

**THE NATURE OF  
PARTICIPATION BY THE  
PARENT COMPONENT IN  
RURAL SCHOOLS GOVERNING  
BODIES**

A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
NTABAMHLOPHE CIRCUIT IN KWAZULU- NATAL

By

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**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

In

**EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT POLICY**

At

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**DECEMBER 2012**

## DECLARATION

I hereby wish to confirm that THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION BY THE PARENT COMPONENT IN RURAL SCHOOLS GOVERNING BODIES has been initiated by me, thus making it my own work. However, I wish to put on record that other sources used have been acknowledged through references.

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Zwelinjani K. Ndlovu (204402007)

Date

## ABSTRACT

Since the establishment of SGBs in 1996, one of the key problems confronting provincial education departments has been the building of capacity of SGB members. This is more so in the previously marginalised and disadvantaged school communities. These structures could not claim to be democratic enough without the necessary skills and knowledge for parent component members to participate fully in school governance.

The purpose of this study then, was to explore the nature and function of the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies (SGB) with regard to school governance as stipulated by the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA). As it is anticipated that members of the SGBs and the parents in rural area; cannot lead on the governance issues, this study, therefore, hoped to identify the barriers that the stop parent component from functioning effectively. Hence, social capital theory was used to measure the imbalances within the SGBs of two Primary Schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit which falls under the Estcourt Circuit Management Centre (Estcourt CMC).

This is a qualitative research study, situated in the interpretive paradigm with the aim of investigating the nature and functions of the parent component in the rural School Governing Body in two primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The key question with regard to addressing the investigation also concerns the parent competencies in practicing the policies as stipulated in SASA. The secondary questions look at how 'social capital' impacts on the rural SGBs as well as dynamics between policy and practise in relation to decision- making.

This in-depth investigation of parental involvement utilised semi-structured interviews, observation as well as documents to gather data. The research population for each school constituted the principal, chairperson of the SGB, two parents, two educators and one non-educator. As the focus was on the parent component: - the age, qualification and experiences with regard to school governance was highlighted. This does not mean my study was a quantitative one as well but this would establish the changes that would have added value to the life of these parents.

The findings revealed that most of the parent components in the SGBs are unemployed and being unemployed resulted in poor networking with other SGBs of other schools. Illiteracy is one of the impediments that impacted negatively towards being involved effectively in the governance of these two schools. The findings further reveal that parents could not adopt and interpret policies that pertain to finances as well as administering schools' property, without explanation by the principals.

## **DEDICATION**

I want to dedicate this thesis to my most lovely family who have been called to eternal life when I was underway to upgrade myself. These are my father Jacob Masuku Ndlovu and his twin brother Esau Matopiya Ndlovu who both passed away in 1994, my mother Gladys Jabhile Ndlovu who passed away in 2011, my eldest brother James Celani Ndlovu (CSJJ), my older brother David Bhekumuzi Ndlovu, my sister in laws, my niece Philile and nephew Senzo not leaving out my lovely daughter Nompumelelo with whom I did not have time.

May The Heavenly Almighty God bless their souls and may they rest in peace.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all let me thank the Almighty God for giving me such an opportunity to study at the UKZN. Also God has been with me through difficult times and gave me a way forward even after I de-registered because of trials and tribulations I encountered.

I also wish to pass my sincere gratitude to Dr Irene Muzvidziwa. She came in when I was about to succumb and leave studying. I so wished I had her as my first supervisor. She has been kind and very encouraging, persuasive and provided scaffolding measures for me towards this project. I have benefited so much from her conceptual support our meetings and her guiding comments. I wish her guidance can be escalated even to other researchers.

I started this thesis in 2008 and de-registered in 2010 due to unbearable problems, but pursued thereafter by Jabulani Ngcobo whom I have to acknowledge for his support. I also want to acknowledge Mandla Mazibuko for assisting me through Governance resources; for example, the Organogram was received from his Departmental materials.

I wish to thank the schools' SGB members; parents, principals, educators and non-educators for the enthusiasm exhibited in giving their time to me. I am pleased to mention that one of the educators from School A is now a principal in one of the Estcourt CMC schools. And the non-educator participant from School B is now a qualified educator. I want to say congratulations!

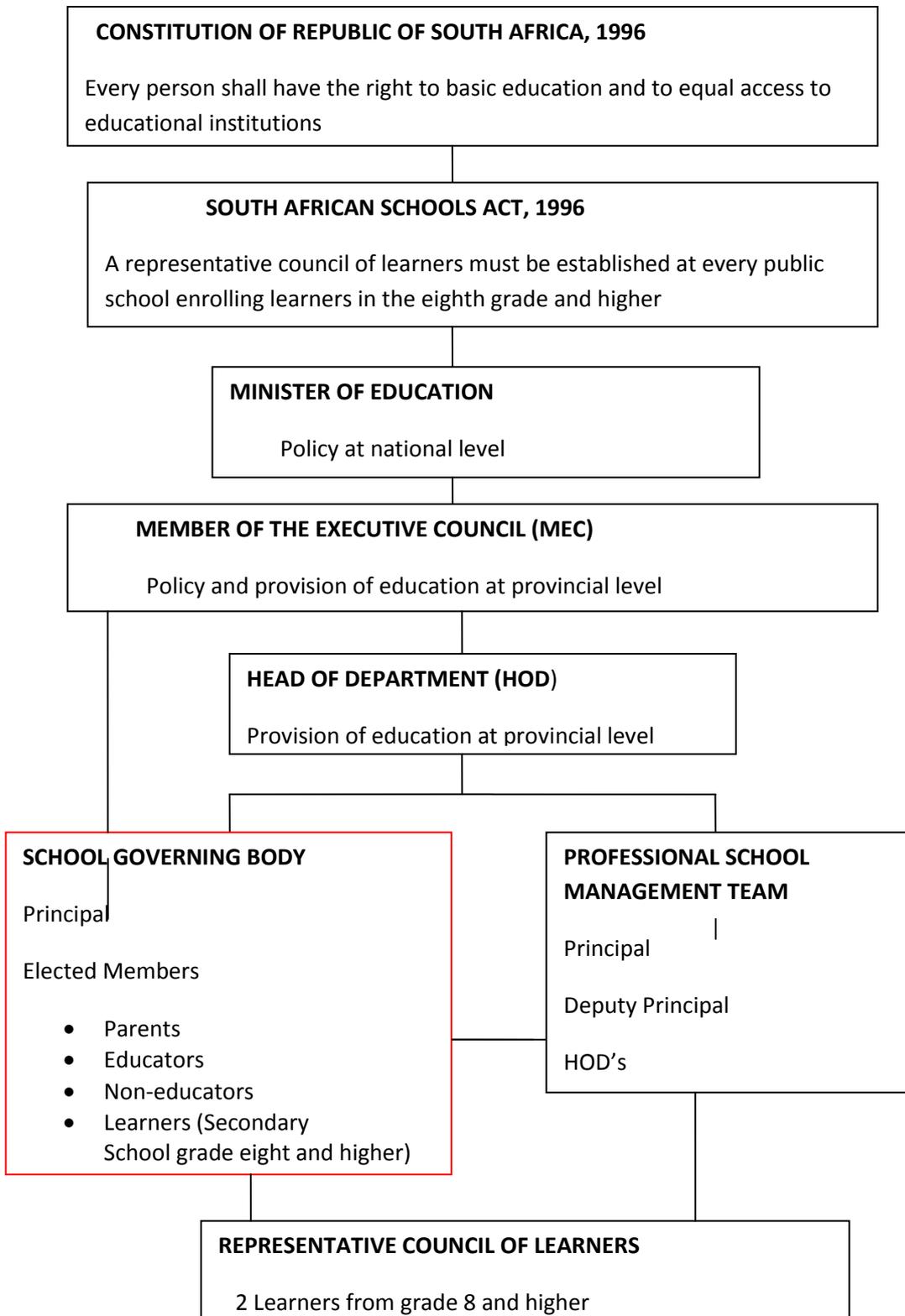
Lastly, I want to thank my family for the support they gave me and their understanding in terms of my time schedules which sometimes meant that I was away for some days and also not able to be with them even during holidays. These attributes go first to my wife Thabisile, and all my boys, Smanga, Dumisane, Mpumelelo, and Nkululeko, and girls,- Nontokozo and Lihle, nieces and nephews. My daughter Nontokozo was studying Medicine at UCT in Cape Town but she would take her time to encourage her Dad. Thanks for that. I also would like to acknowledge my only sister Tholakele (Mrs. Luthuli) for invaluable support she gave me.

May God Bless you all!

## ACRONYMS

CMC.....	Circuit Management Centre
DoE.....	Department of Education
GM.....	Grant-maintained
LEA.....	Local Education Authorities
MEC.....	Member of the Executive Council
SASA.....	South African Schools Act
SDC.....	School Development Committee
SGB.....	School Governing Body
SMT.....	School Management Team
USA.....	United States of America

## ORGANOGRAM INDICATING THE POSITION OF SGB



Extracted from Departmental Resources- Master Trainer Workshop (2009)

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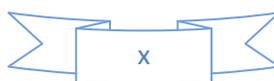
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**Attachment**

Clearance Certificate

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCING MY STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces my research study which is on the nature of participation by the parent component in Rural School Governing Bodies, in particular the parent components being role players in decision-making of the schools. The chapter highlights the background to the study, the purpose of the study, and the statement of the problem. The rationale for the study and the research questions including brief outlines of the theoretical framework and research methodology will also be highlighted. Lastly, it presents the organisational structure of this dissertation as a whole.

#### 1.2 Background to the Study

Governance in South African Schools became an integral phenomenon in the post-apartheid state of South Africa. The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA, 1996) stipulates that each and every public school should establish a School Governing Body (SGB) that will engage with the mandate of the Central Government (Department of Education, 1997). The Hunter Committee, also established by the Department of Education (DoE) in 1995, proposed that when the SGBs are elected, the parent component should be in majority by more than one member of the total of school component members. This is intended to give the parents more powers in voting rights (SASA, 1996). Section 23 of SASA elaborates on who should be elected for membership of the SGB. The composition, therefore, being parents who have children at the school, the principal as *ex-officio*, meaning recognizing his or her capacity as the head of the school, educators, non-educators, and learners, should the school have grade eight or higher. Section 16 (1) of SASA states that the governing body may execute functions and obligations only if they are prescribed by the act so as not to infringe on others rights.

Having said all the above, my concern is that after so many years of the endorsement of the South African Schools Act, governance in some schools, especially in rural schools has not improved. Xaba (2011, p. 201) has mentioned that while there are outcomes that each school should meet, the SGBs „fall far short“ due to their ineffectiveness in governance matters. Most researchers have found that in most cases effective governance cannot happen because of challenges schools“ SGBs encounter (Heystek, Dieltiens, Grant-Lewis Naidoo, Brown & Duku, cited in Xaba, 2011, p.201). These researchers cited in Xaba (2011) have asserted that most School Governing Bodies are challenged in capacity to govern or engage in governance matters. Section 19 (1) of SASA articulates that the Head of Department (HOD), through the appropriate funding, should design a programme:

a) to induct the newly elected SGBs

b) as well as provide an ongoing training so as to promote the appropriate execution of functions.

As I have been a Master Trainer in Governance in one of the Districts for more than four years, I have learned that induction is conducted, but later in the year, if not the following year, after the SGB has commenced with their duties. Mazibuko, cited by Khuzwayo and Chikoko (2009, p. 149), reveals his concerns, after a study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, that untimely planned training prevents SGB members from receiving adequate information on how to execute their roles and functions effectively. In my opinion similar to Mazibuko, untimely planned training has sometimes led to the wrong members of the SGB being trained for the wrong post. An example here is that any member available at the time of the training attends even if the training is meant for chairpersons only. Xaba (2011, p. 201) echoes this when he writes: - „This can be attributed to irrelevant and inadequate training of SGB members, which does not really address the core functions of the school governance“. This, to my knowledge and understanding, creates conflicts and problems in most schools, especially in rural areas as sometimes principals abuse powers that are devolved to them by the Head of Department in section 19 (2). Section 19(2) in SASA stipulates that principals and other officers in the Department of Education should render necessary support to SGBs (SASA, 1996). This also delays the school programmes as there is some misunderstanding in terms of whether the SGB should play a role in professional matters or not. In one of the informal discussions with principals, this came out: *“It is said, once a chairperson in one of the rural schools came to school and demanded registers and time book from a principal to check how many learners and teachers were absent that day”*. This is no doubt a professional matter. In terms of school management, only the principal is duly authorised (by the HOD) to tackle professional matters while the governance of the school should be headed by the chairperson of the SGB (Section 16(3) cited by Khuzwayo and Chikoko, 2009, p. 147).

School governance is a most important feature in education (Xaba, 2011) and seems to experience apparently overwhelming or devastating challenges.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of participation by the parent component in rural School Governing Bodies (SGB) with regard to school governance as stipulated by the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA). As it is anticipated that members of the SGBs and the parents in rural areas cannot lead on the governance issues, the focus will then be on finding out whether co-operation between the school and the parent component exists.

Maluleka (2008) and other researchers contend that SGBs in rural schools are not performing as they are required to do. The responsibilities of the SGBs are so multifaceted that they find it difficult to execute them effectively without some assistance. This is because they need to design some school policies. Section 21 (1) stipulates that SGBs should also be in charge of the school finance that is to pay for services to the school and to purchase textbooks and educational material for the school if they are section 21 with function „c“. Section 37 of SASA agrees with this as it talks about the school fund and assets of public schools which must be handled by the SGBs. This is to handle school fees if the school’s quintile permits this as well as the norms and standards funding, through committees like the finance committee. This also means being responsible and accountable for all the school’s assets, but in accordance with the directions issued by the Head of Department (SASA, 1996). On the part of the parent component of the SGBs, this study then also seeks to investigate, through engagement with a range of participants, whether the government official meets the mandate as per section 19 subsection 1 of SASA of 1996 as it has been said above.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

SASA prescribes that the composition of the school governing body should be made up of the, school principal, elected parent members, educator representatives, non-educator representative, and learner representative should the school have grade eight or higher. The Hunter Committee established by the Department of Education (DoE) in 1995, proposed that the parent component should be more than the combined total of the school component members. This is intended to give the parents more powers in voting rights. This in my view gives the impression that the parent component should lead the decision-making process as they constitute a majority membership in SGBs. From my experience this situation creates conflicts and problems in most schools due to the fact that most parent component members, especially in rural school areas, might be illiterate and therefore might find it difficult to interpret the policies of the central government, let alone lead in decision-making. Maharaj (2005, p.3) support what I have contended, that policies for example do not just exist but they are the product of „history influences of controversy, of promoting some ideologies of others“. This ofcourse warrants that SGB members need to be literate enough to interact with relevant documents.

Nevertheless, School Governing Bodies are entrusted with these responsibilities; developing and adopting policies like religion, language of instruction, and code of conduct for learners, and others (Sithole, cited in Khuzwayo and Chikoko, 2009). This raises a concern about whether schools in rural areas are governed effectively, as most members find it hard to interpret these policies from the Department. The study done by Khuzwayo and Chikoko(2009)reveals that those principals that were in the research complained about SGBs“ parent component, as they were very

ineffective and play minute roles in discussion. They further divulge how the parents’ commonly low levels of education and unfamiliarity with governance matters prevents them from executing their functions (Khuzwayo and Chikoko, 2009).

It remains doubtful whether rural SGB parent members participate in the decision-making processes of their respective governing bodies; and the extent to which they are involved is questionable. Such situations, therefore, prevent SASA policy from being implemented effectively. The observation of the writers mentioned above reveals that it is common to have school governing bodies that show weakest and least effective in governance of the rural schools. Hence, this study focuses on rural SGBs and attempts to identify more clearly what these problems might be, and then suggest how they might be addressed.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- What is the nature of the parent participation within Rural School Governing Bodies?
- How does „social capital“ impact on Governing Bodies in Rural Schools such as the ones in my study?
- What are the dynamics between policy and practice in relation to decision making?

### **1.6 Rationale for the Study**

My motivation for this research study emerges from my sixteen year’s experience as a rural school principal as well as a District Master trainer for Governance. I have realised that although there is a great need to involve the parent component in the SGB and for them to fully participate in all school decision-making activities, there are challenges as well. I have noted with concern that in most cases, rural school SGBs rely solely on principals of schools for initiating and designing school policies. For example, it is the duty of an SGB to adopt the six compulsory policies, including admission policy, the language policy, the religion policy and the many other policies that the SGB should design for the school, for an example, learner attendance policy. But in most of the rural schools I have worked in, even though there are parent representatives present, the principal would still tend to bring in all the information required and towards the end take the lead in the adoption of whatever has been deliberated upon during the day.

My concern, therefore, is whether there is full participation and involvement of the parent component in rural SGBs.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Social Capital Theory as its main theoretical framework. The core idea behind Social Capital Theory is that „social networks have value“ and that „social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups“ (Putnam, 2000, p.19). Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as the „aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to position of a durable network or more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition“, while Coleman cited in Portes, (1998, p.2) says that social capital is „anything that facilitates individual or collective action, generated by networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust and social norms“. In this study, I see the parent component of a School Governing Body, and the SGB on its own, as two social groups. I think these have „more or less institutionalised relationships“. Also, how effective both of these „groups“ are depending on the social capital of the individuals in them and the networks and networking the members can make.

Reciprocity is another way to talk about the principle of „give-and-take“. Putnam (2000) makes a distinction between „specific and generalized“ reciprocity, and notes that „a society characterized by generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society“ (ibid). Specific reciprocity means getting straight „pay-back“ for something you do for someone else. This means that all members of the SGB should understand how valuable their views would be concerning the school governance. This then does not exclude parent component members. Their views will be investments which the school, through learners, may be seen as productive towards the community. „This might be the pay-back time“.

Given the short discussion above, it is clear that Social Capital Theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for my research study. My understanding here is that this concept, which underlies social capital, has a much longer history, but there has been a very limited study of its kind, be it internationally or locally.

## **1.8 Brief outline of the methodology**

This is a qualitative research study, situated in an interpretive paradigm that aims to investigate the nature and functions of the parent component of the rural School Governing Body in two primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This is an in-depth investigation of parental involvement in decision-making of school governance, which also explores specifically the factors that challenge the capacity of parents in meeting their responsibilities, as they have been mandated by the Government through SASA. This study has also to do with the identification of problems those parents in rural schools experience in their capacity as SGB members.

The qualitative approach is suitable in dealing with people's attitudes and perceptions. Xaba (2011, p. 204) contends that the qualitative approach is appropriate to discover perceptions of school governing bodies. This approach, when utilised in probing the questions, allows the subjects to add more on what the researcher has asked. In the case of parents, they will tell you history you have not asked for and even voice complaints to you for something you are not there for. Xaba (2011), citing Bogdan & Biklein (1992) supports the assertion that the qualitative strategy enables a person in understanding human behaviour (Xaba 2011, p. 204). This also means that such an approach gives participants enough space to voice and express their feelings and opinions. Baumgartner and Strong (1998) write that the term "qualitative research" is an umbrella term referring to several research traditions and strategies that share certain commonalities. There is an emphasis on process, or how things happen, and a focus on attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts-how people make sense of their experiences as they interpret their world. Mertens (1998, p.159) echoed this statement by arguing in support of qualitative methods; that they be used in research that is designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific programme, practice or setting. The qualitative approach, then, is appropriate for the study, as it highlights the emphasis on process, focusing on SGBs' attitudes, beliefs and how they make sense as they interpret their world.

The methodological strategy employed in this study consists of semi-structured interviews. Two parent members from each school, the chairperson from each school, two educators, one non-educator and a principal from each school were interviewed. During the meetings and school activities of both schools observation was used, as well as text analysis with regard to policy documents and minute books of both schools.

### **1.9 Concepts**

Parental involvement, school governance and decentralisation are the main concepts used to explore, and inform my study. These concepts are clarified below:-

- Parental involvement in this study includes different forms of participation by the parents, as indicated in SASA, for their children's education. This further means parents should be provided opportunities within the schools to be part of decision-making concerning their children's school programmes.
- School governance incorporates the shared responsibilities of parents, teachers and learners, should the school comprises also of grade eight and higher classes. This is to ensure that all stakeholders are represented in the school governing body. It is important that new governing bodies and the constituencies, from which they are elected, receive

clear information on their basic powers and functions as well as the implications of exercising their governance responsibilities.

- Decentralisation, according to Nafay (2012), means to distribute the administrative functions or powers of a central or main authority among several local authorities. This is similar to what Hanson (1998) wrote that decentralisation is the transfer of decision-making authority, responsibility, and tasks from higher to lower organisational levels or within the organisation (Hanson, 1998, p.112). In this case, central government deploys work that is supposed to be done locally. This means then that such work should be delegated to persons who are close to the situation. And delegation means giving power to another person. Peano (1999) also supports this statement by contending that decentralisation is the devolution of power to lower levels of government to enable them to decide on issues of policy with regard to funding, allocation of resources, decision-making processes, ability to raise funds locally and accountability (Peano, 1999, p. 187).

### **1.10 Organisational structure of the study**

This first chapter provides readers with the problem statement, purpose of study, rationale for the study, research questions theoretical framework, as well as a brief outline of the research methodology.

The second chapter gives a detailed account of the literature on educational governance, a comparative study of decentralisation vis-à-vis parental involvement in decision-making. This chapter explores the school governance and its rationale for my study. It then reviews the literature in regard to social capital theory; its definitions as well as its influence on my study. Chapter two also reflects on the challenges faced by the school governing bodies with regard to the execution of their duties. Relevant international and national literature are reviewed and elaborated on in the exploration of these different concepts.

