality for all in Further Education. The issue of racial prejudice has emerged as one of the key themes and it remains a major impediment to progression in leadership for ABME educationalists, requiring a lot more work that needs to be done with White FE managers and staff to further develop their understanding and acknowledge that their ABME colleagues can be - and are - successful as FE college principals and senior leaders.

The implication of this process nevertheless is that ABME FE college educationalists have a constant battle of having to prove themselves, their worth and effectiveness through delivering a comparatively higher performance. In the case of some respondents this feeling is rooted in their formation years as for example, K said "*... The schools in this part of the City were failing Asian and Black pupils. I failed my 11 plus which was interesting! I went to the local comprehensive Church of England school where I spent*

*three years in the bottom set of the class and with pupils who could not read and write English, although I came from a top class primary school”* (Chapter 4). There is therefore an issue of low expectations of Asian and Black people in terms of their potential performance as learners, as well as leaders, until otherwise proven. Bush et al (2006) have expressed concern about the research deficit in school leadership involving Asian and Black head-teachers and the same applies to the FE college sector.

Many of the anecdotes and mini profiles in Chapter 4 suggest that most respondents strive to engage with individuals and teams in their college organisation to move things forward with an aim to motivate learners and staff, to achieve higher educational goals. Amongst a minority of respondents a recurrent perception was that in urban working class England many White people still tend not to rate the value of education so high in their lives, they have low expectation of themselves, their basic social, health and economic needs are relatively met through the welfare system. The majority of respondents expressed a view that in the countries of their origin by contrast, there is no comparative state welfare provision to rely upon and the culture and network of parental family and community support, their inspiring influence and encouragement are still strong and these factors act as key drivers in the individual’s formative years. But this kind of culture is rather weak in White working class England, the reliance on state welfare is stronger and this makes the role of FE colleges and their leaders pivotal in the local communities. Gronn (1999) has traced many of the individual characteristics of educationalists to their roots and early upbringings. Ribbins



(1996; 2000) and Weindling (1999) interviews with school leaders point in the same direction and they have analysed experiences and socialisation of educationalists to understand their aspirations and their origins. Some ABME principals have underlined the point that this kind of culture is notably weaker in England, especially among many urban White working class communities. The impact of this culture on ABME young people is though beyond the scope of this thesis and is an area for further research (Chapter 4). Shehard (2010) article analysing a recent study of social inequality by Professor John Hill of the London School of Economics has noted that only 4% of children who receive free meals at 15, go to university as compared with 33% of other children. That is despite the fact that teenagers from the poorest homes in England are now 50% more likely to go to university than 15 years ago. The ABME principals have attributed this development partly to the good work that FE colleges are doing by providing an inspiring and caring advice and support service and further opportunities to people who have not been able to achieve a suitable school leaving qualification. They are passionate about FE colleges helping people to move them forward towards their chosen direction. They aspire to create a culture in their organisations which encourages personal development, raises aspirations and nurtures ambitions. The respondent L's assertion sums it up as, *"I am very committed to people having equal opportunities, justice and ensuring that they should be able to achieve their potential regardless of class or race. I have acquired these values through my family..."*

FE colleges though attract governors from their local communities, most of the respondents thought that an astute and good FE college corporation chair and locally representative, strong and balanced membership of the governing body can be an essential asset and they can add to the effectiveness of college leadership. The matching of high calibre, talented and experienced professional support of senior leadership and good clerkship can enable the principal to realise the college's vision and passions, often involving widening and extending of provision to local people. Like the other respondents, C has claimed that the role of an FE college principal involves leading the organisation to create and provide new learning and life opportunities for people, who may not have been fortunate enough to go to university or enter some formal FE education and training or employment after completing their school education. All respondents have claimed to be driven and motivated by a deep personal sense of mission and purpose for improving the quality of life and employment opportunities for deprived and disadvantaged people through FE provision (Chapter 4). This kind of drive combined with the respondents' evident conviction for learner centred leadership for success has sustained the hopes and expectations for raising college effectiveness, thus impacting on the quality and standards of provision. Strong team work, leadership's collective resolve for tackling problems, meeting challenges and overcoming barriers to success appeared to sustain the leadership drive and feeling of satisfaction. The achievement of co-operation within the wider system of leadership and management is crucial for everyone to win and to be successful (Chapter 2).

Evidence in Chapter 4 shows that according to the respondents, learners take FE college lecturers, managers, leaders and principals as role models. The majority of respondents have aspired to move on to a senior leadership position to be a role model for others as they feel strongly that there are not enough ABME role models in the sector. This point was also highlighted by the Commission for Black Staff in FE Report (2003). In the absence of ABME role models, some of the ambitious respondents have emulated successful White principals for their personal and professional development. Generally, respondents are of the view that it is very important for ABME learners - who like their White peers now also have low aspirations and expectations in addition to various social disadvantages and deprivation - to have and to be able to identify with inspiring and successful role models from similar backgrounds. ABME principals see it as equally important that White learners and educationalists see successful role models in action, to come to grips with their stereotypes of ABME learners and leaders in FE colleges. Bridge (1994) has emphasised the point that FE college principals provide role models, even if they do not significantly change the culture of their organisation, they nevertheless influence the role and direction of others in senior positions. Some respondents claimed to have a competitive drive to succeed and establish their credentials in the mainstream as senior FE college leaders and principals (Chapter 4). The ABME educationalists in senior positions have maintained their commitment to teaching, learning and learner success despite the rise of managerialist culture in FE colleges after the F&HE Act 1992 (DfES, 1992), which gave principals a greater corporate autonomy, power and authority than that which they had under the local

education authorities. The new culture distanced principals and senior FE college leaders from lecturers and learners, the new focus was corporate management and external relations rather than supporting activities of teaching and learning (Sections 2.4; 2.5; 2.8). Like the Swann Report (1985) recommendations for the schools sector, however, the ABME principals seem keen to be seen as educationalists pursuing the cause of education for all in FE colleges. Dantley (2009) referring to the role of Black leadership - in this case the ABME principals' leadership - suggests that it is to fight against a racist status quo to advantage a wider community.

All respondents therefore aspire to impact on the college's staffing strategy and curriculum profile to reflect the local community's diverse cultural, social and economic needs. A college's provision needs updating and re-profiling continuously, they have argued, to reflect the local employment, business, and community needs in order to help learners to become employable or entrepreneurial. The theme of quality in FE college leadership, in terms of principals and senior managers, is well emphasised in the literature and data that ineffective leadership can risk the quality of provision for the local population. If there is not a good enough supply of committed leaders who understand the local needs and are capable of getting the best out of their staff to meet them, the reputation of the college and the outcomes for learners may be compromised (Chapter 2). Most respondents believed that to have ABME principals in urban multi-racial areas should be positive and exciting for the local multi-racial communities, offering them leadership role models to counteract many racist stereotypes and to boost their trust and

confidence. It was claimed that unlike the Community Colleges in the USA we do not have a large number of Black vice chancellors and college presidents as role models. We do not have many strong ABME educational leaders in the local communities with the kind of educational and civic leadership which can be valuable in inspiring students and communities (Chapter 4).

A large proportion of the respondents highlighted the barriers and gaps in FE college strategies which slow down or prevent progress in these directions as a respondent's point illustrates, *"I actually think it is sad because FE is still excluding many groups of people from different linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic backgrounds and heritage groups who would be very good for the sector. If proactively included, some could emerge as inspiring leaders in their own right - not only because they can relate to the wider community of students better but also people across the board need to have role models to relate to. So, for our students in general, it's a good thing, to see people (in leadership positions) from different backgrounds."* Marley (2005) discussing barriers to school leadership has made similar points quoting the report's co-author, Professor John Howson, noted that we are not creating a multi-cultural society in terms of leadership in schools and this reality is worrying.

Some respondents have argued for a multi-racial FE college leadership that is more likely to adopt a sensitive and differentiated approach to education and inclusive learner recruitment. Referring to the changing government policy, M asserted that in one sense the government was becoming less interventionist, leaving Further Education to agencies, institutions and the supply and demand considerations. However, Allen and Ainley (2007) have

argued that rather than emancipating the minds of future generations, market driven inflated qualifications based education provision forecloses it. There is though evidence in the data that some FE colleges had developed local initiatives to provide innovative and responsive Further Education in partnerships with local communities, agencies and employers (Chapter 4) to deliver FE provision. Barnsby (2001) has argued in relation to an FE college case study that this college was one of the most important deliverers of education to the ABME community in the country because of its ethos and the diversity of its leadership. The point is that a diverse FE college leadership is more likely to come up with a better solution to meet the needs of learners.

Most respondents however rejected the franchising practices of the 1990s which were used to generate income by many FE college organisations to subsidise rather an expensive and/or under funded campus provision. Respondents have suggested that a better developed and diverse FE college leadership can also be better equipped to provide coaching, work shadowing and mentoring support to aspiring ABME educationalists and leaders to promote and pursue the objective of widening and extending participation of diverse multi-racial communities in FE colleges. A respondent proposed that American community colleges should be visited to see what works there for Black communities and any successful FE college projects from England can also be showcased. A number of positive initiatives providing opportunities for disadvantaged learners in terms of contact, access and progression to FE college courses were mentioned, however, it was argued that there was little infrastructure, strategic or resourcing support to sustain them (Chapter 4).

The technical progression of people through FE courses for economic reasons is important but it was argued that it needs balancing against the empowerment of individuals as learning citizens. G said “...*in the context of the FEFC and now the LSC’s approach, encouragement was given to contestability. It would be a great opportunity if an institution like those in the USA {separate positive action based Black colleges can be created} .... for Black people, where they can identify and cater for their own needs effectively. I think it’s going to be a long haul to get the mainstream providers to be genuinely responsive to Asian and Black people*”. But there was little evidence of support for the idea of separate or Black leadership led Black community centred FE colleges.

There is evidence in the data supporting participation and progression of ABME educationalists within the mainstream FE colleges, recognising that their power and authority in shaping leadership roles and in making senior staff appointments, which determine the directions of the college organisation is a significant factor. The majority of aspiring principals such as the respondent D, though having reached the end of the road in their career in an FE college, had to seek further involvement in a major new initiative, involving corporate curriculum planning and development to acquire strategic knowledge and skills, or alternatively had to seek a position elsewhere in the absence of any structured opportunities for leadership development and career progression. The respondents have aspired to plug any gaps in curriculum innovation through strategic initiatives and to be able to apply for senior leadership or principal roles. They claim to be driven by ambition and

endeavour to 'get on or get out' to succeed elsewhere (Chapter 4). It is argued that the sitting principals should and could do more in developing career pathways for others through work shadowing, mentoring and coaching, professional development and succession strategy. G asserted, *"If you look at the White female principals, there has been a significant growth in their number. I personally lobbied the FEFC for setting up a new leadership initiative to support aspiring ABME principals to get leadership mentoring, coaching and work shadowing opportunities off the ground and to develop a network for mutual support. Having been on the programme myself, I know that I can call upon a network of professional friends and colleagues for help and advice ..."*

ABME principals and senior educationalists have often developed, claimed and asserted their leadership by being innovators, initiative takers and developers of FE college projects aimed at widening and extending participation. Respondent B's initiative is typical in reaching out to the business community in the college area to encourage and support diversification through partnership with the local authority, using the European Social Fund support. It is also a comment on FE colleges' drive for demand led growth after the incorporation in the 1990s. The nature of work that ABME FE leaders have undertaken in FE colleges has shown that originally, and mostly, they were appointed or promoted in struggling urban multi-racial FE colleges to generate new work to stabilise and support FE college establishments in the 1990s which were mainly all White leadership led (Chapter 4). Once in position, no doubt, most of them had evidently



developed their professional niche. It is not an easy task being a college leader, and even more difficult if you have conflicting and competing priorities and demands; on one side there is a pressure from staff and on the other side there is pressure from the corporation and external agencies. However, most of the respondents felt that there are a lot of things that can still be done to improve provision to benefit learners and the community. As discussed above for example, most of the respondents were heavily involved with the wider community in developing new external links which were instrumental to establishing business and community learning partnerships, the post incorporation of FE colleges framework was conducive to this development despite many of its shortfalls ( Chapter 2).

In the process of the 1990s FE colleges' development, the data shows and it has been a common experience amongst the respondents that most of the aspiring ABME principals were initially employed in urban multi-racial FE colleges to meet the education business needs of colleges in terms of their post incorporation survival as viable corporate organisations. There was no local authority protection and as autonomous institutions they were responsible for securing and increasing student numbers for financial sustainability via growth within the then FEFC's demand-led funding mechanism. Respondent B represented the views and feelings of the majority of the respondents by outlining some of the events of the 1990s, suggesting that the strategic leadership within FE colleges arose out of growth related innovative programmes which were often developed and led by ABME FE educationalists in multi-racial urban areas (Chapter 4). This area of FE

colleges' history of post incorporation development is a matter of further research, however, like B, most of the respondents have established their own strategic leadership by initiating and developing a particular FE niche, thus putting them in a position of strategic influence.

Responses have suggested that ABME leadership in practice and in style is shared and diffused, often rooted in leadership initiatives which are frequently dispersed, depending on the college's needs, circumstances and situation (Chapter 4). Many ABME educationalists therefore entered FE colleges in the 1990s and took some innovative initiatives to develop FE opportunities for disadvantaged and deprived learners taking advantage of the then new market driven provision. However, as growth opportunities diminished under the government's funding constraints, they were affected disproportionately because FE colleges began to withdraw from vulnerable and riskier outreach provision which in any case lacked corporate strategy, infrastructure and technology to support it. It was being sustained on the margins by committed and dedicated educationalists who took this development as an opportunity to advantage disadvantaged learners who would not have normally accessed FE college provision. They pursued this cause despite many limitations as F has argued that a basic hindrance to progress was the distance-learning factor for the outreach provision which even lacked infrastructure support for effective communication.

The ABME educationalists however did some imaginative work as respondents have given examples of their community-linked innovative

education and social inclusion projects which improved participation in learning and built bridges between the FE colleges and the diverse prospective learner population in many localities. In the process, they had to be sensitive but tough to sustain their roles, generally senior FE college managers and principals themselves would not have directly engaged in such opportunity-led and, in funding terms, marginal programmes in urban multi-racial areas. In FE college teaching and learning context, Gleeson and Shaine (1999) discussed it as changing FE college managerial culture after the incorporation, that it was middle managers whose mediation kept up the profile of teaching and learning - in this case, the aspiring ABME leaders who mediated the widening participation process. The respondents felt that this kind of work is challenging but strategically significant, though it offers little career recognition. ABME FE leaders, as evidence has shown, have often felt frustrated and marginalised; they did not feel fully involved in leading the mainstream FE college corporate teaching and learning L argued. This can be identified and described as an extension of underlying tensions of the 1990s between lecturers and senior managers as Elliot and Crossley (1997) discussed. Many faced career stagnation and often opted for an exit strategy to realise their potential elsewhere (Chapter 4). Lumby (2008) has noted that unlike the availability of literature on school leadership studies, there is no such equivalent body of research literature to support our understanding of leadership in FE colleges.

An alternative route or a shortcut to gain appropriate experience for promotion, career development and progression to FE college leadership as

most of the respondents suggested was seen as an arrangement for professional work shadowing, mentoring and coaching opportunities. An integral part of the FE professional development programme for aspiring ABME leaders can help them tackle some of the differential barriers that they encounter in their careers. Although there was a common belief amongst the respondents that ABME educationalists are often comparatively better qualified and experienced, yet what they need is direct experience in different corporate leadership settings which can be transferable to an FE college principal leadership role.

Most respondents thus felt that they themselves did not need any further qualifications or formal training, but what they could have benefitted from most was some realistic higher level programme of leadership challenges and opportunities to gain hands-on experience to be able to apply their knowledge and skills to senior leadership tasks. As pioneers most of the earlier ABME appointees to FE college principal posts had to learn and develop themselves in the role, however, in the process the network of ABME educationalists in FE colleges which was established in 1999 (Appendix: 7.2.1, Response to Question 10), introduced initiatives to create opportunities for work placements with experienced FE college and related agencies and department leaders, to develop new and more role models to help aspiring principals to make progress in their career, tackle impediments to avoid getting stuck in repetitive roles which may under-utilise their potential and keep them on the margins (Chapter 4). Most respondents claimed that the down-sizing and rationalisation of FE college organisations has

disproportionately impacted on the careers of ABME educationalists. They insisted that ABME leadership practitioners also deserve due recognition as role models and should not to be taken or seen as token appointments. These points were also made by a sample of ABME FE college leaders who participated in my initial questionnaire based pilot survey whose outcomes had suggested directions for the research questions for this investigation (Appendix 7.2.3e–g).

