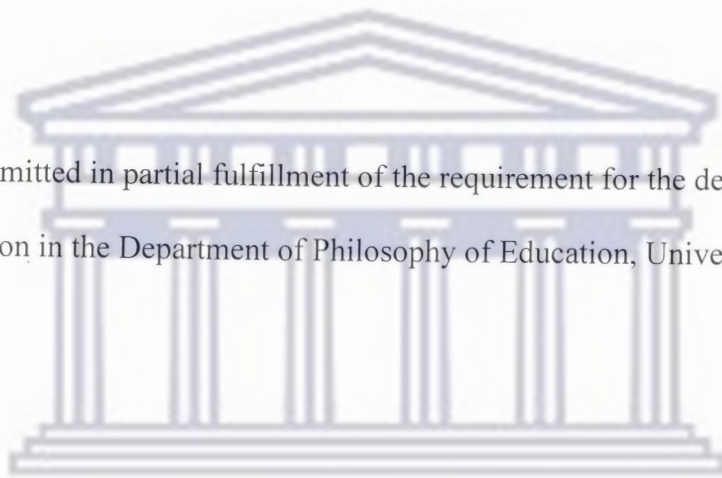


**A STUDY OF PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE:
THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HIGH SCHOOLS
OF LERIBE LESOTHO.**

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A Mini-Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Masters in Education in the Department of Philosophy of Education, University of the
Western Cape.



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UNIVERSITY of the
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November 2001

DECLARATION

I declare that this Mini-Thesis is my own work and it has not been submitted for any other degree in any university. All the references that I have used in this Mini-Thesis have been acknowledged.



ALINA MPHENG 'MALEBOLELO KAIBE

November 2001

To my late parents Theresia ‘Mhlakametsa and Francis Liphapang
Ramakhula



UNIVERSITY *of the*
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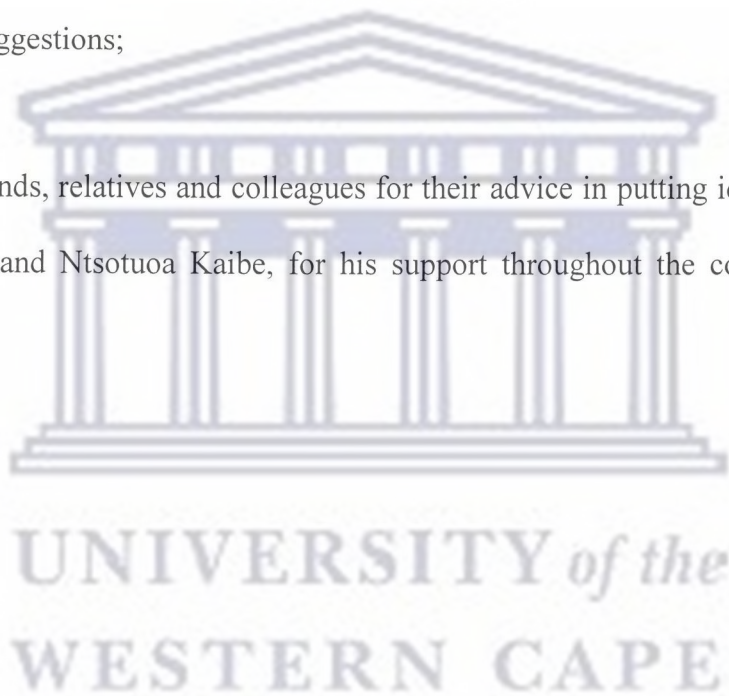


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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the policy of education decentralization as framed in the Lesotho Education Act of 1995 has impacted on school governance at the Roman Catholic Church High Schools of Leribe in Lesotho. The background of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to secularization of education is described to show how this church has historically responded towards the secularization of educational governance. Pre and post independence educational policies are traced to demonstrate that these policies are geared towards the political inclinations of the ruling government. The rhetoric of this new policy is to involve parental participation in school governance in order to promote equitable and democratic decision-making in education management. The reality is that parents are involved in school management because they are expected to pay more for the education of their children. However, critical analysts have demonstrated that the promises that are said to accrue from decentralization policy are not easily realized in Sub-Saharan African countries because of their marginal status within the international capitalist economy. The Structural Adjustment Programme is described in this study to show how it has impacted on the national education systems of the Third World countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The areas of focus are the following: the evaluation of participants roles and responsibilities in school governance; the examination of the role of parental participation in the process of restructuring school governance; and the investigation of both the forces that support and hinder parental participation in school governance. This study suggests that generally the stated aim of promoting equitable and democratic decision making in educational management has not been achieved. The reasons for not achieving this aim are the unclear definitions of supervision and management of the school; the attitude of the principals; the use of only English language in education documents; ignorance of parent contribution by other parties. And also, the legislation does not give parents real decision-making power in staffing requirements and does not include them in curriculum development, examinations and funding.

(i)

Abbreviations

ACL Anglican Church of Lesotho

ANC African National Congress

BCP Basotho Congress Party

BNP Basotho National Party

IMF International Monetary Fund

LEA Lesotho Education Act

LEC Lesotho Evangelical Church

LGGE Lesotho Government Gazette Extraordinary

MFP Marematlou Freedom Party

RCC Roman Catholic Church

SAPs Structural Adjustment Policies



Chapter one

Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a substantial shift from central educational governance to decentralized educational governance in most Sub-Saharan African developing countries. Because of the decline of their national economies, these countries have been encouraged by the IMF and the World Bank to reduce the role of the state by decentralizing their national education systems. This is regarded as means of cost recovery, to reduce public spending and rely on parents to augment public expenditure by paying user fees (Graham-Brown 1993:43).

In these countries, decentralized education governance has been initiated in the name of promoting democratic and equitable policy, and allowing for more parental responsibility in the school management. In terms of such policy parents, teachers, local communities and sometimes students are increasingly represented in school governance through the school board. The rationale provided for involving parents, teachers, local communities and students is that decentralizing the education system would contribute to wider representation, democracy and equity in educational decision-making, as well as making education responsive to local needs (Maclure 1993:72).

Most governments that initiate decentralization and popular participation in education management tend to forget that schools differ in levels of the resources they have. Schools in rural areas often operate in conditions of financial crisis and shortages of

qualified teachers, teaching materials, and other resources needed for good education (Harber 1997:67).

A decentralized education management by itself may not overcome inequities existing in education systems. Governments need to equalize opportunities by providing better facilities and better trained teachers underprivileged regions (Weiler 1978:182). If the situation in rural areas or underprivileged regions does not change, the school governing bodies of urban schools would always be better off than their rural counterpart. The school boards of the former have adequate funds of access finance to their school improvements, while the school boards of the latter suffer dramatic financial shortages. Equity is more easily achieved when opportunities and outcomes are equitably distributed (McGinn 1994:29).

1.1 Central aim

In this study, I investigated how the policy of parental participation as framed in the Lesotho Education Act has impacted on school governance at two Roman Catholic Church High Schools of Leribe in Lesotho.

1.2 Objectives

The purpose of this Mini-Thesis is to evaluate participants' roles and responsibilities in school governance. The second purpose is to examine the role of parent participation in

the process of restructuring school governance. The third purpose of this Mini-Thesis is to investigate the forces that support and hinder parent participation in school governance.

1.3 Research framework.

Critical theory maintains that many human actions are caused by social conditions over which individuals have no control. Critical theory provides knowledge that guides people toward enlightenment so that they can know their true needs. It emancipates people from unsuspected forms of inequalities, misconceptions about themselves and unfair restrictions (Gibson, 1986:5)

Within critical theory framework, explanations of social events is based on three levels which are linked together. The first level of explanation is self-understandings of agents, which is viewed as means of assisting agents cope with their situations. Self-understandings of agents also include clue to agents true situations. The second level is ideology critique which seeks to expose the roots and consequences of the agents self understandings. Ideology critique also attempts to disclose the truth which these agents' self understandings contain by unpacking "hidden meanings and making explicit the new self conception they implicitly contain" (Fay 1987:100). The success of interpretation of discovery of unconscious acts in relation to agents present acts depend on the agents understandings by their own reflection which may change their present action. (Bernstein, 1979:201).