Chapter three describes the methodology used in this research study. The processes and techniques employed with regard to gathering and analysing of data are thoroughly discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four discusses the presentation of data collected as well as analysis. Through the lens of social capital theory, the research findings are explained according to broad themes with sub-headings which emerged from the participants' responses during the discussions with them.

Chapter five discusses the results of the main research findings, recommendations, insights gained from the study, limitations of my study as well as the suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Now that the origin of the study has been dealt with in chapter 1 that is, looking at the background the purpose of the study, problem statement, research questions, rationale and highlights of the theoretical framework, including methodological and concepts, this chapter locates the study in relation to relevant studies undertaken by other researchers. This literature review intends to cover the terms and concepts that are employed such as involvement, decentralisation as well as school governance. Governance complements management and leadership, so this chapter will focus on those areas that are of great importance in informing my study. This chapter reviews literature in regard to social capital and its influence on the functions of the school and its governing bodies particularly the parent component and challenges faced by them.

#### **2.2 School Governance**

##### ***2.2.1 (a) The governance's position in the school***

School Governance is constituted by a parent component as well as a school component. These two components together form what is called a School Governing Body. However, as it has been mentioned above, parents, according to SASA (1996), have more power in terms of voting. Xaba (2011) states that governance is conceptualised on the basis of school governance roles and functions as outlined in SASA. School governance also refers to the in taking responsibilities, and ensuring that the school fulfils its duty of investing and providing pertinent, quality service to the community and all its beneficiaries, in which it is based. According to Cotton & Wikelund (2001), school governance is one occurrence which provides parents with opportunities to take part in decision-making about the school programmes. Others include being a school governing body affiliate, a participant on a parent advisory committee or a school development plan. This means that parents are required to be involved in brainstorming the vision of the school, goals setting, development and execution of other programme activities (SASA, 1996).

Some literature describes school governance as concerning the governing body roles, meaning to decide on the policy and rules by which the school is to be controlled. This includes ensuring that such rules and policies are executed effectively with regard to the law and the budget of the school (Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 1997). Indeed, the governance of the school pertains to issues that deal with school policy formulation, not excluding the vision and mission of the school. Thus for effective governance, School Governing Bodies need to involve parents of that particular school. South Africa and Namibia are countries that embrace the

principles of democracy and equity (Niithembu citing Potgieter *et al.*, 1997). Niithembu also argues in support of the view that the democratisation of education includes the idea that stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners and other community members must partake in the activities of the school. Naong and Morolong (2011) also argue in support of the above statement, emphasising the fact that the Act attempted to legislate the concept of participatory democracy where parents are given a weightier role to play in their children’s upbringing. However, there are still major hindrances that impede this in terms of meaningful parental participation (Naong and Morolong 2011, p. 239).

Karlsson (2002) wrote about the Review Committee which undertook field research and commissioned position papers that explored arguments on controversial issues such as the participation of learners on governing bodies. This Review Committee recommended a single system of public schooling and governance. Government’s challenge was, to find uniform ways with regard to schooling that would allow State funding to be redistributed across schools, that is, serve the poorest communities without withdrawing the support of middle-class families to the extent that they might move their children to the independent schools, thereby removing them from the public schools system.

### **2.2.1 (b) How Professional Management and Leadership differs from School Governance**

According to SASA (1996) section 16 (1), (2) & (3) school governance is delegated only to the SGB of the school which includes school staff members, as stated in the school component. The same principal who is an *ex officio* member in the SGB is subjected to handle professional matters of the school under the authority of the Head of Department (HoD) (SASA, 1996). This, however, has created problems in other schools, for example, school staff members may be elected to a governing body just to watch what the principal does, and not to engage in governance issues. This might be done when electing parents as well. Such exercises usually confuse people in making a distinction between professional and governance matters. It is even worse when parents in the SGB are illiterate. Mahlangu (2008) supports this statement and further contends that while the principal has delegated powers, the HoD expects co-operation and compliance from the principal on school matters and from the SGB on governance issues. If such co-operation and compliance are unsuccessful, the HoD may exercise powers with regard to section 16 (4) which states that “a public school may be temporarily closed should this endanger or is detrimental to the lives of learners at school” (SASA, 1996). Section 18 A (5) talks about suspension of a member should he or she be found breaching the code of conduct in terms of SASA.

Most researchers claim that governance refers to a formal system established by the law to control education through the exercise of power and of influence (Khuzwayo and Chikoko 2009, p. 150). This is true because if schools cannot be controlled by other stakeholders, which include parents, some of them may not produce quality education. According to Khuzwayo and Chikoko (2009) governance is the overall control and authority of the school and its policies and directions. This further suggests that while governance is entrusted with the responsibility and power to formulate and adopt school policy, management is responsible for the running of the day to day administrative and instructional functions of the school by ensuring effective teaching and learning (Khuzwayo and Chokoko, 2009).

Looking at the above information, it reveals that while there might be differences between governance and management, there is a need for overlap. Baber in Mahlangu (2008, p.48) argues that “there is little attempt to distinguish the roles between SGBs and principals”. It is for this reason that van Wyk in Mahlangu (2008) suggests that there is a need for the governors (SGBs), principals as well as educators and non-educators to be capacitated to deal with these complex issues (Mahlangu, p.47). This will therefore, add value to the mechanism that regulates the balance of power in the school decisions (Bauch and Goldring 1998,p. 24) and there will be no scenarios where an SGB chairpersons demands registers and time books in order to control absenteeism at schools. Parents should support and should not interfere with the professional work of the School Management Teams (SMT). SMTs should also not abuse power since they are, in most cases, the learned ones. Maile in Mahlangu (2008, p.50) states that the abuse of power by both the SGBs and SMTs is due to the lack of definitive demarcation in terms of the roles to be played by both parties. (ibid) I support the above mentioned statements because in most cases where parents are not well educated, cases of interference by parents in school matters do occur. The SMT, on the other side, takes advantage of that and exercises their powers in what should have been done by parents. Naong and Morolong (2011) warn that neither the parents nor the principal should engage with the issues of education at the school. They need to work together to achieve the objectives set by the Department and the community (Naong and Morolong 2011, p. 257). The SMT and the SGB should understand that the aim is to educate the learner with the support from the Department. Both are responsible for the upbringing of a child, but follow different routes. This means that SMTs execute their duties under a management mandate while SGBs follow the governance mandate. Mokoena (2011, p. 120) echoes this by stating that participative decision-making should play its pivotal role in cementing the relationship among all stakeholders, aiming at the efficient governance of the school.

### ***2.2.2 The rationale for school governance***

As indicated previously, school governance is the result of the central government's philosophy of democratisation schooling, with its delegation of power to provinces and local levels. The *Educational White Paper 2* sustains this by stating clearly the five principles of democracy that governance policy for public schools should be based on (DoE, 1996, p.16). Two of these central principles are identified as ***representation*** and ***participation***.

In a view to ensuring representation, constituencies that vote for representatives onto the governing body are parents, educators, non-educators and even learners, should the school have grade eight and higher. This is in spite of the school's size, number of educators and number of parents, as SASA states concerning the formula to follow. For example, if the school has five or less educators, only one educator will be elected onto the SGB, but if the number is five or more, two educators are elected onto the SGB. For voting power, parents have one more extra member than the school components combined. The justification of such supremacy is that parents of enrolled learners are seen as having the greatest stake in the school's development and the quality of teaching and learning within the school (SASA, 1996).

One of the IsiZulu proverbs says, "***ayihlabi ngakumisa***", which translates as **'the cow's physical appearance might not assist it in fighting skills'**. With this, I want to decisively question school governance reform in South African schools. My disagreement is based on my experiences as principal of the rural school as well as the Master trainer for school governance in my District. In most instances, parents that are famous, known to many people in the community, are voted to become representatives on the governing body. Though the government does orientate newly elected SGB's, not all of the parents understand or can interpret policies. My contention here does not mean to weaken parents' characters or to degrade their dignity, or imply that illiterate parents cannot invest their knowledge and skills in their children's education. However, running the school governance has been proven to have diverse reactions and opinions even in countries that are developed (Squelch, 1999). Other researchers have written how some SGB members cannot differentiate between governance policy and professional matters. Practice and theory are two different entities to them. Earley (2003), Karlsson (2002) and Squelch (1999) echo that SGB roles are being confused with what principal and the educators and non-educators do professionally. Parent components in SGBs, mainly in rural schools, seem not to be certain enough in executing their duties. Additionally, Whitty, Power & Halpin (1998) observe that the SGBs of schools mostly in rural areas are always at the mercy of the head teacher.

Though decentralisation is in place, schools should at some instances connect in self-directed strategies. This further means that there are policies that can be designed by the SGBs to govern

the school, following the mandate of the central government of course. In a South African schools context, these policies should be brainstormed and designed by all components. The policies will then be taken to all parents, stakeholders and other concerned parties for recommendations as well as approval. According to Mothata and Squelch (1997) school governance relates to policies and rules being executed effectively in terms of the law and ensures that the budget of the school is well arranged, prepared and managed. And this should show transparency and involve all component members including parents in the SGB.

With regard to participation, the roles, functions, and powers, of governing bodies are in two fold, thereby enabling some schools to have better levels of SGB. This means that the functions in section 20 of SASA and responsibilities in sections 36 to section 43 excluding sections 39 and 40, are binding for all governing bodies, while others in section 21 should be applied to the head of a provincial education department (Karlsson , 2002). Examples of functions requiring application to the head of department in section 21 include; maintaining and improving the school's property, and purchasing textbooks, amongst others (SASA, 1996). These functions are conditional on the governing body having the capacity to perform such functions effectively (Republic of South Africa, 1996b, p.16). Sallis (1988) contends that in some countries like New Zealand, which has the most developed systems of stakeholder partaking in school governance, the one challenge schools are faced with is what is termed „sham participation“. This means that decisions are taken at the higher levels of governance, for example nationally, while the other stakeholders are only expected to simply endorse those decisions. The possible consequences may be that the silenced stakeholders become stagnant as they were not part of the policy formulation.

### **2.3 Defining parent**

According to Ramisur (2007) the word „parent“ is defined as either a father or a mother; a person who has not produced an off-spring but has the legal status of a father or a mother; also any animal or plant that produces off-spring; source, cause or origin. Dekker and Lemmer cited in Niithembu (2006) refer to the term „parents as neither an amorphous nor a homogenous mass, but they all have one trait in common, namely that they have children.

According to the South African School's Act, 84 of 1996, parent refers to the parent or guardian of a learner; or the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to above towards the learner's education at school. SASA thus defines the term „parent“ in this way:-

- The natural parent of a learner, whether father or mother (male or female).
- The guardian of a learner.
- Person granted legal custody of a learner and

- Person who undertakes to act as a parent of a learner for the purpose of the learner's education at school (SASA, 1996).

According to Louw (2004) the term „parent“ refers not just to biological aspect of parenthood, but it includes the entire parent community of a specific school in a specific environment with all its diversities. This is common in the South African context where a child is raised by the uncle, aunt, sister or brother and grandfather or grandmother.

## **2.4 Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is viewed as the paradigm that has become a dominant phenomenon in both the developing and developed countries. According to Sebhat (2003, p.26) parental involvement in school governance can be pursued through involving parents in the local schools matters. School activities and policies then becomes part of the community and not a separate institution imposed by the state. Squelch and Lemmer in Mbatha (2005, p.8) define “parental involvement as the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational”. This involvement implies jointcollaboration, sharing and support. Maharaj defines parental involvement as the relationship which parents and the teachers share, which allows both groups to use their abilities to the full in order to give children the best possible education (Maharaj, 1987). Emerging Voices (HSRC, 2005) cited in Niithembu (2006, p. 9) defines parental involvement as a way of involving parents in the education of their children in order to make parents supportive of and informed about their children's development in school.

Parent involvement in this study is, therefore, understood as the active contribution of parents in the education of their children at all levels. For the reason of this research project, participation of parents, or parent involvement as these terms intertwine, would encompass their co-operation and support in all governance issues and school activities. This further means their participating and taking part in decision-making.

Wood (1991) contends that there is growing awareness that parental participation can be both a means to a better education and an end itself. As a means, parental contribution and partnership is considered as a way of providing more resources, facilities and even more places within the education system. This means that participation helps the school to become “more relevant to local needs and conditions by making it effective and efficient through community input” (Sebhat, 2003, p.26). My sentiments towards this statement would be that parents, through participation, invest their interests in their children who are products of their collaboration with the school, through the school itself. Henry (1996) argues in support of the fact that a successful collaboration should be the one that involves all role players as this implies teamwork, partnership, relationship,

co-operation, group effort, alliances and association. Wood also suggests that parental involvement in school governance can lead to greater control over information, the information of alliance and networks, more efficient management of local resources and the development and reinforcement of local organisation (Wood, 1991). This is equivalent to the fact that parents do invest their thoughts and skills, and it should be ensured that they are well prepared to participate in issues that will inform decisions for the school.

In support of this, a study done by the World Bank (1999) reveals that parents can offer or invest resources in the school by providing local knowledge to the school for their children. This further contends that parents can be influential resources the school should utilise, not only in contributing to the upgrading of educational delivery, but also in becoming the centre of education delivery. This further means that parents can identify as well as address those factors that contribute to educational problems (World Bank, 1999). Winters (1993) maintains that parents must be actively involved in the schools' operation and they must feel an ownership of schools where they send their children. And for this reason they should provide much needed skills, knowledge, and also the free labour to the schools (Winters, 1993).

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 and the Education White Paper 2 of 1996 uphold the rights of all learners, parents, teachers and the community to promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the state (SASA, 1996). Similarly, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. Citing Joubert and Prinsloo, Mbatha (2005), supports that this encourages parents to take part in decision-making about issues that affect their children at school and as they are also encouraged to have their views heard about the school programmes (Joubert and Prinsloo in Mbatha, 2005, p.9).

Parental involvement has since been introduced to the SGBs through the democratic system in education called decentralisation. This is the devolution of power by the Central Government to the Provinces or Regions down to local institutions which are the schools. According to Squelch (1999, p.129), decentralising school governance is „in accordance with democratic form of governance based on the principles of representation, equity and participation“.

Parent has always been recognised as the primary educator of the child. The care, development and education of the child are the „responsibilities of the parent and not that of the school, the community, the educator and or the state“ (Ramisur, 2007, p. 11). This point then reaffirms the enormous importance positioned on the role of parents in school governance. The job of educating

has become too multifaceted a responsibility for any one group for example, teachers to do alone (Citing Kruger and van Schalkwyk, 1997).

For effective schooling, SASA holds that learners, parents as well as educators endorse their acceptance and accountability for the schools, funding and governance of public schools in partnership with the state (Ramisur, 2007). This further implies that parents by law should participate in school activities. It also implies a shift from the traditional role parents used to play by merely being members of parent-teacher associations (citing Louw, 2004). This means that parents can now decide what is best for education in the interest of their children. However, this does not mean that parents will take over the schools' responsibilities, but should participate and be drawn in on matters of the school governance.

Fullan (2001) contends that the collaboration between parents and schools calls for the „power of three“, which is the parent, teacher and learner partnership. Further, in terms of school effectiveness, Fullan (2001) found that parental involvement practices is one of twelve key factors that differentiated effective schools from less-effective schools. Such involvement included attendance school meetings, school activities and other functions. Having mentioned all this, it is appropriate to acknowledge the fact that schools are no longer the domain for teachers only. Parents are there to position themselves and participate irrespective of the education or skills they have. They are also accountable for the development of the school. They should admit that the tasks of education can not be accomplished unless they all join the forces and participate in the school.

Involving parents in the education of their children could bring about many returns or benefits to parents, learners, teachers and the entire society. The World Bank came up with the following benefits for learners whose parents show an involvement in their education: an increased sense of security and emotional stability; better grades and test scores; increased attendance figures at school; increased graduation rate and learners are more likely to go to colleges and universities. Further, children gain impetus in maintaining positive attitudes and behaviour, and more learners are involved in extra-curricular activities.

Teachers and schools benefit as well from this kind of connection, as schools get greater financial support from the parents, communities and even government through Norms and Standards. Schools' better standing is preserved in the community; there is a higher student achievement; a higher morale of learners; improved classroom performance in cases where children can be tutored by their parents; better understanding of learner-needs by both parents and teachers; instructional resources are augmented, and increased self-confidence and personal contentment is experienced by particular parents (The World Bank, 1999). Parental involvement can also assist in

identifying and addressing factors that impact on educational success, factors such as low participation and poor academic performance, for example, looking at why girls do not attend schools as well as mobilising communities in an effort to counter this phenomenon. This is well illustrated by the study done by the World Bank in Gambia, Africa using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (The World Bank, 1999).

Rosenholtz in Fullan (2001) suggests that parental involvement is often a measure of effective management. A study in Chicago schools realised the important differences in how teachers in „moving schools“ versus „stuck schools“ relate to parents. Teachers from stuck schools held no goals for parent participation, while teachers from moving schools focused their efforts on involving parents with academic content, thereby bridging the learning chasm between the home and the school. Teachers in stuck schools were far more likely to assume that nothing could be done with parents, while in moving schools teachers saw parents as part of the solution towards addressing the challenges (ibid).

Squelch and Lemmer (1994) believe that education in some schools in South Africa has almost collapsed. The factors that have contributed to such failure include the undermining of authority and discipline, the negative attitude held by some learners and teachers, shortage of relevant provision and the failure of the community to regard the schools as their properties. Mbatha (2005) asserts that societal problems such as drug addiction and alcohol consumption, crime, vandalism of school property, poverty, unemployment and dysfunctional family life have contributed to the collapse of education in some schools. She claims that these forces could be overcome, should the forces of homes be combined with those of the school and the community.

The benefits of parental involvement also include increased positive attitudes of parents towards teachers at school as well as the establishment of a hassle-free school climate. The parents themselves become satisfied with the school and their confidence in the school increases as well. This then enables the growth of the parents“ ability to serve as resources for the academic, social and psychological development of their children. In Canada, an increase in parents serving as advocates for the schools throughout the community was significant. Lastly, parents can also make meaningful contributions to school activities that fall outside the expertise of educators but in which the parent is an expert as a result of his or her particular professional background and / or field of interest (Hornby, 2000; Feuerstein, 2000; Cotton and Wikelund, 2001 and Oosthuizen, 2004).

## 2.5 Overview of Decentralisation

According to Govinda cited in Karlsson, McPherson and Pampallis (2001), the concept of decentralisation means different things in different contexts. Govinda further suggests that decentralisation in the United States of America (USA) means the shift of power from the school district to the school, while in China decentralisation is the shift of power from national to provincial or state government. Mashishi (1994) contends that educational decentralisation is a major thrust of international efforts aimed at restructuring the education system. What Mashishi mentions has been noticed, for example, Outcomes Based Education is one of the programmes tried internationally, with South Africa being one of the countries adopting it. Van Wyk (2007, p. 132) states that „devolution or decentralisation by authorities hopes to grow great relationship between the school and communities“. South Africa has adopted this idea of reforming its schools, redistributing power to the new provinces and to schools after the post- apartheid era. However, ultimate power remained with the central government to control norms and standards, curricula and finance. Having mentioned the above statements, it is obvious that where there is decentralisation, there will always be centralisation. Both these concepts complement each other.

Thus, this research explores the approach of a number of different countries, developed and developing, with regard to decentralisation. Lauglo (1990) contends that the policy of decentralisation was adopted for different reasons. Lauglo further argues that these reasons range from the adoption of decentralisation as an economic tool to ease governments of their economic overload, to the adoption of the policy as an administrative approach to manage tensions between centralisation and decentralisation. The literature on decentralisation of education distinguishes between three or four different forms of decentralisation (Bray, 1996; Davies, 1990, p. 12; Govinda, 1997, p. 6-7; Fiske, 1996, p.10; Lauglo, 1990, p.30; Hanson, 1998, p.112; Winkler, 1989, p. 4-5). These are: - deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation.

These motives include the attempt to: use resources efficiently; increase democratic control by allowing community participation in decision-making; reduce hostility to national governments and their policies; undermine one group by promoting another; promote the ideology of markets and consumer choice; and, reduce the financial burden of central government by sharing it with local authorities (Karlsson et al, 2001).

Common motives for centralisation, on the other hand, include the desire of a ruling group to maintain control when it is being threatened; promote greater equity in an unequal society; lower costs and speed up policy implementation; compensate for a shortage of skilled or experienced managers at lower levels; and, avoid or monitor corruption. In the South African context, three of the most commonly-stated goals of the post-1994 reforms in educational governance have been

those of increasing democratic participation in decision-making, creating an equitable system of education, and improving the quality of educational provision (ibid).

Many countries have taken initiatives to decentralise school governance, both in the still developing and already developed world (Sebhat, 2003). Therefore, as Squelch in Lemmer (1999) alluded, it is a global phenomenon. The aim behind implementing a process of decentralisation is to create more effective schools that will be flexible and quick to respond to rapidly changing environments. Van Wyk (2007, p.132) states that „devolution of authority hopes to grow a great relationship between the school and community“. For this reason I want to explore how it works in a number of countries that benefit from this decentralisation. I was compelled, to look at both developed and underdeveloped countries, hence the number of countries discussed. The international and local review of countries which follows explores issues related to the notion of parental, community involvement, as well as school component members that are working towards reaching one goal in the democratic governance of their schools.

Terminology might differ from one country to the other, but the emphasis will be specifically placed on those countries whereby parental or community involvement in school governance takes the form of the School Governing Body (SGB).

Over the past few decades, legislative developments in England have provided an interesting example of the movement towards decentralised and self-governance. Deem in Squelch (1999, p. 133), write, „as far back as 1967, the Plowden Report emphasised the importance of parent involvement in education and called for greater representation“. However, it was the Taylor Report of 1997 (*A new partnership for our schools*) that provided the most detailed recommendations for the reformation of school governing bodies as well as decentralisation of decision-making powers.