## **5.5 Conceptualising the Findings:**

### **Environmental and Institutional Factors as the Dynamics of Leadership**

The views and experiences of all respondents as educationalists and senior leadership practitioners in FE colleges have shown in Chapter 4 that their journey to leadership and having achieved a professional position of relative authority, they still encounter direct and/or indirect challenges due to racial prejudice and stereotyping. Bush, Glover and Sood (2006) reflecting on the theme of racial prejudice in their study identified that it remains a major barrier in progression to leadership. Daft (1999) argued that Asian Americans in the USA who aspire to leadership roles in corporations are often frustrated by stereotyping that they are seen as hard workers but not leadership and executive material. This dimension has a complex dynamic of its own within the leadership process involving many forms of limits and challenges that ABME principals have to encounter and cope with. The dimensions of race in FE colleges can be located in wider social and historical context, Warmington

(2009) has noted that it is not static but dynamic, shifting and open to manipulation as it has happened in colonial history - racism had taken an ideological root providing racist perceptions. However, there is a diversity of perspectives on the race dimension, Bulmer and Solomos (2004) provided a model for conceptualising racism that is sensitive to diversity of race discourse and too often necessary manifestation of racist ideas in specific institutional and social environments. In an FE college environment ABME leaders have to grasp the complex, subtle and inadvertent nature of racial prejudice and stereotyping quickly and work with them, Respondent A has noted. Referring to a common experience of many ABME leaders A has maintained that they have to remain positive and determined in confronting such race impediments as involving stereotypical perceptions of ABME educationalists – they come not only from the external funding, inspection, regulatory or support agencies but also from within the FE college organisation. ABME leaders have to come to terms with these challenges fast in their roles and consider them as opportunities of a different kind to be taken up, for corrective measures – a different and additional burden to be carried to succeed in their leadership roles (Chapter 4). *“The jobs with excessive degrees of stress and difficulties are occupied by ABME FE colleagues, they are not even given an opportunity to professionally benefit from their own achievements...I worked for two senior Black managers; one certainly was very hawkish and another was very dovelike. I found that both of them were being undermined by staff and I was always left with this perspective - that they were being undermined partially because they are*

*Black and not because the things that they say and do were crazy or bad ...”*

noted M.

Expressions of all respondents suggest some experience and/or knowledge of direct discrimination due to racial and cultural prejudice and stereotyping. This factor has continued to be significant, in undermining the effectiveness of the respondents’ leadership and has held some of them back from making progress in their roles and career in FE colleges. Most of the respondents, however, have strong advice for ABME colleagues aspiring to senior leadership positions that this dimension should not hold them back from their endeavours and that they should continue to strive and do their very best to make progress (Chapter 4).

In overall terms Respondent A’s experience is typical in offering an example of most respondents’ career journeys, perceptions and experiences, that young Black people were suffering disproportionate levels of unemployment and they have had no advocates. This is what had attracted A into campaigning for their rights and then to get involved initially in the youth service and after that in education. It was the same passion which had driven A to enter and make progress in FE colleges to transfer the passion for fairness, equality and justice into the leadership roles process. The respondents’ message for FE college ABME educationalists is to take racial and cultural stereotyping and prejudice as yet another significant impediment to be tackled in the journey to FE college leadership. The most common message to aspiring ABME principals is that they should re-double their

efforts in pressing on with the task of further self-improvement together with the improvement of their respective FE college's effectiveness. They should make their mark in improving Further Education for all, create an identity and recognition for their contribution and work, and for the progress they have made. Evidence demonstrates that all of the principal respondents have been through a similar route of experience to FE college leadership and have done similar things in their journeys to the top. Bulmer and Solomos (2004) suggest that there is a need to locate the meanings attached to the ideas, in this case to views and experiences, about race within a particular set of social relations, although they have noted that from a sociological perspective, a more general account of wider significance can also be developed. In other words, this emerging model of FE college ABME leadership experience, process and approach can be transferable to other social sectors to tackle racial prejudice and stereotyping impeding fairness, equality and justice.

Respondents have also cautioned and underlined the point that even where an FE college corporate leadership has a positive policy and action strategy to be equitable and inclusive in employing ABME educationalists at senior levels, it does not necessarily follow that such a strategy may have the same level of enthusiastic support at the middle, junior and staffing levels. Their experience suggest that some White staff across the organisation may resent diversity driven corporate initiatives and they may not embrace new challenges posed by aspiring, experienced, better qualified and well motivated senior ABME FE college leadership (Chapter 4). Evidence from respondent M has typically shown that ABME educationalists on



management grades have at times struggled to get the support of their White peers even if their projects have brought new opportunities and work, enhancing the security of their jobs.

This study shows that while principals are of crucial importance, leadership and responsibilities in colleges have to be shared and this must be a key characteristic of successful FE college leadership. ABME lead educationalists have often been appointed on the margins to help FE colleges grow student numbers and income such as happened throughout the franchising era of the 1990s. When things became less favourable with the change of the government's funding policy from 1997 onwards, the financial constraints and strategies slashed off many ABME leadership and management positions through rationalisation and mergers. Many remained disadvantaged as they could not quite make it to the centre stage of managing and leading curriculum, funding, student data audit, human resource management, strategy and policy development, despite their capabilities, drive and motivation.

Respondents have claimed that the pre-corporation era of colleges under the LEAs experienced some strong policy development for equal opportunities and diversity. The Swann Report (1985) had noted that the aim and objectives of policy making in this field have changed over the years in relation to changing circumstances and the concerns of ABME minority communities and educationalists. However, the LEAs' equality policy framework fragmented and strategy dwindled after the incorporation of FE

colleges under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (DfES, 1992). Respondents noted that White women were also under-represented at principal and senior leadership levels in FE colleges but they managed to move forward and achieved a better representation through lobbying and networking. This developed their confidence, skills and mutual support, and an increase in the proportion of women governors also helped them. In contrast however, ABME aspiring principals had neither the network of support nor facilities for developing their knowledge and skills for leadership positions (Chapter 4).

Some respondents outlined their experience and noted that from the late 1990s ABME educationalists had commenced some informal networking through local, regional and national activities, some events and professional development conferences were also organised with the support of some progressive FE colleges and sponsorship of the DfES and FEFC/LSC. This development encouraged some aspiring ABME principals to come forward to develop themselves to take advantage of leadership level vacancies. Having formalised the Network for Black Professionals in the FE colleges' sector a small number took advantage of coaching, mentoring and work shadowing schemes and managed to secure senior leadership positions. Respondents felt that FE college corporations tend to make senior appointments in their own mirror image unless alternatives are presented to them. Policies and strategies can shift with new blood leadership; appointments at principal, corporation and senior levels and the presence of a stronger national network added to the dynamics of change and to remove barriers. G suggested that,

*“We need to start pressurising, targeting key players, and I think that the Network of Black Professionals has been performing that role.”*

Some respondents referred to the post incorporation demand led growth of FE provision using community and employer franchising as a model of delivery. This was a controversial approach but many colleges went ahead and used franchising for widening and extending FE provision in the 1990s. Some of the colleges’ policies were to develop community based centres, run and controlled by the colleges as the franchising method was being perceived as exploitative of communities and was being used as a mechanism for generating FEFC income. However, this gave many ABME educationalists an opportunity to develop external links to deliver community based provision which provided them with a way forward into leadership roles. They undertook the task of connecting communities to FE colleges (Chapter 4). N claimed, *“....excluding groups of people who would be very good for the FE colleges (is a loss) to the sector, colleges must relate to diverse groups of learners to inspire and develop them as role models ...I just wish that FE culture wasn’t as dismissive of Black people, it forces us to function within set parameters. I am not sure whether this is FE colleges in general, because management jobs across the board have perceptions attached to them. They have specific race connotations. I would say we really need to give people genuine opportunities to show how good they are and that they are welcome.”*

## **5.6 Conceptualising the Findings:**

### **Effectiveness of Performance and its Impact as the Dynamics of Leadership**

There is some evidence (Chapter 4) providing examples of good practice where chairs and members of FE corporations as well as educationalists in FE colleges and professionals in the funding and regulatory agencies, have relatively positive and progressive attitudes, commitment and conviction for practising objectivity, fairness and racial and cultural sensitivity. By 2006 eight FE college corporations predominantly in White communities of coastal, country and semi-urban areas had appointed ABME principals, providing them the opportunities to demonstrate the qualities of their leadership. Ironically, the issue of representation of ABME leadership at senior levels was of greater significance for urban multi-racial areas based FE colleges which serve demographically diverse communities in big cities like London, Birmingham, Leicester, Coventry and Manchester. But they were lagging behind in making principal and senior leadership appointments involving ABME educationalists (Chapter 4). This area in terms of representation of ABME educationalists at senior levels in FE colleges needs further research however, Morrison (2008) claims that research in this area remains scarce and there is little clamour for it from FE college leadership who benefit from the existing power relations. Schuller and Watson (2009) have argued that FE college values and mission should be inclusive and pluralistic, offering a comprehensive and diverse curriculum for a diverse population. They see college performance and effectiveness in terms of social inclusion, removing

barriers to unemployment and provision meeting the needs and demands of individuals, families and communities. Allen and Ainley (2007) have also underlined the role of FE college provision in preventing social isolation of people who need Further Education most and have also argued against its privatisation.

Respondent J noted, *“At the time when I joined in my role there were very few Asian and Black lecturers, let alone leaders and managers within FE colleges. After my appointment it also dawned on me that as well as being in management within my college, I have also become a role model...What FE colleges need to do is to recognise and utilise the strengths of what Asian and Black staff can bring to their roles and develop their potential to benefit students and the FE organisation...”* said J. J raised the issue of the existence of systemic institutional racial discrimination and lack of or weaker strategies to involve ABME and White staff in combating it.

One of the common factors which was noted in the accounts of the journeys to senior leadership positions of the respondents was the ignorance and lack of direct experience and/or knowledge of ABME learners and educationalists on the part of many White senior corporate decision makers. This issue can be illustrated from the data relating to the respondents' experience (Chapter 4). As A pointed out, the real issue was the lack of experience and vision of the corporation for the large multi racial/cultural urban FE college; that neither the college's staffing nor their management and leadership structure reflected the cultures and accents of its student population. There appeared to be little

attempt to appreciate, understand or address this issue. In essence effectiveness and performance of an FE college is inseparable from managing diversity which is about maximising individuals' potential.

Respondents view institutional attitudes to eliminating racial discrimination as a core issue and concern, and essential for an FE college's effectiveness and performance. There should be a safer environment for raising concerns without having to go through the formal procedural process. ABME educationalists' experience suggests that formal proceedings create animosity, tension, inter-personal and professional difficulties and could end up being detrimental to one's career. Informal external and independent channels do not exist to seek help or intervention as this kind of support is not available. Most of the respondents talked extensively about racial discrimination in FE colleges despite the law, codes of practice and procedures. However, they believe that there was not much that could be done to seek fair and equitable treatment without risking a career (Chapter 4).

Ofsted (2007) Common Inspection Framework has introduced a separate inspection grade for equality of opportunity. Prior to this however, respondents claimed that not many FE college formal structures proactively engaged in a purposeful way to provide processes and facilities for fairness and equality. Often FE college authorities did not deliver their remit on race equality in an expected way with integrity. ABME educationalists' strengths and capabilities do not always get due recognition; rather they are seen as a threat by those with vested interests and in senior positions who

comparatively may have lower formal qualifications. Moreover, Warmington (2009) referring to examination of experiences with higher education, has noted that raced boundaries may strengthen if and when a White British and Bangladeshi British professional working in the same environment, performing identical tasks may apply and compete for promotion. Most of the respondents asserted that they were under-utilised within FE college organisations which had impeded the scope of them being effective in their leadership potential to improve the college performance.

FE Colleges need to be responsive and driven by values and an ethos fitting the purpose of their existence; they should be visible in introducing the kind of changes that are needed to make them more attractive and responsive to local people, employers and organisations. Colleges are not sufficiently engaging individuals with different languages, heritages and backgrounds. Their experience and strengths are often overlooked and they do not therefore become part of the learning and skills design, development and delivery process. Respondents made the point that FE colleges still address the needs of traditional White working class communities, whilst recognising the issue of underachievement of White boys being an issue as Allen and Ainley (2007) have also noted, however, many of these areas have now transformed into urban multi-racial diverse communities with changing business, cultural and linguistic environments (Chapter 4).

FE colleges do have potential. C felt, *“It is exciting to have an FE college that could actually run some basic education and skills classes in the community*

*settings in addition to A levels and equivalent vocational and work related learning programmes, NVQs provision and also Higher Education. I think it is fascinating that I can be principal of a college that is providing opportunities to wide ranging social groups leading to Further Education and Higher Education qualifications. This is a privilege a big advantage of FE to the public, which is why FE is so thrilling. We don't just deal with one sector, we actually deal with every sector ranging from the community organisations to industry.”* This is not a dissimilar description of an FE college to the one which can be gleaned from the Government's latest policy publications (BIS, 2009).

Despite an exciting and diverse brief for FE colleges, addressing the limits to the effectiveness of leadership, some respondents have noted that colleges' complex regulatory and monitoring systems involve a multi-agency interface, consisting of inspections and assessments of teaching and learning, monitoring of application of funds, validation of management controls and audits but the agency staff or contracted specialists to carry out the work are not necessarily experienced in engaging, socialising and working with ABME principals and educationalists. They are unlikely to fully understand and appreciate culturally, and racially, what motivates and drives ABME college leaders and staff. The ABME leaders and educationalists may not have progressed their careers through the conventional routes. They may have gained experience, skills, strengths, capabilities and attributes at different levels and in different settings which differentiate them as educationalists (Chapter 4).



FE college governing bodies - responsible for making senior appointments are in similar positions, causing an initial entry barrier. For ABME leaders it remains a challenge to be able to sustain a leadership position with authority, their experience and contributions may be continuously underestimated. There are not many senior role models of ABME managers in leadership of education be it FE colleges, universities, LSC or the DfES. Some initiatives have been taken to address this point by having more Asian and Black leaders as role models for leadership aspirants to emulate. *“... I feel that it is very important. There is nothing worse than having a team of middle class White colleagues telling ethnic minority staff and communities what to do to be inclusive. That does not work”*, A asserted.

The perceptions and expectations of FE agencies and colleges of ABME senior managers in leadership positions are low. This has remained an issue in so far as the points of view and experiences of most of the respondents are concerned. They claimed that their capabilities to be effective in leading and managing the improvement processes impacting on the college's organisational performance are underestimated. Often, White senior officials who work in funding, inspection, and regulatory agencies and also in many FE colleges presume ABME FE college leaders may not be competent in making a positive impact unless otherwise shown or proven (Chapter 4).

Typically, respondent A asserted, *“the FEFC's opinion of me as a person and professional was less favourable...I think in their minds perhaps an ABME principal is not up to certain standards. I have been unhappy with that*

*treatment that I have had from the FEFC for a period. The Ofsted inspectorate, I think, also came with certain expectations and you have to quickly change their perceptions when they are being negative. I am very blunt and people get to know you for that. I make sure that I have got around me a senior leadership and management team that I can trust. As it happens my senior management and leadership team are all White. But they are the colleagues whom I can trust. No principal can afford to rely upon a team that cannot be trusted.”* The Commission for Black Staff in FE (2003) reported that institutional values have a strong influence on the values of individuals working in it. The external FE funding and inspection agencies may have varying values influencing their representatives which was evident from the interviews with ABME principals making a complex inter-agency arena of work impacting on the effectiveness as FE college leaders. However, the culture of inspection and regulatory agencies has been changing too - Ofsted (2009b) states that their core values include an explicit commitment to valuing people’s differences. This is central to all that they claim to do and how they go about it. They have committed to promoting best practice in equality and human rights among the FE colleges they inspect and regulate. Although criticising the Ofsted’s bureaucratic system of inspection, Coffield (2009) questioned the value of time and resource that FE colleges have to allocate to be able to respond to some 236 assessment questions, which is a distractive process from the core and moral purpose of Further Education.

## 5.7 Conclusion and Direction

This Chapter interprets and reflects on the findings within the conceptual framework (Chapter 2; 2.11), to make sense of the research evidence (Chapter 4; Appendices 7.2.2 Fig 3; 7.2.5). Most of the issues and concerns are double edged in terms of being propellers, as well as impediments for the leadership of ABME principals. The findings have shown that ABME principals have taken the impediments to their leadership as challenges, and opportunities for transforming FE college institutions to achieve their vision of fairness, equality and social justice. Each of the thematic features identified fits with one of the following composite dimensions of the dynamics of leadership:

- people and cultural factors
- race, environment and institutional factors, and
- performance effectiveness and impact factors.

The Chapter has identified the outcomes of the research by describing, interpreting and contextualising their meanings and messages in view of the theoretical direction of the literature review. The findings are based on the experiences of ABME principals and arise from their biographical trajectories. However, Chapters 4 and 5 have avoided profiling the interviewees individually, to protect their identities, as the target group was relatively small and the majority of them happened to be known ABME educationalists in the field of FE colleges, therefore, their profiles remain anonymous. The analysis

has reviewed any significant commonalities and variations in their experiences for the thesis, whilst also noting any significant minority points (Section 4.5). These two Chapters have briefly reflected on the minority and discrepant evidence as an alternative to the central argument within the scope of the thesis.

On the whole the evidence supports the outcomes of the investigation by providing a compelling argument that it is the deeply rooted personal factors which have enabled ABME FE college principals to transfer their aspirations, aims, values and vision into the FE college leadership process. These factors have enabled them to influence FE college organisations and have provided some success in bringing about the institutional transformation. An alternative argument which has surfaced in the findings is in support of setting up US style Black Colleges in England. But it does not find favour with the vast majority of the interviewees and the research data. However, this and other points of interpretations of the research outcomes can be a matter for further research, but it would have to be beyond the scope and limits of this thesis.

The next and final Chapter 6 provides the thesis' overview and summarises the key findings together with the recommendations - including further improvement of representation and effectiveness of ABME principals' leadership in England's FE colleges. It also identifies and describes some of the areas for further research which should add value to the process of FE college leadership research and development.

## **Chapter 6:**

### **The Thesis: Overview of the Investigation and Outcomes**

## **6.1 Overview and Introduction**

This Chapter provides an overview of the study and concludes the investigation into the dynamics of leadership involving Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's Further Education colleges. It summarises the outcomes of the thesis (Sections 6.5; 6.6) by identifying and describing the factors which motivate, drive and sustain the leadership of ABME principals.