1.4 Current political framework of parental participation in Lesotho.

Before the new policy was introduced, the government had responsibility for examination, curriculum development, inspection, funding, and payment of teachers salaries. The church on the other hand had responsibility for teacher appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal. The churches appointed the school managers who were often the church ministers. The school managers employed teachers on behalf of the churches, and were responsible for the management of the school. The churches had educational secretaries who acted as a link between the churches and the government. Their work included the ratifying of teachers contracts (Mohapeloa 1982; the Education Sector Survey 1982; Ministry of Education 1992).

The Basotho Congress Party (BCP) won the general elections of 1993. The BCP government introduced the Lesotho Education Act (LEA) in 1995. The stated aim of the new policy is to involve parental participation in school governance in order to achieve equitable and democratic decision making in educational management. In terms of the LEA, the formal mechanism through which the partnership of school governance is expressed is the school board.

The LEA states that parents, members of the community, teachers, the principal and the church should participate in school governance.

The composition of the school board includes two representatives of the proprietor and one of them should be chairperson; and three members of the community served by the

school elected by parents of pupils admitted in their school. One of the community members should be vice-chairperson. The chief of the area where the school is located or his representative, and the representative of teachers and the principal of the school are also included in the composition of the school board.

The election of three members of the community by parents of pupils admitted in that school is important because these representatives, it is argued, would be acceptable to the parents of pupils who experience the consequences of education provision.

In terms of the LEA, decision-making in school governance is based on the majority of members present voting, and in the event of a dead lock the person chairing shall have a casting vote in addition to his deliberative vote (Lesotho Government Gazette Extraordinary (LGGE) 1995:963). This is advantageous because it gives the members of the school board guidance in making decisions.

The parents' representatives make up the majority on the school board. The majority of parents on the school board is justified on the grounds that parents when compared with other parties are the main financiers of the school system. However, the number of representation, becomes critical because decision-making of the school board is based on the majority rule. Parents may always outnumber the church and teachers when decisions are made. Thus the majority of parents in the composition of the school board weakens the church representatives and teacher representatives, in school governance, hence

“running the school over to parents may have the potential of undermining equal participatory democracy” (Sayed 1997:724).

The school board members are required to perform the following functions:

- to supervise the school for which it has been constituted;
- responsible for the management, and the proper efficient running of the school;
- make recommendations to the appointing authority regarding, the appointment, discipline, transfer or dismissal of teachers whose salaries are paid by government.
- Advise the District Education Officer to recommend to the appointing authority the promotion or demotion of a teacher.
- the school board is required to submit (at the end of each school year) an audited financial statement of the school to the Proprietor and Principal Secretary (LGGE 1995:963).

The LEA grants the school board the power to supervise and manage the school. Although, in my opinion supervising and managing mean the same thing, according to the LEA, supervising and managing the school are two distinctive responsibilities. However, the LEA does not provide the guidelines that make it possible for the school board members to differentiate between these two concepts. In this way, it may be

difficult for the school board to know what they are required to do in relation to either supervision or management of the school.

The LEA grants the school board members power to recommend teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal. This function turns out to be the responsibility of the government because the LEA guarantees the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) to make final decision on teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal (staffing requirements) (LGGE 1995). The shift of power of teachers appointments justifies Hallak's argument (1995:111) that most of the countries that devolve educational management power to the local authorities do not abstain from controlling staffing requirements.

In terms of the LEA, the officials from the Ministry of Educational are empowered to inspect all relevant school records and instruct the principal to facilitate this exercise. In addition, if an officer appointed to inspect school records discovers a breach of discipline committed by a teacher:

- such officer may recommend in writing to the appointing authority that disciplinary action be taken against such a teacher and the appointing authority shall take appropriate action accordingly (LGGE 1997:483).

The task of making recommendations about teachers discipline appears to be performed by both the school board and the officials from the Ministry of Education delegated to

inspect the school. In terms of the LEA, if these officials find a breach of discipline committed by a teacher, they report this matter to the appointing authority. There is no indication of their briefing the school board about the matter, therefore it is likely that these two parties may clash on the issue.

The school board is required to submit an audited statement of the school to the Proprietor and Principal Secretary. In terms of the LEA, the principal should prepare the school budget, and present it to the school board for approval. The LEA does not specify what the school board should do if it does not agree with the budget presented.

The LEA grants the school principal rights to:

- be chief accounting officer of the school and be responsible to the school board for the control and use of school funds;
- maintain or cause to be maintained records of income and expenditure for the school,
- prepare an annual budget for the school and submit it to the school board for its approval;
- submit at the end of each school year, a financial statement of the school to the management committee or school board for its approval (LGGE 1997:471).

By stating the functions of the principal, the LEA attempts to demarcate the principal's role from that of the school board..

The LEA does not guarantee the participation of the school board in school financial affairs because the school board is only expected to submit at the end of each year an audited statement of the school to the Proprietor and Principal Secretary. The question of who is expected to audit the books still needs an answer. The rhetoric of the LEA is to grant parents authority to participate in school financial affairs; the reality is that the legislation strengthens the position of the principal in school financial affairs.

Even though the BCP government claimed that decentralized approaches are introduced to promote equitable and democratic decision-making in educational management, the government retains the control of curriculum development, examinations, funding and

staffing requirements (LGGE 1995:990). This view correlates with the argument of Sayed (1992:4), Watson (1995:6), Hallak (1995:111) and Kinyanjui (1998:284) that most countries that initiate decentralized approaches still retain control of the national education framework; including control over the curriculum, examinations, staffing and funding.

The other critical issue about the new educational change is the fact that the LEA does not clarify the relationship of the Central Ministry of Education and District Ministries of

Education; and the relationship of the District Ministries of Education and the school boards.

The LEA does not address the issue of how the members of the school board can solve conflict that may occur in the process of parental participation in school governance. Omission of this key issue may make it difficult for the school board members to manage conflict which might occur in the school governance.

Lesotho has initiated an educational decentralization policy which enables parents to participate in the educational matters of their children as well as be accountable for the use of the user fees they pay. The rhetoric is that Lesotho is promoting democracy, where parents have a say in school governance. The reality is that the government is shifting its responsibility of financing the education system to the parents while retaining control of the education framework, funding, staffing requirements, administration of examinations, review and authorization of curricula, and school inspection.

1.4 Problem statement

Parental participation policy in Lesotho's education system did not develop without problems. In 1992 the military government proposed an educational decentralization policy to empower the parents and community to participate in school governance. The policy was never implemented because the main churches (Roman Catholic Church, Lesotho Evangelical Church and Anglican Church of Lesotho) in Lesotho opposed it.

The BCP government and the churches assessed the decentralization policy proposed in 1992 and the Church School Proprietors and the government held negotiations about the draft of the Lesotho parental policy. They jointly released a press statement on the 15th August 1994 informing the public about the successful settlement of the controversy between the Church School Proprietors and the government (LGGE 1996:43).