This called for all schools to have their own representative governing body that exercises full authority and has full decision-making powers regarding the way the school operates (Squelch, 1999, p.134). In terms of representation, the Taylor Report favoured a structure that would offer equal representation of different groups (*teachers, parents, students, Local Education Authorities (LEA"s) and community representatives*). However, following the Taylor Report, only a few LEA"s experimented with student governors, a practice which was later banned under the Education Act of 1986. The Act established the structure of governing bodies and set out their basic functions, thus following the Taylor recommendations very closely (ibid). Squelch (1999) asserts that the governing body comprises of five parent governors, one but not more than two teachers, the head of the school who is the principal and a number of foundation or first governors. This structure seems to silence the students as it does not involve them in governance;

however, since 1988; parents as well as co-opted governors have played a dominant role in the decision-making of their schools.

According to Squelch (1999), the Education Reform Act of 1988 paved the way for further decentralisation by providing for the local governance of schools. The Act devolved more power and responsibility for decision-making, particularly over financial and personnel matters, from the LEAs to the earlier reconstructed school governing bodies under the 1983 Act (Williams in Squelch, 1999). The Education Act required LEAs to allocate a budget to all its schools to cover almost all of their running expenses, over which schools would have full control. Levacic (1995) also alludes to the fact that school governing bodies became responsible for managing the budget, and appointing, disciplining and dismissing the staff (Levacic, 1995, p. 8). The local governance of schools provided the opportunity to control their own financial affairs and to be more self-sufficient and independent of the LEAs (Squelch, 1999, p. 134).

With a view to self-governance, which is another momentous development in the England decentralisation establishment, is the introduction of grant-maintained (GM) schools under the Education Reform Act of 1988, which was reinforced by the Education Act of 1993. According to Squelch (1999), the GM schools in terms of the new education laws, could „opt out“ of the LEAs and receive their funding directly from central government. This means that GM schools receive larger amount of funding than those schools that remained with LEA sector. And this is because in GM schools, governors have total responsibility for every aspect of the running and functioning of the schools (Williams in Squelch, 1999, p. 134).

### **2.5.1 Decentralised school governance in Chile**

Chile had a new democratic government in power in 1990, and this government put to an end of seventeen years of authoritarian rule (Sebhat, 2003). One of the first major policy changes was to revisit decentralisation. This time the focus was on democratic reform, including the popular election of mayors, and on improved teaching as well as learning. The goal was to exercise pedagogical decentralisation at the school level while strengthening governance at the central, regional as well as at the municipal levels (Sebhat, 2003, p. 40). Teachers, who are equally important, and backed the change in government, received back their service status, job security, and the right to organise. The prevailing philosophy was, however, that teaching and learning would improve only if teachers recovered their keenness to work hard. This means that teachers were never silenced in decision-making but were given more autonomy in curricular and other educational decisions.

### **2.5.2 Decentralised school governance in Australia**

In Australia, the term „devolution“ has been used to describe the process of restructuring and decentralisation in education during the 1980s and 1990s (Squelch, 1999, p.135). According to Sharpe (1994), the above process was typically driven by issues such as quality, effectiveness, accountability and flexibility. However, according to Gamage (1994), the beginnings of the decentralisation can be traced back to 1948 when New South Wales became the first Australian state to initiate it. Squelch (1999) refers to Sharpe’s (1994) definition of devolution:

*...a process through which an agency (such as a government) deliberately relinquishes aspects of control over the organizations for which it is responsible, thus moving along the continuum in the direction of total self-management.*

Australia’s devolvement of power and authority to school communities has been effected through the establishment of school councils which are equivalent to the South African School Governing Body. Gamage and Sharpe, cited in Squelch (1999, p.135) contend that although all states and territories are engaged in devolution, the Victoria initiative and devolution project has been said to be the most advanced and a model example for other states. The education Act of 1958 was amended in 1983 thus enabling a Victorian school council to determine the general education policy of the school. The amendments emphasised the importance of local authority responsibility and shared decision-making on educational policy. Since the powers devolved were far-reaching, school councils were empowered to be accountable for the general education policy of the school, buildings and grounds including maintenance, the selection of principals and deputy principals, employment of ancillary staff, maintenance of accounts, general budget planning and effecting auditing. At the same time, the councils and their members were protected from having to meet costs arising from any action for damages while performing their legal functions (Gamage, Sipple & Patridge, in Squelch, 1999, p. 135). Australian school councils, though this may vary, subject to *proviso*, that parents can be more, like in South Africa; comprise of the principal and elected parents, teachers, community members and students, should the school be a secondary or higher.

### **2.5.3 Decentralised school governance in New Zealand**

Like Australia and many other countries, New Zealand also embarked upon a process of transforming and restructuring the education system in the 1980s with a view to bringing about greater decentralisation. In 1989 the new Education Act came into being and provided for schools to take over their own governance (Squelch, 1999). In the place of regional education boards, schools could establish their own boards of trustees consisting of a three to five parent

representative body, the principal, a staff representative and a student representative should it be a secondary school, similar to South African SGBs (Wylie, 1995).

The duties of the school boards are the appointment as well as dismissal of staff while in South Africa the SGB can only recommend to the HoD the appointment of staff, maintaining buildings and grounds, staff development and the school's general performance. The Ministry of Education provides the funding for all the state, schools sets broad guidelines for the curriculum, and determines standardised assessment tasks for all primary schools. These are the strengths of New Zealand's approach towards decentralisation. The initial administration reforms were followed by pedagogical reforms that reflected broad consensus on the goals of a national curriculum while also making it necessary for the schools to add local components, as it has been suggested earlier.

#### **2.5.4. Decentralised school governance in Zimbabwe**

School governance in Zimbabwe, like in any other post-colonial state, can be better understood and explained against the backdrop of colonialism (Chikoko, 2006). The colonial regimes practiced segregatory educational policies against the black people, such as the „bottle neck“ system in which fewer and fewer black pupils were allowed to proceed with formal education as they progressed (Mumbengegwi, 1995 in Chikoko, 2006). Against this background as Chikoko suggests, the newly independent state of Zimbabwe straight away began what is called „a rapid expansion of educational provision, including free primary education, through a centralised system of governance“. The reforms which were instituted had the express purpose of eliminating the inequalities which had prevailed during the colonial era. Such reforms and rapid expansion entailed a huge education bill on the part of the Zimbabwean government (Dorsey, Matshazi & Nyagura, 1991 cited by Chikoko, 2006).

Towards the end of the first decade of independence, there was an obvious decline in the quality of education, as the heavy government spending on education was no longer sustainable neither was it justifiable anymore. A paradigm shift was seen as the panacea. Decentralisation of school governance was then adopted as the way forward. This entailed among the others, the devolution of school governance decision-making powers to local communities. This move saw the creation of School Development Committees (akin to School Governing Bodies) (Chikoko, 2006).

In Zimbabwe, the School Development Committee (SDC) comprises five persons elected by parents of pupils at the school, the head of the school, the deputy head of the school, a teacher at the school, and a councillor appointed by the local authority. Zimbabwe SDC differs from South African SGB (as mentioned in the next paragraph) by having the councillor that is appointed by the local authority and the deputy head of the school. Zimbabwe's SDC does not include learners. Nevertheless both are decentralised or delegated to govern the schools.

### 2.5.5 Decentralised school governance in South Africa

Squelch (1999) suggests that prior to the legislation of the 1990s, governing schools was a much less demanding activity. Governing bodies or management councils played a supportive role with restricted powers and functions. They did not make basic policy decisions; nor did they shape management policies to any great extent. For the most part, school governors tended to have symbolic powers rather than actual authority. Moreover, the majority of black schools did not have governing bodies as it was supposed to be the case.

During the 1990s legislative developments resulted in governing bodies gaining more power and responsibilities. In 1992, the powers of governing bodies were extended widely in two particular areas; first, they could determine their own admission policy and, second, they could decide on how much will be paid as the school fees. Following the general election of 1994, the adoption of a new constitutional dispensation and the phasing in of new education legislation under the new government, a new system of education has been created based on the fundamental principles of democracy, unity, non-discrimination, equity and equality. The first White Paper on Education and Training, cited in Squelch (1999, p.137) specifies that:

... the principle of democratic governance should be increasingly reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stakeholders, interest groups and role-players”.

Therefore, in keeping with international trends, South African schools, like other developing countries, have „subsequently moved towards greater decentralised school governance” (Squelch, 1999, p. 137). The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 has mandated the establishment of democratic structures of school governance which provide the basis for decentralised governance between education authorities and the school community. The rationale for the establishment of representative school governing bodies is fundamentally to ensure that teachers, parents, learners and non-teaching staff will actively participate in the governance and management of their schools with a view to providing better teaching and learning environments.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA, 1996) prescribes the composition of school governing bodies of ordinary public schools. These bodies are made up of the school principal, as an *ex officio* member, elected members and co-opted members. All in all, elected members of the governing body comprise parents, educators at the school, and non-educators at the school as well as learners in the eighth grade or higher. SASA states that parents must form the majority of membership on the governing body for voting rights. Therefore, a parent component must have

*one* member more than the total school component which comprises the principal, educators, non-educators and learners, should it be a secondary school or higher. A parent who is elected to the governing body must have a child or children at the school and may not be employed at the school. This further means that an educator or non-educator staff member may not be part of the governing body. If I would have an opinion on this I would not limit election to parents with children at school only. This is because there are parents without children in the community who are good and outstanding parents in terms of governance and who might not be co-opted as mentioned below due to the limited number. In addition, I would not exclude educators and non-educators with children from being elected, as this might limit the resources for the school.

Members of the community who have certain skills and know-how and have interests in investing in the development of the school governance and management may be co-opted. However, the co-opted members have no voting rights (DoE, 1997, p.25).

## **2.6 Challenges anticipated within decentralisation**

Sebhat (2003) contends that in many instances, decentralisation has been seen to exacerbate existing rich-poor gaps. He further suggests that highly decentralised systems commonly permit sub-national bodies to retain most or all of the resources. I also argue in support of the fact that „areas with abundant financial and human resources are in a better position than those with fewer resources in order to make maximum use of decentralised ideology and power“. This means that only affluent schools would be likely to make the greatest achievements.

Greater popular participation in decision-making may not necessarily result from decentralisation of power (Bray, 1985). Bray suggests that authority devolved to the school level could be wielded in an authoritarian manner by a school principal (Bray, 1985). It is also anticipated that SGB's, especially in rural areas, lack some skills necessary to exercise powers given to them, and there is not enough in the budget for training skill programmes. Lastly, decentralisation has no guarantee of democracy.

## **2.7 Accountability of school governing bodies**

Decentralised decision-making and authority place greater responsibility and answerability on School Governing Bodies (Squelch, 1999, p.141). Squelch further asserts that if a governing body does not perform its functions properly, the head of department may withdraw it on reasonable grounds, provided that he or she follows correct procedures. The head of department may appoint a person to act in the place of the SGB. However, the SGB may appeal the decision by the head of department. And the head of department may not take action against a governing body unless he or she has informed the governing body of his or her decision to withdraw its functions. He or

she should also grant the governing body a reasonable opportunity to prepare their case and make representations relating to that, as well as considering such representations (SASA, 1996).

The governing body is also entitled to be given reasons for any actions that are taken by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for education. SASA makes it possible for any member who is unhappy or disagrees with the decision of the head of department to withdraw the functions of the governing bodies to appeal to the MEC (SASA, 1996).

## **2.8 The functions of school governing bodies**

The functions and the roles of the school governing bodies are set out in section 20 and 21 of the SASA. Section 20 lists the prescribed functions of all governing bodies. In this section, the governing body of a public school must: promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development; adopt a constitution, adopt the mission statement of the school; adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school; support the principal; educators and other staff in performing their professional functions; determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school; administer and control the school's property; buildings and grounds which include school hostels; encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school; recommend to the head of department the appointment of educators at the school; subject to the Educators Employment Act and the Labour Relations Act, recommend to the head of department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school; subject to the Public Service Act and the Labour Relations Act, at the request of the head of department, allow the reasonable use under fair conditions of the facilities for educational programmes not conducted by the school; discharge all other functions given to the governing body by SASA; and discharge functions that are set out by the member of the executive council in the Provincial Gazette.

Section 21 on the hand includes a list of functions that may be allocated to a governing body by the head of department. Section 21 allows the governing body to apply in writing to the head of department should they need to be allocated the following functions: to maintain and improve the school's property, buildings and grounds; to determine the extra-curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options according to the provincial curriculum policy; to develop a budget for the school; to buy textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school; to pay for services to the school and other functions consistent with this Act and any applicable law.

Given the fact that there are sections describing the functions of SGB in SASA, it clearly proves that there is a demarcation with regard to what the governing body should or should not do. For example, only section 21 Schools' Governing Bodies are allowed to purchase textbooks. And this means that not all governing bodies are allocated such powers.

In closing, decentralisation by itself is no panacea for all national educational problems as Sebhat (2003) argues, and it is for this reason, therefore, that Fiske (1996) and Bray (1984) suggest that it is vital when designing a decentralisation plan to be aware of other factors that might have an impact on its success or its failure. This then means that effective decentralisation will need a well-conceived plan for all stakeholders irrespective of their qualifications in education, to share powers entrusted to them.

## **2.9 Social Capital Theory**

### **2.9.1 How it informs the study**

This study has adopted social capital theory as its main theoretical framework. The core idea behind social capital theory is that „social networks have value“ and that „social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups“ (Putnam, 2000, p.19). There seems to be strong argument that societal levels of educational attainment are linked to levels of economic development. Some researchers have provided evidence that shows that the combined inputs of different interested stakeholders, families, community and the state’s involvement in education add value in ameliorating the outcomes (Mbatha, 2005 citing Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Braatz and Putnam, 1996; Frances et al, 1998 in The World Bank, 2003 and Putnam, 2000). My rationale, therefore, for adopting social capital theory for this study is that it affirms that parental involvement in their children’s education is beneficial to the children. Social capital theory supports the idea of involving parents and communities in the life of the school (Ramisur, 2007), as it has been contended that when parents, teachers, learners and the community interact, the governance of the school is likely to improve. Further, the basic beliefs underlying social capital theory, when they are interacted with, seem to enable people to build their communities and create a sense of belonging (ibid).

### **2.10 How social capital linked to the study**

According to Dekker and Unslaner (2001) social capital is about the value of social networks, bonding similar people and creating bridges between diverse people, with norms of reciprocity.

Putnam (2000) writes about the first known use of this concept of social capital by the state supervisor of rural schools in West Virginia called Hanifan. In 1916 Hanifan argued the importance of community involvement for successful schools, invoking the idea of “social capital” to explain why. For Hanifan (1916), social capital referred to:

*Those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely ;  
good will fellowship, sympathy, and families who make up a social unit.....*

**The individual**, which is one parent or an SGB of one school, is helpless socially, if left to him or herself. If he or she comes into contact with **neighbours**, which is a whole SGB or a group of SGBs from other schools, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole **community**, which is a school in this study. The community or SGB as a whole will benefit by the co-operation of all its parts which are members of the SGB, while the **individual** or each member of the SGB will find in these associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy and the fellowship of his or her **neighbours** and or other SGB members

Putnam (2000) and his group also claim that, social capital is a key component to building and maintaining democracy. Social capital can be translated to the communal value of all „social networks“ and the inclinations that rise from these networks to do things for each other. This further suggests that while democracy through individualism lives on, „social networks“ toward the common goal are exercised, with one or the other adding value to the group. Some aspects of this concept are approached in most social science fields. Some trace the modern usage of the term to Jane Jacobs in 1960 who, while not explicitly defining the term „social capital“ used it in an article with a reference to the value of networks. Sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman have also shown interest in social capital theory with reference to the value of networks. In the late 1990’s, social capital theory gained more popularity as researchers, including the World Bank research programmes, began to use it as a focus in their studies.

Bourdieu in Mbatha (2005, p.18) defines social capital „as the collective of the actual or potential resources which are concurrent to control of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual associate and recognition or other words to membership in a group-which provides each of its members with the support of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word“ (Mbatha, 2005).

According to Mbatha (2005), Foley and Edwards (1999) highlight two elements of social capital to networks and norms that create reciprocity. They contend that social capital is best conceived as access (networks) plus resources. Putman (2000) on the otherhand defines social capital in this way:

*Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals-social networks norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”. The difference is that civic virtue is most powerful*

*when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital (cited in Smith, 2001).*

*A more comprehensive and broader definition of social capital by The World Bank (1999) is that „social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of society's social interactions... Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society; it is the glue that holds them together. Social capital includes education, governance, religious institutions, neighbourhood groups and associations, cultural diversity, languages, libraries and other knowledge archives, health care facilities, community development corporations, legal and police systems and so forth (The World Bank, 1999).*

All these statements prove that working together with the School Governing Bodies, their members can also shape the quality of education. To have quality education, the school should have quality governance as well as quality management joined together in one vision. This requires each member of the school governance to invest in it through their efforts and support for the benefit of his or her child.

## **2.11 Advantages and disadvantages of social capital**

a) Advantages of social capital include adding value to joint ethics and norms among members of a group that permit collaboration (Fukuyama, 1997), and the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks and even other structures (Portes, 1996). Social capital can also provide the process whereby the social actors can generate and bring together their network connections within and between organizations to gain access to other social actors' resources (Knoke, 1999). And lastly, it provides a culture of trust and tolerance where extensive networks of voluntary associations can surface (Inglehart, 1997).

b) What is noted, however, is that the same characteristics of social capital that enable beneficial, productive benefits have the potential to cause negative externalities (Aldridge, David, and Sarah, 2002). Social capital sometimes acts as a barrier as its downside is fostering the behavior through networks and this exacerbates rather than improves performance of the SGBs for an example. It can also be a restriction to individuals' movements and choices as there is a high risk of negative social capital in rural and urban poverty situations (Small, 2002). And lastly, every feature of social structure can be social capital in the sense that it produces desired outcomes, but can also be a liability in the sense that it produces unwanted results.

### **2.12 How social capital impact on the rural parent component of the SGBs**

Parental involvement in their children's education is always regarded as beneficial to the children. It is argued, then, that should parents, teachers, learners and the community interact, and schools are likely to improve. The social capital theory is like an engine that supports and involves parents and communities in the life of the school. The basic belief of social capital is also that it provides interaction which enables people to build communities. Social capital includes education, governance, religious institutions, neighbourhood groups and associations, cultural diversity, languages and some systems such as police (The World Bank, 1999, p. 218).

Coleman (1991) contended that the best way to get better schools was to foster closer ties with parents, teachers and learners. Social capital allows citizens to resolve collective problems with greater ease. Putnam (2000) echoed Coleman's (1991) contention, suggesting that people benefit more if they co-operate with each other, but at the same time, individuals may avoid their responsibilities hoping that others would do the work. He noted the following additional advantages of social capital: child development is powerfully shaped by social capital because of trust within the families, schools, peer groups and the larger community-these all affect the child's opportunities and choices, and, as a result, their behaviour and development; and, in high social capital areas, public spaces are cleaner, people are friendlier and the streets are safer. Putnam (2000) also maintained that higher crime rates in some areas are, partially because people are shirking community organisations and neglecting the youth (Ramisur, 2007).

### **2.13 The influence of Social Capital Theory on the Nature and Functions of the SGBs**

According to MacBeath (2007), the complex interweave of circumstance is encapsulated in social capital theory which explores the pattern and intensity of networks among people, the support they receive from those networks, and the sense of well being and empowerment that they derive from shared values and the trust they have in their environment. MacBeath further links the social capital theory with three key measures namely; *levels of trust, social membership as well as access to networks*.

First, **levels of trust** are measured by whether individuals trust their neighbours, whether they consider their neighbourhood a place where people help each other and the degree of apprehension about local people who are seen to pose a threat. **Social membership**, on the other hand, is measured by the number of organizations, clubs, societies or social groups to which an individual belongs. Lastly, **access to membership** is measured in terms of people's ability to make and maintain links in informal situations which offer friendship and support outside of formal organizations. These may be casual or short term (which are „weak links“) or close personal relationships („strong links“) which develop through extended families, neighbourhoods, local associations (including school governing bodies) and in a range of informal and formal meeting places.

Putnam (2000) and his followers have asserted that social capital is the key towards maintaining democracy. Research has also shown that higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, better employment outcomes, lower crime rates and higher educational achievement. Those with extensive networks are more likely not only to be housed, healthy, hired and happier, but also more willing and able to access and find success within the educational system.

Social capital theory uses three descriptive concepts which help deepen insights into the importance of formal and informal networks. These are *bonding social capital*, *bridging social capital* and *linking social capital* (MacBeath, et al, 2007).

Bonding social capital, according to MacBeath (2007) is characterised by strong bonds, for example among family members or among members of the same ethnic group which help „getting by“ in life. Putman (2000) suggests that bonding capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity. However, MacBeath warns that strong social bonding, whether within the family or in friendship groups, religious sects, clubs or gangs, can be an inhibiting factor, cutting people off from wider social contacts which may offer alternative perspectives.

Bridging social capital is the avenue of escape from insular and inward-looking association (MacBeath, 2007). „Weak links“ are often realised when bridging social capital is seen in the connections made with other people who stand outside the immediate reference group and its value orientations (MacBeath, 2007, p.43). Bridging may also be virtual in nature, in which people establish links with others on a national and international basis via internet. Putnam (2000) argues, like MacBeath (2007), that „without bridging social capital, bonding groups can become isolated and disenfranchised from the rest of society and, most importantly, from groups with which bridging must occur in order to denote an “increase” in social capital“.