The responses to the research aim and questions (Sections 1.4; 1.5) pivotal to this thesis, have been achieved by reviewing the relevant literature (Chapter 2) providing a conceptual framework (Section 2.11) for the empirical work. The empirical study involved biographical interviews with the first generation ABME principals (Chapter 4) and the process involved exploring, analysing and interpreting their views, voices and experiences (Chapter 5). Although the number of ABME principals is still disproportionately small, this group has developed significant influence both socially and educationally in FE colleges (Thomson, 2009a; 2010b) (Landman 2008; 2009). The research findings are conceptualised in Chapter 5, and show the appeal of Further Education for ABME educationalists. The evidence identifies the sources of their aspirations and motivations, discovers and describes their experiences, and distinguishes the nature of their leadership in taking many impeding challenges as opportunities for transforming FE colleges, making a difference in the lives of learners and the community.

The investigation process is literature review and interviews based. The composite argument of the thesis is that the ABME principals' leadership journeys have been propelled by their personal aspirations, ambitions, values and commitment to a vision of fairness, equality and social justice for all. This is stimulated and energised by their direct experience of disparities and racial discrimination (Appendices 7.2.2 Fig.3; 7.2.5). They strive to maximise the capabilities of their colleges to enable and empower deprived, disadvantaged, disaffected and discriminated against learners and communities to advantage themselves through Further Education, and to succeed and make social progress. This significant composite factor has attracted and retained ABME principals in FE colleges.

However, there is evidence that their drive to achieve these goals has been mediated by persistent tendencies within FE colleges to marginalise their role - underestimating their capabilities through racial stereotyping and discrimination (Sections 2.8; 2.9; Appendices 7.2.2, Figure3; 7.2.5). The literature review has also shown that there are many bureaucratic, structural, organisational and environmental impediments, which have tendencies to prevent them from being fully effective in their professional approach and practices (Section 2.7; 2.8). However, the empirical evidence has suggested that ABME principals have relished these limits to their leadership and have taken them as transformational opportunities (Chapter 4). Their approach to FE college leadership has been learner service and community centred, which has given them a moral authority, capability and empowerment to be

effective in impacting on the college organisation to make improvements (Sections 4.4; 5.3.2).

On the whole, this investigation has focused on studying the dynamics of leadership, identifying the ABME principals' motivations, interactions, initiatives, activities and experiences as FE college leaders. Despite the scarcity and availability of directly related literature in the field, the review of a collection of relevant publications has provided an historical and contemporary context (Chapter 2). It has become evident from the literature search and review that the theme of this investigation is unique and original and that a new area of investigation in the field of FE college leadership has been discovered, which is under-researched and under-theorised.

The thesis is presented in six chapters: introducing and addressing the research aim, the literature review - providing a conceptual framework for the empirical work, the research design and strategy, the data collection, analysis and interpretation, and the conceptualisation of findings. This Chapter concludes the thesis, offering a synthesised narrative of the findings and outcomes.

## **6.2 Place of this Thesis in the Literature**

I believe that this research thesis will find a seminal place in a developing body of publications covering the area of educational leadership in the field of England's FE colleges. The literature search and review process has shown



that the theme of this investigation is unique in identifying, analysing and describing the factors influencing and determining the dynamics of leadership of the first generation ABME principals. The study has identified and analysed the sources of their passions and drive to realise their vision of fairness, equality and social justice through the provision of Further Education. The findings suggest that they have pursued their aims despite the mediation of their goals by persistent tendencies within FE colleges to marginalise and underestimate their capabilities and presence in the organisational structures. The literature review has referred to many contextual and environmental barriers and the impact of racial prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination which influences the people, culture, institutions and environment surrounding FE colleges. The study suggests that by and large it is the initiatives, interactions and activities of ABME principals at individual and collective levels, which have enabled them to establish a degree of influence and assume some authority for participation and representation at significant policy and decision making levels in FE colleges and related agencies.

This study was completed over a period of ten years for the reasons explained in Chapter I. This extended period has seen a significant change and transition which has added contextual value to the thesis. I have been able to take account of relevant past, present and emerging publications to offer a contemporary interpretation to the data, findings and outcomes of the investigation. The study timeline between 1998/9 and 2008/9 has in this sense been advantageous in connecting the investigation into the ABME

leadership in FE colleges to past, present and future developments in Further Education.

The literature review has substantiated the above points. As noted in Chapter 2, much of the published research relating to the subject of this study appeared after the incorporation of FE colleges under the F&HE Act 1992 (DfES, 1992). The legislation influenced the direction, context, culture and priorities covering the role of principals and senior leadership in FE colleges. Jephcote *et al* (1996) identified and discussed the rise of competition and market orientation of FE colleges as a key dimension in the changing dynamics of leadership. They asserted that FE college principals have become preoccupied with such corporate issues as finance, human resources, productivity, efficiency and accountability. Elliot and Crossley (1997) analysed the new managerial tensions and conflicts within FE colleges which determined and impacted on the dynamics of leadership; Harper (2000) investigated structural changes and the influence of the external environment; and Gleeson and Shain (1999) identified and located the role of middle managers as mediators of change between senior college leaders and lecturers, who were arguably polarised due to the new priorities of corporate leadership and the teaching profession. These dimensions of change in FE colleges impacted on all principal and senior leadership roles.

The process outlined above was also developing within a wider social and educational context. Warmington (2009) has analysed this in terms of post-racial positions and the future of the race debate in education as a principled

pursuit in the direction of social justice. A recent history of discourse on ethnicity, culture and race discrimination - ranging from the Swann Report (1985), Macpherson Report (1999), Hall (2000) to Bulmer and Solomos (2004) - has provided a framework to locate the race dimensions of this thesis. The Commission for Black Staff in FE (2003) and subsequent work emerging from its findings and recommendations has added to the dynamics of leadership in FE colleges, strengthening a campaign for equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion. Schuller and Watson (2009) have maintained the view that in England, the enthusiasm for Further Education and lifelong learning as a tool for economic development, social inclusion and diversity emerged in the later years of the last Conservative government. It became more established from 1997 onwards as the New Labour government promoted and implemented its version of social justice via FE provision through a series of policy, strategy and funding initiatives backed up by various publications, pieces of legislation and the change in the machinery of government ( DfES, 2000; 2003; 2006; DIUS, 2008 a,b,c,d). Even in this changing era of austerity and cuts in public expenditure, the New Coalition Government's consultation documents have underlined that to respond to the needs of a dynamic economy FE systems must be driven by informed choices for learners and employers and meeting different learning needs; that "Skills and training ...create a better society and are an important driver of social mobility...empowered learners and employers ...a responsive and flexible system ...supporting our vision for a Big Society" (BIS, 2010b, p5)

### 6.3 A Contemporary Reflection on the Thesis

A review of some of the relevant contemporary publications explores whether there are any significant variations in the dynamics of leadership in the views of newly appointed ABME principals. Broadly speaking, they have concurred with the salient messages of the findings and have validated the empirical dimensions of this thesis. For example, Lee (2009a, p5) quotes a newly appointed ABME principal as saying “I felt ...(college) gave me life enhancing opportunities and I wanted to give something back to see more people coming up and gaining confidence ...I wanted to be in a position where I could make a difference and turn my vision into reality”.

Landman (2008, pp4-5) has discussed the views of two other newly appointed ABME principals and quoted them as saying, “The key career driver for (me)...has been the belief and experience that education and training are the key to creating life chances and that regardless of an individual’s background there should not be a threshold placed on the potential... Disadvantage is a context, not an excuse”. “At a time when there were lots of barriers to the progression of (A)BME colleagues and this was an unacknowledged problem in the (FE colleges) sector... The Network (NBP) has helped me and many colleagues to discuss *these issues* and to clarify the steps that we needed to take in order to take our careers forward...There is a danger that as a BME manager you can be viewed as being associated with a specialist equality and diversity agenda rather than mainstream FE agenda such as quality improvement, teaching and learning etc.” As a

practitioner, I have remained in touch with the latest views and voices of ABME principals of England's FE colleges through various meetings and have reviewed the recorded proceedings of the National Advisory Board of the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI) and the Network for Black Professionals (NbP), which validate the findings of this investigation.

The new Conservative, Liberal-Democratic Coalition Government programme (Her Majesty's Government - HMG, 2010) plans to set FE colleges free from direct state control and abolish many of the Further Education quangos so that public funding is fair and follows the choices of students. The Coalition Government's programme also asserts that there are many barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities - too many people of all ages are held back because of their gender, race, religion or sexuality. The paper proposes concerted government action to tear down barriers and to help to build a fairer society. For example, there is the proposal for providing internships for under-represented ABME communities in every Whitehall department and funding a targeted national enterprise mentoring scheme for ABME people who want to start a business. It is, however, debatable how far the new Government's ideas may materialise in view of the forthcoming cuts in public spending. The race dimension and its implications as analysed in this thesis have provided a unique set of additional challenges to ABME principals which have propelled them into some differential leadership actions involving adoption of a principled struggle for equality, diversity, fairness and social justice for all in FE colleges. This is what differentiates this thesis from any general research on FE college leadership.

#### **6.4. A reflection on the Distinctiveness of this Study**

The distinguishing features of this thesis which differentiate it from any general study of educational leadership are partly rooted in the outcomes of the literature review covering race, ethnicity and education (Section 2.9). Moreover, the findings and outcomes of the empirical investigation surrounding the experiences and activities of ABME principals have provided a new, different and additional dimension to FE college leadership. A comparison and contrast of the dynamics of ABME principals' leadership, with that of the general FE college leadership population can be of significant interest. However, this is a new area for further research which extends beyond the scope of this thesis.

It should be noted that, whereas 100% of ABME principals have been driven by the issues of race equality in Further Education, in addition of course to all the other factors which propel and/or impede their leadership (Sections 2.8; 2.9), only 14% of all principals have identified equality, diversity and human rights as a priority driving factor for them as FE college principals (Appendix 7.2.3h). This may now have changed due to Ofsted's emphasis in inspecting equality and diversity in FE college leadership as part of compliance with the newly developing Single Equality Framework (Ofsted, 2009b) which is also a question for further research (Section 6.9). For ABME principals, the differentiating factor propelling their leadership is the dimension of racial disadvantage, the cause of social justice and their belief that FE colleges are

key to making a difference in achieving race equality, social inclusion and social mobility.

## **6.5 Research Outcomes: The Narrative**

The main findings of this thesis are that the deeply rooted personal aspirations, ambitions, values and vision of fairness, equality and social justice for all have propelled ABME principals into leadership, to advantage poorer, deprived, racially discriminated against and disadvantaged learners and communities who need Further Education most. The findings suggest that this has been a significant factor in attracting, motivating and sustaining ABME principals in FE college leadership. However, this goal has been mediated by persistent tendencies within FE colleges to marginalise and underestimate their capabilities, and bureaucratic controls and organisational impediments which have inhibited their leadership. The thesis has highlighted that ABME principals have actually relished this challenge and taken it as a set of principled opportunities - providing a strong sense of purpose and strengthening the dynamics of their leadership.

This Section summarises the findings and presents the research outcomes addressing the research aim and questions. It selects the salient headline conclusions suggested by the theoretical (Chapter 2) and empirical study (Chapters 4 and 5). Arguably all principals are attracted to FE colleges by their purpose, ethos and culture of strong values, aiming not only to support and protect disadvantaged learners from a sense of failure, but also, to offer

them a sense of new and positive opportunities for transition and progression in their lives (Appendix 7.2.4). ABME educationalists in their leadership roles however, are also additionally and significantly motivated and driven by their own direct experience of multiple disadvantages - including that of racial discrimination and stereotyping - which bind them to the principles of fairness, equality and social justice for all (Appendix 7.2.5). They believe that FE colleges are instrumental in achieving the objectives of these principles as they inspire learners to improve their qualifications, improve the scope of their employability and/or to go into business and higher education. What differentiates ABME principals' drive and motivation is that they have an intrinsic and inextricable bond with disadvantaged, deprived and disaffected learners who in their view deserve the same opportunities for social mobility. This did not appear as a prime and priority motivator for all principals in FE colleges according to the national survey and analysis of outcomes (Appendices 7.2.3g, h; 7.2.4; 7.3.5). However, this is an area for further research and analysis - beyond the scope of this investigation – which could involve comparing and contrasting the extent to which the dynamics of leadership of different social groups of principals may match and/or differ.

What follows is a summary of conclusions identifying and describing the differentiated propelling and impeding factors, which determine the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals and address the research aim and questions (Sections 1.4; 1.5).



ABME principals' personal and professional passion, vision, values, ambition, aspirations and commitment to fairness, equality and social justice drive and sustain their FE college leadership. These factors are often rooted in their direct experience/s of racial discrimination, disadvantage, deprivation and/or trauma, and in their upbringing in family and community settings, their history and heritage, and their personal and professional socialisation. They believe that FE colleges are capable and have the capacity to provide life transforming opportunities to those who need Further Education most and thus make a difference in their lives. This is what has attracted them as educationalists to seek employment in FE colleges.

Despite so many environmental and contextual constraints and institutional impediments, ABME principals have taken their FE college leadership roles as an opportunity to take staff and the college organisation forward by reaching out to learners - enabling them to participate and advantage from Further Education by gaining qualifications. They believe that FE colleges are especially valuable for those underprivileged people who have not been enabled by schools to achieve a suitable qualification. FE colleges can empower learners to realise their potential and enable them to move on in their lives. The colleges' supportive and caring environment for learners who may not have experienced it before, can be life transforming and should be free of racial prejudice and stereotyping.

Ironically, however, FE colleges themselves have been a closed system for ABME educationalists despite their better qualifications and transferable

experiences. The scope of their entry and promotion has been limited and they were under-represented at all levels. There was a significant vacuum in the provision of role models for the diverse modern multi-racial communities which FE colleges were aiming to serve. Funding and information management strategies, Ofsted inspection, regulatory audit and quality mechanisms acted as bureaucratic barriers for ABME educationalists.

Lee (2010) has reported that the new Coalition Government, motivated by cost reduction, plans to create a single FE funding body that aims to simplify the system and give FE colleges more freedom. In the complexity of the FE funding and regulatory system, ABME principals felt they were perceived as outsiders without experience and therefore unfit for senior leadership roles. Power, authority and decision making in FE resides with corporate governors, many of whom are not familiar in working with ABME educationalists in leadership roles. Analysing race and ethnicity in education Warmington (2009), however, has argued that race conscious educationalists may see it as an opportunity for social interaction and moreover, a tool for seeking to realise the principle of progressive social justice. For first generation ABME principals, the race dimensions have provided an impetus for promoting and pursuing the principle of fairness, equality and justice over the last decade through networking, lobbying and campaigning. One of the key contextual and theoretical conclusions is that all first generation ABME FE college principals over the last decade have had their leadership impacted on by the factors identified and described in this investigation. They, in turn, have propelled, sustained and strengthened it.

## **6.6 Summary of the Findings:**

Chapter 5 has conceptualised thematically the findings arising from the empirical data (Chapter 4). This section summarises the outcomes relative to the dynamics of leadership - identifying, describing and interpreting the factors which propel, impede and/or sustain the leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's FE colleges (Sections 1.5; 1.6).

### **6.6.1. People and Cultural Dynamics of Leadership**

The dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in England's FE colleges have been underpinned by a range of factors - the direct experiences of racial disadvantages, inherited and/or developed personal and professional aspirations, ambitions and motivations – which have generated and/or reinforced their particular passions, values, beliefs and vision for equality, fairness and social justice. These factors are significant in propelling their leadership and in maintaining their spirit, confidence and morale and that of their college organisation and the educationalists and learners associated with it. This is in line with the Foster Report (2005) which challenged the narrow skills based approach that then Government policy was driving FE colleges to adopt and deliver. The Foster Report emphasised the advantages of creating vision, purpose and values based colleges to develop socially aware, well spirited and rounded learners.

Thomson (2009b) reported on the development of the new social, moral, spiritual and cultural guidelines for Further Education being recommended by the National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in FE. The evidence in Chapter 4 shows that ABME principals are profoundly influenced by direct past and present experiences of deprivation, discrimination and disadvantage which have given them a social and moral cause with deep passion for change in FE. The passion for change is in stimulating action, providing hope, drive and expectation for initiating and sustaining transformation in FE college organisations. These factors have given ABME principals strength of character, self-confidence and purpose - not only to overcome and tackle the impediments of race, but also to pursue a principled cause for fairness, equality and justice in FE colleges and beyond. However, the values and vision deficit and limits to leadership have tended to restrict the progress and endeavours of ABME educationalists in entering and progressing at various stages of their careers in FE colleges (Chapter 5).

One of the common dimensions to surface in the research evidence (Section 4.2) is that despite the disadvantages of race, culture, language, disability, gender and/or socio-economic deprivation (which have impeded the prospects of employment and career progression of ABME principals), they have striven to succeed by negotiating and cutting through the culture of direct and/or indirect discrimination, racial stereotypes and low expectations. They have relentlessly endeavoured to move on from the margins to mainstream FE college leadership. They have drawn determination and conviction from their socialisation, heritage, history and challenging real life

circumstances, emerging as role models for others in similar circumstances (Chapters 4 and 5). The UK Commission for Employment and Skills report UKCES (2010) has likewise identified the values, beliefs, identities and interdependence of individuals and groups as an important dimension within the dynamics of changing national and global skills and employment framework.

### **6.6.2 Institutional and Environmental Dynamics of Leadership**

ABME principals have converted their experiences of racial disadvantage into a principled drive for fairness, equality and justice in order to overcome and deal with the many institutional and contextual impediments they have experienced. This personal drive has added social value and public credibility to the dynamics of their leadership journey and reformed many discriminatory and less favourable institutional practices. Such practices (Section 4.3) initially inhibited access and frustrated the trajectory of ABME principals to a senior leadership career and/ or undermined and marginalised their roles and positions in FE colleges. However, they have relied upon their personal and cultural strengths, comparatively higher qualifications and differential experience of community or voluntary work in various multi-racial social settings to make progress. They have interacted, negotiated and asserted their presence and position in FE colleges and external agencies whose policies, strategies, ever changing priorities and practices often varied from the spirit and expectations of applicable equality legislation and recommended good practice.