On the 20th March 1995, the government and the Church School Proprietors agreed on all the clauses of the whole draft of the Lesotho Education Policy (Moeletsi oa Basotho 22nd October 1995:1). However, the Church School Proprietors were surprised to find out that the Minister of Education released a draft of the Lesotho Education Policy, which they criticised as diverted from what they had agreed on. According to the churches, the Minister of Education had excluded some clauses, changed others and included additional ones (Moeletsi oa Basotho 22nd October 1995:1)

The Church School Proprietors of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL) and Methodist Church lodged a letter of complaint to the Prime Minister asking him to withdraw the draft Lesotho Education Policy from the parliament and called for negotiations between themselves and the government. Their areas of concern were school governance and staffing requirements. The churches complained that they did not want the secularization of school management and the shift in power of staffing requirements to the government. They also stated that the draft of the LEA did not include the Christian education clause that states that in “full consciousness the child

energy and talents are devoted to the love of God, love of humanity and love of the country” (Moeletsi oa Basotho 10th December, 1995:1).

The Catholic Church maintains that the church is the people not the building, and these people should have the freedom of expressing their wishes in church and in school. The Catholic Church appreciates the involvement of parental participation in school governance, but the definition of parental participation from the point of view of the church differs from that advocated by the LEA. As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the role of parents in school governance is to:

- pay for the education of their children;
- make a choice of the schools for their children;
- choose the way their children are taught; and
- persuade the government to fund the education of their children including Catholic education (Moeletsi oa Basotho 19th November 1995:1,10).

In terms of the Catholic School Policy of 1987, the composition of the school board should include a chairperson who was an appointee of the Bishop; the church priest of the church; the local chief; two Catholic parents, the teacher representative who was a Catholic; and the principal. In terms of the Catholic School Policy, the school board was to manage the school according to the regulations and rules entailed in government education policy on behalf of the Catholic Church. In addition to the regulations and rules of the Ministry of Education, the Catholic Schools that were headed by Sisters or

Brothers would make regulations, which were necessary for their categories. The Catholic School Policy endorsed that Religious Knowledge had to be compulsory in Catholic schools (Seboka sa Babishopo ba Kereke e Katholike 1987).

The joint letter of Church School Proprietors suggests that the Church School Proprietors opposed attempts by the government of Lesotho to promote the secularization of education governance. This implies that the churches did not support the commitment to parental participation and government responsibility on the issue of teachers appointments entailed in the LEA.

Involvement of active parental participation in school governance is a challenge for parents who previously did not participate in real decision making of school governance. ✓

The inclusion of parents in school governance makes certain demands on the Lesotho educational system. The school board members need training that enables them to execute their functions effectively. This raises the question of whether the school board members in Lesotho are trained for their current position in the school governance. ✓

The interview questions to participants were guided by the following areas of focus:

1. Knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the school board.
2. Where does power lie in school governance?

3. What the forces are that support or hinder parental participation in school governance.

This study was conducted in two RCC High Schools in Leribe. The choice of schools was based on the assumption that the Roman Catholic church had historically demonstrated its opposition to secularization and shifting power to local communities throughout the world. Also the RCC in Lesotho had persistently opposed attempts by the state in encouraging the secularization of education governance. It is my concern to investigate more completely the understanding that parents have of their roles and the forces that support or hinder parental participation in school governance. ✓

1.5 Motivation for the study

My motivation for researching parental participation in school governance arose from a consideration of merits and demerits of the decentralization policy introduced in 1995. The Catholic Church had previously demonstrated its opposition towards the secularization of educational governance.

1.6 Significance

This study focused on the role of the school board as an agent of change in educational management and a critical reflection of participants' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The research study would create awareness of barriers to effective

parental participation in school governance and the forces that both support and frustrate effective parent participation in school governance.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The barriers for this study had been both time and resources. One limitation, was the lack of literature on the Lesotho Education System. The education sector appeared to be under-researched and as a result it was difficult to get relevant and adequate literature on the Lesotho Education System and information about education in the Leribe context.

Because the study focused on only two Roman Catholic Church high schools in Leribe, the findings could not be generalized. The sample could not stand for the generalization of parental participation in school governance in Leribe district, or the country as a whole.

1.8 Research and methodology

The research design for this study was that of the descriptive research which included gathering data in order to test hypothesis or answer questions regarding the current status of the subject of the study. Descriptive studies are based on the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions and procedures (Gay 1981:153). Descriptive research implies that the researcher observes and records not necessarily by

seeing but rather by listening. Descriptive data are usually gathered through a questionnaire survey, interviews and observation. (Leedy 1997:190, Gay 1981:153).

I used survey research which is an attempt to gather data from members of population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables (Gay 1981:154). I used sample survey where the researcher “infers information about the targeted population, relying on the responses of a sample drawn of the population” (Gay 1981:156).

As mentioned earlier, the central aim to this study was to investigate the impact of educational decentralization policy on school governance in Roman Catholic High Schools in Leribe, Lesotho. This aim was achieved by evaluating participants roles and responsibilities in school governance, as well as investigating the forces that support and frustrate effective parental participation.

1.9 Target population

Data for this study was gathered from two Roman Catholic Church High Schools in Leribe, Lesotho. The two schools had been chosen because they had established parental participation in school governance in terms of Lesotho Education Act 1995, and they were willing to participate in the study.

The school board members were selected to participate in this study because they were the people responsible for the implementation of decentralization policy and they had an interest in understanding the process of the parental participation more clearly.

1.10 Sample description

Eight school board members of two Roman Catholic Church high schools in Leribe, Lesotho participated in this study. The following members of the school board were tested and provided evidence in each school:

- chairperson (the church representative),
- vice-chairperson (parents representative),
- principal, and
- teacher representative.
- two representatives of parents.

1.11 Research instrument: interviews

Interviews were a major source of data for this study. The researcher for this study put a series of open-ended questions to relevant respondents in each school. Babbie (1990:27) has stated that the interview technique has the advantage of reducing the number of don't know and no answers. According to him, the interviewer, can both observe and ask questions. This ensures that the respondents understand the interview

questions. I probed and redirected my questions to ensure that they were properly understood.

1.12 Data processing and analysis

I had recorded the information as responded to the participants. Thereafter, I grouped the information according to its themes. Finally, I provided an analysis.

1.13 Reliability and validity

In order to enhance reliability, I assured the respondents that the study was anonymous. I encouraged them to respond openly and intuitively.

In order to enhance validity, I used their mother – tongue language (Sesotho). Using Sesotho in interviews enabled the respondents to understand interview questions, and also people feel more comfortable when they express themselves in their own language.

Chapter Two

Education in Lesotho in African context

2.1 Traditional education in Africa

Traditional societies during the pre-colonial period differed according to their size, complexity and degree of stratification ranging from the societies without leaders to the great states of West Africa. Social and political roles were divided according to age, sex and personal features and achievements. The young were subordinates to the old, and women to men in both social status and political decision making. Women were responsible for child rearing, household, and farming activities, and the men went hunting (Blakemore 1981).

Their way of life shaped the kind of education they pursued. The kind of education that was followed in pre-colonial Africa was African Customary Education, its main aims were to:

- preserve the cultural heritage of the extended family, the clan and the tribe;

- adapt members of the new generation to their physical environment and teach them how to control and use it; and explain to them that their own future, and that of their community, depends on the understanding and perpetuation of the institutions, laws, language and values inherited from the past (Datta 1984:2).

African education comprised of informal and formal education. The provision of education in the African system was responsive to local needs and was based on the roles the learners were likely to play in their adult lives. As a result, the African education system was based on sexual stratification. Boys and girls were taught separately because their roles in their adult lives differed. Mothers and female relatives were responsible for informal females education while fathers and male relatives were responsible for informal males education (Blakemore 1981 : 8).

In the traditional African education context, formal instruction was connected with specific stages of initiation. The initiation ceremony characterized a shift from adolescence to adulthood and they were taught tribal and customs, the do's and don'ts of sexual behavior and the art of properly organizing conjugal relations (Datta 1981:8). At a latter stage the trainees were grouped according to the roles they would perform in their adult life. Parents, elder sisters and brothers as well as relatives and the community at large were responsible for the management of traditional education at local level (Datta 1981 : 8).