„Linking social capital“, the third concept, is a form of bridging that describes a different kind of social network (MacBeath, 2007). MacBeath further suggests that while social bridging is collegial and „horizontal“ in nature, linking social capital works on the vertical plane, that is, within hierarchies of power and influence. Being able to make, and use, connections with people in positions of power and authority can prove to be the key to accessing vital resources-financial, social and educational.

Another critical concept in social capital theory that both Putnam (2000) and MacBeath (2007) discuss is „reciprocity“. They draw attention to the notion of „reciprocity“ as a social norm which can enhance the trustworthiness of individuals that make up a group. Putnam (2000) makes a distinction between *specific* and *generalised* reciprocity, and notes that „a society characterised by generalised reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society“ (Putnam, 2000, p.21). Specific reciprocity in this study refers to SGB members of the same school working towards the common goal of an informed decision. This is like „let us all invest our inputs in this matter, for example, *I will do this for you if you do that for me*“ (Putnam, 2000, p.20). Generalised reciprocity in the context of this study refers to the influence of former members of the SGBs on decision-making even if they are no longer members of that SGB, because they have been exposed to what the governance of the school expects parents to invest for the benefit of their children. This means if they invest their thoughts in SGB and parents meetings, their children might benefit and at the end boost the economy within the environment where parents belong.

Given the discussion above, it is clear that my study and social capital theory bond together. When applied to my study, the mentioned concepts of social capital theory are reflected in the workings and dynamics of the SGB as a whole, and the parent component as a separate group. Bonding can be viewed when the SGB as a whole works collaboratively and produces good results, while bridging can be considered in two ways: first, a cluster of SGBs may share challenges they face within the governance in order to improve the results. *That is connections made with other people*. Second, bridging can be viewed when the SGB joins other societies for the benefit of the school. That is, establishing links with others on a national or international basis (MacBeath, 2007). To echo this statement, Putnam (2000) suggests that joining an organisation cuts in half an individual’s chance of dying within next year. Linking social capital also works on the vertical plane that is within hierarchies of power and influence. This means making use of relations the SGBs have in order to access resources and funding for education in their schools.

#### **2.14 Challenges faced by School Governing Bodies**

Most of the challenges inherent in the notion of parental involvement stem from two sources (Niithembu citing Ndlazi, 1999). The first is the crippling effects of the apartheid education system as discussed by Ndlazi (1999) in his unpublished thesis, „Parents“ non-involvement in

school governance". According to Ndlazi (1999), parents view their reasons for not fully participating as caused by lack of finance, work commitments, illiteracy with regard to the interpretation of policies, their family problems, as well as a diminishing value of education. The second is the fact that the SGB (parent component), especially in rural schools, do not see nor understand what their roles in school governance are. They believe that school should take full responsibility for their children, and therefore, attempts to involve parents were viewed as the school failing its responsibility (Christie, 2001, p.56). Other challenges, according to Khuzwayo and Chikoko (2009), are that of decision-making authority that at times causes conflict among the SGBs parent component and SMTs. The cause of the problems here are that this authority seems to lie with the principal and SMT (Khuzwayo and Chikoko, 2009, p. 152).

Challenges with stakeholder participation in school governance are by no means unique to developing countries like South Africa. According to Jones (1998), SGBs are given more powers and influence than ever before. Such bodies are even required to be involved in making important decisions that have an impact on the quality of education. But the SGBs' parent component is most of the time, confused concerning what they should be engaged in. For example, they tend to be unfamiliar with the meeting procedures, the language genres in regard to policies (*lack of appropriate legislation knowledge*), which exacerbates the problems of what and how they should contribute to their respective school governances. SGBs also feel inhibited by the presence of the school component who seems to have more knowledge and perceive their role as simply *rubber stamping* what others have decided upon (Jones, 1998, p. 329).

## **2.15 Conclusion**

In this second chapter, I presented an overview on what School Governance entails, and looked at how it differs from professional management and leadership, both of which are responsibilities of the Head of Department (HOD). Governance and management are there at school for one purpose only; a learner. The rationale for governance was presented, as governance partnerships laid a foundation for democracy. Parent involvement was discussed because as revealed in studies such as that of the World Bank (1999), „parents can provide or invest resources to the school providing education for their children“.

Decentralisation, its forms, its rationale as well as its comparison of international and local trends was also discussed. With these I have sought to establish challenges that are being encountered locally as well as by international countries when decentralising or devolving power. Decentralisation, as per the delegation of the Central Government, has led to School Governing Bodies' accountabilities and their functions. My literature review also clarified the different concepts after dealing with social capital theory and its background. It discussed the few advantages and disadvantages and how social capital impacts and influences the nature and

functions of rural SGBs. This chapter also presented some difficulties and challenges faced by school governing bodies, looking at what other literature reveals in terms of the participation of the parent component in the SGBs. The literature review assisted in designing approaches and / or methodology to be used in the study, as presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study is an in-depth exploration of the nature of participation of the parent component in rural schools' governing bodies in Ntabamhlophe Circuit. Its focus is on primary schools' governance, specifically the challenges and the capacity of parents in rural schools to meet their responsibilities in terms of decision-making in the school governance issues as per the stipulations of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA). Briefly, this study explores the nature of parental participation in school governance by looking at functions or the roles performed by the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies (SGB) in the implementation of SASA guidelines.

Against this background, this chapter attempts to give a detailed account of the research design and approach pursued in the selection of respondents, and the instruments and techniques used in data collection.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This is a qualitative study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit under Estcourt Circuit Management Centre. Qualitative research was chosen for this study because it enables the researcher to deal with participants' perception and attitudes. Through the qualitative approach, the researcher is able to probe questions which develop the study further. Qualitative methods allow inquiry into the parental involvement phenomenon, „with its real-life context“, (Yin in Niitembu 2006, p. 36). Parents are exercising their legal rights to play a major role in the education of their children, through participating in school governance as it is stated in South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996.

I further used this approach to sort of „excavate“ inside the respondents and reveal the real life situation of a particular context. This was to „catch the complexity of a single case“, as Stake (1995) contends. As I wanted to investigate the nature of rural parental involvement in schools, I viewed the qualitative study as the more fitting approach. Therefore, this study seeks to enhance the reader's understanding of this „fact“, hopes to aid discovery of new meaning as well as extend the reader's understanding of the phenomenon.

### **3.3 The Outline of the Research Paradigm**

Middlewood (1999, p.12) describes paradigm as „the frameworks that function as maps or guides for scientific communities, determining imperative problems or matters for its members in order to address and define acceptable theories or explanations, methods and techniques to solve defined problems“. A shift in a paradigm according to Sebhat (2003, p. 50), may take place when a main paradigm is overthrown and a new paradigm takes its place. Mertens in Niithembu (2006, p. 32) cites paradigm as a way of looking at the world and as composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action.

This study was undertaken using qualitative research paradigm as it is already stated in the research design in above.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

The qualitative methodological approach on which this study is based leads to the adoption of techniques of semi-structured interviews, observation and documentary analysis. These techniques enabled me to access information on the background of my respondents, their position on the nature of activities they are involved in, their perceptions and or views with regard to their experiences. These techniques enabled me to gain an objective and reliable understanding of parental participation in school governance while at the same time; I attempted to incorporate social capital theory as the means of gauging the aptness of my data.

#### ***3.4.1 Interviews***

Most of the data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 157) assert that the semi-structured interview is the one which tends to be most favoured by educational researchers since it allows in-depth understanding to be achieved by providing the interviewer the opportunity to probe and expand the respondents“ responses. I decided to use a semi-structured interview because it enabled me to structure the responses of the interviewees so as to gain information on the required area. It also allowed me to probe necessary questions which might have arisen during the interview period. The significance of a semi-structured interview is that it enables researchers to explore the responses made by the interviewee while at the same time controlling tendencies to move away from the topic in question. With semi-structured interviews, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. (Sebhat, 2003).

Furthermore, with semi-structured interviews, the interviewer can be flexible in terms of the order in which the discussion topics are considered, and perhaps more importantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more extensively on issues raised by the researcher. In supporting this statement, Cohen et al (2000, p. 278) emphasise the advantages of semi-structured interviews as follows:

*The framing of questions for a semi-structured interview considers prompts and probes. Prompts enable the interviewer to clarify topics or questions, whilst probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify or qualify their response, thereby addressing richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty that are some of the hallmarks of successful interviewing.*

I stated to all the respondents that they have a choice in choosing the language they felt comfortable with so that they would be able to express themselves easily. This included educators as well, as most of them seemed comfortable in expressing themselves in IsiZulu. With some educators I used English only in conducting the interview. For parents' respondents, I had to conduct interviews in IsiZulu as it is their local language. All their questions were written in this local language.

My questions for the parent component of SGB members included introductory questions to ascertain whether the respondent was a local person, and establish the distance between him or her and the school. I wanted to know whether he or she was employed, to ascertain his or her availability, should the school need him or her. I wanted to know his or her formal schooling; this would ascertain whether he or she could interact with documents that the department issues to support them, including policies. Lastly, I wanted to determine the age of the respondent, as this would give me the idea of his or her level of communication and the generation he or she fits into. The above information is informed or incorporated with the social capital theory which advocates that stakeholders like parents should invest their interests, knowledge as well as the skills in their children through the school governance where they are mostly represented.

I used a tape recorder for each and every interview conducted, to give both myself and the interviewee opportunity to talk. One of the advantages of audio recording was that I could spend time being a better listener instead of trying to record notes and concurrently be a good listener (Walker, 1985). Transcripts were later written up from the recordings.

### ***3.4.2 Piloting the study***

To reduce vague and or confusing or insensible questions, my research questions were first piloted with two educators who served in the SGB of my school one a principal of another school and a parent serving in the SGB of my school. Bell (2002) contends that all data gathering instruments should be tested to check their appropriateness in terms of whether instructions are clear and whether they are relevant to the research questions.

Therefore, the main purpose of my pilot study was to remove any grey areas from the interview schedules, so that the respondents in the main study would not experience difficulties in answering the questions in our discussion (Bell, 2002). Piloting the interview schedules enabled me to rephrase and/ or rewrite the questions so that the answers of the participants would develop my study. Neuman (1994) cited in Ramisur (2007) regards the use of pilot studies as one way of improving reliability of information obtained during the research process. Although this exercise, may consume more time, it is likely to produce reliable measures.

### ***3.4.3 Observation***

According to Mbatha (2005) observation of meetings helps to elucidate what transpires during parents' meetings. Marshall and Rossman (1995) write that observation entails „the systemic noting and recording of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social settings chose for study“ (Marshall and Rossman, 1995, p. 79). It is apparent that observation is a fundamental and critical method in all qualitative inquiry as this is the method that assumes that behaviour is purposive and expressive of deeper values and beliefs.

Observation of the SGB meeting with School A was conducted and most of the aspects that are related to meetings were observed. School B fell outside of my observation schedule as the school was trying to hold a meeting for the new SGB members. And this took time as the quorum was not met. This on its own proves the fact that parents in rural areas in particular, lack the knowledge and commitment in terms of participation in their schools. Eventually, the school did elect new members for its SGB.

Stenhouse cited in Mbatha (2005) asserts that observation with whatever amount of participation is obviously an important part of a case study. In School A I observed that though the chairperson had the agenda for the meeting, the principal would conduct the meeting and the chairperson would only emphasise what the principal had suggested. This highlighted to me the weaknesses the chairperson has with regard to facilitating the meetings.

#### ***3.4.4 Documentary Analysis***

Sebhat (2003, p. 62) contends that documentary analysis and observation are research tools that tend to be used as an enhancement to interviews. „They may be used to attain background material and develop research questions“, Middlewood et al (1999, p. 143) and Marshall and Rossman (1995, p. 85) have the same opinion that documents may be used to discover the official view of school aims or to classify policy statements, or alternatively documents might provide an official record of events, such as SGBs meetings.

School A has various minute books which including the SGB minute book where only matters that concern SGB are recorded. It is also reveals the planning of each and every parents meeting to take place. There is a Parent- SGB minute book. This is a joint parents and School Governing Body record of all the deliberations and undertakings that have taken place. Sub-committees such as finance, maintenance and nutrition committees also have minute`s books for their meetings. School A utilises letters, a communication book and/ or memoranda as well as verbal announcements for communicating, should they need to have a meeting. Other documents analysed were a log book and diaries. I did not want to look at the principal`s diary as in most cases this is a more personal document, but he was fair enough to reveal that he uses a diary for planning and for reflecting, for example, if there was a parent meeting, was the quorum met? What were the outstanding issues? Anticipated dates of the next meeting? The log book is also used for important entries. In this book, the school records all the outcomes of the events. This includes parents` meeting that were held that day.

Documents that were analysed from School B reflect the same information as School A, though, in addition, School B keeps attendance registers for the meetings. Those attendance registers reveal the parents` names as well as the learner`s name. Such records also show how parents are involved and are participating in their children`s school. Among the other things in principal`s log book, his entries includes visitation of parents to the school, should they deem it necessary to meet the principal with any issues pertaining their children`s well being. Arbor Days, Cultural Days, and farewell functions of grade 7 are also recorded in the log book. Formal policy statements are said to be informed by the decisions taken in parents meetings.

As demonstrated above, document analysis was my secondary source of data, and was solely used to enhance my interviews and my observations.

#### ***3.4.5 Data Analysis***

Bogdan & Biklein (1992) contend that analysis involves working with data, organising them, breaking them into smaller and more manageable units, searching for patterns, discovering what is

important and deciding what to let somebody know. This means data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other accumulated materials to increase the researcher's understanding, so as to be able to present information and pass it on to others.

My interview schedules were written in IsiZulu for parents, and though all educators' schedules were in English, some of them resorted to using IsiZulu in our discussions. (See Examples). This required me to listen several times to the taped interview. I had to then write the transcriptions in English, First in my note book, and then type it in the computer's word processing programme (Microsoft Word).

The data collected was conceptualised so that it would enable me to appropriately interpret it.

### **3.5 Research Sites**

I am a principal of one of the rural primary schools which form part of the Estcourt Circuit Management Centre (Estcourt CMC). Estcourt CMC constitutes four circuits. One of the circuits is Ntabamhlophe which services schools that are all in deep rural areas. My two research sites are primary schools in this circuit. The schools chosen will not however, be identified by their names for the purpose of anonymity. In my study these schools are referred to as School A and School B.

The reason why I chose these two schools was for my own convenience with regard to the accessibility and the fact that I am known to the principals and some staff. Though these schools are in a rural location, both of them are developing in terms of infrastructure. Both schools enrolment increases and they are recognised as outstanding schools. The principal of School A has recently been awarded an outstanding performance award in leadership and management of the schools by the Othukela District in which we all serve. Both schools comprise of grade R to grade 7 classes.

Lastly, both schools comprise of educators, non-educators, security personnel, cleaners (general assistant) as well as an administration clerk. I am mentioning these because they constitute membership in the SGB.

### **3.6 Selection of Participants**

After the ethical clearance was approved, I requested permission from the department of education through Estcourt CMC, and the school principals as well as their chairpersons. I was introduced to all SGB members for both schools. The study topic was explained to them and they all happily agreed to assist me in my research. According to Bell (1987), three issues are highlighted in terms of research ethics. These include receiving clearance through the official

channels, protecting the anonymity of the respondents, and confidentiality of records. It is for this reason that each and every respondent was provided with a consent letter which was signed before and after the interview.

Interviews were conducted between March 2009 and July 2009, the reason being that there were many long holidays between these months. An other reason was the fact that teachers, though they agreed to take part in the discussion, sometimes, all of a sudden claimed to be busy with some projects. This meant that appointments were sometimes not honoured by some respondents. Thus I had to drive to and from the same school several times. Similarly, some teachers preferred to be interviewed at school and not after hours. The rights and preferences of all these teachers were observed as my intention was to gather data irrespective of what time that data collected. The parent component were positive in this regard, though, the signing of a consent letter was like taking them to jail, even after I had explained this time and again. This is an example of what came out when parent 2 of School B was asked to say anything she would like to say:-

*Yes, I want to know why you wanted me to sign the paper, (consent letter) when you are not teaching here?*

### **3.6.1 Research Population**

As mentioned above, my research sites were both primary schools. This means that learners were silenced in terms of being represented on the SGB. The assumptions are that both parents and educators represent the learners' interest. Learners become members of the SGB once the school has grade eight or higher.

The research population for each school thus constitutes:-

The principal; chairperson or deputy chairperson of the SGB; two parents; two educators and one non-educator from each school.

### **3.6.2 Rationale**

The following rationale explains the research population used. The term *educator* was also used in the place of *teacher* or vice versa. These terms in this study describe one and the same personnel who can be a post level one, post level two or level three in the case of a representative to the SGB. I decided to omit the age and the qualifications of the school component in my study as my focus was on the parent components.

- ***The Principals:*** The interviews with the Principals were deemed necessary because they represent the department of education at their schools, and for that reason they assumed

an *ex-officio* status. Principals are the heads of the schools, therefore it is their duty to see to it that departmental and school policies are understood and implemented. Principals are the mediators between the staff and the parents as well as the community. In most cases parents depend on the principals' ability to solve their children's problems that are encountered on daily basis.

- **The Chairpersons:** The interviews with the chairpersons were just as important, as they play a pivotal role in leading school governance matters as stipulated in SASA. Chairpersons are the officials that design agendas of the schools meetings, be it for the parents or for the SGB members of schools. Most documents that are attached to schools are counter signed by the chairpersons. Before payment is done, it requires approval from the chairpersons. They also recommend the appointment of teachers who are entering the school as well as transfer of teachers who are leaving the school. There are many other responsibilities.
- **Parents:** These are the most important clients of schools. Without parents there would be no schools because there would be no learners to teach. Interviews with the parents thus form an integral part of my study as they are the ones who should elect SGBs, formulate policies for the school as well as take decisions about their schools; hence my study is to explore the nature and function of the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies. As it has been explained earlier, only the parent component of the study reveals the range of the ages as well as qualification. This gave me an insight in terms of their qualifications, that is, to what extent is it possible for them to read or write. With regard to their ages, I wanted to establish their experiences and whether they can still be employed within the current policies.
- **Educators:** The interview with educators was also deemed necessary because they are always at school and, in most cases, with the learners. They do meet parents during teacher-child-parents day. They in most cases and sometimes unintentionally, observe the behaviour of parents during the parents meeting as well as the SGB meetings. Educators are supposed to be mediators between other educators and parents; however, from my experience, this cannot be confirmed in some of the schools.
- **Non-educators:** These were very important in my interviews, because they also constitute the SGBs of the schools. Non-educators refer to personnel such as the administration clerk, security, general assistant or grounds man and any other personnel who are working at the school but are not an educator. Non-educators can be very influential in the decisions taken at schools as these, in most cases, are living around the schools. They also observe what is taking place within the schools. The elected members are also responsible for disseminating information to all other non-educators.

### **3.7 Ethics issues**

As I have mentioned earlier in 3. 5 (Research sites), I am a rural primary school principal. Therefore, I had to make sure that I was not influencing the participants or contaminating the data through my experience. I had been a teacher with other participants until I was promoted and became a principal in a same Circuit Management Centre. This means I was well known by all participants. This further means there was the danger that the participants might not disclose important information to the researcher, perceiving he might „steal“ their ideas since he is the principal.

However, all the necessary information was given to them, that is, the confidentiality and the rights of participants. This was to avoid problems, which fortunately did not occur. As the researcher explained earlier, in the interviews, the language used was fitting to the participants. The researcher used IsiZulu with all parents including the chairpersons. Some of educators preferred English while some wanted IsiZulu as a means of communication. This was to make all participants feel at ease.

I mentioned all ethical considerations to the participants and put more clarified what the participants can or cannot do during the research, meaning, their right to volunteer in the study as well as withdrawal at any time from the research. Also participants“ anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed. The names of the schools as well were protected and School A and School B was used. During data presentations I referred to the educators as; educator 1 from school A, educator 2 from school A and the same to school B. But principals, non-educators and chairpersons were placed as principal of school A or B. The same applies to other participants.

Lastly, all participants were given consent forms which were written in English (Appendix B.1) and IsiZulu (Appendix B.2). These letters were for all participants in the School Governing Body irrespective of the portfolio in the school.

### **3.8 Limitations of the study**

This study was conducted in two primary schools in one Circuit. As such, the findings and the suggestions apply only to the primary schools in this Circuit. Because of this limitation of using only two research sites, this study makes no attempt in generalising its findings.

One of the limitations was the time factor. The schedule for the data collection coincided with the end of the term of office of the SGB members who were elected in 2006. Their term had elapsed

and the new members were to be elected at the end of March, though this was later extended to July 2009.

Educators also had an impact in limiting my study as they changed dates and times even after they had agreed to take part in the discussion. Sometimes I had to drive to and from the school for re-scheduling. I did not have the option of interviewing other educators than, those who were serving in the SGB.

I have mentioned previously that my interviews with parents were conducted in IsiZulu. I then had to translate their responses into English and in some cases I might have used my own interpretations and might not have captured the original meaning by the interviewees.

Lastly, as a principal of the rural primary school myself, I have to acknowledge the fact that my own beliefs, experiences gained while I was a District Master Trainer, values and judgement cannot be overlooked in what I was studying. And therefore, I might have contaminated the data myself when probing during the discussions.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the overall methodology adopted for this research study. It has provided an in-depth discussion of the methodology that was employed. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations as well as documentary analysis. This chapter spelled out the research sites used with their values and their culture of doing things. Data was collected from the people as well as it was evident in the communication patterns inherent at both schools. A discussion of ethical issues was included, with these primarily concerned with human relations issues.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The central aim of the research was to explore the nature and function of the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies with regard to the current policies and practices of school governance and parents' involvement in decision-making. The key question to address in the investigation concerns the competence in the parent component of SGBs and their ability to put into practice the policies as stipulated in SASA. The secondary question further explores the role played by „social capital“ in the SGBs.