In line with race equality legislation and guidelines (Commission for Racial Equality, 2001) - amid a climate of rising concerns about racial discrimination (The Black Staff Commission Report, 2003) and the lobbying by ABME principals via the Network of Black Professionals (NbP/BLI 2009) - government departments and FE funding, sponsoring and regulatory agencies began to make a systemic impact in the direction of equality, fairness and justice for all at all levels in FE colleges (The Commission for Black Staff in FE – the Commission’s Legacy, 2008). This process also influenced Ofsted’s approach in inspecting the leadership and management of FE colleges, involving assessment of equality and diversity policy and their strategy and practices in assessing the overall performance, effectiveness and impact of FE colleges (Ofsted, 2009).

The Equality Act 2010 has created a new single equality duty for public bodies, covering all forms of disadvantage; in taking strategic decisions, they must show due regard for reducing the inequalities in outcomes that result from socio-economic disadvantages. Although, as many equality organisations agree, the legislation falls short of providing fully justifiable individual rights, it still provides an important framework for preventing discrimination claims (The Public Services Trust 2020, 2010).

### **6.6.3 Impact of Effectiveness Related Dynamics of Leadership**

Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals claim (Chapter 4) that the effectiveness and impact of their leadership has been constrained by the

impediments of FE colleges and their contextual structural power, authority, organisation and provision of resources. Spicer (2007) has discussed how power and empowerment, ideas, information and knowledge based authority and micro-politics within a team, department and school can interplay in improving and/or impeding performance, effectiveness and impact.

The leadership role impact of ABME principals in FE colleges is further compounded by their under-representation at all levels, including leadership. The LLUK (2007/08) Annual Workforce Diversity Profile that appeared in 2010 has re-confirmed that 4% of White staff are in senior management and leadership roles in FE colleges as compared with 1.8% of ABME staff.

The evidence in Chapter 4 shows that despite the under-representation of ABME educationalists and the race and organisational factors limiting the potential of their leadership role, they have often initiated action to reach out to communities, businesses, agencies and industry to make a difference through widening and extending teaching and learning provision, thus benefiting those disadvantaged learners who need education and training most. They have developed innovative connections and partnerships resulting in better and more effective Further Education provision, transforming the quality and standards of teaching and learning in their colleges.

This dimension was verified by a survey of relevant Ofsted (2006) inspection reports for FE colleges led by ABME principals. The challenges of widening

and extending participation and increasing the market share and income of colleges has provided them with real opportunities which have propelled their leadership (TES, 1994; 2005). They claim to have made their mark, demonstrated their effectiveness and impacted on the performance of FE colleges despite impediments of access to resources, structural disadvantages, stifling audits and bureaucratic interventions. They have made this contribution through their passionate commitment and drive to make a difference in the lives of learners in Further Education provision, despite the limits, oversights and lack of recognition of their innovative contributions to FE colleges (Chapter 4 and 5). This process has driven and sustained the leadership of the first generation ABME educationalists as principals in FE colleges.

## **6.7 Implications of the Findings**

Gronn (1996) has argued that leaders' socialisation in education has dramatic implications for the styles of leadership that they adopt and develop; their positive or negative experiences influence the formation of the perspectives which drive and determine their leadership priorities. The preceding analysis has shown that it is the personal values, life experiences and professional journeys of the first generation ABME principals of FE colleges which have been significantly, though arguably not exclusively, influential in affecting their views and perspectives and determining the drive, style and priorities for their leadership. However, the external policy, funding, regulatory environment, changing systemic needs, accountabilities and - as Spicer (2007) suggested in his analysis of the dynamics of authority - the micro-politics of FE colleges,



have also been dominant dimensions in influencing the leadership of FE college principals. Kaplan (1990) noted that it is the moral, ethical and psychological properties educational leaders bring and apply to the task of leadership which primarily underpin the dynamics of their leadership. This investigation has likewise shown that ABME principals in FE colleges were attracted, motivated and driven by the moral and ethical causes of social justice, diversity and racial equality to tackle the issues of deprivation and disadvantage.

In my experience and observations as an FE college leadership practitioner, and in so far as the findings and conclusions of this investigation suggest, the propelling and/or impeding factors and dimensions underpinning the dynamics of leadership have been used positively in the process. ABME FE college principals have focused on making the leadership process effective in impacting on the momentum for improvement and transformation of their colleges. It is significant that they have been successful in taking up general internal and external changes and challenges as opportunities, and they have endeavoured to transform the additional impediments into opportunities for success. This suggestion has been further verified by examining the performance of those FE colleges which are led by ABME principals who were interviewed for this research (Ofsted, 2006ab; 2007).

The conclusions arising from the findings have implications for Further Education policy, the ever changing machinery of Government relative to FE, funding arrangements, strategic commissioning of Further Education,

planning systems, regulatory and inspection agencies and organisational and professional development frameworks - all of whom interact with, and impact on the dynamics of FE college leadership. In view of the outcomes of this investigation, I will offer some indication of the nature of the potential post thesis work which could be developed from the following recommendations.

## **6.8 Recommendations**

This study should not solely be of interest to the research and academic community, but also to aspiring principals and students of leadership in FE colleges. It covers the policy and strategy development, leadership practitioners and FE college professionals pursuing professional development. This Chapter has been condensed and refined to reflect the outcomes of the research - focusing on the salient points without losing the overall value of the work. This is the first study of its kind, thus making an original contribution to broadening and deepening understanding of the experiences of ABME principals in England's FE colleges. The outcomes in the concluding Chapter should be transferable to studying the dynamics of leadership in other sectors and organisations involving ABME leaders.

Gunter (2001) suggests that spoken and written texts are read and interpreted differently by different people depending on the context that they operate in. The findings and conclusions of this investigation may be read, interpreted and used at any time and context, by different audiences or readers, stakeholders, or those who have an interest in the area of leadership within and outside FE colleges.

At the time of writing this Chapter, further challenges and opportunities were appearing in terms of transforming FE colleges. The last Labour Government's latest proposals published in 'Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver' (DfES, 2006; DIUS, 2007b), 'Change in the Machinery of Government' and the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children's Bill (AoC, 2009; LSN, 2009), were aimed at changing Further Education funding and commissioning arrangements, strategy and provision. Since then, with the change of Government following the May 2010 general election, the new Liberal-Democratic and Conservative Coalition Government is in the process of introducing its policy involving the redirection and reduction of funding and some limited de-regulation of FE colleges. The new Coalition Government has published its policy, regulatory and funding intentions in recently published consultation documents to reform Further Education system and priorities (BIS, 2010ab). However, the outcomes of this investigation in terms of the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals aimed at transforming FE colleges and their environment to achieve a greater fairness, equality and social justice will continue to have potential to inform and influence the policy makers and their policy, strategies and funding decisions. The Coalition Government's new arrangements are due to be implemented by 2011-12. Their impact can be evaluated in terms of the dynamics of the FE college leadership process identified in this thesis. This thesis provides a basis for further investigating the effects of these interventions on college leadership - as propelling and/or impeding factors. The question will be how far the Coalition Government's new FE policy and funding strategy will help or hinder

achievement of its vision of social mobility (BIS, 2010ab) within a reduced funding provision.

Any intervention by the government departments, funding, regulatory, standards, governing and support agencies needs to be examined in the light of this thesis. The aim should be to eradicate limits to FE college leadership whilst the bureaucratic barriers and impediments which obstruct FE college principals' leadership drive and priorities should be removed. The environmental and contextual changes may come and go, but the personal and professional vision and values of educationalists and principals for their learners in FE colleges remains a constant and significant driving force. This is what sustains the standards of provision and effectiveness of FE college organisations. It is the commitment and sense of mission based on the principles of fairness, equality and social justice which drive their leadership. In this context, the particular issue of under-representation of ABME principals and educationalists at all levels in FE colleges needs addressing through affirmative strategies.

There is strong scope for a renewed role for voluntary organisations such as the Network of Black Professionals and Black Leadership Initiative to add value. They can make use of the outcomes of this investigation and prepare the case for a follow-up investigation after the publication of the Commission for Black Staff in FE Report (2003). For example, in the year 2000, the then FEFC responded to concerns that were raised through the lobbying process

on behalf of ABME educationalists in FE colleges. The FEFC then devised a policy of inclusiveness and equality in FE colleges.

*...the Council intends to provide funds for the design, development and contribution towards the cost of a training programme for college senior management teams and the Council would wish to see these programmes agreed, to improve the promotion opportunities for black staff (FEFC, 2000 a, Circular 05,p9,).*

What follows is a sample of some realistic recommendations in Figure 5, showing the ways in which the findings of this investigation can be used as a resource for making FE college leadership more inclusive, diverse and dynamic to impact on improving FE colleges.

## **6.9 Further Research and Development**

The findings of this investigation (Chapter 4) provide a new, different and refreshing additional body of knowledge for use in the further innovation and development of the research focus, aim and questions (Sections 1.4; 1.5). This could lead the process of study in the direction beyond the scope of this investigation to meet the changing academic and professional needs of educationalists and learners in the field of FE colleges relative to the dynamics of leadership of the next generation of ABME principals and their White European peers. The conceptual outcomes of the investigation (Chapter 5) could be further interpreted and explored to transform them into a

new and differential theory and practice of educational leadership relative to the next generation of ABME leaders and their White peers. This thesis provides a substantive basis with the potential for further theorising the outcomes - a logical next academic step - to build on the foundation that the findings have laid. Thus the findings are capable of generating further discourse to take the research beyond the parameters and scope of this study.

As this study has shown the social, economic and educational threshold for the ABME principals has been a challenging starting point in the goal of achieving an educational leadership role in FE colleges. It has included a testing trajectory in terms of the actual journey, social mobility and career progression of the ABME principals through the impediments of disparities, deprivation, disadvantage and race discrimination, as the evidence has shown (Appendices: 7.2.2, Figure 3; 7.2.5). However, the thesis suggests that ABME principals have propelled themselves into educational leadership on the back of the strengths of their heritage, socialisation and experiences by turning these into their passion, values and vision for the role of FE colleges and in making a difference in the lives of learners - particularly those learners, who need Further Education more than most to gain a suitable qualification for accessing further and/or higher education, employment or business.

There is no suggestion that White European peers of ABME principals are not driven by similar considerations for learners, communities and other driving factors surrounding FE colleges (appendix 7.2.4). However, unlike their White

European peers, ABME principals have had different and additional experiences in their journeys as this research has shown, involving race factors. These have both - impeded their drive for leadership and added to the dynamics of their leadership in the process (Appendix 7.2.3e-h and 7.2.5).

How then do the experiences of ABME and White principals compare and contrast? What are the personal, professional and educational implications of the variations in their experiences? How have their experiences and the transformational strategies arising from them, impacted on the priorities of FE college leadership for organisational transformation and on-going improvement of Further Education? The cultural, socio-economic threshold and race disadvantaged social mobility patterns of ABME principals' life journeys have shown some significant features (Chapter 4). Their White peers will not have experienced racial discrimination in their career, (Appendix 7.2.3e-h) although there may be other disadvantages of gender and/or disability; how have these impacted on the dynamics of their leadership?

The variations in the ABME and White principals' career trajectories and experiences are significant enough to justify further research, analysis and theorisation to demonstrate the differential input and contributions of ABME principals into FE college leadership. Unlike their White European peers ABME principals have not been as privileged to enjoy and benefit from discrimination free schooling, university education, social environment, employment and the support of friendly institutions, according to Hutton

(2010), as in the case of their peers - these influential White European principals mainly belonging to the post-war generation or “baby boomers”. What is it that differentiates the ABME principals’ efforts to achieve similar career goals and transformation? This could be explored through further quantitative and/or qualitative research. The evidence of this investigation shows that in most cases ABME principals’ career journeys were not as smooth and plain as should be reasonably expected in FE colleges. It is evident from the literature review that unlike ABME principals, their White European peers did not have to undertake the same level of struggle or encounter racial discrimination and disparities at personal, institutional, cultural or environmental levels (Sections 2.3; 2.5; 2.8; Appendices 7.2.2 Figure 3; 7.2.5). How have these variations impacted on the individuals, the nature and style of their leadership, the transformation of the institutions and their professional relationships?

LSIS and the Schools of Educational Leadership in universities may interrogate the findings of this investigation to add further academic value to their FE leaders and leadership in education research and training programmes. The outcomes of this thesis are also transferable to other public sector services and are capable of adding value to leadership research relative to fairness, equality, diversity and social justice. Not least, this study into the dynamics of leadership could enhance an evaluation of the aims, objectives and contents of relevant programmes designed for FE college managers, leaders and the qualifying programme for aspiring FE college leaders. Within the scope of the proposed further research and theorisation of



this investigation is the question of researching the influences that educationalists and their organisations could generate attitudinally, behaviourally, institutionally, environmentally and/or in performance related factors. The findings could further develop Ofsted's ever changing inspection framework, relating to assessment of educational leadership and the capacity to improve FE colleges by mapping the leadership functions against the factors which, in the experience of ABME principals, make a difference in learners' lives - especially those learners who experience disparity, disadvantage, deprivation and vulnerabilities.

Stothert (2009) evaluated the new and formal requirement for the now outgoing Principals' Qualifying Programme (under the Coalition Government's policy - HMG, 2010); therefore it can only be a point of academic interest. The evaluation did not make any links or references to the needs of the diverse leadership group within FE colleges (CEL, 2005ab) who would have benefited from its development. The evaluation made no reference to the issues of fairness, racial equality and diversity in the employment and leadership of FE college principals. There is an obvious need, in terms of the findings and conclusions of this investigation, for further review and assessment of these issues and their relevance to FE leadership programmes. As mentioned above, however, the new Coalition Government has removed the requirement of a Principals' Qualifying Programme for FE college principals (Thomson, 2010d). Further research is needed into the practical and strategic reasons for the under-representation of ABME principals in FE colleges - why is the volume of applications so low for senior leadership posts, especially from

potential next generation of FE college leadership aspirants? In view of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review, there is also a new reason for further researching the impact on the dynamics of leadership of ABME principals in FE colleges, of the impending reduction of funding by Government (Section 2.4; Lee, 2010cd; BIS, 2010ab).

Some FE colleges may have used a strategy of attracting executive and leadership personnel from business, industry and voluntary services to senior posts - as the LLUK is currently doing under the Catalyst programme, attracting managers and leaders from other sectors and developing them for FE colleges. This area has not been further explored since the Commission for Black Staff Report (2003). The issues faced by those who are in service and aspiring for a leadership role in FE colleges needs further research and examination in view of the differential occupational pressures on them. These pressures, however, may be unknown in terms of their personal and professional implications.

The minority and discrepant evidence in Chapter 4 suggesting the setting up of US style Black colleges and a discrete race discrimination advisory service to resolve issues of perceived or actual discrimination - without having to go through the formal procedure - must arise from the undue frustrations, stress, anxieties and strains for aspiring and/or practising FE college leaders. There is a continuing vacuum in the availability of research literature based on biographical data profiling of ABME principals, to counteract racist stereotypes and prejudices affecting access and career opportunities for FE

leadership aspirants. Moreover, the question arises as to whether there are any mental or physical health effects of issues that arise from racism, inequality and discrimination (Appendix 7.2.5) which impede progress. What happens with those ABME leadership aspirants who have been unable to progress their careers - what is the nature of their experiences, views and voices? BBC Radio 4's 'Analysis' programme of 17 October 2010 has explored and discussed some similar issues in the general and wider social context. However, this field is under-researched and the outcomes of this thesis could prompt research interest relating to the next generation of ABME educationalists in FE colleges. There are a range of possible themes for further research and development arising from this thesis. The most obvious questions are as follows:

However small, will the progress of recent years sustain in improving the representation and input of ABME educationalists in FE college leadership? Will the future generation of ABME educationalists also continue to pursue the leadership process with the same energy and vigour, turning their experiences of disadvantage into positive personal and institutional transformational strategies? How far have the attitudes and behaviour of White European principals changed since the last national survey of 2000 in relation to fairness, equality and social justice? (Appendix: 7.2.3h) There is merit in carrying out an impact assessment of the role and influence of ABME principals' work through the Network of Black Professional and Black Leadership Initiative in the FE college sector – what strategies have emerged and how have they brought about any transformation? How far have the

views and practices of new ABME educationalists and entrants been influenced by the kind of moral purpose that the first generation of ABME principals have developed, promoted and exercised for Further Education?

## **6.10 Concluding Statement**

This investigation has explored, identified and described the dynamics of leadership of Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals in England's FE colleges (Chapters 4 and 5). It shows that the area of leadership in the field of FE colleges is still under-researched and under-theorised (Section 2.3). Addressing 'equality and diversity in leadership' at the 2008 BELMAS conference in Birmingham, Lumby (2008) reiterated that research on FE college leadership is minuscule. This thesis is a gateway to further research; it offers a significant new and differential body of knowledge relative to the target group (Section 1.8), nature of the study (Sections 1.4; 1.5; 6.4) and in outcomes (Sections 6.5; 6.6). The research is based on the literature review (Chapter 2) and empirical inquiry (Chapter 4), the resulting thesis poses a new challenge for rethinking Further Education relative to its moral, social and economic purpose in developing fairness, equality and social justice for all - including ABME learners, educationalists and communities (Sections 6.7; 6.8; 6.9). It provides information, data and findings useful for a further discourse among FE policy and strategy leaders, funders and regulators, academics and students, aspiring principals and leadership practitioners.