As in other parts of Africa, traditional education in Lesotho included informal and formal education. Children learnt how to do practical activities by watching their parents, elder brothers and sisters and members of the community at home and in the fields. At a certain age boys and girls were enrolled in initiation schools:

- taught by local leaders, traditional doctors and wise elders, where boys and girls separately learnt cultural values and philosophy, personal and family, responsibilities and duties to one's clan and people (Seithleko 1995:3379).

2.2 Missionaries and education in Africa

In the eighteenth century, European missionaries arrived in Africa. The missionaries established a western school system. According to Mohapeloa (1982:140) the missionaries' objective of establishing schools was to teach Africans how to read the Bible in African languages or the missionaries' languages. Most early missionaries made little attempt to either to understand African culture or use the local environment for pedagogical purposes, hence education was not responsive to local needs (Blakemore 1981).

European missionaries (Roman Catholic, Paris Evangelical, and Anglican) established schools in Basotholand between 1806 and 1870 (Mohapeloa 1982:140) introducing

western education to Lesotho. The provision of education thus became the concern of the churches.

As in other African countries, in Lesotho the aims of missionary education were to promote the acquisition of literacy, the study of the Bible, the spiritual teachings of the church and the participation in Christian community. Through education, missionaries emphasized eurocentric cultural values and behavior, its central aim was to develop Christian character which was foreign to the Basotho (The Education Sector Survey 1982).

2.3 Education during the colonial period in Africa

As has been demonstrated, western education in Africa had been introduced and controlled by missionaries. Colonial governments introduced subsidies known as grants in aid to control the curriculum, school inspection and the examinations. The schools that followed the official curriculum, and inspection as well as taking final examinations were given subsidies. In this context, during the colonial period, the education system of African countries served colonial needs rather than local African needs (Blakemore 1981).

In 1868 Basotholand became Protectorate of Britain. The colonial authorities supported mission education from the earliest days. As in other African countries, by 1900 the colonial government introduced governments' grants – in – aid which were aimed at unifying the Basotholand education system under the control of the government. In

1909, the colonial government established the Central Board of Advice that was headed by the Director for Education, which was followed by the nomination of church secretaries viewed as a link between the colonial government and the churches. Thereafter, the provision of education became a partnership between government and the churches (LEC,RCC,ACL) (The Education Sector Survey 1982:Seithleko 1995).

In 1946, in the light of the move to prepare African colonies for self- rule in the post World War II era, the colonial government appointed the Clark Commission whose term of reference was to review the education system and its role in the development of the nation (The Education Sector Survey 1982:1)

The report of the Clark Commission in 1946 resulted in two important things:

- the formulation of the comprehensive Education Act which pronounced on the role and responsibility of government and the churches in the management of policy and the schools;
- the second was the establishment of Central and District Advisory Committees to provide a forum for education policy discussions for chiefs, churches and government (The Education Sector Survey 1982:2).

The Education Department formulated a uniform syllabus and a system of school inspection as well as the introduction of a standard examination for primary and secondary schooling. This brought a new component into the mission - based education system; i.e. the use of formal, standardized qualifications and credentials (The Education Sector Survey 1982:2).

2.4 The Catholic church and secular education

Historically it had been difficult for different states throughout Africa to take over the control of the RCC Schools. The RCC had often been against the policy of a secular education management for both primary and post primary schools. It was therefore difficult for different states in Africa to implement the policy of a secular education management in both primary and post primary of the RCC schools.

In 1937 the Department of Education in Northern Rhodesia initiated secularization of educational governance through which local authorities controlled the schools and the government supported these schools through grants – in – aid. The Catholic Church disagreed with any form of secularization of schools but recommended that any handover must be piecemeal and asserted that they be protected against the posting, transfer and control of teachers in their schools to be outside their control (Carmody 2000).

During the 1950s some Protestant Churches had given their primary schools to the government but Catholic Church still retained control of its primary schools. The

Catholic Church did not want to hand over its schools because it claimed that the Education Act did not make a provision for the teaching of Religious Education. In response to this argument the government pointed out that since Catholic Schools included non Catholic students, it would be undemocratic to force the students to learn religion because religion in Catholic schools during that time amounted to Catholic education (Carmody 2000), which excluded non-Catholics.

2.5 Party politics in Lesotho

Ntsu Mokhehle formed the BCP in 1952. Its stated aims were to fight for freedom against oppression of commoners by Chiefs. The BCP wanted to turn Basotholand into a democratic country. The BCP opposed hierarchical authority of Chiefs and Colonial government in Basotholand. The BCP was also fighting for freedom against racial discrimination that had come to occupy government and social life in Basotholand (Gill: 1993, Mohoo oa Lekhotla 1993).

The Commoners League was the union of Basotho people who felt oppressed by Chiefs. The following was the heritage that the BCP took over from the Commoners League manifesto:

- an enigmatic blending of traditionalism with a vigorous anti-colonialism;

- a sharp awareness of the subtleties of racial discrimination ; a sophisticated understanding of the subversive influence of western culture and religion on Basotho society;
- an eagerness to create links with external African nationalist movements and to identify with Pan Africanist themes;
- a willingness to accept communist assistance and its militant rhetoric without sacrificing the principle of nationalism to Marxism (Gill 1993:203).

The BCP wanted educational management that concur with democratic government. Such educational management had to include students, teachers, parents, community, churches, government and non-government organizations. The BCP opposed educational management which was not responsive to its citizens. It wanted a democratic educational governance that included all stake holders (Mohoo oa Lekhotla 1992:11).

In 1957, chief S.S. Matete withdrew from the BCP with other influential chiefs and formed the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) because they feared that the new Legislative Council advocated by Mokhehle would completely leave the chiefs out of the process of governance, and would be dominated by commoners (Gill 1993:210).

2.6 Catholic church and the main party politics.

Because of its nature of hierarchical authority, the RCC did not support the form of

democracy that was called for by the BCP. The RCC did not like Mokhehle's relationship with militant Pan Africanist such as Kwame Nkurumah of Ghana and Robert Sobukwe of South Africa. The RCC was against the notion of a secular education claimed by BCP which it sometimes saw as similar to Communism (Gill : 1993).

The RCC and other Catholics, who were against the manifesto of the BCP formed the Basotho National Party (BNP) in 1959. The BNP was anti-communist and willing to have a good relationship with South Africa. The BNP did not like the BCP idea of democratizing the Chieftainship. In order to gain support from the RCC, the BNP would not make any attempts to secularize or nationalize education of Basotholand. The BNP was therefore supported by Chiefs, the RCC, traders, South Africa and West Germany (Gill 1993).

2.7 Education policies between 1966 and 1990

The BNP won the first general elections held in 1966 and became the government of the day. During its ¹⁹⁷¹ five years, the BNP did not make any attempts to secularize education because it was still on good terms with the Catholic Church. Educational management was still based on a partnership between the churches and the government. The government continued to retain control of the curriculum, funding and inspection, whilst the churches were responsible for teachers' appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal. The Catholic Church got funds from overseas and was favoured

by the government; as a result it was able to develop its facilities at a faster rate than the other churches (Gill 1993:225).

Because of its more hierarchical approach Catholic church was also able to maintain better standards of discipline and education in many of its schools. This encouraged the nation at large to send its children to the Catholic schools. (Gill 1993:225).

The second elections were held in 1970. The BNP was defeated but chief Leabua Jonathan did not hand over power to the BCP. Instead, he suspended the Constitution and declared a State of Emergency on 30th January 1970 (Coplan 1995;Muller 1997; Gill 1993). The BNP then announced that Lesotho was to be an independent state with the King functioning as head of the state, and with executive authority vested in a Prime Minister and Cabinet responsible to the lower house of a bicameral parliament (Coplan 1995, Muller1997, Gill 1993).