The data gathered was obtained through semi-structured interviews, observation as well as through documentary analysis. This chapter therefore, presents two sections. The first section presents data collected in two schools which is categorised into broad themes with numerous sub-headings. Some of the sub-headings are grouped together as they draw on for the same data. The second section deals with the analysis of the findings and how it is linked to „social networks“ as social capital theorists suggest. Profiles of the two schools precede the presentations.

#### **4.2 Profiles of Two Schools**

##### **4.2.1 School A**

School A's documents disclosed that the school started in a church in 1944 by a community member. The pseudonym was used to protect the school. The parents employed an unqualified female teacher who started Sub-standards A and B (grade 1 and 2), who taught both classes. In 1945, the same teacher, being unqualified, was then employed by the Department of Education. In 1946 to 1948, four mud classrooms were built, and standards one and two (grade 3 and 4) were introduced. The school's first principal was appointed and employed within these years. Standards 3 and 4 (grades 5 and 6) were also introduced. And lastly, standard 5 (grade 7), their highest grade was also introduced.

The school endured some difficulties in terms of its premises as all of the classrooms were built in mud. In 1976 the same school, under these circumstances, gave birth to a Secondary School which was later given its name and the status it deserves. In 1978 the Secondary School moved to the new site which was prepared by the School Committee, equivalent to School Governing Body, of School A. The school has been developing since then, having series of principals. Teachers were employed while others were retiring.

Under the current leadership, the school has established a computer lab, a domestic science room and has built very beautiful classrooms with bricks. Its administration block emulates the ones built in urban and town schools. The enrolment has increased, enabling the school to employ a deputy principal, security personnel, a clerk and a cleaner.

School A has been showered with awards by the Department of Education and in 2007, the principal was given an award for outstanding performance in Leadership and Management of the school. The school was elected as the education centre for the neighbouring primary schools. Though its enrolment is fluctuating because of other schools built nearby, School A is always able to keep its enrolment high. This means that no teachers have to be redeployed to other schools.

#### **4.2.2 School B**

The school's documents revealed that it was established and registered in 1982. Its enrolment at the time was 112 learners with 3 educators. Before its registration, the school housed its learners in different households. From 1982 the school has had three principals, including the current one. It has developed since 1982 when it was built with Masonite boards and the floor had to be covered with cow-dung. In 1989 the school was fortunate enough to secure funding which assisted its rebuilding using ash blocks.

In the year 2003, due to enrolment increase, the Department of Education also assisted the school to build the first three brick classrooms. The administration block was established in 2004 by the Department of Education and the Department of Works jointly.

During the year of study in 2009, the school had 848 learners with 22 educators, an administration clerk, a cleaner and a security personl paid by the School Governing Body through its school fees.

The school is doing very well in terms of results. It has also been recognised for being a well managed primary school in the circuit. At times the circuit meetings are hosted by the school as it also accessible. What is interesting, about this school is that the chairperson and one member have been members of the SGB since its inception in 1982.

#### **4.3. Findings**

The nature of the parent component of the two schools reveals that most of them are unemployed. Those who can support their families do so after they have engaged with gardening projects, or some farm chickens and cows. Being unemployed might be a barrier to their being able to network with other SGBs, as some struggle just to put a plate on the table. Illiteracy is one of the impediments that impacts negatively on being involved effectively in the governance of these two schools. From the interviews and discussions held, it was apparent that parents are unaware of the

changes that are taking place within the system of education pertaining to governance. Some of the parents have been on SGBs since the inception of the schools, but this seems to have not added value in terms of understanding the governance issues.

Parent components as members of the SGBs are obliged to engage effectively with the functions and roles of the School Governing Bodies as they are mentioned in chapter 2. Some of their roles are to adopt school policies that pertain to administering finances, administering school property and if the school is section 21 with function c (These are schools which are given powers by the Department as per SASA section 21) it has to purchase textbooks and other educational materials. Both section 20 and section 21 schools have to recommend the employment of educators. This means understanding prescripts such as the *Educators Employment Act* as well as the *Labour Relations Act* and others. My findings have also revealed that parent components in SGBs cannot interpret Departmental policies as well. With regard to executing responsibilities that have been devolved by the central government, some seem to be frustrated while others decide to leave everything to the management of the school.

The reasons for the poor level of involvement by the parent component were perceived differently by different stakeholders, viz, the parent component themselves, the educator and non- educator components as well as the principals of both schools. Therefore, the data collected has developed issues and these issues emerged as themes. These themes are; **parents roles in the SGB, educators' and non-educators' perceptions** as well as **principals' perceptions about parents**. From these themes, sub-themes developed or emerged. These are clearly explained in the next paragraph.

#### **4.3.1. Parents roles in the SGB**

##### ***4.3.1.1 Parents' rights and responsibilities***

It is evident that most parent components in rural schools" governing bodies still lack knowledge in terms of their rights and responsibilities. This study is congruent with the findings of Niithembu (2006), Sebhat (2003), Ramisur (2007) and others that „parents, due to the lack of education and lack of general understanding of educational terms, are ineffective in executing their duties“. It is for this reason that Sarason (1997) regarded the SGBs" responsibilities as awesome and difficult when it comes to the parent component.

In my study, parent components of both schools tried very hard to prove their eligibility in terms of their roles, but the evidence of my data shows the opposite. When a parent from school B was asked about the position she holds in the SGB she responded in this manner:

*Mhm, what is this? Who sign the cheques? No, I sign the cheques.*

It was obvious that parents are unaware of their responsibilities and this means that they do not know what the law says regarding their status. This parent should have known by that time that she was a treasurer. Apparently the mentoring obligation of the department is absent.

#### ***4.3.1.2. SGB Election Criteria***

In terms of South African Schools Act 84, of 1996, the procedures of the election of SGB members are well articulated. This sets out who is eligible for being elected and who cannot be elected. It states categorically the functions of the electoral officer, among them, to keep the voters roll, which is the list of only registered „parents“ that send their children to that particular school.

When the chairperson of school B was asked what qualified him to become a chairperson of the school, he replied by saying:

*It is to manage and understand all the pillars of the school.*

*Yes, it includes your loyalty and trustworthiness to the school.*

Another parent of the same school with regard to the same question told me this:

*It's that I always wish that the school develops and function properly.*

These were good attributes from these two parents but these statements do not qualify them to be elected. SASA stipulates very clear that „a parent should have a child at school“. And in terms of the election of the office bearers such as chairpersons, parents in the meeting can only elect the required number according to the school's statistics or PPN (Post Provisioning Norm). This means now that only the elected parents in the SGB will elect the office bearers such as chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer and other members (SASA, 1996).

#### ***4.3.1.3. Parents Cannot Lead***

Schools are no longer the domain for teachers only. Parents are also positioned to participate irrespective of what education or the skill they have. Fullan (2001) contends that in terms of the school effectiveness, parental involvement is one of the twelve key factors that differentiate effective schools from less-effective schools. Such involvement includes school meetings, school activities and other roles parents should play. Joubert and Prinsloo (2001) assert that parents should take part in decision-making about the issues that affect their children at schools. And their views should be heard during the drawing up of school programmes.

Parents that were interviewed from both school A and school B showed interest with regard to participating in their schools' matters and activities. But all of them could not prove where they have led decisions. The only thing they could do was to suggest their views and leave them to the principals and the teachers.

In one of my discussions, one of the parents responded by saying:

*What I have done to the school is to initiate the nutrition for learners...*

*The former principal went out for donations and sponsors...*

While parents can be resourceful in thinking what can benefit their children, at the same time, their own social capital is undermined as there is no evidence of dialogue except suggesting. Both school SGBs seem to lack strong networks which would have enabled solidarity to emerge. The concept of dialogue, according to John (2009), implies trusting relationships. These should have been evidenced in parents leading discussions as they would have other stakeholders who might have provided input on their thoughts. Bourdieu (1986) defines the volume of social capital as a function of the size of the network and the volume of capital possessed by networked individuals.

#### **4.3.1.4. Bonding and Bridging**

Bonding is the relationship characterised by strong bonds within the family or among the members of the same ethnic group which have common goals (MacBeath, 1972). Bridging relationship is observed mostly when a group with a common goal initiates a connection with other groups or people who stand outside but are used as a reference group for its value (MacBeath, 1972).

In my study, some parents from both schools would claim that both these concepts exist in their SGBs. Of course even though these concepts do exist, as I interviewed only three members on parents' side from each school, I would not disagree with them. But when I asked about networking within and networking outside their SGBs, I received the following responses:

*We do share our views and we have good relationship in our SGB...*

*In terms of sharing ideas, err... we are a very clever SGB, but we*

*still need to network with those successful schools...*

*Err... no we have never done that.*

The above quotes from three parents prove that parent components are not well acquainted with the fact that relationships can create social networks which might enhance the development of

their SGBs. Each and every member does feel obliged about the development of the school; however, these obligations are not shared with others. Should these obligations be shared, as Coleman (1988) suggests, local business people with expertise in terms of governance, might invest in their SGBs. An investment in social capital is needed for the disciplinary procedures to benefit everyone. This form of social capital is inherent in the relations amongst different stakeholders in the school (ibid).

#### **4.3.1.5. SASA Document**

The South African Schools, Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) which draws together the recommendations of the White Paper 2 of 1996, is the most inclusive and comprehensive document that covers funding, organisation as well as governance of schools. SASA creates a single school system in which all people can work together to improve education quality and ensure that all children have equal rights and opportunity to learn. The basic aims of SASA are also to make education better for all and more efficient. It also creates a single non-discriminatory school system based on fundamental rights provided in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, where the rights of all people are enshrined. SASA's central principle is therefore to create new school governance structures and partnerships between the State and all stakeholders involved in education especially parents of the children at schools.

In my research, I gathered that most parents are unaware of the SASA (South African Schools Act) document and even those who have seen it, have not read it. This means that no one has thoroughly explained the use of this document to both schools. When two parents from both school A and B were asked how much they understand this document, they responded like this:

*Ehhe, though I'm old now but I know that there is this book...*

That was all by a parent 2 from the school A. While parent 1 from school B answered like this:

*There is „BP“ (meaning she forgets easily) but I do have a book  
though I'm not sure whether it is the one.*

This to me means that there might be books about the SGBs but were not well introduced to parents though they were given. As a principal myself, I do have other pamphlets, booklets and magazines other than the SASA document which enhances the comprehension of the roles and functions of the SGB. However, all these are extracts of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. This further means that their social networks are not effective and therefore, undermine their social capital in terms of trust and trustworthiness, dialogue and solidarity.

#### ***4.3.1.6. Rely Solely on the Principal***

In my study I found a great deal of information indicating that rural Schools' Governing Bodies' parent component in particular rely exclusively on the principals of their schools. Parents in the SGBs are not confident enough in executing their duties. Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998) contend that the SGBs are always at the mercy of the head teacher. As a principal myself in the rural school, I understand very well that when drawing up policies at school, I need to be proactive while guiding all the stakeholders concerned, along all the processes and procedures to be followed.

The following contributions from parents proved me correct when they stated that their principals do networking on their behalf. This is an extract from our conversation after parent 1 from school A was asked about sharing challenges with neighbouring schools:

*Mhm, no, I don't remember that, teacher, not at all. Except when a principal, when he notices a challenge or a problem,...*

And this is how parent 1 from school B commented, during our discussion:

*The principal does network with other departments' personnel.*

The follow up question asked was whether parents within the SGB network with other SGBs, and the response was:

*No, not yet, we only discuss our challenges with the principal and request him to contact more of his associates; "Now, principal can you get us help?" That is what we normally say.*

Most interviews with the parents from School A and School B concur with the fact that the parent components in the SGBs seem to leave everything to be done by the principal and the educators. Their expectations are manifested in an unacceptable approach and their actions undermine their social capital by not sharing or scouting for ideas that will enhance the development of their schools as a group. And this means the absence of bridging social capital in their institutions.

#### ***4.3.1.7. Never been to Workshops***

Section 19 of SASA stipulates that the government should organise an on going workshops for the newly elected members of the school governing bodies. My observation is that in most cases only the chairpersons, and, may be once in two years, the treasurers are called for orientation. This then does not help the whole SGB members as this might depend on whether or not the chairperson

gives feedback to the others, and when/if he or she does, will he/she convey exactly what was said or what he/she thinks at that time?

The chairperson of School A mentioned this:

*Yes ...When chairpersons are needed. I attend so that I will be well orientated even when I'm busy, but I do make time for that.*

It is apparent, however, that parents feel obliged about their duties as SGB members but they do not share common understanding. Here, Putman's (2000) suggestion about social capital in terms of the parents' expectations and obligations is important. Dekker and Unslaner (2001), as discussed in chapter 2, also highlighted that „social capital is about the value of social networks“, but in this case, parents who happened to be in the workshops cannot disseminate information in these schools, meaning they cannot communicate the information to the parents and others in the governing body. Therefore, social networks are not always present in both schools. My data shows that not all parents in both the schools have been exposed to workshops of any kind.

#### **4.3.1.8. SGB Remuneration**

When parents are elected to a governing body, it is understood that they volunteer their services to the school. This is how they can invest their skills and knowledge in their children. Some parents seem to be confused as they said to me they were not sure whether they should be paid or not. As a principal I knew about this but I wanted to establish how they feel about it. From my conversation with parent1 from School B, this was the response:

*We have given up on that. Soon we will be deposed or removed as there is going to be an election on Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> July. We haven't been paid since 1982.*

A follow up question was whether they know who should pay them, and this was the response:

*I don't know. May be it is the principal or the department? Who owns the SGBs really?*

But with parent 2 from the same school, this was different as there was a sense of understanding. This is what she said:

*In fact this time needs a lot of money as no one can survive without it, but there is a saying by the today's youth which is „volunteering“. We*

*also do that because we will earn money from our children once they are educated.*

I was astounded by this statement but I was content in hearing this from a parent in a rural area because most parents think that they must be paid for being in the SGBs. However, such attributes prove the absence of dialogue and solidarity. Should there be social networks in such schools, a dialogue would have happened and solidarity emerged. „*Underlying expectations and obligations* is the principle of **reciprocity**“. This means that parents should always look at the end results of what their children will become after they as the SGB have strengthened their levels of trust and trustworthiness. If parents invest their thoughts in the SGB, as suggested by Putnam (2000) and MacBeath (2007) in chapter 2, their children might benefit and at the end boost the economy within their environment where they live, and therefore the parents will benefit too. This does not contradict the fact that the principle of reciprocity means „*I'll do something for you if you do something for me*“; (Putnam, 2000, p.20) because at the later stage their children in whom they will have invested, will compensate them. That is exactly what was concurred by parent 2 of the School B in our discussion.

Having reflected on all the above, it is good to learn that some parents are aware of the fact that their schools are the centres of development. When they were asked whether they give their schools the support and dignity they deserve; they all responded by saying, „*We do that happily*“.

#### **4.3.2. Educators' and Non-educators' Perceptions**

##### ***4.3.2.1. View parents as the school owners***

During the interview with educators, I learned that what they said affirms how parents can provide or invest resources in the school by providing local knowledge, as the study by the World Bank (1999) reveals. This confirms that parents can be powerful resources the school should utilize, not only in contributing to the improvement of educational delivery, but also in becoming the core agents of education delivery. Winters (1993) asserts that parents must be actively involved in the running of the schools and they must feel ownership of the schools where they send their children. Therefore, they should provide much needed skills, knowledge, as well as free labour to the schools. This came out from educator 1 in School A as he articulated the following:

*Yes, they are, very much needed ... The parent component is sort of the impetus within the structure, say for instance we are talking about the school fees, because they are to determine the school fees as well, so if*

*we don't include them, it won't be easy for us to know how does the community feel about the school fees...the parent component knows the outside situation of the socio-economic situation of the community, they understand it much better than we do...they give us their view even though we determine the budget of the school, but they know from the side of the parent if the parent can be able or can afford to pay such amount of the school fees. Take for instance the issue of the uniform, err... teachers might feel that we need to change uniform, but if the parent component is not there we can't just change the uniform. But those people, they know that not all parents can afford to buy the new uniform.*

This statement, though it does not mentioned the word „ownership, does reflect the fact that the school component cannot take decisions on their own, just because they constitute the SGB of the school. They still need input from the parents. However, an unequal relationship exists as only the parents' physical presence is needed in a meeting, meaning that other components of the SGB are able to discuss and take decisions. This of course undermines the social capital in terms of a dialogue and solidarity. Educators, as they decide, for example, to change uniform, do need the presence of the parents, but not necessary their thoughts.

A School B educator 1 suggested this:

*Yes, they do play a major role but there is a lot that still need attention. I think most of them still need workshops so that they really will acknowledge the ownership of the school...They should pay attention at all times, since it is their rights.*

It is evident from the attributes above that bridging has never been facilitated and it does not exist. This educator should not have said this if there was bridging within the SGB of this school. Bridging would have enabled their social network to be strong and to challenge all the problems together instead of shifting the blame to the parent. Social capital networks anticipate that the SGB shares common goal irrespective of which component initiated the idea.

#### **4.3.2.2. Parents depend on the School Component**

My study reveals that in most cases, parents in the SGB depend on educators to do the duties which they are elected for. Educators and non-educators raised a concern that parents should understand the need for them to participate in all school activities. It goes without saying that they should play an important role as the major stakeholders. Educator 1 from School A, when asked how often the parents in the SGB initiate activities to be done at school, responded in this manner:

*I have to be honest with you, very few things that they do, if any...because most of the activities that are being done here, for an example, the prize giving ceremonies, the sports and all things like that, the fund raising, as I said I have to be honest with you; they are cheated by the educators, yes, in committees almost each and every committee, is led by the SGB member but the initiative is taken within the school by teachers, they sell the idea to the SGB members and they take it from there, usually it goes like that. Almost all the activities are initiated by educators.*

This educator was concerned that parents' involvement is significantly lacking, because even when they are to tackle certain items, those items will eventually be dealt by either the teachers or the principal. Echoing the above statement, educator 2 from School B said,

*Err,.. sometimes they give the principal the opportunity to engage on school Governance without consulting. They don't hold back the powers they are entrusted with.*

When asked about why parents in the SGB rely on teachers and the principal for activities to be done at school, the non-educator from School B responded:

*I think this is because SGB parent component are elected every three years, while the principal has been there for may be ten years and the teachers as well are at school. I think this influences that.*

I cannot speculate on this statement. However, my understanding is that the SASA states that parents must form the majority of membership in the governing body. Thus, there must be more

parents on the governing body than the combined total of the other school component with voting rights (DOE, 1997, p. 25).

Therefore, parents are not given any choice but to exercise their rights and execute their duties. Whether parents are given choices or not, social capital is characterised by effective social networks, which means that all SGB members, irrespective of the components they represents, should share a common goal. Educators and principals should not take the responsibilities of the other SGB members, but share with them. This means that trust should exist among all members as it is the central element of relationship. An absence of trust and trustworthiness diminishes the social capital of the group and makes it ineffective.

#### ***4.3.2.3. Parents Not Participating***

It is one of the parents' duties to see that all sub-committees are in place and they are functioning properly. My experience, however, is that in most schools parents have not been active *vis-a-vis* their roles as members of the SGBs. Knoke (1999, p. 28) contends that „social capital can provide the process whereby social actors can generate and bring together their network connections in order to gain access to other social actors' resources“. Therefore, the data gathered in both schools indicating that parents are fully participating in sub-committees might not be accurate. This is because, though parents are there in committees, they still do not function as they are expected to. Educators in both schools raised concerns about this. They even mentioned things like resources that are just bought without their approval as they sit in the SGB meetings. This is an example given by one educator:

*Err.. everything that needed to be bought, we have a finance committee. A finance committee does not take decisions for the SGB. What the sub-committee does is to make recommendation to the SGB, and the SGB has to take decisions. But it was not the case here, because we were only told that the decision has been taken by the sub-committee for the mother body (SGB) of which we contested because we have a policy here which states that if we are to buy anything, there must be quotations, and three of them and the SGB has to take decisions on the recommendations that has been made by the sub-committees involved in the purchase of that particular thing...*

What undermines parents' social capital in this case is the fact that dialogue is lacking, as there are no strong networks amongst them. This was observed in both schools as other educators were suggesting workshops for parent component. And it is obvious that solidarity among the members of both SGBs is unlikely to emerge since parents are just there physically and do not participate.

#### **4.3.2.4. Parents SGB and Meetings**

Decentralisation, it is said, can possibly work if to those at the school level, participation is not merely a procedural exercise, but a conscious effort to allow the marginalised to voice their concerns, and to create a meaningful opportunity for them to affect informed decision-making which will enhance development and change at the school. There needs to be, at the school level, clear conceptions about what participation entails.

In my literature review, I mentioned the differences between moving schools and stuck schools as argued by Rosenholtz's in Fullan (2001). I have clarified the fact that stuck schools have no goals for parent participation, while moving schools focus their efforts on involving parents. Involvement of parents for full participation means that parents should attend all the meetings. It is during the meeting where the budget is deliberated, infrastructure is planned and policy formulation takes place. Not all parents might be skilled with the budget processes. This means, therefore, that the SGB needs to bring in to their budget meeting an expert or someone capable of deliberating on their budget. The importance of this move, indicated by MacBeath (2007) and highlighted in the literature review in chapter two, suggests that „bridging social capital“ may also be virtual in nature, in which people establish links with others. MacBeath further suggests that while „bridging social capital“ works on the „horizontal“ plane- that is, a group on the same level-, „linking social capital“ works on the „vertical“ plane meaning it draws resources or information from above.