As I have explained (Section 1.5), due to work, relocation and medical reasons I was unable to continue with this research for a long duration

between 2003 and 2006. However, as a leadership practitioner and an FE college principal, I was able to observe and manage changes, review new literature and participate continuously in FE college leadership activities. I stayed closer to national changes through my role as member of the national advisory/executive boards of the Centre of Excellence for Leadership, the Black Leadership Initiative, the Network for Black Professionals and the Council of Faiths and Beliefs in FE. Upon resuming the investigation and analysis, noting a review by Rutherford *et al* (2002) reminded that a 'mixing and matching' approach to research can be 'fit for the purpose' of answering the research questions, I reviewed and analysed the interview data in the latest FE context, to ensure the research outcomes are contemporary, applicable and usable and that they are capable of contributing to further research and improvement.

In so far as the core thematic outcomes of this investigation are concerned, I would underline that unlike White European principals, ABME principals have experienced a range of new, additional and different circumstances determining many personal, professional, cultural, institutional and environmental factors which have propelled and/or impeded their leadership. They have, however, relentlessly pursued their aspirations and ambition to succeed supported by their passions, vision, values and commitment for Further Education provision relative to deprived, disadvantaged and disaffected learners who need it most. They were bonded to this process by their own direct experience of racial discrimination, stereotyping and other traumas. This is what differentiates the dynamics of their leadership from FE

college principals in general - 97% of whom are White European and the majority are male (Lee, 2010b). This study shows that often ABME principals have gained strength and confidence to sustain their drive in leadership under acute challenges, from their upbringing, socialisation and heritage values, holding a high regard for the moral purpose of teaching and learning.

There is no suggestion, however, that White European FE college principals do not face acute challenges or that they do not draw strengths from similar sources to deal with them. This investigation, however, suggests the new, additional and different challenges of racial prejudice and discrimination are a unique social and historical reality that only ABME principals have been subject to. ABME principals have taken FE colleges as an excellent vehicle for driving the transformation of the lives of many learners to make a difference in the pursuit of racial equality, diversity, fairness and social justice.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this investigation are capable of making FE colleges more dynamic through the effectiveness of their leadership and for the purposes of continuous improvement, reform and modernisation, using the evidence based research process. Ribbins (2000), however, suggested that whilst effective leadership can impact on improvement, the leadership endeavour can run into difficulties unless system, resource and institutional legitimacy are provided. Gunter (2001) also claimed that organisational processes have a vital underpinning role in sustaining improvement. The Ofsted inspection reports show that ABME principals led FE colleges are effective, well run and successful.

Finally, in the process of initiating, formalising, conducting, completing and concluding this research, I have immensely benefited as a leadership practitioner. It has enabled me to develop acute critical self-awareness, self-assessment and sensitivity towards the impact and implications of a leadership role as principal in an FE college community of learners, educationalists and staff, partner institutions, the local community and economy. This investigation, and the tremendous changes that have taken place involving FE colleges in England in recent years, have accompanied me in my journey as the first ever Asian principal of a General Further Education College in England since 2002. This study has enabled me to engage more consciously and confidently in Further Education developments within and outside the college. I believe that this thesis is capable of adding value in developing principals personally, professionally and academically as FE college leadership practitioners.

This study should have added value to the leadership processes in the college where I work; for example, the college achieved Beacon college status and gained outstanding grades for leadership, management and in capacity to improve teaching and learning (Ofsted, 2006b). The college has achieved a successful merger with a Sixth Form college and it has made a substantial capital investment completing £50M+ new campuses. I believe that the process of this investigation has also enabled me to engage more effectively in local, regional and national activities relative to FE policy, strategy and development.

## 7. References and Appendices

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## **7.2 Appendices:**

### **7.2.1 Sample of an Interview Transcript**

#### **EdD RESEARCH INTERVIEWS 2001-02**

**Respondent's Full Name...**

**Leadership Position/The Role Title...**

**The College...**

**Date: 18 September, 2002**

***Question 1: Please tell me something about yourself as a person and educationalist, and what are the sources of your motivations?***

***Appendix 7.2 is not available in the digital version of this thesis***

## 7.2.2 Schedule of the Interviews

Interview 1:	Monday,	27 August,	2001
Interview 2:	Tuesday,	28 August	2001
Interview 3:	Thursday,	30 August,	2001
Interview 4:	Tuesday,	4 September ,	2001
Interview 5:	Tuesday,	4 September,	2001
Interview 6:	Thursday	6 September,	2001
Interview 7:	Monday,	10 September,	2001
Interview 8:	Wednesday,	13 September,	2001
Interview 9:	Tuesday,	18 September,	2001
Interview 10:	Thursday,	20 September,	2001
Interview 11:	Tuesday,	25 September,	2001
Interview 12:	Tuesday	25 September,	2001
Interview 13:	Wednesday,	28 September,	2001
Interview 14:	Tuesday,	2 October,	2001
Interview 15:	Thursday,	4 October,	2001
Interview 16:	Thursday,	18 October,	2001
Interview 17:	Tuesday,	23 October,	2001
Interview 18:	Thursday,	25 October,	2001
Interview 19:	Friday,	26 October,	2001
Interview 20:	Friday,	9 November,	2001
Interview 21:	Wednesday,	21 November,	2001
Interview 22:	Friday,	23 November,	2001

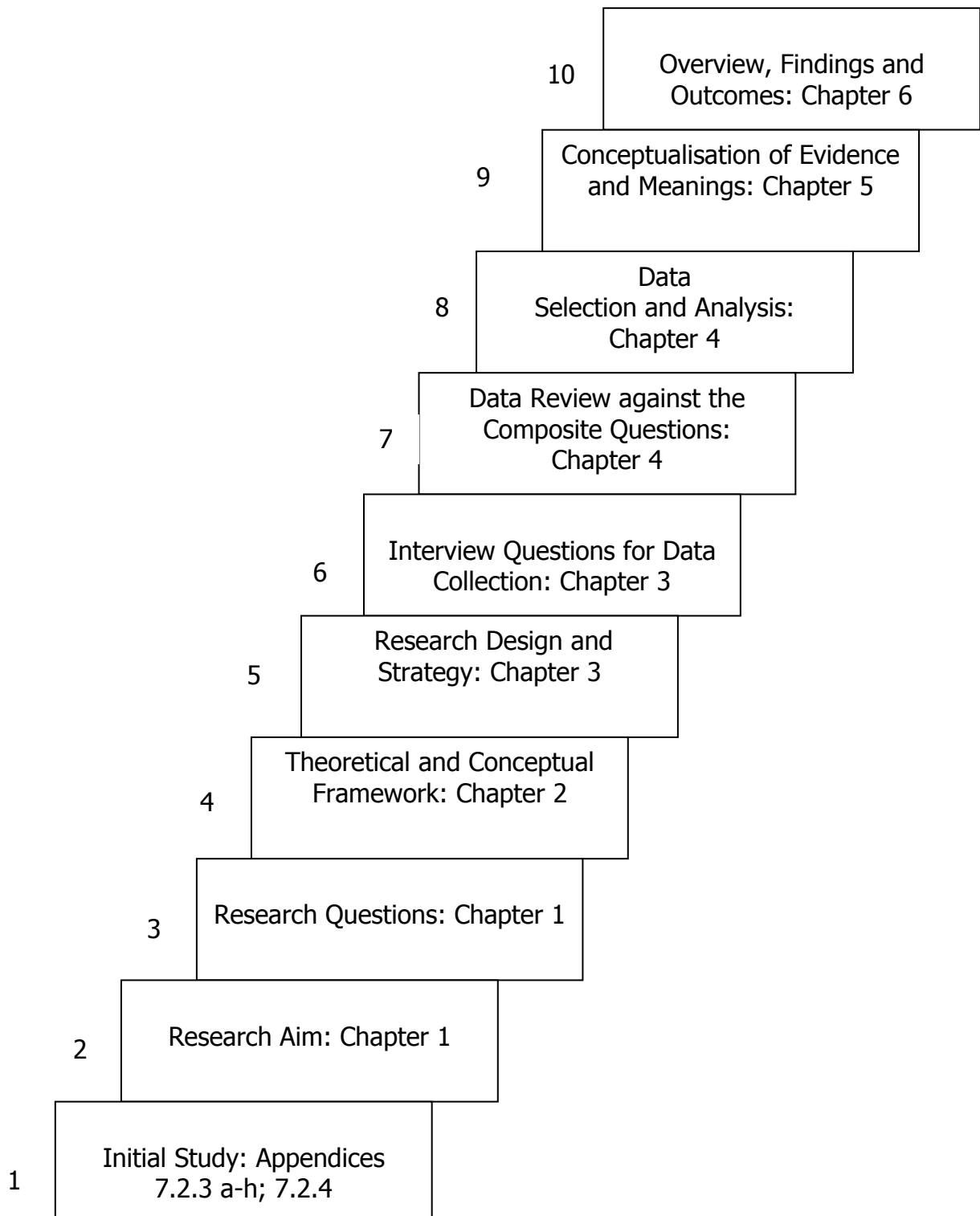
**Note: Out of a total of 22 interview transcripts relating to 16 FE colleges, 14 were selected for analysis in Chapter 4 of those Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic principals, who happened to be in the most senior leadership positions in England's FE colleges at the time.**

## 7.2.2 Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework which Supported the Empirical Research

Dimensions	Propelling / Impeding Factors	Critical Comment	Section Ref.
Environmental	Legislation, govt policy and funding	Implementation and impact of equality policy is under-researched	2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 4.3; 5.5
Institutional	Inclusivity of corporate vision, values, directions, priorities and working	Issues of diversity in leadership and representation under-investigated	2.3; 2.5; 4.2; 5.4
Structural	The system: including/ excluding or marginalises ABME leadership practitioners, disregards their disproportionately higher contribution	No literature on the impact of mergers/ rationalisations on ABME FEC leaders	2.8; 2.9; 4.3; 5.5
Resources	Relatively low resourcing of disadvantaged learners and staff, despite improvement in funding	Research gaps in contribution to FE provision of ABME leaders in hard to reach areas	2.3; 2.8; 2.10; 4.4; 4.5
Exercise of Power	Discretionary power and influence undermine, sideline and pass over A and B leaders for promotion	Few case studies based investigation into the effects	2.6; 2.8; 4.3; 5.3
Cultural	Communication and leadership in diverse multi-racial workforce	Little differential study	2.2; 2.6; 2.9; 4.2; 5.4
People	Socialisation, self esteem, experience, aspirations, views, perceptions and expectations of leadership practitioners. Role models, history, heritage, culture and identity, lack of space and opportunities for realising personal and professional potential	Little or no biographical data based research literature on Asian and Black principals/ aspiring principals	2.2 2.6; 2.8; Chapters 4 and 5
Provision and Responsiveness	Lack of inclusive curriculum and learner services: Unmet needs, aspirations and expectations of learners from diverse backgrounds	Little research into resource and strengths that learners bring	2.6; Chapters 4 and 5
Equality and Diversity	Insignificant and low representation of A and B principals as compared with learner numbers. Increasing emphasis for equality for learners in learning but not so much for staff and leadership practitioners	Gaps in Research	2.3; 2.9; 4.2; 5.4
Stereotyping	Agencies' stereotypical approach ABME leadership practitioners	Under-researched and under-theorised area	2.3; 2.9; 4.2; 5.4
Performance/ Effectiveness	The nature of additional, new or different innovative contributions of diverse leadership in FE colleges	Deficit in literature compensated by empirical research	2.3; 2.9; 4.4; 5.6

## 7.2.2 Figure 2: The Research Process

Ten steps strategy: from initial study to the research outcomes



## 7.2.2. Figure 3: The Issues and concerns Identified: The Leadership Propelling and Impeding Factors:

### Dynamics: Propelling Factors

- ❖ Passion for learner participation, success and progression
- ❖ Commitment to supporting staff - their work, personal and professional wellbeing and development
- ❖ Personal qualities and characteristics
- ❖ Heritage, socialisation and values
- ❖ Team work and strategic intelligence
- ❖ Aspiring to be, and acting as an inspirational role model in leading the college community
- ❖ Dedication for enabling and empowering individuals, teams and organisations
- ❖ Ambition, innovation and initiative
- ❖ Intellectual and emotional intelligence, strategies for tackling situational and transitional circumstances/ issues

### Impeding Factors

- Racial stereotyping and prejudice
- Ignorance and attitudes
- Institutional exclusion
- Absence of network
- Absence of role models
- Lack of recognition
- Institutional barriers
- Over expectations
- Lack of confidence in employing A& B principals
- Marginalisation
- Institutional incompetence
- Bureaucracy
- Lack of corporate confidence
- Institutional discrimination
- Institutional despondency

- ❖ Equality, diversity and social inclusion      Pre-conceived perceptions  
of ABME principals
- ❖ Opportunities to develop through work      Deprivation  
shadowing, coaching and mentorship      Disadvantages
- ❖ Policy awareness, networking and  
liaison      Under- representation
- ❖ Responsive and Inclusive further      Undermining interventions  
education
- ❖ Vertical and horizontal collaborative      Fear and reservations  
alliances
- ❖ Competence, experience, knowledge      Lack of opportunities  
and skills

## 7.2.2. Figure 4: Conceptualising the Findings

<b>Key Thematic Categories</b>	<b>Dynamics of Leadership</b>	<b>Limits of Leadership</b>	<b>Headline Summary</b>	<b>Cross-Section References</b>
People: motivational dimensions	Aspirations, characteristics capabilities and qualities	Recurring barriers of racial prejudice and discrimination	Personal vision, values, passions and work ethic	5.3.1
Cultural: socialisation and popular context	Heritage and developed values inspiring passion for progress	Popular stereotyping undermines the role models	Socialisation, development, experiences and conditions	5.3.1
Institutional: attractions, ethos, purpose, priorities and sustainability	Positive and progressive policies, strategies and resourcing	Inconsistent corporate commitment to eradicate discrimination	Refusing to be victims of institutional racism -drive for success	5.3.2
Environmental: external environment impacting on FECs	Government policy, funding priorities and context	Bureaucratic barriers impeding responsiveness of leadership	Endeavour to reach out, connections and networking	5.3.2
Performance: inclusive dispersed and supportive	Style of leadership, work ethic and ambition	Marginalisation and exclusion from the leadership	Strive for team work & dispersed leadership	5.3.3
Effectiveness: Taking it as an opportunity to make a mark	Eye for opportunities: transitional and transformational	Lack of recognition of contribution to FE college leadership	Leadership profile: initiatives, innovation and delivery	5.3.3
Impact: utilising own experience and expectations to measure success	Ultimate purpose of FE colleges is to improve life opportunities for learners	External and centralised initiatives undermine local FEC leadership	Belief in others' potential in delivering successful leadership	5.3.3

## 7.2.2: Figure 5: Recommendations Arising from the Outcomes

<b>Factors Identified</b>	<b>Propelling Factors</b>	<b>Impeding Factors</b>	<b>Some Key Recommendations</b>	<b>Implementing Agency</b>
People Section ref. 5.4 6.6.1	Personal aspirations, characteristics, qualities and approach	Conditions/ experience of racial prejudice and stereotyping	Create biographical research literature relating to the area ABME FE college leadership	Universities' Educational Leadership Research Schools
Cultural 5.4 6.6.1	Heritage, socialisation, values, expectations, refusal to be victims	Stereotypical perceptions, low expectations, attitudes and ignorance	Identify, promote, profile and use FE college A&B/BME leadership role models and their success stories	The CEL/LSIS/DIUS in partnership with BLI/ NBP
Institutional 5.5 6.6.2	Progressive employment policy, strategy, resourcing and impact monitoring practices	Inadvertent barriers, unfair and Inhibiting employment, re-structuring and leadership succession practices	Set fair targets to improve representation, introduce positive action programmes, promote excellence through equality and diversity	DCSF, BIS and the funding agencies' steer and monitoring of FE Corporations' practices
Environmental 5.5 6.6.2	Flexibility of FE colleges to deliver the changing government priorities	Barriers to extending benefits of change for A&B/BME college leaders	Continuing leadership development: mentoring, coaching, work shadowing and peer reviewing	FE Corporations resourced by the CEL/ LSIS in partnership with BLI
Performance 5.6 6.6.3	Ambitious, work ethic, dispersed and inclusive style of leadership	Experience of exclusion, marginalisation and lack of recognition	Implementation of effective equality and diversity policy and practice in FE college leadership	FE Corporations, College leadership and management
Effectiveness 5.6 6.6.3	Innovative use of transitional and transformational opportunities	Lack of power, authority, resources and undermining of the initiative	Awareness, understanding and appreciation of capabilities of A&B/BME leaders	Funding, Regulatory and Support Agencies and FECs
Impact 5.6 6.6.3	Urge to make a difference in learners' lives through Further Education	Multi-agency, duplicative and over bureaucratized system	Assess the quality and standards of leadership for its focus on learners' wider success	Inspection and Audit mechanisms: OFSTED



## **Appendix 7.2.3 a: Background and Initial EdD Study**

### **7.2.3b: The Origins of Interest in Leadership**

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emerging dimensions involving the dynamics of leadership. The review of the data then enabled me to locate the practitioners' perspectives in a wider context, providing a framework for further exploring the subject.

### **7.2.3c: An Initial Review of the Literature**

This stage consisted of reviewing some of the FE agencies' papers, outlining the directives and changes in the Government's policy, planning, funding priorities and the changing role of FE college leadership after the incorporation of FE colleges under the F&HE Act 1992 (DfES, 1992).