The announcement of the Prime Minister caused internal instability in the country. In order to suppress the political instability, Jonathan's government detained opposition leaders and harassed their supporters. Freedom of speech and freedom of assertion in political parties were curtailed as the country increasingly veered towards a de facto one party system (Matlosa 1996:69).

Britain and Sweden responded to the internal instability by halting their financial assistance in Lesotho. They were in a way forcing the BNP government to return

Lesotho to democratic government . The BNP did not call general elections. It established good relations with the eastern bloc in order to increase its external financial assistance (Matlosa 1996).

The establishment of good relations of the BNP with the eastern bloc antagonized the Catholic church. Since school governance had been the responsibility of the churches, the BNP felt it was necessary to make educational changes in order to reduce power of the churches in educational management.

In 1974 the government terminated tuition fees for employing teachers in primary schools and called for a fixed tuition fee at secondary schools to be paid to government to alleviate the salary costs. From that year the payment of teachers' salaries has been the responsibility of the government. The school manager's responsibilities had been to submit the contract forms to the church education secretary for ratification, and the church education secretary submitted the forms to the Ministry of Education. The government started financing the Education Sector because it wanted to control this sector (The Education Sector Survey 1982; Mohapeloa 1982).

The objective of reducing the power of the churches in educational management was not yet accomplished. In 1978, the BNP government challenged the role of the churches in education by recommending a phased shift of management powers from churches to government but the negotiations about this matter was ended by protests made by the main churches (RCC, ALC, LEC) (The Education Sector Survey 1982).

In 1981, the government initiated the education policy guidelines which stated that the provision of education was to be a partnership among communities, government and the Christian churches (The Education Sector Survey 1982:3).

Education policy proposed in 1978 and 1981 were never put into practice because the churches opposed secularization of educational management. The education policies between the period of 1966 to early 1970 were influenced by the ideology of the BNP. Since early 1970s and early 1980s, the proposals of education policies had been influenced by the changing relationship of the government and the RCC.

2.8 School governance

In addition to teachers' appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal, the church was responsible for the management of the school. The principal was always a member of the church and he/she was responsible for the day to day running of the school (Mohapeloa 1982; Seitlheko 1995; Sinyangwe and Leimu 1985).

The principal's duties included:-

- admission and promotion of the students;
- collecting fees, buying education materials and being a treasurer;
- disciplining the students; and

- management of staff relations with parents (Seboka sa Babishopo ba Kereke e Katholike 1987:7).

2.9 Funding

Costs for education in Lesotho are the joint responsibility of the government, parents and private institutions. Parents pay for their children's books, school uniforms and food at school. The government's responsibility is largely financial assistance for the payment of teacher salaries. The church and the community contribute by building classes, but recently there is a shift in the area of the school building and maintenance because the government is building schools with the financial support of bilateral and international agencies (Seitlheko 1995; Sinyagwe and Leimu 1985; Mohapelo 1982).

The main point regarding funding is fact the conditions of funding are changing over time because of the cuts in social spending. Parents are expected to supplement public budget by paying more user fees for the education of their children.

2.10 Conclusion.

As in other African countries, traditional education in Lesotho was responsive to the needs of parents, relatives and members of the village. This system of education was changed by European missionaries who initiated education that was responsive to their needs. The arrival of European missionaries was followed by colonization of the

country. Colonial government supported mission education. To ensure that education served its needs, colonial government introduced curriculum inspection and examination.

Lesotho prepared for a democratic government way back in early 1950s. The two main parties were the BNP and the BCP. The BCP called for a democratic education governance that included parents, members of the community, churches, government and non-governmental organizations. The RCC did not like the BCP idea of secularizing education governance. The RCC supported the BNP. To ensure its support from the RCC, the BNP would not attempt to secularize education governance. The BNP won the first general elections in 1966. As it promised the RCC not to secularize the education governance the BNP did not make any changes in education management in its first Five years of governance.

In 1970, the second general elections were held and the BCP defeated the BNP. The BNP refused to hand over power to the BCP. This caused internal instability throughout the country. Britain and Sweden attempted to force Lesotho to renew its policy by temporarily stopping their financial assistance to Lesotho. The BNP tried to increase its external financial assistance by establishing good relations with eastern bloc. This shift of the BNP antagonized the RCC.

The BNP was aware that its relationship with eastern bloc might end its support from the RCC. It therefore attempted to reduce the power of the RCC and other main churches in education management. In 1974, the BNP government started to pay teachers salaries.

In 1978 the government attempted to shift management powers from churches to government but churches protested against the shift of power. In 1981, the government sought to initiate the education policy guidelines, which specified that education management was to be a partnership among communities, government and Christian churches. These education policy guidelines were never implemented because Christian churches opposed government policy.



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Chapter three

Literature review

3.1 Structural adjustments

Most Third World countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been experiencing an economic downturn since the 1980s. These countries have failed to repay loans which were granted to them at a particular rate of interest from international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Watson 1995:6). Though these Third World countries are still in need of financial assistance for economic development, they cannot gain access to additional loans from these international organization unless they keep up debt repayments. They can only obtain additional loans from international organizations if they adopt the guidelines of the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes (Graham- Brown 1993:18, Watson 1995:6). Graham – Brown (1993:18) argues, however, that the main purpose of this economic adjustment by international organization is not necessarily to develop the economies of less-developed countries but to make sure that these countries keep paying their debts.

A structural adjustment process propagated by the monetary agencies, is characterized by four shifts the liberation of the economy; the deregulation of markets; privatization of state – owned utilities and the “stabilization” of the economic and political environment through cost – cutting strategies/policies (Fataar 1998:9). The first step for Third World

countries is to stabilize their national economies. Graham-Brown (1993:19) points out that stabilization is a programme meant to decrease demand and expenditure within the economy of the debtor country. According to him stabilization include the following:

- currency devaluation;
- cuts in central state expenditure;
- removal of state subsidies;
- restraints on wages and public employment;
- limits on credit expansion.

It is in the context of national economy recovery in Third World countries that the IMF and World Bank encourage Third World countries to reduce the role of state and to assert the values of free trade, market forces, and the reduction of central controls and direction over the economy, and other aspects of society including education (Watson 1995:4). Parental participation in school governance is encouraged on the assumption that if services decline, parents can find out the cause and be responsible for action. If funds are needed to repair the facility or to provide books there is no need to wait for the central government to provide money. The idea that lies behind this policy is that the users would be more willing to contribute to school costs if they are directly involved in the school's management (World Bank 1989:85).

In a situation of Lesotho where parents pay for educating their children, the idea of involving parents in school governance is based on the assumption that parents will

determine the level of the user fees (World Bank 1995:105). In this case, parents will not pay less, but pay more than they used to pay.

This view of involving parents in the school governance so that they can pay for their children's education appears to increase the inequalities within the education sector. Communities that comprised of richer families may increase the level of user fees beyond the means of the poorer families. In addition, schools that are located in poorer areas, serving poor families are not in a position to raise much extra money. They therefore have poorer facilities, sharpen [ing] inequalities between and within communities or schools (Graham – Brown 1993:45).

One of the effects of structural adjustment policies in many third world countries has been the retrenchment of teachers. Many parents are unemployed and strive hard for food, education for their children and health care. For these people, the payment of higher fees for educating their children would be difficult. Where such charges are already in operation, the economic crisis has made it even harder than before, for the poorest sectors to afford these payments for several children (Graham- Brown 1993:43).

Though the fees are accompanied by a move towards decentralization and devolution of power from central government, to parents and local community which gives them the appearance of democratic commitment, the needs and interests of local people are often not considered in the formulation of macro educational policies.