My data gathered from the schools shows that some parents do not attend meetings. If they come to the meeting they come late when some of the important points have been discussed and some motions have been passed. They seem to rely on educators to take decisions concerning the work that is deliberated on at the meeting on that day. This means there might be no or very limited development on the parents' side. This was learned from the School A educator. But that was not the same for School B, since the educator said very clearly that some of the parents do not participate in meetings. This is how the educator responded when the question about the existence of bonding in the school was raised:

*Yes, it is easy to establish that, because even the meetings, some of them do not attend. And it is known that in most cases they don't*

*attend. Sometimes even when you are in the meeting, some of the*

*SGB members will not respond because they are afraid...*

Both at School A and B, parents in the SGBs undermine their social capital by not attending the meetings and if they come it is when some deliberations have already been discussed. Portes (1998) advocates focusing on social relations and networks in the analysis of social capital, which in both schools, seems to be undermined. Parents are lacking relationships amongst each other and they do not trust each other – and *trust* is one of the elements of social capital. Further, it is clear that bonding does not exist in both schools. John (2009) asserts that social capital relates to sociability, the types and strength of relationships that people develop with other people, structures and organisations, and how these relationships influence aspects of their lives, their education as well as social development.

#### ***4.3.2.5. Powerful People Dominate***

Powerful people, using their status as business persons or being known politicians in the area, have been seen by schools as invaders, for many decades. North-Midwest Institute, cited by Pretorius (1999, p.165) argues that this is a result of communication failure, where many educators fear that should they encourage closer involvement, business would take over the schools. In turn, business people have looked at schools with an expectation of failure and have tended to view education as a purely social issue.

The data gathered in schools A and B prove that people in power invested in the school with their resources; for instance, some have been members of the SGB since 1982 (even before the „SGBs“) till today. And they seem to take pleasure in being elected to the SGB all these years.

This is good actually. But to other school components, this is seen as invading and not allowing others to take over the leadership of the school governance. This is what came out from our discussion with educator 2 from school B:

*What I think is that when the election of the SGB is conducted, proper instructions by the law, SASA should be followed thoroughly and check whether really, those parents do have children at the school. Because some are elected while they don't have a child at school. And this parent does not have a passion for the school needs, but you'll find him running the school. He or she is there because of his or her status.*

The same educator 2 when asked about bonding at school, said:

*No, they fail to bond if they are in the SGB, because they bring outside issues to the SGB meetings. You can find a chairperson for example, because he or she has power, he or she will rule in the SGB meetings as well. He or she must be the only one to voice out something or suggestions.*

This was well said. However, the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, stipulates very clearly that if you are a „parent“ you can stand for election. This term „parent“ as SASA states, can also be a guardian, which means that even a grand parent, for instance, can be nominated should he or she be available. It does not matter what status the person holds. However, these statements confirm that both Schools A and B SGBs are not involving other members as they should, and therefore prevent their acting as a source of social development for the school. The dialogue is also limited, as only the powerful members can decide on the school governance policies and dreams. Therefore, in both schools, it will be impossible for bonding to exist.

From the above statements, it is also clear that there is no trust and trustworthiness among the members of the SGBs. Members of the SGBs who are trustworthy should demonstrate trustworthiness and be the key players in a social network. They should contribute positively to the social capital of the SGBs.

#### **4.3.2.6. Leading in Ideas**

Though parents in the SGB claim that they participate in all school activities, educators don't feel the same way. Educators see parents as passive, even though they at times attend meetings and functions. As has been said earlier, parents depend on teachers and the principal. I have gathered that they cannot lead with their ideas and they lack understanding on what exactly they should do as the parent component in the SGB.

When asking the reason why parents are so reserved, both schools' educators replied that they think parents have a fear of discussing and debating issues with the professionals. Echoing this statement, one educator said:

*I think the inferiority complex is the problem not only to this school but most of the schools that I've been involved with. Inferiority complex on the part of the parents, is the problem because what they know is that teachers*

*are better equipped than them educationally, so whatever they might have in their minds, may be teachers won't take that particular idea as good as those parents see it, so is just that, just that.*

This inferiority complex mentioned by the educators is evident in both school A and school B, proving the ineffective social networks among the SGBs. It is evident that there is no trust, trustworthiness and their expectations are slim if not absent at all. Their obligations with regard to their schools are not focused and this diminishes the social capital of the SGBs.

#### **4.3.2.7. Workshop for all SGBs**

Parents themselves have confessed that they have never been to workshops. Only chairpersons have been to workshops. While it is true that the department does organise induction workshops, these are not enough. Only chairpersons attend. My question is, do they report back what they have learned? As the principal myself I have learned that it is very difficult for the chairpersons to report. Actually it never materialises unless I assist my chairperson. The Department of Education is supposed to conduct workshops and provide ongoing support to the SGBs, but this is not happening. For this reason, even the educators and non-educators feel there is a need for the principal and the Department of Education to conduct workshops for the School Governing Bodies.

An educator 2 from School A suggested this:

*The parent component of the SGB must be a bit active, they need to be workshopped again and again, because the problem that I think, is that these people, there is no monitoring, there is only induction, there is no mentoring, because mentoring takes a very long time, but when these, these people are put in these positions, the department, they just take them may be one or two days and they just give along things to do in one or two days. Which doesn't help the school at all. It doesn't help the school so I think there must be those people from the Department of Education that must visit the SGBs or may be on quarterly basis, to ensure that the SGB it does sit, it does have a minute book and*

*everything is there, to ensure that the school is as smooth as all  
wanted to be.*

School B educators, when asked who they think can provide support for the SGBs in schools, share the same view with an educator from School A. They are of the idea that the Department is responsible for the empowerment of SGB members since it is the Department that delegated powers to them. And this is true. Educator 2 from School B added:

*I think the support should start with teachers then by the principal  
until, may be the District as this can be done if it has been applied for.  
Like in this school, we have had a workshop by the District that was meant  
for educators in management. And that impacted positively on our SGB  
meeting as we escalated some of that information we received.*

My data reveal that workshopping of the SGB members might help alleviate problems that are encountered on a daily basis in schools. Some SGB members confuse governance with the functions of the professionals in the school. This means that they invade what the principal and the staff does professionally (Earley, 2003; Karlsson, 2002; Squelch 1999).

Having said the above, it is clear that all educators think parents are important to the school, therefore, they should play a pivotal role. Ramisur (2007), citing Kruger and van Schalkwyk (1997), also contend the parent has always been recognised as the primary educator of the child. The care, development and education of the child are the responsibilities of the parent and not that of the school, the community, the educator and the state only. Ramisur (2007) further implies that parents, by law, should participate in school activities. Traditionally, as Louw (2004) suggests, parents used to play a role by merely being members of parent-teacher associations.

Parents of both schools undermine their social capital by not engaging to schools activities and decisions. By sharing the common goal with all components in their SGBs, they will determine what is in the best interests of their children in terms of education. Teachers themselves should engage parents in debates, dialogue and have trust in them, so that parents will be positive and not undermine their social capital in terms of their expectations and obligations.

### 4.3.3. Principals' Perceptions about Parents

#### 4.3.3.1. *The Principal Runs the School*

Parents assume that principals of schools are responsible for the running of the school. It is true that the principal should see that things at the school are always in order and the teaching and learning is facilitated without hindrance. But the governance of the school is the area that provides parents with opportunities to take part in decision-making about the school programmes (Cotton and Wikelund, 2001).

When a principal from one of the schools asked what hinders parents to be actively involved, he could not come out with the real answer, but this is what he said:

*I think that understanding... that belong to the old style of doing things. They are just afraid of coming out, yes to step forward... even when you invite them, the parents to come, let say for example, to elect the governing body. Mostly they are afraid to be elected. There is that thing I don't know what is that, yes. That is that fear, in such a way that we will keep on may be using the same people to participate in the SGB structure of which now they are still belonging to that old style and are afraid of voicing out their views. They are afraid, „When I say something, people might say, I'm mad". Err... is just that understanding.*

My discussion with the principal reveals that parents do not „want“ to take part in schools where their children are learning because they fear they might not be useful. This might mean that they are unaware of the fact that they are obliged to take care of the school governance, and it indicates that orientation is not well conducted. This situation creates the space and opportunity for those who are already in governance to continue, even though they might be living in an old school of thought. It is obvious then that both schools“ social networks are ineffective. There is no solidarity emerging among members within both schools since dialogue, an important value in their social capital, has been silenced.

#### **4.3.3.2. Teachers to Assist the Principal**

The discussion above reveals that principals of schools claim that teachers should assist them since they are an erudite component of the SGB. When observing the SGB meeting from School A, I noticed that parents were really passive unless the principal pointed to a certain SGB member to respond, otherwise the meeting was between the educator representatives and the principal. A principal from school B suggested the following:

*Educators should work as a bridge, which is from them to parent and back, but now they are misusing that opportunity instead now, they are causing a lot of havoc, problems and all this.*

This was a cry from one of the principals. I do not understand this since educators are equal partners with parents. The parents actually have even more power, with one additional member on their side. Educators form a part of the SGB, thus they are in family with the parents. Looking at what the principal said, it is apparent that they all undermine their social capital vis-à-vis the debate and dialogue that should give rise to their solidarity. Bonding is lacking among all the SGB members and it is unlikely that effective social networks exist. This, therefore, proves the lack of trusts within SGB members in terms of taking decisions for their schools governance.

#### **4.3.3.3. Parents' Inferiority Complex**

This sub-heading has been dealt with previously, where both parents themselves and educators have seen this as a factor that hinders the full participation of parents in the governance of the school. Principals also have identified this as an element diminishing parents' involvement.

When asked how the SGB parent component in particular, responds to taking a leading part in decision-making, the principal of school B mentioned this:

*Yes, they are, but though this is not enough to me, it is not enough, they have just put the ,top part of a fruit" in respect of the decision-making.*

*There is that thing, may be they are under estimating themselves, they are underrating themselves. ...“ We can't err...take things, except may be the principal should tell us what to do, so that is not enough.*

The same principal when asked why parents seem to rely on them in most cases. He responded by saying:

*Yes, it is a fact, because they look at the principal and..., they do things once the principal has told them. And the principal will normally initiate and then they will embark on that after. Yes, there are very rarely cases where may be they come up with the new idea and which we really need, and because they are the eyes of the community and the needs of the school rely on them. But now, normally...they rely on the principal”.*

Cotton and Wikelund (2001) assert that parents should be involved in designing the vision of the school, goal setting, development and implementation of all activities the school has planned to do. Parents should ensure that rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law. In this instance, parents may be seen to be undermining their social capital, which is true. However, to me the reason for this is that they are clearly lacking monitoring as well as guidance. Parents in the SGBs are just happy that they are in the leadership position and they are with educators and principals, so why bother themselves about the decision-making on the vision and the mission of the school.

#### **4.3.3.4. Parents Can Invest in the School**

School governance incorporates the shared responsibilities of parents and teachers. The other component is learners, when the school has grade eight and higher classes. This ensures that all stakeholders are represented in the school governing body. The principle of decentralisation is meant to transfer decision-making authority and responsibilities to all these role players mentioned above (Hanson, 1998). Peano (1999) agrees that decentralisation is the devolution of power to lower levels of government in order to enable them to decide on issues of school policies. This further means engaging fully into activities that are rendered at school.

My discussion with the principals from the two schools divulges that most SGB parent components in their schools are unaware that they can invest skills and knowledge in their children, irrespective of whether they are illiterate or not. From the discussions we had, I could establish that parents do have skills to contribute, such as those associated with gardening projects, nutrition, and so on.

My discussion with principal from School A revealed the following:

*As far as I understand, parent component need to be developed, to attend workshops, so as to understand their roles and responsibilities at school as school governance. Their representation and ownership of their school needs to be revealed, so that they participate actively in the decision-making. At the end they will be able to learn to own, develop, and look after their schools'' safety.*

The principal of School A further contended that:

*Parents should attend meetings at school, regularly, and they should be encouraged to do so. This will give them opportunity in showing their opinions and expertise to the school. They can engage to projects like gardening, like planting vegetables to be used in school nutrition programmes as well as keeping some of the money for themselves and for the school's fund.*

What the principal said above is good, however, this means that should a parent be unable to attend a meeting due to some circumstance, he or she would not be able to participate or be involved since he or she would not be able to cope on his or her own. Principal of School A confirmed to me that parents depend on the leadership of the school in order to execute and invest their skills.

Parents claim that they fully participate and engage in the governance of their schools. For example, a chairperson from School A, when asked what she had contributed to the school so far, responded by saying:

*I noticed that ceiling board in some classes...off and damaged by the rain.  
I then immediately contacted the SGB and the principal and we agreed that man power was needed...This was well maintained and this made me happy noticing that I have done my duty.*

The above examples prove that parents can be actively involved in the school governance. However, when they contribute, it is not considered to be an idea shared or owned by the group. It remains one person's idea.

#### ***4.3.3.5. Ongoing Mentoring and Monitoring***

It is explicitly explained in SASA that whilst the professional management of the school is the responsibility of the principal and the School Management Team (SMT), the SGB is responsible for the governance of the school. In some schools it is said that principals of schools have been unwilling to hand over or even to share the power or authority which they held before the democratisation of the school governance, and, as a result, have not sought to empower their School Governing Bodies. Other literature discloses that some school principals still hold onto information and do not explain policy documents, and therefore have been able to hold power over the SGBs. And it might be one of the reasons that SGBs are, in effect, delegating authority back to the principals.

Section 19 of SASA, as this has been explained before, calls for provincial education departments to provide training to SGBs on an ongoing basis so that they are able to execute their functions appropriately. However, it seems this is not exercised. Adam and Waghid (2003) indicate that for elected school governors to function effectively, it is imperative that they have an understanding of the principles of democracy as well as the need as representatives, to be accountable to their constituencies. All participants in school governance, therefore, need to be educated and empowered vis-à-vis the principles of democracy and representation, as it cannot be assumed that democratic governance will arise naturally in the School Governing Bodies. Where SGBs have a limited understanding of their roles and are not answerable to parents, then it is not surprising that problems such as low participation by parents occur, as observed by the principals of the two schools.

During our discussion about these issues, the principal from School B confirmed that though SASA prescribes ongoing support, it is not happening-except the once-off induction. This is what he said:

*No, not the induction only. They should be inducted and monitored and have some workshops. Yes, to ...unpack even those sections SASA prescribes for the SGB. And it should be in their language so that they easily understand. Yes, what...what is in these documents, because we simply give them those documents but they fail reading,*

*is not something to co-ordinate more especially by us, but we can make that opportunity. I think it ... might assist our SGBs.*

This principal has also touched on the point that when workshops are conducted, the materials used should fit within the understanding of that particular group. This is due to the fact that policy documents are often very complex in style and language or genre of writing. Van Wyk (2004, p. 54) also argues this pointing out that SGB workshops should be done in the language the parents understand, and not in the language that suits the providers and or facilitators.

Having said the above, there is still a problem lies with trust and trustworthiness among the SGB members. Though the Department fails the schools in terms of ongoing support, it is assumed that principals as *ex-officio* members are the wellspring of the resources that might be needed in the SGB discussions. This means that if the principal is able to train and mentor the parents, they will be able to contribute and social capital will increase and/or not undermined.

#### **4.3.3.6. Legislation**

The Act makes every public school a juristic person, a legal entity, with control over its fund and assets and rights to the use of its property. It allows for the establishment of independent schools, and for the education of children at home. The Act recognises that the state alone is unable to improve education. A central principle is creating new school governance structures and partnerships between the State and all others involved in education- parents, educators, learners (grade eight and higher classes), non-teaching staff and communities. All are urged to work together to create a better learning environment.

The act also stipulates that the governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school. Coleman (1988) suggests that trust is the central element of relationships. To be in the position of trust according to Mbatha citing Squelch (2001), means that the governing body must; act in good faith, carry out its duties and functions in the best interest of the school, not disclose confidential information that might harm the school, not engage in any unlawful conduct and not compete with the school's interests and activities (Mbatha, 2005, pp. 63-69).

All the above is stipulated in section 18 of SASA as the code of conduct for all SGB members, including the principal as an *ex-officio* member. The chairperson is responsible for reprimanding all members who are contravening this code of conduct. The chairperson can decide whether the misconduct is less serious or serious. If the case is less serious, the chairperson can warn the member himself or herself. There are no circumstances where a principal will have to ensure that the code of conduct is adhered to, unless he or she is assisting the chairperson. It is also stated in

the Act who should call for the reprimanding of the chairperson, should he or she contravene the law, but it is not the principal (ibid).

However, this is what came out from our discussion with the principal from School A when we were talking about the reinforcement of relationship among the members of the School Governing Body:

*Yes, all the members participate actively in our school. I as an ex-officio create and reinforce the relationship among the members of the whole SGB by having the SGB code of conduct, in place and ensure that it is implemented. I also encourage all members to be actively involved in the meeting and ultimately have the collective and innovative ideas.*

It is quite true that in order for the parent component in the SGB to understand and be involved with the legislation on the SGB matters they need to bond and demonstrate trustworthiness among themselves. This is believed to contribute to grooming the members in a group to be key players in a social network. They will then share a common goal which might involve policies to be discussed and clarified. It is also clear that for both School A and B, SGB members lack trust and trustworthiness. This therefore, diminishes their social capital.

#### **4.3.3.7. The Term of Office**

According to Mbatha (2005), the Act states that all schools must establish governing bodies on which parents have the largest representation. It is said that the Act also stipulates the term of office for office bearers to not exceed three years. Mbatha further suggests that the period of three years aims at giving all parents who have children at the school enough time to be involved in school activities.

But giving the office bearers three years limits how the parents' expertise can be shared with the school, particularly parents in rural schools. Principals of both Schools A and B though they have not made clear statements, reveal that the term is short because of the monitoring which needs more time to be done effectively. Three years is too short in a sense that the first two years might be for orientation which leave them with one year. Then the following year their term of office expires. Only induction is conducted and that is done after the election of the SGBs. SGBs then have to be assisted by principals of schools if those principals are fair, otherwise they have to scaffold themselves and this might take two years to fully grasp what needs to be done. Then, in

their third year when they get used to the gist of their duties, they have to vacate the office, as stated above. This tends to disadvantage the schools, particularly in rural areas.

Effective social networks which are characterised by trustworthiness, obligations, reciprocity and expectations warrant a long duration in order for the parent component in the SGBs to be able to share a common goal. This means parents might be able to invest their skills and knowledge, having the understanding of what is expected of them. It is for this reason therefore that parents in both the schools are undermined in their contributing to the social capital of the SGB.

#### **4.3.3.8. Parents are Positive**

Both principals claimed that parents are positive in engaging with school activities. Parents themselves were certain that they exercise their rights in executing their roles as SGB parent components in both schools.

The data gathered prove that parents, though they claim to be participating fully in the schools' activities, they are not. For example, the chairpersons of both schools claimed that they are responsible for calling and chairing the meetings, whereas, the principals, on the other hand, also call the meetings. My discussion with the chairperson from School A, when asked how frequently they hold the meetings, went like this:

*We normally hold meetings four times a year. But as SGB we meet time and again.*

I asked his role during the meeting and he replied:

*What I do, is to organise meetings, then prepare the agenda and chair the meeting. That's what I do.*

And this is what the principal of the same school (A) said:

*In fact what I do is that I call a meeting quarterly where we discuss what we have done and what we want to be done. They are also welcome to raise their ideas which we all talk about. This concerns the school's infrastructure, sports because they like sports they even like athletics. others offer themselves in coaching these sports or codes because they used to be players themselves.*

These contradicting statements prove that parents still find it hard to perform their roles and functions in schools. Even though principals may suggest that parents initiate some of the activities, my data establishes very well that principals are protecting the fact that their SGBs, particularly in rural schools, cannot be responsible on their own, be creative and take charge in the school. Lemmer (1999,p. 156) asserts that parental involvement in school governance is the most challenging activity, as it requires parents' sacrifice with regard to their time, which is impossible for most parents.

In the light of the above, I want to argue that it is clear for both schools' SGBs that the relationships do not connect, which result, in cooperative being undermined. Briefly there is no closure for both School A as well as School B. Coleman cited by John (2009) suggests that closure refers to the density of relations within a network or structure which helps to cement expectations, norms and obligations of members. Such an understanding of social capital that arises from the inter-connectedness of one's network sees closure as an asset which could be acquired, grown and also destroyed. And as family and community relations weaken, closure is reduced and social capital dissipates (ibid).