### **7.2.3d: An Observation of Leadership in Action**

This stage involved the observation and examination of the dynamics of leadership practices in a large private industrial organisation led by an Asian Managing Director (Appendix 7.2.3). This was beneficial in the absence of such an opportunity within FE colleges in terms of ethnic and business dimensions (Whittaker, 2005). The aim was to study any relevant features of leadership practices in private industry which may compare and contrast with FE colleges, as colleges were beginning to attract candidates for leadership posts from the private sector of industry (Lee, 2008). FE colleges were thus strengthening their competitive and corporate positions.

### **7.2.3e: Questionnaire Based Survey - 1**

This stage of study was about identifying any differential themes and issues within the overall study, investigating the effectiveness and impact of Asian and Black leaders on FE colleges. This was a questionnaire based survey confined to five colleges in the West Midlands that I developed as part of my EdD coursework. The findings provided some differential dimensions to the dynamics of leadership pointing in the direction of a range of inhibitions that Asian and Black principals and aspiring principals experience suggesting a new dimension for this investigation.

### **7.2.3f: Questionnaire Based Survey - 2**

After the initial stages of developing a way forward for the empirical research through interviews, the observation project and the literature review, the two surveys further refined and clarified the course of this investigation. The task, however, was still relatively tedious due to the lack of any reliable and comprehensive data and information relating to the population of Asian and Black leaders in FE colleges, as evidenced in the AoC (2000)

conference proceedings in Harrogate. The personal and professional contacts and some unpublished FE college and EdD tutorial discussions, together with Rutherford and Gunter (2000) guidance notes enabled me to proceed. The questionnaire's content and design were informed by the purpose, aim of this research, the outcomes of the EdD course work and the literature review. Each question and the multiple choice responses were numbered to facilitate the tabulation and computation of the data.

The questionnaire based survey has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage I experienced was that I was able to be precise, focused and consistent in asking the same questions in a standardised fashion, to all respondents scattered in different locations in five colleges. The method is economical and the opportunity cost is comparatively low. The disadvantage was that the response level could have been low due to sensitivities and respondents' fatigue.

I wrote an explanatory letter in seeking the respondents' assistance and made reminder calls, but there was little opportunity to test and verify the absolute reliability of the data, going by Denscombe's (1998) analysis. I gave a shorter time scale to respondents for completing and returning the questionnaire. I enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelopes, which I thought helped the process of getting responses more quickly. The maximum possible response population in the target FE colleges was only around thirty. I selected twenty five Asian and Black lead-managers for the purpose of this survey - allowing for a fair and reasonable representation in the sample in terms of gender and ethnicity. I received fourteen completed questionnaires making it a sixty percent response. Within the scope of the project, this was a proportionate response for analysing the resultant data as against Tall's (2000b) advice. It provided a basis for the following national survey.

#### **7.2.3g: Questionnaire Based Survey - National**

This stage built on the previous survey, involving a national survey of principals' views, experiences, perspectives and expectations regarding the dynamics and limits of leadership in FE Colleges, which further guided and influenced the research themes for the interview questions. This was a quantitative research initiative, compensating for the research deficit in literature on the subject.

In this questionnaire-based survey the sample size was the maximum possible that could have been realistically achieved through the AoC (2000) annual conference, which attracts the largest number of principals and aspiring principals. To short circuit the process and to produce results closer to, and almost as accurate as those for the whole of the FE college principal population, I kept in view Gorard's (2001) argument that most studies are subject to a law of diminishing returns. Therefore, I confined the survey to what was possible to achieve within the access and resources framework. In keeping within the scope, costs and time scale available for this project, I decided against posting 419 questionnaires to cover 100% of the FE College principal population. Instead I planned to be realistic in collecting the data for analysis and testing, to inform my research directions.

Having received clearance in support of this survey from my then college and from the Association of Colleges, I designed, piloted and then circulated my questionnaires through the office of the AoC 2000 Annual Conference Management Team. Not all colleges are members of the AoC and the usual conference goers were more likely to receive my questionnaire through the agreed arrangement for distribution. I became aware of some of the limitations of my overall approach to the project between 21 and 23 November 2000, when my questionnaires were distributed through the delegate packs at the 2000 Annual Conference in Harrogate.

At the conference, my inquiries and observations of the participating principals and examination of the delegates' official list, established that there were still only two Black FE college principals and that there were no Asian FE College principals. Two new appointees were also known to be of African and Caribbean origin and the only Asian principal was then recently appointed at a smaller adult education college. Unfortunately none of them were available at the conference to receive my questionnaire. Therefore, a possible aspect of the investigation into the dynamics of leadership involving a comparative study and analysis based on ethnic variation in responses had to be abandoned. The quantitative analysis involving the application of one way chi square test - allowing a comparison of observed outcome against what might be expected through pure chance - was of course aborted.

The response statements would have been only valid for the White group of principals, but not for the Asian and Black principals, unless the number had been greater and more

statistically significant. The sample size of two for Black FE college principals, and none for Asians, would have been insignificant and misleading in statistical terms. With the exception of two, the remainder of the 243 FE college principals participating in the conference - 57.5% of the total population who became my possible respondents - were all White.

Out of my target population of 419 FE College principals, non-participants who were not present at the AoC conference and therefore were not in my sample, formed a substantial proportion of 176 or 42.5%. Thus the survey actually targeted those FE college principals who participated in the AoC annual conference of November 2000 in Harrogate. The achieved sample ultimately was 43, 10.3% of the total population and 17.7% of the possible target population. I was aware that my survey could produce a biased outcome because of the probability of a particular bias in the views and experiences of AoC conference goers as compared with those who stayed away. However, the actual target population still formed a clear majority, out of whom only 43 or 17.7% completed and returned the questionnaires.

I believe this was a valuable first national survey of its kind, involving the largest group of FE college principals who were more likely to attend national events and influence the internal and external environment which impacts on and underpins the dynamics of FE college leadership. Despite the probable ethnic and professional bias in my eventual data, its value should not be underestimated.

In the circumstances, however, any ethnic comparison would have been meaningless as it would have carried no validity because of the insignificant size of the sample involving Asian and Black principals. Because of the sampling issues, any further comparative work may have been of less value, although there is little consensus amongst the research methodologists about a sample size. As Tall (2000b) has argued, in educational research an accuracy of 15, even 20%, may be acceptable in assuming a random or fair sample. Because the proportion of Asian and Black FE college principals in the whole of the target population was statistically insignificant, for the purposes of a meaningful comparison of the factors that drive or constrain their leadership as compared with White FE college principals, no further work was done in this direction. However, this can be a valuable research project for the future (Chapter 6).

Despite the methodological limitations of the project and the bias in the sample, it was my contention to analyse the data that I had collected. Gorard's (2001) suggestion that a sample size does not have to be of a certain proportion encouraged me to go ahead, scan the responses, collect the data and produce an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. This was a rewarding exercise. It reinforced my belief in the approach of using a quantitative method to confirm, check and balance the qualitative analysis of the dynamics of leadership arising from the findings – as, for example, from my initial/pilot interviews in which I called the core propellers of leadership the 'P' factors. I would argue that the outcome and findings of this survey were valuable in terms of enhancing the research directions and further analysis (Chapters 5 and 6).



## A Pilot Research Survey of Leadership Effectiveness Impact in improving Further Education Colleges Improvement

A pilot research survey of personal professional perceptions and experiences of Further Education Colleges managers as leaders, who identify themselves as black/asian/ethnic minority people. The aim of this survey is to study their leadership effectiveness impact in improving general urban multi-racial Further Education Colleges

No. of colleges in the sample = 5 / Max. possible no. of respondents = 31 / Number selected as a representative sample = 23 (25)  
Actual number who responded = 14 (61%) out of 23 (100%)

													Max. Poss % responses of each cell	
<b>1</b>	<b>Leadership Role</b>	1.2 Yes 93%	1.3 No 7%										100%	
<b>2</b>	<b>Aspires to lead?</b>	2.1 Yes 93%	2.2 No 7%										100%	
<b>3</b>	<b>Impact on Improvement?</b>	3.1 Recruitment	3.2 Retention	3.3 Results	3.4 Destination	3.5 Income	3.6 Equal Opps	3.7 Advisory Services	3.8 Innovation	3.9 Support mechanisms	3.10 Environment & Facilities	3.11 Other	3.12	100%
		79%	36%	36%		21%	29%	7%	43%	14%	21%			100%
<b>4</b>	<b>Which part impacted most?</b>	4.1 Campus	4.2 Off Campus	4.3 Other									100%	
		50%	29%	21%										
<b>5</b>	<b>What enabled you to make an impact?</b>	5.1 Personal Qualities	5.2 Network of contacts	5.3 Passion for equal opps & multi cultural curriculum	5.4 Concern for Students & regeneration	5.5 Power & authority	5.6 Status & support	5.7 Budget & resources	5.8 Strategic position	5.9 Social network & peer group	5.1 Other	5.11 Other	5.12	100%
		86%	36%	36%	43%	7%	29%	7%	14%	7%				100%
<b>6</b>	<b>Recognised, supported &amp; institutionalised?</b>	6.1 Yes 14%	6.2 No 79%	6.3 Other 7%									100%	
<b>7</b>	<b>Will continue to maximise your impact?</b>	7.1 Definitely 7%	7.2 Hopefully 21%	7.3 Possibly 21%	7.4 Probably 7%	7.5 Have doubts 43%	7.6 Impossible						100%	



## RESEARCH SURVEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### Leadership Effectiveness Impact in Improving Colleges

#### *Reference - Question 1*

93% of FE colleges' black managers consider themselves to be Leaders in their profession

79% impacted student recruitment and significantly lead on college growth

#### *Reference - Question 3*

43% impacted college innovation and lead on the development of new courses

36% impacted student retention, results, destination and success

29% impacted equal opportunities and introduced multi-cultural curriculum

21% impacted college income, revenue

14% impacted learning, teaching and learner support mechanisms

7% impacted advisory, consultancy and research services

#### *References - Question 4*

50% impacted campus based college work

29% impacted off-campus work

21% impacted both campus and off-campus work

#### *Reference - Question 5*

86% are effective in impacting college due to their personal qualities, qualifications, experience, skills

43% are effective in impacting college due to their concern for students, communities, business and commitment, learning and regeneration

36% are effective in impacting college due to their knowledge, external links, network contacts, passion for equal opportunities and multi-cultural curriculum

29% are effective in impacting college due to their position and network enabled mobilisation and support

14% are effective in impacting college due to their strategic position and organisation structure enabled me

7% are effective in impacting college due to their power, authority, budget, human and physical resources enabled me

*Reference - Question 6*

79% do not feel that the impact of their leadership effectiveness and contributions have been sufficiently recognised, supported, shared and institutionalised

14% feel that the impact of their leadership effectiveness and contribution have been sufficiently recognised, supported, shared and institutionalised

*Reference - Question 7*

43% have doubts despite their strengths and input as leaders, if they will be able to continue to maximise their impact on improvement

21% are expressed hope and possibility

7% are definite about them being able to continue to make impact

Course and Research Programme:  
EdD – Doctor of Education: Leaders and Leadership  
Assignment: EDRT06 – Quantitative Research Methods

## Application of Quantitative Research Methodology in Investigating the Dynamics of Leadership in England's Further Education Colleges:

*What motivates FE College principals in their leadership role?*

*Investigate the driving factors which enable them to impact the performance and organisation of their institution for continuous improvement in provision. What factors prevent them from being effective in this process?*

*In particular, identify the significant variables that determine the comparative success of Asian/Black and white principals as FE College leaders.*

Sujinder Singh Sangha, Student ID 315533, Registration: 1 October 1999

Supervisor – Dr. Desmond Rutherford  
Module Tutor – Mr. Graham Tall  
Assignment Submission: September, 2002

## Findings and analysis

The following findings and analysis arise from the review of the data spreadsheet and aggregated figures (see attached). As I have explained and reasoned above, the following quantitative findings have added value to my qualitative research based EdD project. My initial qualitative and quantitative study and the following findings prepared me for my field investigation. My earlier EdD work suggested 'P'factors' hypothesis as being the significant drivers and motivators of leadership in FE Colleges. This study has added rigour by suggesting further 'push and pull' variables affecting the dynamics of FE College leadership. The findings have added to my objectivity drive and added to the process of devising informed research questions appropriately for my theme. The triangulation of my earlier work and the following findings have thus enhanced the quality of research questions (see attached):

- The target population - maximum possible number of respondents – FE College leaders/ principals/ chief executives = 419 \* 100%
- The sample - maximum possible accessible target population through the AOC annual conference of year 2000 = 243 58%
- The achieved response - number of FE College leaders/ principals/ chief executive who responded by returning the completed questionnaire = 43
- Others who responded - the number of vice principals/ deputy principals/ directors – who responded but who have not been included in the findings and analysis = 15
- Two blank returns were excluded from the analysis, achieved actual number of respondents = 43 (out of 58+)
- **Percentage returned and analysed = 17.7%**

\* Includes all types of post-16 education and training colleges in England i.e. 275 general FE colleges, 107 sixth form colleges and 33 specialist colleges  
(Source: FEFC 2000/01)

The findings are for too comprehensive and detailed for the scope of review and analysis for this assignment. Therefore I propose to save them for some further analysis at a future stage for a post EdD project. However, they have suggested themes which are a clear guide for focusing and directing my questions and framework for analysing for EdD research materials. I can therefore claim that the underlying assumptions in my interview questions are based on my EdD qualitative and quantitative research work rather than my own long standing subjective views and experiences of leadership work in FE Colleges sector.





## **The findings of research survey of FE Colleges' Principals'**

### **Perceptions and Experiences of what 'drives' FE colleges**

- 95% believe that funding/income drive
- 84% believe that 'leadership vision' drives
- 79% believe that 'learner needs and demand'
- 67% believe that mission, purpose, policy and strategy
- 65% believe that external environment, policies and situations
- 58% believe that organisational culture, communication and processes
- 51% believe that curriculum, students, quality and standards drive
- 44% believe that inspection, audit and accountability drive
- 14% believe that local area regeneration programmes drive
- 12% believe that college structure drive
- 12% believe that equal opportunities, diversity and communities drive
- 9% believe that innovation, research and development drive
- 5% believe that FE growth through off-campus partnerships and franchising drive
- 2% believe that external organisations e.g. trade unions, business and professional bodies drive

**Note:** The respondents were asked to indicate six factors in the order of importance

## **The finding of research survey of FE College' Principals'**

### **Perceptions and Experiences of key Challenges and Concerns**

All principals believe that student recruitment, retention, achievement and destination are the key challenges and concerns

- 91% believe funding, finances and control
- 91% believe that change from the FEFC to LSC
- 70% believe that widening and extension of participation
- 60% believe that regulatory framework and controls
- 44% believe that local area regeneration, community and business involvement
- 42% believe that other providers (competition)
- 42% believe that diversity, equality, fairness and human rights
- 21% believe that mergers, take-overs and partnerships
- 16% believe that franchising and partnerships
- 14% believe that industrial relations and job security

**Note:** The respondents were asked to indicate six factors in the order of importance

**The findings of research survey of FE Colleges' Principals'**  
**Perceptions and views of the future of colleges (3-5 years)**

- 81% view that partnerships with schools and universities will strengthen
- 79% view that partnerships with other providers will grow
- 72% view the future as full of opportunities
- 58% view that competition will grow
- 37% view that financial and resources will improve
- 37% view that merged large size college to be safe
- 35% view that colleges loss of status as providers of post 16 non HE
- 35% view that partnership with international providers will grow
- 33% view that financial and resources position will weaken
- 30% view the future as full of threats and college will weaken
- 19% view that colleges will be safer as independent small/medium size effective colleges
- 19% view that partnerships with universities, local and international providers will weaken

**Note:** The respondents were asked to indicate up to six factors in the order of importance



**Leaders and Leadership in FE Colleges  
(Research Questionnaire – National Survey)**

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- 1. Who do you think actually leads further education colleges?**  
(Please number up to 6 boxes in the order of your preference 1 to 6)
- 1.1 People as students and learners
  - 1.2 Clients, customers, community, business and industry
  - 1.3 Lecturers and support staff
  - 1.4 Equal Opportunity and Race Equality Commissions
  - 1.5 Co-ordinators and managers
  - 1.6 Senior managers and vice/deputy principals
  - 1.7 Principals and Chief Executives
  - 1.8 Governors and Corporations
  - 1.9 funding regimes, agencies and sponsors (FEFC/LSC/TEC/ESF)
  - 1.10 Inspectors/auditors/external verifiers/awarding bodies
  - 1.11 External organisations and pressure groups (NATFHE/ACM/Unison/ATL/AoC)
  - 1.12 FEDA/FENTO/LEAs/EU/International bodies
  - 1.13 Franchises and external partners
  - 1.14 Government, political parties and law
  - 1.15 Other ..... (please specify)
- 2. What do you think actually drives Further Education Colleges?**  
(Please number up to 6 boxes in the order of your preference 1 to 6)
- 2.1 Local area regeneration programme
  - 2.2 Finance, funding, income and expenditure
  - 2.3 People's learning needs and demands
  - 2.4 Organisational culture, communication and processes
  - 2.5 External environment, policies and situations
  - 2.6 Growth of FE through franchising, partnerships and off campus work
  - 2.7 Mission, Purpose, policy and strategies
  - 2.8 Leaders and Leadership vision
  - 2.9 Organisational structure and management
  - 2.10 Trade unions, businesses, national and international professional bodies
  - 2.11 Curriculum, students, quality and standards
  - 2.12 Equal Opportunities, diversity, communities and FE
  - 2.13 Innovation, research and development
  - 2.14 Inspection, audit and accountability
  - 2.15 Other ..... (please specify)
- SSS/Ed.D/1/11/2000-2
- 3. What are the key challenges and concerns in FE colleges?**  
(Please number up to 6 boxes in the order of your preference 1 to 6)
- 3.1 Changes from FEFC to LSC
  - 3.2 Widening and extension of participation
  - 3.3 Regulatory framework and controls
  - 3.4 Industrial relations and job security
  - 3.5 Mergers, takeovers and partnerships
  - 3.6 Diversity, equality, fairness and human rights
  - 3.7 Student recruitment, retention, achievement and destination
  - 3.8 Local area regeneration, community and business involvement
  - 3.9 Other providers, i.e. independent companies, voluntary and community organisations and colleges relationship
  - 3.10 Funding, finances and controls
  - 3.11 Franchising and external partnerships
  - 3.12 Other ..... (please specify)

**4. How do you see the future of FE colleges over the next 3 to 5 years?**  
(Please number up to 6 boxes in the order of your preference 1 to 6)

- 4.1 Full of opportunities and will become stronger
- 4.2 Full of threats and will become weaker/vulnerable
- 4.3 Loss of status as providers of post 16 non HE
- 4.4 Competition will grow with other provider
- 4.5 Partnerships will grow with other provider
- 4.6 Safe as independence small/medium size effective colleges
- 4.7 Safe, as merged large size colleges
- 4.8 Financial and resources position will improve
- 4.9 Financial and resources position will weaken
- 4.10 Partnerships with schools and universities will strengthen
- 4.11 Partnerships with schools and universities will weaken
- 4.12 Partnerships with international providers will grow
- 4.13 Partnerships with international providers will weaken
- 4.14 Other ..... (please specify)

**5. If the above questions have provoked any action thoughts in your mind, which first three would you list in the order of your preference:**

- 5.1  
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- 5.2  
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.....
- 5.3  
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**6. Is there anything you would like to say on the topic of leaders and leadership in FE Colleges? Please list up to three things in the order of your preference.**

- 6.1  
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- 6.2  
.....  
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6.3

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.....