An assessment of the prospects of educational reform strategies requires not only an understanding of national and international forces, but also consideration of local conditions and the perceptions and actions of local people (Maclure 1993:75).

Education policies and reforms incorporated in a structural adjustment frequently imply that educational problems are caused by administrative inefficiency and an over involvement of the central state. Dei (1993:49) believes that inadequate attention has been paid to deplorable national economic conditions and poverty as major causes of educational problems.

A key impact of structural adjustment policies on the education sector has been financial cutbacks in public spending. Fataar (1998:11) has pointed out that financial cutbacks in education caused a decrease in real education expenditure and the implementation of financially constrained educational reform. According to him, governments have to make education policy reforms with limited financial resources. Policy in this context becomes a matter of seeking legitimacy to compensate for the state decreasing commitment to the provision of social services (Fataar 1998:11). Maclure (1993:73) argues that decentralization approaches in Third World countries may not bring equity and democratization in national education system because of these countries positions within the global capitalist economy.

3.2 The impact of structural adjustment in Lesotho

In 1986 the Lesotho Defence Force toppled the Basotho National Party (BNP). Lesotho was under the military rule since this year until 1993 when Lesotho returned to civil government. It was the military government which assessed and formulated the education policies on governance and decentralization.

Lesotho has been suffering from an economic decline since the 1980s. The decline of the agricultural sector and remittances of labour migration from South Africa (The Education Sector Survey 1982:47), and political and economic mismanagement (Matlosa 1996:69) and the closing of De Beers diamond mine contributed to the economic depression in Lesotho.

It is in the context of Lesotho economic deterioration that the military government turned to the World Bank for additional loans. Thus, the military government adopted a structural adjustment programme in order to meet the requirements of such a loan from the World Bank (World Bank 1996:90).

The effects of a structural adjustment programme in the Lesotho Education Sector are similar to other third world countries. An effect of a structural adjustment programme has been the decrease in the teachers salaries (Moeletsi oa Basotho 22nd October 1995:8).

The military government also proposed the educational decentralization policy of 1992 as means of cost recovery in the Lesotho education system. The educational reform was meant to address the existing educational problems in the country.

3.3 Education implications of political changes

The problems afflicting the Lesotho educational system have long been recognized by the citizens of Lesotho. Some of these problems were: deterioration of quality of education, high dropout and repeat rates, very poor facilities and staffing in primary schools, weak management and professional supervision. In addition, there was a lack of effective quality control in the system owing to the absence of an effective means of determining pupil's achievement from the national level (Ministry of Education 1992:4).

The Ministry of Education (1992:101) had long argued that poor administration and management had been a contributing factor to the poor quality of education in Lesotho. The central planning policy functions of the Ministry of Education had been hindered by an organizational structure created in earlier times, for a much smaller educational system. In addition, the implementation of previous policies had not been effective because of the lack of a decentralized field service capable of monitoring and supporting school level activities, and [a] poorly defined and ineffective system of local level school administration and management (Ministry of Education 1995:101).

The Ministry of Education (1992:128) pointed out that though the management of education in Lesotho was in the hands of the government, churches and local community, this partnership had for many years, suffered from a lack of clarification of respective roles, and ambiguity over areas of responsibility and accountability. The Ministry of Education was responsible for formulating policies, laws and regulations. The churches were responsible for local level management.

The Ministry of Education (1992:5) pointed out that among the policies which could remedy the situation of education in Lesotho was active, cooperative partnership in education administration and management, and the provision of education services between and among the churches, the government, the community and other non-government organizations.

By proposing community and parental participation in school governance, the military government intended to reduce the role of state in public funding and encourage parents and community participation in school governance in order to augment public funding.

The Ministry of Education (1992:5) proposed an educational policy which included the:

- revision of education legislation in order to improve the administration and management of education;
- restructuring of the Ministry of Education headquarters with a view to streamlining decision making;

- decentralization of educational management to the districts and strengthening of the inspectorate;
- improvement of management and resources used at school level;
- improvement of teachers conditions of service, and the establishment of a career structure.

3.4 Revision of educational legislation in Lesotho

The Ministry of Education (1992:103) pointed out that in terms of the Lesotho educational policy of 1992, the definition of individual responsibilities and tasks at all levels in the Ministry was as follows:

1. The Chief Education Officer was responsible for inspection of schools, educational audits, education management at district level, and organization of all functions of officers at sub-Ministry level.
2. The Chief Education Officer was empowered to manage all curriculum matters including the design of syllabuses, accrediting of learning materials, liaison with examination bodies, design and transmission of distance learning.
3. Teachers' appointments and direction including professional relations, conditions of service salaries, staffing, standards, qualifications, pre-service

training, in service training, and staff development also rested on the shoulders of the Chief Education Officer.

4. Finally, the Chief Education Officer is responsible for education funding, education matters, personal services, school supplies, building and school organization, school feeding and office management.

According to the Ministry of Education (1992:128) local level management by churches had been problematic as the country was experiencing parallel management structures which created a problem of accountability at school level. It was difficult for the government to implement the Ministry regulations at school level because school management rested on the shoulders of managers nominated by the churches, who were not answerable to the Ministry. Furthermore, it was argued that teachers were confused as to who was their employer, as they were employed by the church but paid by the Ministry, the decentralization policy incorporated in the fifth five-year development plan sought to shift the power of teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal from the churches to the government (Ministry of Education 1992).

It is clear from the above that the military government was attempting to control teachers' appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal. This initiative of the military government to control the staffing correlates with the argument of Hallak (1995:111) and (Kinyanjui 1998:284) that most governments that introduce

decentralized approaches do not give up the control of teachers appointments: transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal.

The policies and strategies included among other things **improvement of local level management, school administration and the use of resources in schools** (Ministry of Education 1992:5). These policies and strategies to improve education were not a surprise because the World Bank educational agenda stresses decentralizing the management of public education and encouraging the expansion of non-government and community – supported schools (World Bank 1986:2).

The Ministry of Education (1992:78) pointed out that low enrolment in many secondary and high schools rendered them inefficient and non-viable as secondary level educational institutions. The Ministry claimed that facilities were inadequate, and the staff poorly qualified with pupil teacher ratios below recommended norms. It is in the context of national economy recovery that emphasis on the proposed Lesotho education policy was based on **consolidation, rationalization and efficiency improvements** within the secondary sector with only a limited amount of expansion (Ministry of Education 1992:4).

The inclusion of parents and the churches was to be formalized in the revised legislation through the establishment of school committees. The Ministry of education was supposed to:

- develop guidelines for the formations of the school committees;
- set down regulations for the proper level of representation;
- define the functions of the school committees in advisory rather than managerial terms (Ministry of Education 1992:130).

The Ministry of Education (1992:79) intended to reduce the number of small, inefficient schools, by carrying out a school mapping exercise for secondary and high schools during 1991/92. The purpose of doing the mapping exercise was to develop a plan for directing resources only to schools above the minimum size. The Lesotho national agenda for education in Secondary Sector was to focus on “efficiency” and “decentralization” of the Lesotho education system. At the school level other means of reducing education costs included large classes. (Ministry of Education 1992: 79).

By suggesting an increase in both secondary and high schools enrolments in Lesotho, the military government did not consider that there were disparities and inequities in the distribution of resources and wealth in this country. It was likely that middle class parents would choose to pay more for the education of their children and this increase in schools fees would make it difficult for poor students to attend certain schools.

3.5 Assumptions of a decentralized education management

Most countries in the world have made a shift towards the decentralization of educational governance in the last two decades. Lauglo (1995:6) defines decentralization as the

disperse of power to units of administration. Parents, members of the community, students and staff are usually represented in the administration of the school (Hallak 1995, Robinson 1994, Cohen 1978). The main justifying rationale for decentralizing educational management is to place decision making as near as possible to the point of implementation (Robinson 1994:72).