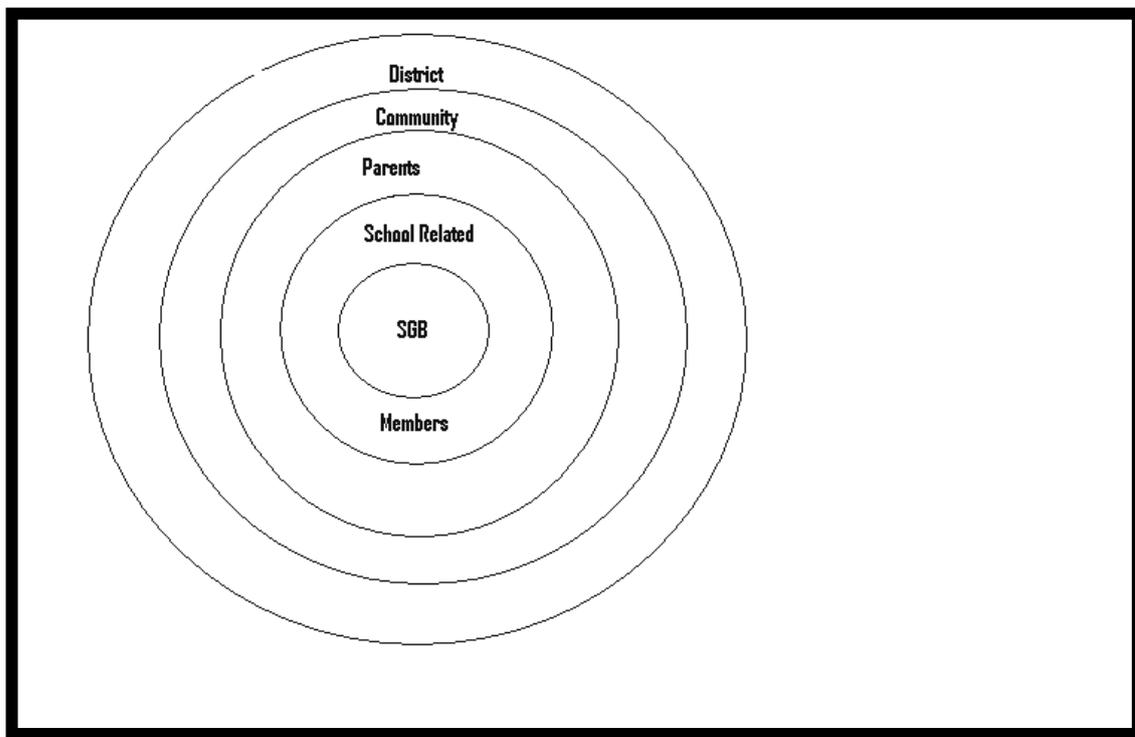
John states, referring to Coleman's theory of closure, suggests that a community's social capital is greater when there is greater interconnectedness or density of relationships, as closure carries the benefits of better information sharing, increased trustworthiness and collective sanctions ( John, 2009, p. 75)

#### **4.4. Analysing using Social Capital: Social Network Approach**

Bourdieu (1997), Coleman (1990), Lin (1999) and Putnam (2000) assert that social capital is embedded in social networks. To be effective, social networks need the existence of certain key elements, which are: - Trustworthiness, Expectations, Reciprocity and Obligations. This means, therefore, that an efficient School Governing Body will have to embrace all the four characteristics. The research study done, however, does not reflect all of these characteristics in a sense that they engage in social networks. But the study reveals that the parent components in the SGB are keen and they observe all these elements. For example, when one parent from School B was asked about her understanding of their duties before engaging with the SGB, she mentioned that what was **expected** from them was to build the classrooms. This also means that they were **obliged** to establish more classrooms.

My concern when analysing the data through the social network lens is that all these characteristics are not communicated socially in the sense that they would bring out the understanding of trustworthiness, reciprocity, obligations and expectations, from the parents, as Coleman (1990) suggests.

The diagram below illustrates how structures that should together constitute effective social networks remain, unrelated. This is supported by Granovetter in Coleman (1988) when he argues that failure to recognise the significance of real personal relations and networks of relations exists even in the new institutional economics.



*Diagram showing remoteness of subgroups from each other. (Informed by the responses from the interviews with regard to monitoring and providing support)*

With the information gathered from the interviews and discussion, I created this diagram to reveal how each constituent is remote from the other. This is the same for both schools. The overall circle that encircles all other circles represents the Department and it is the one that provides induction to the SGBs. In this regard, the school receive induction from this constituency and not the Circuit Management Centre which only supervises what the **District** has introduced. In terms the effective social networks, as mentioned earlier, if A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B. This obligation can be conceived as a credit slip held by A for performance by B (Coleman, 1988, p. S102). The distance between the District and the schools is approximately 97 kilometers apart for School A and 91 kilometers for School B. Reciprocity is unrealistic as once the District has organised the inductions, it leave the rest to the „not well shaped SGB“. It is, therefore, obvious that social network between the two schools and the District is impractical, and the data collected does not indicate the fact that there is such a social structure that is deemed to provide an ongoing

support. Briefly, this is a subgroup as Spillane (2007) suggests, that is an important source in distributing and or assisting in mediating individuals' relationships, as guided by SASA.

The next subgroup or constituent is the **community**. The community is a broader subgroup which has an interest in the school whether members have children in school or not. This subgroup is silenced in terms of social networks within the school governance of both schools. There is no evidence that show any interaction that might promote ties between these subgroups. When both schools organise the meetings, they are only between the SGB of the school and the parents of learners.

Following the community is the **parents** constituent. This is the most important subgroup that actually determines whether the school should exist or not. Parents are the immediate clients of the school. This is a structure which is more fervently interested in what is taking place at the school. When most schools lose enrolment, it is due to the fact that once parents become dissatisfied about what is happening at school, they move their children to other schools, to where they think education for their young ones is well rendered. This is a subgroup that is considered in both schools, as its members elect the governing body. My research revealed that parents only respond to what the SGB suggests and in very few instances will they initiate activities that will create networks. One example of initiative in School B was where they raised a valued point, that should the school be in need of a builder, plumber or any service, the SGB should consult them first to save the school money or so that they add value to the economy of the school.

The other subgroup is the **school-related members**. These are educators, administration clerks, school cleaners and security personnel in both School A and School B. This group has a vast impact in terms of the development of the school polices. Though they are represented in the SGB of the school, they, in most cases, provide support to the SGB through their members. My research data reflected that in both schools, principals complain about the fact that this group influences their members in the SGB to pursue their own agenda. For example, it is often the case that the school-related members want to establish how the money is utilised. Is it according to a budget decided by the whole SGB or an individual, like the principal? This therefore, proves the absence of social network. Social network is wanting in this regard.

The last and most important subgroup is the SGB. This is the group that should be seen implementing the governance policies. To implement policies, the SGB should not be working solo; rather it should be seen practicing the bridging concept. Bridging social capital is the avenue of escape from insular and inward-looking association (MacBeath, et al 1972). McBeath et al asserted that „weak links“ are often realised when bridging social capital is seen in the connections made with other people who stand outside the immediate reference group and its value

orientations. These people who stand outside the group can be other SGBs, other educators, parents, community and the Department. They can be their immediate resources. Parents are called for the meetings when there are issues to be discussed or to be conveyed by the SGB. Coleman (1988) recommended that local business should invest in education by placing a bounty on the head of a child. He further suggested that the bounty should be redeemed by anyone who took responsibility for developing the child into a productive and efficient member of society. This means that the SGB, with the help from outside, should be able to develop disciplinary procedures for the school. But this is one sided meaning only the principals will call meetings and parents have not been in a state where they have to call the meeting. Both schools, however, could not exhibit any ongoing activity in my data which could be seen as the result of their social networking. Parents interviewed said clearly that there was no collaboration with other stakeholders, with the exception of when there was the establishment of another classroom. And this is said to be networked only by the principal. Putnam (2000) argues that without bridging social capital, bonding groups can become isolated and disenfranchised from the rest of society and most importantly, from groups with which bridging must occur in order to denote an “increase” in social capital.

Muthukrishna and Sader (2004) also contend that social capital is increasingly seen as a useful tool for understanding the role of relations and networks in social and economic development. Woolcook (2001) and Coleman (1988), assert that social capital is commonly defined in terms of social trust, norms, social support and values and the way these allow individuals and institutions to become more effective in achieving common objectives. This means that each member within the SGB should be able to share his or her views, should be able to invest his or her knowledge and skills towards the development of the governance in the school. My study, however, revealed that in both schools, individuals perceptions of the sense of collective responsibility, could not influence or be influenced by subgroup behaviours. “Social Capital”, thus is wanting the SGB in my study. Festinger, Schachter and Bach (1950) believed that members of one’s immediate subgroup tend to have a stronger influence on others’ behaviour and beliefs than do other members of a social network, because the interaction is most frequent within those subgroups.

In light of the above statement, I want to suggest that the SGB as the most vital subgroup should autonomously engage in institutionalised interactions. This means that SGB members should draw their roles together in co-constructing ways of thinking, speaking and valuing instructions or mandate as per SASA from the government in joint endeavors.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings drawn from the themes and sub-headings discussed in previous chapters. Conclusions and recommendations will also be discussed. I considered the insights gained in this research and provide suggestions as to how parental participation can be improved in school governance.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the data through the lens of social capital theory in providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of „parents“ participation“ while making sense of the research sites, and the participants“ views. This chapter reflects on the extent to which the main purpose of the research was met. Limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research are noted.

#### **5.2. Main Findings**

While parent components in rural schools claim that they carry out their roles and responsibilities in their school governances, it is obvious from the data collected that parents“ participation and/ or involvement in the SGBs activities is a contentious challenge to the school component and parents themselves. All parent participants in my study were confident that they execute what the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 articulates, while all educators were strongly said otherwise. Principals themselves had contradicting statements with regard to parents“ participation. As shown in the previous chapter, one principal claimed that parents are always participating in their duties while the same principal, in other instances took over powers from the chairperson. Thus pragmatically parents“ participation is only their presence when governance issues are discussed and does not mean their engagement with them.

With regard to induction, mentoring and monitoring, both educators and parents seem not to understand a thing. This is usually for the benefit of a principal and a chairperson. Once in a while where the department will call for a workshop for parents who are treasurers, but they usually do not report back to other members of the SGB. My findings reveal that the Department of Education owes parents a great deal in terms of what SASA stipulates in Section 19. Induction is done but proper mentoring and monitoring is absent. This worries the principals of rural schools who then decide to take over powers to themselves. School component members like educators are able to interact with the necessary documents, but workshops for them may add value towards their duties as representatives of all other educators. Principals think that educators are misusing these opportunities of being SGB members for their own benefit, including checking on them

principals as to how they use school monies. However, all components agreed that there is a vast need for enough training for all of them.

Social networks, as suggested in social capital theory, are missing in terms of the relationships amongst the elements that constitute in governance of the schools. As highlighted in the diagram in chapter four, the SGB is isolated from the parents and other community members who might invest necessary skills and knowledge in the school. With the exception of the one household in each of the areas where the schools are situated who gave the right to use their homes for the inception of both schools, no other stakeholders seem to have been invited and/ or contacted for the development of the schools. Only the parents in the SGBs are taking part, such as when they have to build a classroom. The District office that constitutes one of the elements of the social networks, as indicated in previous chapter, is more than 120 kilometers away from the schools.

My findings also reveal that both SGBs are unaware of the value in sharing views, challenges as well as achievements with other SGBs from other schools. They said they have never done so. They rely on principals to network on their behalf. The bridging concept is not within their understanding. This is a strong factor that might hinder the parent component in exercising their rights and executing their functions effectively in the SGB.

This study reveals a number of challenges that impede the effectiveness of the parent components of SGB. These include the lack of educational background from most of the parents in the SGBs. The complexity of educational terms used in the documents is a primary stumbling block as these are difficult not only for the the parents to grasp but even the educators and non-educators. Lack of training of the SGBs by the Department of Education is also a factor. Parents still believe that issues of governance should be left in the hands of the professionals and therefore, they should take decisions concerning the vision and the mission statements of the schools, curriculum, admission policies, language policies, budget, extra-mural activities as well as code of conducts for both learners and the parents. There is also a general reluctance to participate because of lack of confidence by parents. They feel that they are less or not qualified, so educators should assist the principals of schools as they are there most of the time. Ramisur (2007) however, suggested that parent should participate in the school activities as they „are held responsible as well“.

It is evident therefore, that decentralisation of power to the local levels has still a long way to go in terms of execution as the legislated changes receive very little attention from those on the top of the hierarchy, and some of the directors and managers seem to be unwilling to be pioneers and to act as agents of change. To this end, therefore, rural Schools“ Governing Bodies need a certain degree of attention from the authorities before granted *all powers* to govern their schools.

### 5.3. Recommendations to Improving Parental Participation

Increasing parents' participation in the school should be regarded as a priority. Participation of parents should lead to meaningful identity of a school community and increase the possibility of serving the interests of all stakeholders, learners in particular. This entails the involvement of parents in order to promote governance, which will in turn, through the learners, promote the interests of the community through the school.

Principals, the educators and non-educators should take leading responsibilities in ensuring that parents are provided equal responsibilities and functions in the enhancement of the quality education and governance at schools. Parents are not paid for being in the SGB, though some think they should get paid. However, I could not wait to express my positive feelings when one parent mentioned that *they are volunteering their services to school without looking for any remuneration, because they will be paid by their children when they are educated and earning.* This proves the fact that parents only need encouragement towards their responsibilities. And teachers are the ones to involve parents in substantive issues that have a bearing on the governance of the school.

There are many problems that hinder parents from attending and being actively involved in school governance. One of these problems is caused by members of the community who bring with them their status and prestige to the schools. Such people need only their voices to be heard and in most cases their decisions are final. What will be the use of ordinary members of the community attending the school activities when they know very well whose voice will be the last one? Principals as the ex-officio members of SGBs should intervene and protect those parents. Advocacy in terms of such acts should be conducted immediately.

One of the parents articulated that to be elected for governing body membership you must be at home and not working. This is not incorporated in SASA, and I do not think this is considered to be a factor. All parents of learners are eligible for election, whether working or not. The school principals need to guide their members to hold meetings during the time when most parents are available. This is because decisions should be made primarily by parents when voting. This means that it is of utmost importance that parents and educators work out meeting times. This is for both parents as well as the SGB meetings.

Lastly, communication among the members of the SGB and parents should always have the mutual understanding that their meeting and their existence in the school is to benefit their children. This means, therefore, that parental participation should be drawn in and that they should endorse each and every school activity, as long as that activity will lead to the improvement of the school and not the detrimental of their children. And to exercise any kind of

parental involvement, there needs to be an understanding among all concerned groups (Shaeffer, 1994).

#### **5.4. Insights Gained from this Study**

Insights achieved in this study revolve around the understanding of different concepts such as decentralisation, social capital theory, bonding and bridging concepts, as well as the phenomenon of parental participation or involvement.

The main aim of parental involvement, particularly in decentralised school governance, is to enhance stakeholder participation and to encourage authentic partnership in government schools. It is believed that when parents send their children to school, they automatically develop a sense of ownership of school. For this reason, the Government delegated power to parent through the South African Schools Act 84, of 1996. Parents are even given more power (represented by an extra parent) to vote against all the other members of the school component. Parental involvement includes different forms of participation by the parents as indicated in SASA for their children's education. And this means parents should therefore, be provided opportunities within the schools to be part of decision-making about their children's school programmes.

Social capital theory provides a broader and new understanding of parental involvement in schools and its relevance to our schools. The core idea behind it (Putnam, 2000) is that „social networks have value“ and that „social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups“. Social capital is increasingly seen as a useful tool for understanding the role of relations and networks in social and economic development. It is commonly defined in terms of social trust, norms, social support and values (Putnam, 2000), and the way these allow individuals and institutions to become more effective in achieving common objectives. The concept of the learning community or School Governing Body in my study indicates that it should be a collective group in which knowledge is shared, there is team work, participation and norms of behaviour, and interactions become a valuable resource of organizational capacity and learning. This actually means that SGBs should socialise knowledge and skills through effective forms of interactions.

Bonding and bridging concepts are part and parcel of social capital. Bonding (MacBeath, 1972) is characterised by strong bonds, for example among family members or the same ethnic group, which helps „getting by“ in life. Bonding capital is good for under girding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity (Putnam, 2000). Bonding can therefore be seen when the SGB, as a whole, works collaboratively and produces good results. Unfortunately, this was not observed in both schools where research was executed. Bridging can be viewed in two ways: where the cluster of SGBs is sharing challenges that hinder the governance to be effective; and when the SGB joins other societies for the benefit of the school. This was also absent from the SGBs in my study.

Rather, the SGBs as indicated left functions of bonding and bridging to the principals, should they feel inclined to do so.

### **5.5. Suggestions for further research**

I strongly suggest that further research into studies of the nature of the parent component in SGBs of rural schools, be conducted, as the overall findings of my study were based on the responses articulated by four educators, two non-educators, six parents, including the chairpersons of each school as well as two principals of the research sites. My study was based on the premise that only two rural primary schools were to be involved in the case study. The purpose of this study was to explore the nature and participation by the parent component of rural SGBs.

Research of this kind should be conducted so that the evidence of a gap vis-à-vis the Department of Education representatives, who were not part of the discussion in terms of this study, would be called forth. This might provide more information to understand the problems more clearly and even look for alternatives and effective solutions.

Further research should be done in investigating the sub-committees of the rural schools, and in particular, their responsibilities. For example, the finance committee; what stops it from functioning well? Why can't this committee be responsible enough to draw up a budget and present it to the parents?

I am of the opinion that the term of office for School Governing Body members is insufficient. Three years term for SGB members in rural schools is not enough because it takes some time for the member to acquaint himself or herself with their responsibilities. And when, after one year or two years, they start to get used to the idea, they are left with one or two years to invest their skills. And the person might not be re-elected. This deserves a study on its own if the governance of the rural schools is really to be developed.

When analysing the data gathered through the lens of social capital theory, I gained an enormous insight into how a phenomenon such as parental involvement can be so exciting at times. Contradictions made by the participants during the interviews were amazing. This included the principals as well. I feel that some of the concepts that support this theory were not well addressed in analysing whether parents value the inputs from different interested stakeholders in their respective SGBs.

### **5.6. Conclusion**

The introductory revealed the background of this research study. It stated the problem statement and the research questions. Chapter two then explored and reviewed the literature concerning

parental involvement, decentralisation, school governance and social capital theory, how this theory can manipulate the „social networks“, and how this therefore, influenced my study. Chapter three elaborated on the research design and methodology, where the instruments used to collect data were explicitly explained. The presentation of data was dealt with in chapter four where school profiles were discussed. In this chapter, the data collected was linked to social capital and analysed through the lens of social networks. Chapter five then discussed the summary of findings, recommendations in improving parental involvement, insights gained by the researcher, limitations as well as the suggestions for further research.

In closing, my research findings demonstrate certain similarities to comparable studies, confirming the point that parental involvement in rural School Governing Bodies is limited, due to the factors elaborated in previous chapters, particularly four and five. I am confident that this study will add value to the growing body of knowledge on „parental involvement“ in school governance.

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**APPENDIX A**

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28 / 01 / 2009

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Mr V. T. Nkabinde

Ntabamhlophe Circuit

Private Bag x 7082

Estcourt

3310

Dear Sir

**RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH**

I am doing Masters in Educational Leadership and Management in the UKZN (PMBurg) and I hereby request a permission to conduct research at the two following schools, namely: Mathamo Primary School and Sakhile Primary School. The study at the schools will run from February 2009 to March 2009. My topic is; “The *nature of participation by the parent component in rural School Governing Bodies: A case study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal*”. The reason for selecting these schools as my research sites is because they are in a rural location, easily accessible and they are developing.

This project might impact positively in school governance should the SGB require the feedback. Confidentiality will be exercised as no real names, be it school or person will be mention. Pseudonyms will be utilised for expressions should the need arise.

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully

.....

Ndlovu Zwelinjani Kingdom

**APPENDIX B. 1.**

31 Alexander Carr Ave  
P. O. Box 1871  
Estcourt  
3310

Dear SGB Member

**Master of Education- Consent Letter for the Interview**

I am Zwelinjani K. Ndlovu a student doing Masters of Education in Leadership, Management and Policy in UKZN (Pietermaritzburg Campus). I want to thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. I also want to assure you anonymity. That is what we will discuss will not be heard by anyone else other than my lecturer and my supervisor unless you give permission to do so. I will also use a tape recorder so that I will be able to analyse our discussion later. This will, therefore, enable me to attend to our discussion without writing notes.

Your name and identity will not be disclosed to anyone except my lecturer and my supervisor. The following is strongly ensured and considered:-

- That you understand my project title first before engaging to discussion.
- That what will be discussed will be treated as confidentiality as possible.
- The interview will be a once off and could take only forty five minutes to an hour of your time.
- That our discussion will be based on the questions that you will scan before.
- That your participation is voluntary.
- That you can withdraw from this study at any time, should you wish so, without any disadvantages against the school or yourself.
- You can ask questions at any time during our discussion, should you need clarity.
- That being a participant you stand a good chance to benefit from this study.
- You will be given more time to give in your consent.
- That you are also allowed to consult family or friends before the study commences.

Please sign the declaration in the space provided to show that you have read, understood and agreed to terms of your participation.

I..... (Full names of participant)  
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study and I consent to participating in this study project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from this project at any time, should I desire to do so.

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

## **APPENDIX B. 2. (IsiZulu Version)**

31 Alexander Carr Ave

P. O. Box 1871

Estcourt

3310

Lungu LoMkhandlu

### **INCWADI YESIVUMELWANO SOKWENZA ISIFUNDO SE-MASTERS**

Igama lami ngingu Zwelinjani K. Ndlovu umfundi owenza iziqu ze-Masters ekunganyelweni nokuphathwa kwezikole, eNyuvesi yase KZN eMgungundlovu. Ngicela ukubonga kuqala ngokuvuma ukubamba iqhaza kulomkhakha wemfundo engiwezayo. Ngicela ukuthembisa ukuthi akukho esizokhuluma ngakho okuyokhangiswa noma kutshelwe omunye umuntu ngaphandle kwemvume yakho. Esizokhuluma ngakho kuzogcinwa kuyimfihlo. Kulengxoxo yethu ngicela kulindeleke ukuthi i-tape recorder yokuqopha izosebenza ukuze ngikwazi ukulungisa amaphuzu esixoxe ngawo noma sengingedwa.

Imininingwano yakho ayizukwaziswa muntu ngaphandle kothisha bami. Okunye okuzoqikelelwa yilokhu okulandelayo:-

- Ukuthi wazi ngesifundo sami kuqala ungakabi yingxenywe yengxoxo.
- Ukuthi esizokhuluma ngakho sizokugcina kuyimfihlo yethu.
- Ukuthi ingxoxo yethu ingeke yeqe ehoreni. Kanti sizobe sinemibuzo ezosihola kulengxoxo yethu. Ingxoxo yethu sizoyenza kanye kuphela.
- Ukuba yingxenywe kulengxoxo kungokuthanda kwakho.
- Nokuthi uma ufisa ukuhoxa noma nini unokukwenza lokho ngaphandle kokubanjelwa amagqubu noma ukugodlwa kokunokukusiza.
- Nokuthi ungabuza imibuzo noma yingasiphi isikhathi uma ufuna incazelo.
- Ukuthi ukuba yingxenywe yalengxoxo kukubeka emathubeni angasiza wena okukanye isikole sakho.
- Ukunikezwa ithuba elanele lokucabanga ngalesisivumelwano.
- Nokuthi ungakwazi ukuthathisa kwabomndeni noma abangani kuqala ngokubamba iqhaza kwakho kulengxoxo.