**7. What do you think drives people as FE leaders and managers?**  
*(Please list up to three things in the order of preference 1 to 3)*

7.1

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7.2

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7.3

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.....

**8. What do you think makes the leadership more effective in FE colleges' improvement?**

*(Please number up to 6 boxes in order of your preference 1 to 6)*

- 8.1 Authority .....
- 8.2 Power .....
- 8.3 Resources .....
- 8.4 Influence .....
- 8.5 Network .....
- 8.6 Characteristics .....
- 8.7 Position .....
- 8.8 Initiative .....
- 8.9 Equality .....
- 8.10 Curriculum .....
- 8.11 Students .....
- 8.12 Situation .....
- 8.13 Environment .....
- 8.14 Law .....
- 8.15 Passion .....
- 8.16 Commitment .....
- 8.17 Curriculum .....
- 8.18 Audit .....
- 8.19 Inspection .....

8.20 Other .....  
(please specify)

8.21 Other .....  
(please specify)

8.22 Other .....  
(please specify)

8.23 Other .....  
(please specify)

8.24 Other .....  
(please specify)

8.25 Other .....  
(please specify)

Thank you. Please post the questionnaire back by 10<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

The aim of this preliminary research is to explore and develop an initial theoretical and practical appreciation of the role of FE College managers as leaders, who identify themselves as Asian/ Black/ Ethnic Minority FE college leaders. In particular the objective is to examine their impact as leaders in the effectiveness and improvement of Further Education Colleges.

Please return the completed questionnaire to me by 20<sup>th</sup> November 2000:

Sujinder-Singh Sangha, [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]

1. **Do you consider yourself a further education college manager who has a leadership role?**

1.2 Yes  No  (please tick as appropriate)

2. **Do you consider yourself a further education professional who has led or aspires to lead on some college work?**

2.1 Yes  No  (please tick as appropriate)

*(If the answer to both questions is no, you may or may not respond to the rest of the questionnaire, but please return the questionnaire to me)*

1. **If your answer to any of the above questions is yes, then do you consider yourself as someone who has been able to make an impact on the college effectiveness and improvement**

*(Please tick up to 3 boxes indicating the areas in which you think you have been able to make the most impact)*

- 3.1 Recruitment of new students and college growth
- 3.2 Retention of students on courses
- 3.3 Results – student achievements
- 3.4 After course destination and success
- 3.5 College income and revenue growth
- 3.6 Equal Opportunities and multi-cultural curriculum
- 3.7 Advisory, consultancy and research services
- 3.8 Innovation and development of new programmes
- 3.9 Learning, teaching and learner support mechanisms
- 3.10 Learning environment and facilities
- 3.11 Other..... (Please specify)

4. **Which part of college work do you think you have been able to impact the most through your initiative, efforts and drive?**

*(Please tick one box only indicating the area of work where you think you have been able to make the most impact)*

- 4.1 Campus based work
- 4.2 Off campus/outreach work   
(franchised/collaborative/partnership/external work)
- 4.3 Other..... (Please specify)

**5. What do you think has enabled you most to make an impact on the effectiveness and improvement of the college?**

(Please tick up to 3 boxes only which you think are most applicable)

- 5.1 My personal qualities, qualifications, experience, skills and commitments
- 5.2 My knowledge, external links and network of contacts
- 5.3 My passion for equal opportunities and multi-cultural curriculum
- 5.4 My concern for students, community, business learning and regeneration
- 5.5 My position of power and authority enabled me to trigger initiatives leading to improvements
- 5.6 My status and network enabled me to mobilise, encourage and support initiatives
- 5.7 My budget, physical and human resources enabled me to make an impact
- 5.8 My strategic position in the organisation's structure enabled me to make an impact
- 5.9 My informal social network and peer group helped enable me to make an impact
- 5.10 Other..... (Please specify)
- 5.11 Other ..... (Please specify)

**6. Do you think that the impact that you have been able to make, in the effectiveness and improvement of the college has been sufficiently recognised, supported, institutionalised and is being widely shared within and outside the college?**

- 6.1 Yes  No  Other ..... (Please specify)

**7. Do you think of yourself as someone who possesses leadership qualities and has the necessary recognition, support and encouragement available; and that you are satisfied that you will continue to maximise your impact on the effectiveness and improvement of your college?**

- 7.1 Definitely  7.2 Hopefully  7.3 Possibly   
7.4 Probably  7.5 Have doubts  7.6 Impossible

**8. Would you like to share up to three action thoughts, which this questionnaire might have stimulated relating to your work in FE Colleges?**

- 8.1 .....  
8.2 .....  
8.3 .....

Thank you. The following information, if provided, will be treated as confidential and the above information will be anonymised.

Name: ..... Male / Female (please delete)

College: ..... Ethnicity: .....

Telephone: ..... Fax: ..... E-mail: .....

Would it be okay for me to contact you further, if the need arose, for a f  
research interview? Yes  No  (please tick urther

appropriately)

## **7.2.4 Compilation of Initial Findings:**

### **The Most Frequently Made Responses to the Open–Ended Questions by the Participating Principals in the National Survey**

#### ***5. If the above questions provoked any action thoughts in your mind, which three would you list in order of your preference?***

- 5.1 clarify the college's mission
- 5.2 work assiduously to establish, strengthen and maintain partnerships which are effective, especially with local providers of education
- 5.3 involve all staff in the consideration of the issues and challenges, ensure they are aware of and fully informed about developments
- 5.4 management of dependence upon political changes
- 5.5 management of dependency upon the vagaries of the economy
- 5.6 need to secure an equitable funding system in relation to schools
- 5.7 need to improve the image of FE colleges in relation to delivering the government's agenda
- 5.8 need to professionalise the FE colleges in terms of dealings with business, industry and public
- 5.9 management of dominance of targets  
eg retention/achievement/success rates
- 5.10 FE colleges are driven by many diverse factors, the strength rests in their ability to respond
- 5.11 government policy is often the key to many changes – franchising and the current government's view is a good example of how their policy and attitude has stifled innovation and reduced the numbers participating in FE
- 5.12 whilst partnerships have been identified as an alternative to competition, in reality standards and performance will ultimately lead to winners and losers
- 5.13 sharpen focus, be wary, know where you are going
- 5.14 future prospects – the government plans its policies around particular groups of people not around institutions, those which adapt successfully/deliver towards different groups have better prospects for growth and success
- 5.15 accountability – government/LSC do not lead colleges, but the issue of accountability is real
- 5.16 some choices are so interactive in reality that the ranking seemed difficult
- 5.17 colleges need to do two audits, curriculum and strategic position
- 5.18 colleges will need to learn to read the needs and demands of specialist markets
- 5.19 colleges will need to co-evolve internally
- 5.20 decent salary increases for FE staff so that they are at least equal to salaries of staff in schools and sixth form colleges, this should be a government priority.



- 5.21 at present very little is really known about how LSC will work, we need as much information as possible as quickly as possible
- 5.22 with the 'disappearance' of the FE colleges, as we currently know it, there is a need for the Association of Colleges to take on a much more proactive role in the future on our behalf
- 5.23 possibly many principals come into their position for the wrong reasons
- 5.24 many leaders lack humility and genuine commitment to firm and transparent leadership
- 5.25 colleges are diverse in nature so that the skills of leadership and management may have a different focus in different organisations
- 5.26 raising the profile of the college particularly in terms of academic provision and quality – learners are more important
- 5.27 some of the questions raised are somewhat arbitrary given the significant range of differences between colleges in the sector
- 5.28 the question of leadership in operational and academic matters will assume greater importance and affect all levels of college/programme area management
- 5.29 AoC could be taking a lead role but needs to seize the opportunity
- 5.30 language and choice of words are significant
- 5.31 listen, communicate and involve
- 5.32 focus on three key success factors
- 5.33 principal's job is becoming more difficult
- 5.34 principals have not been given proper recognition for their achievements
- 5.35 to be an effective leader you need a sound team of senior managers
- 5.36 leaders lead but are influenced by a wide range of other pressures
- 5.37 the direction of a college is determined by a combination of influences
- 5.38 pursuing the college mission is the core management activity, the assumption being that responsiveness to needs, performance and environmental factors underpins the mission
- 5.39 in FE colleges, leadership must be a collective authority to be effective
- 5.40 relationship between corporations and managers will continue to be crucial
- 5.41 implications of LSC powers and role on college leaders' and managers' autonomy
- 5.42 don't believe your own publicity – Bilston, Halton, Nottingham
- 5.43 it's a long sloggy job, not Henry V type leadership, stay another five years and you don't do much
- 5.44 leadership needs to be disentangled from management leadership
- 5.45 leaders are developed and not born
- 5.46 difficult to lead in the sense of chief executive of a private company leads, no real confusion, we are public servants first, not really free entrepreneurs
- 5.47 a leader needs sometimes to invest, we don't get enough money to invest
- 5.48 no need to drive the FE colleges, staff are motivated, they need support more than leadership
- 5.49 leadership is quite possible internally, however externally college principals have no power

- 5.50 leadership internally must be concentrated on changing the climate, too many principals simply reorganise
- 5.51 FE colleges are grossly under-resourced and underpaid
- 5.52 strategic vision will be vital
- 5.53 collaborative non competitive strategy will be essential
- 5.54 commitment to quality will be vital
- 5.55 leadership of a school and college often seen as comparable, complexities of FE colleges are little understood
- 5.56 colleges are heavily dependent on environmental factors (local, regional and national), colleges with good leadership may still fail
- 5.57 training of leaders alone may not be the answer to improving quality

**6. Is there anything you would like to say on the topic of leaders and leadership in FE colleges? Please list up to three things in order of your preference.**

- 6.1 need a clear vision of what leadership is trying to achieve, have the courage to change that vision if necessary
- 6.2 they need excellent communication skills to engage and enthuse staff in that vision
- 6.3 it is hard to be captain of a successful team if the rule of the game keeps changing, but we try
- 6.4 old style autocratic leadership will not work in learning skills era
- 6.5 leadership is critical
- 6.6 leaders need to look outside the FE colleges for ideas
- 6.7 leadership is an important element in the success of a college but it must operate in a context of a high quality management team and motivated staff
- 6.8 one of the key elements of this is clarity of purpose which is constantly communicated
- 6.9 a second tier element is that leaders must know what is going on in their colleges and must have a grip on practical details as much as strategic vision
- 6.10 leadership is the role of every manager within the organisation
- 6.11 leadership should not be delegated up, avoid a culture of leadership around the principal
- 6.12 need to secure an equitable funding system in relation to schools
- 6.13 more training and qualifications for middle and senior managers
- 6.14 have enough expertise and good practice
- 6.15 principals as leaders are critical and everything for success
- 6.16 balance between leadership and management often affected negatively by external forces
- 6.17 leaders and leadership do impact on the success and failure of a college – leaders and leadership come from many different quarters but strong leadership is essential to the success of a college
- 6.18 leadership training is now in place for senior managers, though not all training will equip individuals with the ingredients to become successful
- 6.19 vision, charisma, eloquence
- 6.20 not enough work has been done to categorise approaches and effectiveness

- 6.21 not enough is done on different notions of organisation/college effectiveness
- 6.22 all that leaders have are values, skills and wisdom
- 6.23 can't be taught – can be learned via tutoring, coaching and mentoring
- 6.24 leadership will need to be strong under LSC so too the need for local FE colleges to work together in harmony
- 6.25 recognise that life in FE colleges will become harder
- 6.26 you can't underestimate the effect that the 'leader' has on the organisation
- 6.27 have you compared the style of women educational leaders to that of males? The OU has published articles indicating there are marked differences
- 6.28 it might be useful to differentiate between who actually leads/drives FE colleges and who should lead/drive do so
- 6.29 too much arrogance
- 6.30 FE colleges' leaders now have the opportunity for education and training, colleges have long suffered from the natural progression of good teachers into positions where they don't have the training or expertise
- 6.31 the quality of leadership is good and a model for other private/public sector organisations
- 6.32 we should be proud of what we have achieved and confident as professionals in the future
- 6.33 lead by example, do what you say
- 6.34 focus on leadership culture and strategy for differentiation
- 6.35 develop dialogue/partnerships/ownership of future strategy with LSC
- 6.36 develop mutually beneficial partnerships with other providers, generating income and reduce dependency on LSC
- 6.37 too driven by funding and a regulatory framework which inhibits innovation and real customer focus
- 6.38 increased financial pressure on creating relationships, roles and contracts, eg LSC view of sixth forms and private training providers
- 6.39 policy is very unclear, remember we were told not to grow just three years ago, now we are told to grow as fast as we can
- 6.40 colleges will do well if they can deliver, the threat is comparison with selective institutions like sixth form colleges
- 6.41 the government needs to describe what it really wants, eg tertiary colleges, and if so say so
- 6.42 the government must know of delivering good work now done by FE colleges, eg adult education
- 6.43 small rural colleges surrounded by non-viable sixth forms are likely to lose their full-time 16-19 provision in favour of the schools because the government will not wish to upset parents by closing sixth forms that parents like
- 6.44 the funding is that a full-time 16-19 pupil in a school Sixth form earns twice as much as a full-time adult in an FE college
- 6.45 the local LSC will be too scared to tackle the mergers agenda in case principals kick up a fuss, in fact in some cases merger is a solution
- 6.46 adjust to LSC regime and deliver a partnership strategy with LEA/local communities

- 6.47 strengthen links with HE, schools, employers and communities
- 6.48 review strategy/effectiveness and deliver a centre of excellence strategy
- 6.49 power of central government in diverting the energies of FE colleges and the time spent trying to cope with the rules
- 6.50 need to respond constantly and vigorously to change

**7. What do you think drive people as FE college leaders?**

- 7.1 a belief that life opportunities can be made better by good education and training
- 7.2 a genuine commitment to people and to the notion of their entitlement to opportunity
- 7.3 personal and professional pride
- 7.4 concern for students first
- 7.5 ambition
- 7.6 desire to make a difference
- 7.7 helping students succeed
- 7.8 commitment to service, passion
- 7.9 a high level of motivation and drive
- 7.10 honesty
- 7.11 confidence and energy
- 7.12 vision
- 7.13 resilience
- 7.14 seeing the financial situation – positive budget, purpose
- 7.15 desire to change through development of people
- 7.16 desire to contribute to the future
- 7.17 public sense of responsibility and duty
- 7.18 provision of learning in a diverse way
- 7.19 a sense of accomplishment, power, authority, status and money
- 7.20 a can do attitude
- 7.21 generally capable of regulating unmanageable situation
- 7.22 the determination to achieve the college's mission
- 7.23 the determination not to be ground down, FE colleges have survived and FEFC has not
- 7.24 a commitment to the power of learning in effecting change for individuals through empowerment
- 7.25 a commitment to public service
- 7.26 funding and financial management
- 7.27 responding to local needs
- 7.28 helping students to change and control their lives
- 7.29 developing ourselves to meet the challenges of the future
- 7.30 a desire to drive improvement and delivery to local communities
- 7.31 wanting to promote staff ideas for change and improvement
- 7.32 challenge, achievement, recognition as able and fair leader/manager
- 7.33 job satisfaction, making a difference to peoples' lives
- 7.34 passion, social conscience and belief, desire to make a difference
- 7.35 love of learning
- 7.36 bloody minded determination to succeed despite the environmental issues

- 7.37 keeping ahead of the tide
- 7.38 continuing push for improvements
- 7.39 ambition, determination
- 7.40 equality of opportunities and support for diversity
- 7.41 a belief in what FE colleges stands for and achieves with its students
- 7.42 to achieve a successful college
- 7.43 the fear of failure
- 7.44 achievement of educational targets
- 7.45 survival as a leader
- 7.46 latest demands from the funding and quality agencies
- 7.47 commitment to values and principles
- 7.48 concern to do a good job for the community, just like old style chief education officers
- 7.49 hope to influence potential views
- 7.50 believe that FE college is good for all
- 7.51 desire to influence and lead
- 7.52 strong interest in the broader picture/vision for FE college
- 7.53 wanting to do a good job and to be recognised as a successful senior manager/leader
- 7.54 personal survival instincts, no way down and rarely go to another job or profession