Sander (1995:95) argues that the decentralization of educational administration often hampers the transfer of skills and knowledge across regions and units. This view is supported by Kinyani (1998:284) who points out that parental participation in school governance is highly differentiated by region, ethnic groups, economic abilities of the communities concerned and the value placed on education in various segments of the society. For example, a school board of a school located in a lower socio economic area that consists of poor and uneducated people is not like a school board of a school situated in a high or middle class socioeconomic area populated by rich and educated people.

People in the latter have more competences and resources than people in lower socioeconomic areas. They have knowledge and skills to manipulate education politics and have funds to access finance to their school improvements.

African governments often suffer from political instability. Such governments are often not supported by the majority of population and faced with a problem of resistance to policies, including education policies. It is within this context that devolving power to local citizens becomes an effective mechanism of managing conflict to smaller territorial units (Sayed 1992:6). It is undeniable that conflict may still be experienced at the local

level; such conflict may tend to become particularistic and parochial in the nature and scope of their challenge (Sayed 1992:6). In this way, conflict is not addressed to the state but deflected to smaller administrative units.

Although the decentralization of the education system may be seen as an approach that enables a shift in power by increasing participation in education management, in reality the state usually devolves power only on some non-essential aspects of provision of education to local authorities (Sayed 1992:7).

Most reforms of education administration systems refer to participation but rarely to autonomy. Even in the most advanced systems of devolution, the state provides very little autonomy to schools in the three key areas of governance: budget, staff and curriculum (Hallak 1995:111).

Although advocates of decentralization imply that within local participation all participants are equal and there is no class conflict (Ripo 1977:49), and all participants are equal and work for the common good (Dickson 1981), Jones (1991:164) argues that in reality within local participation, participants are not equal and often do not work for the common good.

Meaningful implementation in school governance is influenced by the attitude of the principal, his readiness to implement a reform, his managerial capacity, and his ability to mobilize actors within school (teachers, parents) (Hallak 1995:113).

A decentralized education governance that entails and enhances democracy, equity and greater participation is a phenomenon found in many countries. It is difficult to see how this reform could promote equity where underprivileged regions remain disadvantaged. More specifically, democracy, equity and wider representation could not be achieved where the governments still retain key areas of governance such as budget, staff and curriculum.

3.6 Parental participation

As it has been indicated earlier, decentralization facilitates parental participation in educational administration. The notion of participation implies that the new administrators and the traditional administrators need to work as more equal partners in school governance. They need to be competent in performing responsibilities granted to them and take part in real decision making (Shaeffer 1992:280). Such participation implies:

a willingness on the part of the traditional administrator to share necessary information, and a willingness on the part of the new partner to share not only ownership of, but also the responsibility for change and accountability (Shaeffer 1992:280).

Parental participation was introduced in educational administration because policy makers were not satisfied with the growing power of the professionals and economic

elites and a loss of control by the masses (Cohen 1978:430). Parental participation in school governance is therefore viewed as means of fostering democratic citizenship in any given country (Deem 1994:24), hence parental participation is introduced to “increase the influence of parents and explore the political dynamics of popular exclusion” (Cohen 1978:430). In addition, “the phenomenon is also an example of a globalization process which implies that the chains of political economic and social activity are becoming world wide in scope, ... whereby local transformation is as much an element of globalization as the literal expansion of social relations across space and time” (Deem 1994:24).

Robinson (1994:73) points out that in New Zealand, parental participation was introduced in school management because educators were interested in lobbying central agencies administrators to protect and improve their work conditions rather than considering the quality of education provision received by local communities. It was therefore believed that parental participation in educational governance would move educators focus from the center to “the local communities to whom decision making resource management and accountability had been devolved” (Robinson 1994:73).

3.7 Issues about parental participation

Skau (1996:38) points out that parents and teachers often understood the concept of parental involvement differently. The reason for this was that the role of participants in school governance were often left unclear. According to him, there were no guidelines

that made it possible for the parents to get involved in school governance. He therefore argues that parental involvement in school management could only be successful if the roles of the parents, teachers and principals were clarified.

Robinson (1994:84) reports that in the study that he undertook in New Zealand, both parents and teachers were reluctant to involve school boards in educational decisions. They preferred parents to have a role on administrative decisions. He stresses that both parties believed that educational decisions required a professional expertise which parents did not have. Verhoeven (1994:415) argues that parents did not usually recognize their rights and obligations. They were often interested in the education of their own children. Parents felt that only teachers could handle the problems of children professionally, hence they felt that they did not need parents meetings because they could contact teachers if the need arose.

Skau (1996:44) points out that parental participation was not successful in schools located in lower socio economic areas. Poor parents from minority groups did not participate at all. Poor parents did not have time to participate in educational matters because they were striving hard to survive. In addition, these parents neither had the skill nor knowledge that enabled them to get involved. However, Skau (1996:44) points out that in schools located in lower and middle class districts, parents participated very well because “higher socio economic and education levels appeared to increase the possibility that parents in these two communities felt more comfortable in schools and were more skilled in decision making procedures.”

Yaffee (1994:704) stresses that parental participation in America was time consuming because it resulted in meetings lasting many months. She points out that meetings that included teachers, administrators and members of communities took a long period as meetings were prolonged to avoid hassles and to reach consensus.

Yaffee (1994:704) argues that parental participation in school management resulted in the loss of trust between the parents and teachers. Skau (1996:40) supports this view. He points out that in his study, teachers were worried by the attitudes of parents towards them. Teachers felt that parents regarded them as objects not human beings.

Skau (1996:39) points out that the attitudes of principals towards parental participation differed. Some school principals saw parental participation as a good thing, while other school principals viewed parents as not being competent to participate in school governance (Verhoeven 1999:415). Skau (1996:44) argues that parental participation was successful in schools where the principals and teachers encouraged parents participation. In these schools school governance was “balanced – active, involved and democratic” (Skau 1996:44). He points out that in the schools where the process of parental involvement was dominated by the teachers and the principals, parents felt that they needed knowledge before being involved, as a result they supported the decisions made in school.

Mankoe and Maynes (1994:30) caution that stakeholders in Ghana might not yet have accomplished the type of full and genuine participation entailed in the educational

decentralization policy. Parents in Ghana were not satisfied with their level of involvement in the area of student discipline and teachers appointments (Mankoe and Maynes 1994:29). Mankoe and Maynes state that parents in Ghana were not sure whether they were merely responsible for making final decisions in the area of teachers' appointments, or whether they were mere advisors. This suggests that parents were uninformed about their role in educational governance. Mankoe and Maynes (1994:29) argue that the problem of not addressing this issue made the educators leave parents out of the process, and thus with no voice in the appointment of teachers to their schools.

Mankoe and Maynes (1994:29) point out that research in Ghana reveals that stakeholders were not able to play their roles because of economic constraints. They point out that the evidence gathered in Ghana reveals that the government relied on the community for the mobilization of resources to ensure the effective delivery of their functions.

The research in Ghana also reveals that officials from districts owed their attachment to their parent organizations at the regional and central government. The reason for this was that there was no real financial support for the implementation of decentralization policy (Mankoe and Maynes 1994:30). Their findings reveal that there was no radical change in the relationships between the District Assembly, District Administration, Regional Administration and the Central Government (Mankoe and Maynes 1994:30).

3.8 Why parental participation in school governance is worthwhile

As has already been mentioned, many of the changes towards more parental participation in education management have emanated from attempt to decrease education expenditure. Parents are encouraged to supplement social spending by paying user fees. It is argued that parents would be more willing to make additional financial contributions if they are directly included in school governance. If funds are required for school improvement, parents would not wait for central ministry to appropriate funds (World Bank 1989, Deem 1994, Watson 1994, Fataar 1998, Graham-Brown 1993).