Ngicela ukuba ubhale amagama akho bese uyasayina ukukhombisa ukuthi uyahambisana nalokhu okufundile futhi uyahambisana nakho.

Mina..... (Amagama aphelele)  
ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyayiqonda ingcazelo mayelana nalesisifundo futhi ngiyavuma ukuba  
yingxenye yaso.

Ngiyazi nangamalungelo ami ukuthi ngingashiya uma kunesidingo.

.....

Isiginesha yelungu loMkhandlu

Usuku

## **APPENDIX C. 1.**

### **Research Topic:**

The nature of participation by the parent component in rural School Governing Bodies: *A case study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal.*

## **PARENTS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **Personal Details**

Gender of the Participant \_\_\_\_\_ :

Location Area of the Participant :

Occupation of the Participant \_\_\_\_\_ :

Age of the Participants \_\_\_\_\_ : 21 - 40 [ ]

41- 60 [ ]

61- And above [ ]

### **Formal Schooling**

- A. What level of education do you have? If you have been to school?
- B. What language of instruction were you taught with?

### **Employment Details**

- C. Are you presently employed?
- D. What do you do for living? (If answered yes to question C)
- E. Where did you last work and when? (If you were once employed)

### **School Governance Related Issues**

1. What qualified you to become a member of this School Governing Body?

.....

2. What position do you hold in the SGB of this school?

.....

3. Before you were elected in this SGB, what did you know about the role of the parents they play in the SGB? Give examples.

.....

4. Are you now aware of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 guidelines on the school governance? If you do to what extent do you think it is put in practice?

.....

5. Do you think as the SGB you value others input towards the success of the school? If you do, can you mention few examples with regard to your social networks?

.....

6. In what ways can parents get involved in key school functions so as to promote and enhance community participation?

.....

7. How do you as parents make sure that you share challenges faced within the governance with other SGBs of neighbouring schools? That is if you do network.

.....

8. As parent component how do you encourage former SGB members to invest back their skills attained while they were members? Give examples of how you do that. Can you also mention any results due to those meetings with former members?

.....

9. How many activities so far have you personally initiated to the school? If nothing, why not? What stops you? If yes give examples and why you thought those activities will enhance the development of the school?

.....  
10. How often do you meet as the SGB in this school?

.....  
11. When you are in the meeting, how is the room arranged? How do you sit? Why do you think you have to sit that way?

.....  
12. Can you assure me of the trustworthiness of individual parent members in this SGB? Do you have any example to relate on that?

.....  
13. Do you think it is fair for SGB members to put much of their time in the school governance matters without any remuneration? Why is that? Can you explain?

.....  
14. What problems do you face when discharging your duties as parents with regard to school functions?

.....  
15. Are there any other issues or questions you wish us to discuss?

.....  
Thank you very much for your time.

**APPENDIX C. 2. ( IsiZulu Version)**

**Isihloko Sesifundo :**

Ukuqonda ngesimo nangeqhaza elibanjwa ngabazali basemakhaya eMkhandlwini Wezikole:  
*Inhlolovo ngezikole ezimbili eSeketheni yaseNtabamhlopheKwaZulu-Natal.*

### **ISHEDULA YEMIBUZO YABAZALI**

#### **Imininingwane ngelungu**

- Ubulili belungu :  
Isigodi lakuhlala khona ilungu :  
Isikhundla ngokomsebenzi :  
Iminyaka iphakathi kuka..... : 21 no 40 ( )  
41 no 60 ( )  
61 nangaphezulu ( )

#### **Okumayelana nemfundo**

- A. Yiliphi ibanga ogcine kulo emfundweni? Uma ngabe waya esikoleni?  
B. Yiluphi ulimi enanifunda ngalo?

#### **Okumayelana nomsebenzi**

- C. Njengamanje ungabe uyasebenza?  
D. Ungabe wenza msebenzi muni? (Uma uphendule ngoyebo ku C)  
E. Ugcine kuphi ukusebenza nini futhi? (uma ungasasebenzi)

#### **Okuphathelele Nokunganyelwa Kwezikole**

1. Ngicela ungitshele ukuthi yini ekugunyaza ukuba ukhetheke ukuba yilungu lomkhandlu walesisikole?

.....

2. Isiphi isikhundla onaso kulomkhandlu walesisikole?

.....

3. Yini obuwyayazi ngeqhaza labazali emkhandlwini, ungakakhethelwa kulomkhandlu? Nika izibonelo ezimbalwa.

.....  
4. Usunalo yini njengamanje ulwazi ngemigomo eku South African Schools Act, 84 yo nyaka ka 1996, equkethe ulwazi ngokunganyelwa kwezikole?

Uma unalo, wazi kangakanani? Ucabanga ukuthi kuyenzeka yini okushiwo yilomgomo kulesikole senu?

.....

5. Ucabanga ukuthi njengomkhandlu niyaziseka yini izimvo zabanye abazali abasemkhandlwini uma nje zizothuthukisa isikole?

Awusho nje ukuthi nihlanganyela kanjani emibonweni yenu? Unganikeza izibonelo ?

.....

6. Ngokubona kwakho iziphi izindlela ezingakhuthaza abazali abasemkhandlwini ukubamba iqhaza emsebenzini ebalulekile eyenziwa izikole ukuze umphakathi wonkana nawo ukhuthale ekuxhaseni isikole?

.....

7. Yikuphi enikwenzayo ukuqinisekisa ukuthi izinselelo enibhekana nazo emkhandlwini niyaxoxisana ngazo nemikhandlu yezinye izikole? Uma ngabe ninako ukuxhumana?

Uma ningenakho, mzamo muni eniwenzayo ukuze kube khona ukuxoxisana?

.....

8. Njengabazali abasesemkhandlwini niyabakhuthaza yini abazali abake baba semkhandlwini ukuba bazotshala ulwazi abanalo?

Ngabe ukhona mhlambe umphumela omuhle odalwe ukusebenzisa labobazali, uma nibasebenzisa?

.....

9. Wenake yikuphi okusuka kuwena siqu othe akwenziwe esikoleni ukuze sithuthuke? Uma kungekho, yini indaba? Umiswa yini ukuthi ukwenze? Uma usuke wakwenza nikeza izibonelo nokuthi kulekelela kanjani kwintuthuko yesikole?

.....

10. Nihlangana kangaki njengomkhandlu kulesisikole ukudingida izidingo zesikole?

.....

11. Uma umkhandlu wenu usemhlanganweni uhlala kanjani?

Obani abahlala phambili?

Yini eyenza ukuba nihlale kanjalo, mhlambe?

.....

12. Awuqinisekise ngokuthembeka kwelungu ngalinye kulomkhandlu walesisikole ukuthi kukhona yini?

Yikuphi okungaba yizibonelo zalokho?

.....

13. Ucabangani ngokuzinikela komkhandlu ngesikhathi sawo esikoleni ube ungavuzi noma ungalutho?

Yini indaba?

Ungenaba ngalokhu?

.....

14. Nibhekana kanjani nezinkinga zesikole njengomkhandlu?

Yiziphi izinkinga eniwayele ukubhekana nazo njengomkhandlu wesikole?

.....

15. Kukhona mhlambe okunye obungathanda ukuba sixoxe ngakho, noma ke imibuzo onayo ngalengxoxo yethu?

.....

Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho.

**APPENDIX D. 1.**



.....  
4. How much do you know about the South African Schools Act as pertain to the governance?

.....  
5. Do you invite parents' suggestions when drawing up school policies? If you do, do you receive positive responses. If not, what do you do?

.....  
6. As the chairperson, how do you encourage bonding among all the SGB components that is parents and teachers?

.....  
7. Do you involve yourself in academic matters of the school governance? If so, to what extent? If no, what stops you?

.....  
8. How is your relationship with the principal? What role does the principal play in the SGB meeting? Are you pleased that the principal does so? If not what do you think it should be done?

.....  
9. Are you aware that as the chairperson, the school is the centre of attraction for the community; therefore it should be valued and be recognised for its impact? What can you say about that?

.....  
10. What do you do to encourage parents to invest their thoughts in school for their children to be successful?

.....  
11. Do you encourage parents to participate in the following school activities?

- Extracurricular activities?
  - Excursions and school trips?
  - Parent-teacher days?
  - Closing functions?
- .....

12. Do you encourage relationship between teachers and parents? If not, why? If yes, how have you been successful in this?

.....

13. What decisions have you contributed this year to your SGB? Can you explain how you have contributed?

.....

14. What do you do as the chairperson to keep your members happy and productive towards the school performance?

.....

15. Do you also encourage your members to network with other SGBs for more information? If not, do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea? Why do you think so?

.....

16. Do you have anything that you would like us to discuss?

.....

Thank you very much for your time.

**APPENDIX D. 2. (IsiZulu Version)**

**Isihloko Sesifundo :**

Ukuqonda ngesimo nangeqhaza elibanjwa ngabazali basemakhaya eMkhandlwini Wezikole:  
*Inhlolovo ngezikole ezimbili eSeketheni yaseNtabamhlopheKwaZulu-Natal.*

### **ISHEDULA YEMIBUZO KASIHLALO**

#### **Imininingwane ngelungu elinguSihlalo**

Ubulili belungu \_\_\_\_\_ :

Isigodi lakuhlala khona ilungu \_\_\_\_\_ :

Isikhundla ngokomsebenzi \_\_\_\_\_ :

Iminyaka iphakathi kuka..... : 21 no 40 ( )

41 no 60 ( )

61 nangaphezulu ( )

#### **Okumayelana nemfundo**

- F. Yiliphi ibanga ogcine kulo emfundweni? Uma ngabe waya esikoleni?
- G. Yiluphi ulimi enanifunda ngalo?

#### **Okumayelana nomsebenzi**

- H. Njengamanje ungabe uyasebenza?
- I. Ungabe wenza msebenzi muni? (Uma uphendule ngoyebo ku C)
- J. Ugcine kuphi ukusebenza nini futhi? (uma ungasasebenzi)

#### **Okuphathelene Nokunganyelwa Kwezikole**

1. Ngicela ungitshela ukuthi kwenzeka kanjani ukuba ube ngusihlalo walomkhadlu walesisikole?

.....

2. Imihlangano niyibamba kangaki kulomkhandlu?

.....

3. Yikuphi wena okwenzayo njengosihlalo uma kunomhlangano? Kanti ke ngaphandle kokuhlala imihlangano yikuphi okunye ongakubala, okwenzayo njengosihlalo?

.....

4. Ake ungitshele ukuthi wazi kangakanani ngomthetho wokwenganyelwa kwezikole obhalwe kwi Act yoMzansi (South African Schools Act , 84 of 1996)?

.....

5. Uma nihlela imigomo yesikole njengomkhandlu niyayimema yini imibono yabazali? Uma nikwenza abazali bayanixhasa yini? Uma benganixhasi nenza njani? Niyaqhubeka noma nilinda baze banixhase?

.....

6. Njengosihlalo uwukhuthaza kanjani umkhandlu ukuba usebenze ngokubambisana, wonke amalungu awo?

.....

7. Uyalibamba yini iqhaza ekufundisweni nasekufundeni ngokunganyelwa kwezikole? Uma ukwenza mhlawumbe ukwenza kuliphi izinga? Uma ungakwenzi, yini ekuvimbayo?

.....

8. Bunjani ubudlelwano phakathi kwakho nothinshanhloko? Uthishanhloko yena udlala yiphi indima emhlanganweni womkhandlu? Lokho akwenzayo ngabe kuyakuthokozisa? Uma kungenjalo yikuphi ongathanda kwenzeke?

.....

9. Kungabe njengosihlalo uyakunaka yini ukuthi isikole sineqhaza elikhulu ephakathini wonke, ngakhoke kufanele sinikwe isithunzi esifaneleyo? Ungathini ngalokho?

.....

10. Yikuphi njengosihlalo okwenzayo ukukhuthaza abazali ukuba batshale imibono emihle esikoleni ukuze abantwana babo babe nempumelelo?

.....

11. Uyabakhuthaza yini abazali ukubamba iqhaza kulokhu okulandelayo?

- Ukufaka imibono kwi extra curricula?
- Ukulekelela kuma excursions nama school trips, uma abantwana behamba?
- Ezinsukwini zabazali nothisha?

➤ Emicimbini yokuvalela unyaka?

.....

12. Uyabukhuthaza ubudlelwano obuhle kothisha nabazali? Uma ungakwenzi umiswa yin? Uma ukwenza uyaphumelela yini kulokhu?

.....

13. Yikuphi kulonyaka okuphamisile okuthuthukisa isikole? Isiphakamiso sakho siye senzeka kanjani?

.....

14. Njengosihlalo wenza njani ukugcina amalungu omkhandlu ethokozile futhi ezimisele ukukhiqiza impumelelo esikoleni.

.....

15. Uyawakhuthaza amalungu omkhandlu ukuxhumana nokusebenzisana neminye imikhandlu yezikole ukuthola olunye ulwazi? Ucabanga ukuthi lokhu kulungile noma ngeke akulungile? Yini eyenza ucabange kanjalo?

.....

16. Kukhona okunye ongathanda ukuba sikhulume ngakho?

.....

Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho.

**APPENDIX E. 1.**

**Research Topic**

The nature of participation by the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies: *A case study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal.*

**Non-Educators - Interview Schedule**

1. For how long have you been in this school?

.....

2. How long have you been serving as a member of the School Governing Body of this school?

.....

3. As a non-educator representative how do you view the role of the parent component in this SGB? What kind of challenges or problems do you normally face in this school?

.....  
.....

4. How do you solve problems and challenges should you encounter some in this school? Can you relate to me any examples of challenges you have faced and managed to solve?

.....

5. Since you are representing non-educators in the SGB, how do you view the support by other members in the SGB?

.....

6. To what extent do you value the parents' suggestions and support them in their ideas? Can you give me few examples where their suggestions were valued assisted and come through?

.....  
.....

7. Tell me the procedures of how you hold meetings as a Governing Body of this school? How do you sit? Where do parents sit? And what do you think this is the right manner of sitting?

.....

8. How much do you know about the South African Schools Act, 108 of 1996?

.....

9. In most cases parent component rely solely on the principals and teachers in the governing of the school. What can you say about that? What do you think is the cause? What ideas can you suggest in stopping this, if you do not like it?

.....

10. How much do you engage yourself in sports in this school? Are you happy about that?

.....

11. In order for this school to develop, you and all other members of the SGB should invest your skills and knowledge and share your opinions together. Are you given such opportunity? If you have, what good results has emanated from that? Can you give few examples?

.....

12. How does the chairperson of the SGB keep the members of the SGB happy and enjoy investing to the school's development?

.....

13. As SGB members, how often do you meet?

.....

14. Do you have anything concerning our discussion that you would like us to talk about?

.....

Thank you so much for your time.

**APPENDIX E. 2. (IsiZulu Version)**

**Isihloko Sesifundo**

Ukuqonda ngesimo nangeqhaza elibanjwa ngabazali basemakhaya eMkhandlwini Wezikole : *Inhlolovo ngezikole ezimbili eSeketheni yase Ntabamhlophe KwaZulu-Natal.*

**Ishedula yemibuzo yabangebona othisha kodwa abasebenza esikoleni**

1. Usunesikhathi esingakanani usebenza kulesisikole?

.....

2. Usunesikhathi esingakanani sokuba yilungu lomkhandlu wesikole?

.....

3. Njengelungu elimele abasebenzi abangewona amathishela uyibona injani indima yabazali abakumkhandlu wesikole? Hlobo luni lwezinsalelo noma izingqinamba enijwayele ukubhekana nazo?

.....

4. Uma nibhekana nezingqinamba kulomkhandlu wesikole, yikuphi enikwenzayo ukuzisombulula? Unganginika nje izibonelo ezimbalwa, nendlela enizisombulula ngayo?

.....

5. Wena umele abangebona othisha, abazali eninabo emkhandlwini bakwemukela kanjani? Mhlawumbe yini usho kanjalo?

.....

6. Uma abazali benikela ngemibono yabo, nihlangebezana kanjani nabo? Nilekelelana kanjani nabo? Awunginikeze izibonelo ezimbalwa lapho abazali baveza khona imibono yabo kwase kuba nempumelelo ethile esikoleni.

.....

7. Awungichazele ngendlela enibamba ngayo imihlangano nabazali njengomkhandlu ke manje. Nihlala kanjani nina bomkhandlu? Abazali bona bahlala kuphi kanjani? Yini eyenza ucabange ukuthi kungcono uma nihlala kanjena?

.....

8. Wazi kangakanani ngoMthetho ongamele ukuphathwa kwezikole obhalwe kwi Act yoMzansi obizwa ngokuthiwa iSouth African Schools Act, 84 of 1996?

.....

9. Abazali abasemkhandlwini baye bethembe kakhulu othisha nothishanhloko ekunganyelweni kwesikole? Ungathini ngalokho? Ubona ukuthi kudalwa yini? Yiliphi ikhambi onalo uma ngabe lokhu awuhambisani nakho?

.....

10. Lingakanani iqhaza nina enilibamba kwezemidlalo lapha esikoleni? Ngabe kuyanithokozisa lokho?

.....

11. Isikole senu ukuze sithuthuke kudingeka ukuba nina nabazali ngokuhlanganyela nibe nemibono ezosithuthukisa. Kungabe ithuba lokwenza

njalo ninalo? Uma ninalo imiphi imiphumela emihle yalokho? Ngiphe izibonelo ezimbalwa.

.....

12. Usihlalo womkhandlu wenza njani ukugcina amalungu omkhandlu ethokozile futhi ezimisele ukutshala ulwazi esikoleni ukuze siphumelele.?

.....

13. Nina njengomkhandlu wesikole nihlangana kangaki?

.....

14. Ngabe kukhona yini okunye ongathanda ukuba sixoxe ngakho?

.....

Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho.

**APPENDIX F**

**Research Topic:**

The nature and function of the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies: *A qualitative study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.*

**TEACHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. As teacher representative how do you view your role in the School Governing Body of this school?

.....

2. Do you think parent members are needed in the SGB? How do you view their role in the School Governing Body of this school?

.....

3. Can you say it was proper for the department of education to include teachers, as well, in the SGB? Why do you think so?

.....

4. One of the roles of parent component as they are in the SGB is that they should be able to interpret departmental policies.

What can you say about this?

Are they coping in this school?

Why is that?

.....

5. To what extent do you as teachers in the same SGB assist the parent in understanding these departmental policies?

.....

6. Do you think bonding with regard to all SGB members exists in this school? Do they like to work closely together?

If yes, why do you say so? What have been the results of their bonding?

If no, what do you think this can be exercised?

.....

7. How often do parents initiate some activities to be carried in this school?

What examples can you give?

.....

8. How do you view parent component in the SGB with regard to the following:-

- Attending of SGB meetings.
- Sharing their expertise to the meetings.
- Their input during budgeting.
- Do they support sub-committees like finance committee.
- Designing of school policies. Do you consider their input? To what extent?
- Decision-making. How often do they take decisions?

.....

9. Do you think parents in the SGB should be given support so that they will be successful in fulfilling their roles as SGB members?

Who do you think can provide support, if so?

Why is that?

.....

10. How often do teachers in the SGB invest their expertise in the SGB meetings?

If this is done, can you relate to me any activity that is the result of this?

.....

11. Do you have any other related matter concerning your relationship as teacher representatives with SGB particularly the parent component that you think we should discuss?

.....

Thank you very much for your time.

**APPENDIX G**

**Research Topic**

The nature of participation by the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies: *A case study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal.*

**PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. How long have you been the head of the school?

.....

2. What is the relationship between you and your SGB members? Explain why it is like that?

.....

3. Does the School Governing Body, parent component participate in the decision-making of the school activities. If yes, to what extend do they participate?

.....

4. If not, what do you think are the problems that hinder them from being actively involved?

.....

5. What role do you play as an *ex-officio* in creating and reinforcing the relationship among the members of the whole SGB?

.....

6. Is there any lack of trustworthiness among all the SGB members?

.....

7 Do they value their membership in this SGB? If yes, elaborate briefly. If no, why do you think is that? And what do you think can be done about this?

.....

8. Do you always have to guide the chairperson and SGB members how to conduct themselves before, during and after the meetings?

.....

9. What is your opinion about decentralisation of school governance in order to have more participative from the parent side in decision-making?

.....

10. To what extent do the socio-economic constraints deter parent component from involvement in school activities?

.....

11. What mechanisms can you suggest in applying bonding and bridging concepts to assist your SGB to be as more productive as possible?

.....

12. How do you view your SGB parent component in taking leading part in decision-making?

.....

13. What other recommendations do you have in the reinforcements of parents' participative in improving the school governance in your school?

.....

14. Do you have any other matters that you might like us to discuss?

.....

Thank you very much for your time.

RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)  
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28 NOVEMBER 2008

MR. ZK NDLOVU (204402007)  
EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear Mr. Ndlovu

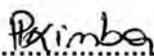
**ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0767/08M**

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

*"The nature and function of the parent component of rural School Governing Bodies: A case study of two primary schools in Ntabamhlophe Ward, KwaZulu-Natal"*

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
**MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA**

cc. Supervisor (Dr. C Thomson)  
cc. Mr. D Buchler