**7.2.5: A Condensed Overview of the Research Data – Most Frequently Made Responses by the Interviewed ABME Principals to the Interview Questions (Section 3.8)**

RESPONDENT's IDENTITY CODE	RESPONSES PEOPLE AND CULTURAL FACTORS (1)	RESPONSES INSTITUTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS (2)	RESPONSES EFFECTIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE FACTORS (3)	EMERGING KEY THEMES FOR EACH RESPONDENT (4)	EMERGING KEY ISSUES FOR EACH RESPONDENT (5)
A(1)	Being passionate about inclusion of young Black people in education and employment, values driven professionals can make a difference	FE colleges being a closed system for highly qualified and experienced Asian and Black candidates, FE agencies underestimate their capabilities and commitments	Make FE colleges open, accessible, responsive, inclusive, objective and equitable organisations; both for education and employment	Education and social inclusion in FE colleges is a key to success, capability of governors, principals and agencies to work with Asian and Black professionals	Responsiveness to legislation, equality and diversity policy and strategy development implementation and monitoring, self – assessment and improvement
B(2)	Traumatic experience causing disability and disadvantage, developed a deep empathy and concern, education should enable	Situation of a heavy reliance on franchising, radical organisational change, conflicting institutional demands and opportunities	Tackling of racial discrimination positively through education, creating learning opportunities for the	Passion for education of disadvantaged people due to race and disabilities, reform of FE colleges to make them effective	Challenge of tackling discrimination due to race, gender and disability, Asian and Black leaders to develop a positive

	people to realise their potential, to be resource for self and the society	for connecting with the external businesses and communities for development	excluded, child care provision to support women returners and engaging with businesses	through change for inclusion and responsiveness, external links and partnerships	individuals and organisational approach to make progress
C(3)	Brought up in a deprived area experienced disadvantages but good caring and inspiring support from parents who worked hard, good role models instilled positive values and behaviour. Chair provides effective and efficient leadership, have dedicated and diverse governing body passionate to be responsive.	Public prejudice and stereotyping of Asian and Black continue and affect, the wider public and institution though appreciate the contribution and calibre brought to the role, strength of character, values and passion for the job matters most, those who have experience of working in diversity are appreciative.	To be able provide what public need: educational qualifications to move on in life to HE or work, especially to be able to support those young people without a hope and qualification after completing their school education is extremely satisfying, it is more than a job – a purpose with specific goals to help others win.	Deprived upbringing and disadvantage of race and prejudice, caring, hard working and supportive parents, and then governors who practiced good values, public appreciation of calibre and contribution, passion and commitment to provide education for learners' success and progression.	Despite appreciation of personal and professional commitment to hard work and high calibre, racism in society continues to make an impact, low level of education and disadvantage of language amongst adult population reinforce needs of continuous further education for all.

D(4)	<p>Relatively uneducated parents but the father aspired for a technical qualification through an apprenticeship . Worked hard to achieve and gained 'A' levels to go into electronics, loneliness and racism forced back into a city university, job in FE to help others; the principal's vision stimulating but would box me into dealing with ethnic minority students whose concerns though were not taken as a priority.</p>	<p>The funding regime was problematic, worse off than being under the LEA, to balance the budget within the declining unit revenue due to convergence approach aimed at bringing colleges within a fairer funding band, problematic staffing organisation but streamlined to a model staffing structure which helped, FE colleges change over from the LEAs to incorporation of impacted colleges differently.</p>	<p>To have clearer vision of success for all students, collaboration and partnership with parents, all faiths to be respected and recognised with equal status to provide similar facilities, but none to be given a special treatment and no support for separate communal student societies, to be able to keep any communal tensions out of the organisation, determination not to let in external tension into the college.</p>	<p>Educational deprivation does not prevent parents to aspire for off-springs to achieve a qualification, racism in institutions forces to make retreats, FE colleges funding methodology/ system was problematic, effective rationalisation and organisational essential to ward off differential impact of incorporation of colleges, vision for students success, capability to deal with and keep out the external tension.</p>	<p>FE colleges role in community cohesiveness and development through collaboration and partnership with parents, to maintain capability to deal with and respect diversity of faiths without allowing the external tensions to enter colleges, marginalisation of senior Asian, Black or minority ethnic staff to deal with specialist areas, variable effects of incorporation of FE colleges warrant differential solutions.</p>
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E(5)	Driven by commitment to education as an academic, parents instilled positive values and passion for education being a key route to good employment; even more so for disadvantaged people in enabling them to lift themselves out of deprivation, deep appreciation of FE colleges' work with people who need education and skills most.	This college governing body was bold and committed to recognising the candidates' strengths and appointed on merit a Black principal in an almost all white area, but at the other college stereotypical prejudice was experienced about the qualifications and background of black staff, if the face did not fit their image of the principal you don't get it.	To take staff, learners and organisation forward, to reach out to learners directly/ indirectly to raise their understanding, to enable them to gain qualifications, as principal loss of direct contact with learners had to be substituted by organisational system and communication but many people still do not value education, some lack parental support.	Appreciation for FE colleges' role and commitment to providing education to disadvantaged and deprived sections of society for their success and progress, value of parental support and passion for living up to their aspirations, variation in the quality of college governance and their prejudice or capability in assessing candidates.	Variation in the standards and prejudice in institutions of FE college; governing bodies in assessing and appointing principals, about experience and qualifications, varying values for education and support for learners, successful appointments of Asian/Black principals in predominantly white areas, varying contact - principal and learners.
F(6)	Education is driven by values, to be able to take on learners' challenging attitudes and	Business and bureaucratic considerations, poor buildings and resourcing, distant	Student focused approach aimed at giving them the best	Moral and ethical values and passion driven education aimed at enabling	Institutional, bureaucratic, poor resourcing and over regulatory framework undermine

	<p>behaviour - often flowing from deprivation and disadvantages - as opportunities for reform and their progression; are rooted in teachers' own moral and ethical values which encourage them to engage with parents and carers to create a supportive environment, but preaching alone does not work it has to be coupled with practice, have faith in learners' potential and capabilities.</p>	<p>franchising despite the communication technology undermined the educational priorities and provision. But values, motivation to succeed commitment for learners' success get recognised as key to overall success. Leaders are important but what is more important is the leadership. Ultimately what matters most is learners' achievements and their success evidenced through public information.</p>	<p>possible qualifications suiting their particular needs, setting of achievable but challenging goals for students and staff, attempts to make best use of the college partnership arrangement to maximise advantages for students, alternative FE college qualifications work better for students without GCSEs.</p>	<p>students to succeed as people as well as students despite their disadvantaged backgrounds and environment, provision of suitable qualification equipping with suitable qualification/s. Leadership is about converting challenges into opportunities, partnership between institutions and parents. Institutional, bureaucratic and resourcing barriers affecting education.</p>	<p>effectiveness of education. Leadership resource can be disproportionately taken by non educational priorities, educational goals may be undermined by bureaucratic targets, motivated, dedicated and committed college professionals with right values need praise, support and recognition who often deliver in challenging environment to many challenging learners.</p>
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G(7)	Experience of isolation due to racist environment at the campus forced the move to complete teacher training at a cosmopolitan multi-racial university, but then experienced discrimination and less favourable treatment as compared with white candidates with lower quality qualification, hence the journey into FE.	FE college leadership can only operate in the institutional environment that the corporations set, they are not representative bodies, appoint senior managers in their own mirror image, old principals operated like mafias, 16% ethnic minority students, 8% general population but only .08% principals, need USA style Black colleges to meet the needs.	To have clarity of the strategic role and responsibilities, understanding and appreciation of what the external world needs from colleges in terms of skills provision, to develop long term relationships with external organisations, to promote college as a quality institution, effective lobbying, networking and transferable skills.	Governing bodies - often unrepresentative of the local community - appoint senior staff in the mirror image of themselves; problems of prejudice and institutional racism remain major barriers, lack of representation of ethnic minorities at senior levels, strategic clarity, ethos, learners' needs, external links/lobbying through the professional organisation.	Unrepresentative, incompetent and self appointed governing bodies' public accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and learning provision, the institutional impact of its purpose, strategy, ethos, external lobbying and liaison, Asian, Black and ethnic minorities' professional network for lobbying and influence.
H(8)	The difference that education can make to a life, low skills, lack of basic education; numeracy and	Unpredictable issues, crises and community franchising created problems in	Develop college as a community responsive organisation geared up to meeting the	Value of further education for adults with low skills, numeracy and literacy levels,	Varying level of appreciation for further education's role in equipping people with

	<p>literacy hold back people, so many families have no concept of lifelong learning for generations, faith in FE, encounter some serious racial prejudice but often managers do not or are incapable of recognising racism.</p>	<p>the organisation, complexity and diversity of FE colleges, varying knowledge, institutional racism and lobbying and influence of the Network of Black managers in tackling discrimination and institutional racism.</p>	<p>changing needs of the learners through the curriculum provision, to develop and embed conducive ethos and culture which must be supported and resourced by the college structure, to have up to date transferable skills.</p>	<p>FE colleges' institutional approach to franchising, community and learners needs related curriculum, structured support and resourcing for developing transferable skills, encountering of racism through networking.</p>	<p>skills for employment. Fair, equitable and learner needs based partnership with ethnic minorities replacing exploitive franchising. Tackling of institutional racism and prejudice in learning and employment by networking.</p>
<p>l(9)</p>	<p>Relishes to be a role model in FE for students and the community, have ethnic drive and competitiveness to succeed as there aren't many Black, Asian and ethnic minority faces at senior levels, felt</p>	<p>FE college institutions do not have many Asian, Black and ethnic minority staff at senior leadership and management levels; scope of promotion is limited but colleges look unrepresentative from students and</p>	<p>Audit of Asian, Black and ethnic minority staff in FE colleges involving their posts, levels, profile of expertise, experience, qualifications and skills, letting students, communities know that</p>	<p>Inspiring multi-ethnic role models can play a vital part in stimulating interest in FE college leadership, and in its development whose formation is unrepresentative of the general and student</p>	<p>Incomplete and unreliable information and data about Asian, Black and ethnic minority staff, senior managers and leaders - require a national audit for public knowledge and appropriate actions, multi-</p>

	<p>uneasiness and experienced discomfort at early stages at times being in all white colleges, the colour of my face attracts curious looks, stereotypical perceptions do not concur with the quality of professionalis m brought to the job, ambition to be a principal get inspired by successful and high calibre white principal, dislike for tokenism and support reciprocal relationships.</p>	<p>communities view, inclusion is crucial for the message that you can also make to the top, Network of Black managers must influence the government, the DfES and LSC; the glass ceiling need removing, greater appreciation, understanding and public recognition of the work of pioneering ethnic minority senior staff can help.</p>	<p>there are some ethnic minority staff at senior levels, promotional campaign is needed to raise the profile of this matter, to inspire students, that they can become lectures, they can aspire to go into senior leadership and management, the Network of Black managers have a task of launching a consistent campaign to raise the profile of the issues.</p>	<p>population, the skin colour still generates prejudice and ignorance about the competencies and professionalis m. and qualification of Asian, Black and ethnic minority senior staff continuous, the Network of Black managers role in campaigning for representative profiling of senior ethnic minority staff must be a national challenge.</p>	<p>ethnic and diversity based approach to leadership development in FE colleges, promotion and profiling of the aspiring role models, key role for the Network of Black managers in the national lobbying, PR and in the raising of the profile of senior leadership personnel who happened to be ethnic minorities, the point of ethnic drive to success.</p>
J(10)	<p>Passion to make a difference to the lives of young people in deprived areas through</p>	<p>The LSC's planning and funding strategies do not effectively address the issue of racial</p>	<p>Benefits to learners and communities of a multi-ethnic college organisation and</p>	<p>Passion and commitment for learners' success, reaching out to communities through</p>	<p>The use of FE assets in deprived areas for their local community and economy instead of</p>

	<p>further education, there aren't many Asian, Black and ethnic minority lectures and managers in FE, influential white managers supported by principals marginalise and undermine them, value personal and professional relationships but they are undermined by racism, passion for student services underpinning learning and achievements.</p>	<p>discrimination, the power authority and decision making are with governors, principals and the key senior managers who do not deliver their remit on racial equality, discriminatory and debilitating effects of college mergers and franchising strategies on ethnic minority staff, little or no recognition of their contribution to the colleges.</p>	<p>leadership, making most of the potential and capabilities of Asian, Black and ethnic minority staff and senior managers, supportive mechanisms to deal with issues of perceived or actual racial discrimination without one having to go through the grinding formal procedure, use of FE resources in deprived areas for the local communities.</p>	<p>innovative strategies, racial discrimination and marginalisation of ethnic minority staff and managers, the nature and pattern of contribution of ethnic minority staff and managers to FE colleges, exercise of power, authority and influence by the LSC, governors and key strategic managers, impacts of mergers.</p>	<p>subsidising provision in the middle class areas, exploitation of communities through franchising, suitable mechanisms for dealing with the issues of racial equality and diversity through friendly and informal channels, involvement and participation of ethnic minority staff and managers at all levels of the organisation in mergers.</p>
K(11)	<p>Commitment to equal opportunities and justice, to enable people to realise their potential to cut through the</p>	<p>Targets without adequate resources fail colleges; their inability to attract suitable staff to</p>	<p>Education is a mean of empowering people, staffing profile should reflect the diversity of the local</p>	<p>Race and class equality, education makes a difference in learners' lives in lifting them out of their</p>	<p>Barriers of race and class, white working class lack of values for education influencing younger</p>

	<p>barriers of race and class, family support is crucial to progress, read the lives of Luther, Gandhi and others, schools system fail pupils, low aspirations leading to low achievements, found creativity undermined by the principal.</p>	<p>enhance communication and participation of the local community will prove costly, need to develop appropriate curriculum mix meeting the cultural, social, economic community needs, creeping white working class values of disregard for education.</p>	<p>community, curriculum must meet the changing economic needs to get people into jobs, principal did not support creativity, missing a generation of Asian, Black and ethnic minority people as role models.</p>	<p>disadvantages. Representative curriculum suitable for the purpose of meeting local cultural, social and economic needs. Role models' inspirational value. But principal/s undermine or block the progressive initiatives.</p>	<p>generations of Asian/Black ethnic minorities. Creating linkage between learning provision and employment. Power and authority of principal/s blocking creative and inspiring initiatives of role models.</p>
<p>L(12)</p>	<p>Education empowers, it is pivotal for learners' life chances in enabling them to realise their potential, race equality in education for young people has been the passion, FE is an excellent vehicle for</p>	<p>Biased and unfair employment and promotion practices undermine the position of Asian, Black and ethnic minority staff and managers in FE colleges; often whose ideas, intellectual</p>	<p>Learners' needs must be at the forefront, staffing must reflect the local communities, implement equal opportunities strategy, college organisation and system must be</p>	<p>Focus on teaching and learning, value of learning for life and life chances, quality and competencies of staff, race equality, needs of young people, community needs and the reflection of</p>	<p>Feeling or reality of exploitation of Asian, Black and ethnic minority staff, lack of race equality in education for younger people, lack of reflection of the local community in the staffing</p>

	making progress, inspirational role models help.	imagination and work is used to advantage the careers of others.	transparent, encourage and support inspirational role models to shine through, staff quality and competencies.	the local community in the staffing, inspirational role models, transparency of college systems.	structures, issue of lack of role models in Further Education colleges,
M(13)	FE's role in protecting people from the failures, experience of being able to rise with FE as a learner and as a lecturer to a management position, FE enabled to go into specialist management but not into leadership.	Stressful and difficult jobs are occupied by ethnic minorities who are not being enabled to benefit from their talent and skills, issue of race and class, senior ethnic staff get marginalised and undermined they need opportunities.	Differentiated approach to enable learners and staff to be confident to make progress, to empower them get over their prior disadvantages, mentoring schemes to protect Black staff from the effects of downsizing.	FE colleges' learner enabling and empowering role, differentiated approach to meet the needs of diverse learners, limited opportunities for A and B managers for leadership negative impacts of downsizing.	Limits of FE in developing individuals as well grounded with identity. Confinement to technical skills and related studies. Limited scope of realising potentials to benefit from talent, expertise, collaboration and innovation.
N(14)	Social work based experience of acute deprivation, capabilities of FE colleges in	Race issue in senior leadership appointments in FE colleges, access and progression of	Making FE more open and accessible to Asian, Black and ethnic minority people. Inspire	FE colleges' capability in addressing the needs of deprived and disadvantaged learners. Race	Race profile of FE colleges' leadership and its implications Negative impact of post franchising era



	<p>providing opportunities to do something positive about it, to be able to make a difference in people's lives, feeling of being able to make a direct contribution to people's lives, commitment to provide the best possible quality of education.</p>	<p>Asian, Black and ethnic minority learners, people of diverse backgrounds who aspire to move on in their life and career. FE culture is dismissive of the contribution of race diversity, have faith in people and their potential.</p>	<p>students to do well, people across the board need inspiring role models, Look for qualities in people, exclusion is expensive and make inclusivity work with a difference. Opportunity to mix with people of different heritage and background.</p>	<p>issue in senior leadership positions need diverse role models in diverse settings can be inspiring, social inclusion in FE is expensive but exclusion is even more expensive in its consequences. Tackle undermining practices.</p>	<p>downsizing and mergers on ethnic minority staff and managers: their skills, experience, expertise and knowledge are underestimated. Differentiated approach is needed in employment and learning provision to ensure diversity and inclusion.</p>
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