It is difficult to see how parents participation could succeed under conditions of social and economic inequalities. Parents that hold high levels of income may raise the level of user fees beyond the means of the poor parents. Moreover, schools that are located in underprivileged areas, serving poor parents would not be able to raise adequate funds for their improvements. Parental participation in school governance would be ineffective if the situation of social and economic inequalities does not change.

3.9 Suggestions towards effective parental participation in school governance

Robinson (1994:85) suggests that a genuine partnership in school governance may be successful if central ministry makes clear that the school board's responsibilities involve both administrative and educational responsibilities. According to her, the school board needs to monitor and reports on its educational achievement. She points out that the

clarity of the school board's responsibilities and monitoring of its educational achievement would help to find out difficulties in implementing the partnership policy.

Verhoeven (1999:427) states that "the possession of certain knowledge and skills is necessary for real democratic participation. Parents, principals and teachers need training for effective implementation of parental participation in school governance (Mankoe and Maynes 1994, Robinson 1994, Skau 1996, David 1994, Verhoeven 1999).



Chapter four

Presentation of findings

4.1 Introduction

Lesotho has suffered from economic decline since the 1980s. This crisis forced the country to turn to the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programme to get external financial assistance for economic development. Through its specific project loans, the World Bank persuades the Third World countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to implement its own policy priorities and preferences that are in evidence with the broader strategies of its structural adjustment programme (Gould 1993:56). The research is conceptualized as a survey.

4.2 Sample

Two RCC High Schools in Leribe district participated in this study. The names of these schools are protected and the researcher has referred to these schools as School A and School B. They are chosen according to the following criteria:

- they were easily accessible to the researcher.

- The researcher has considerable knowledge of the area and the educational context that in turn might lead to questions about the problem of the researcher as insider/participant in the field.
- School A and School B had established parental participation in school governance in terms of Lesotho Education Act 1995 in school governance.
- They were willing to participate in the study.

The two schools under study fell under Catholic Church School Proprietorship. The schools had been under the administration of school managers nominated by the Catholic Church. In most cases, the school managers were church Priests or Nuns. The head or principal of these schools have historically been the RCC Sisters but the Deputy heads have been lay teachers provided they are Catholics.

School A was established in 1975, and is located in the urban area of Leribe district.

Some students come from low and middle class socioeconomic areas, others from marginalized urban areas and some from rural poor areas.

The students as well as teachers bodies are comprised of Catholic and Protestants and non-Christian.

The membership of school board comprises three parent representatives, two church representative, local chief, the principal and one teacher representative.

School B is located in a rural area. School B is established in 1960. As in school A the students of this school come from a variety of backgrounds.

The students and teachers bodies are comprised of Catholic and Protestants. This implies that the school is the mixed nature of the religious affiliation of the students and teachers. The members of school board are three parent representatives, two church representatives, one teacher representative, local chief and the principal.

The enrolment in school A was eight hundred and forty (840) children. Catholic Children were seven hundred (700) and Protestant and non-Christian children were one hundred and forty (140). The proportion of Catholic children to Protestant and non-Christian students was 5:1.

The enrolment in school B was eight hundred (800) children. Catholic children were six hundred (600) and Protestant and non-Christian children were two hundred. The proportion of Catholic children to Protestant and non-Christian students was 3:1.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

A variety of sources are used for this study. Documents which are descriptions of events and discussion held in school staff, board and parents meetings were studied by the researcher. The LEA and official education documents were used as a background information for this study. In addition to these documents, news releases from local

papers were used. Interviews were a major source of collection for this study. Twelve interviews were conducted for this study.

Professional, church and parental views about the school board role in school governance as indicated in Lesotho Education Act were collected in this study. The content and format of interviews covers the evaluation of the role and responsibilities of participants, and the examination of the role of parental participation in the process of restructuring school governance. The investigation of the forces that support and hinder parental participation in school governance were also researched.

4.4 Strengths and weaknesses of the study

Its weakness was that parent representatives, teacher representatives and the church representative were lightly sampled for both schools.

4.5 Findings

The findings reveal that the representation of parents on the school board is biased towards Catholic and middle class parents in urban area school. In response to what they know about the responsibilities of the school board, the respondents stated firstly, that the definition of the powers and responsibilities of the parents lacks clarity. Secondly, the members of the school board are not given real decision making power in the area of teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal. Thirdly,

the legislation strengthens the participation of the principal in school financial affairs. Lastly, parents are not only involved in school governance when they pay the user fees and contribute towards building construction. In response to the question where does the power of the school board lie, the respondents stated that the legislation empowers the school board to manage school only. The government still retains control of curriculum, staffing, funding and inspection. The implementation of parental participation is constrained by the unclear definition of powers for school board members, the use of only English in education documents, the ignorance of parents contribution by other parties on the school board, the attitude of the principal, and the long distance from home to the school.

The implementation of parental participation in school governance can be improved by representing parents of different socioeconomic levels, clarification of the power and responsibilities of parents, training the members of the school board, using both Sesotho and English languages in education documents, and circulating adequate information about parental participation.

4.51 Who are the representatives of parents on the school board?

School A

Table 1

Representation of parents by religion

RELIGION	School A	School B
RCC	3	3
LEC	0	0
ACL	0	0
Methodist		0
OTHER	0	0

This table indicates that in both schools all parent representatives are Catholics. Parent representative in School B pointed out that he did not campaign for elections of the school board. He did not even know that he was elected until he received the letter from the Catholic Educational Secretary. The LEA only states that parent representatives should be elected by the parents of the learners enrolled in the school. But the question of how the elections are to be conducted remains unanswered. This leads the elections to lack transparency. The representation of parents is biased towards Catholic parents. This representation of parents correlates with the Catholic School Policy document of 1987

which was given to the parent representatives and local chiefs before they started their work in school governance.

TABLE 2

Representation of parents by socioeconomic position

Category	School A	School B
Entrepreneur	1	0
Unemployed	0	1
Worker	0	0
Professional Worker	2	1
Self-employed	0	1

This indicates that in School A which is located in urban area parents are represented by middle socioeconomic parents and in School B parents are represented by both middle and lower socioeconomic parents.

4.52 What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the school board

All participants in both schools stated that they were not informed about the roles and responsibilities of the school board. Participants stated that they were given the LEA

documents, which were written in English language. No officials came from the Ministry to explain the responsibilities of the school board. Parent representatives in both schools pointed out that the church informed them of the rules and regulations of the Catholic schools.

In both schools all participants pointed out that they were not trained for their current positions on the school board. They stated that all school board members from different church schools and government schools were called to one place at Leribe Camp and were simply told that through the LEA the government intended to promote equitable and democratic decision making in education management. No education official ever mentioned or explained the function of the school board.

4.53 Supervision and Management of the School

In both schools, all the respondents stated that they knew that school board was responsible for supervision and management of the school although they did not know what terms supervision and management meant. They stated that the LEA did not clarify the concept of supervision and management of school. The school board members in both schools stated that for them management and supervision meant the same thing but in terms of LEA the two concepts appeared to imply two different concepts.

The principal in School A pointed out that she tried to involve parents in school governance but it was not easy because there was no provision of the guidelines that

made it possible for the school board members to perform their jobs effectively. In School A, all the respondents stated that they often had discussions about the discipline of the students. They pointed out that decision making on this matter was based on majority rule.

The teacher and parent representatives in School B stated that the unclear definition of powers of the school board left these participants out of the process of parental participation in school governance. Both teacher and parent representatives in this school gave an example of learners who were expelled by the principal without the involvement of other school board members.

Members of the school board stated that even though other school board members reported this matter to the Ministry of Education in Leribe, the students were never readmitted into school. This suggests that unlike in School A where decisions were made on democratic committee procedures, in School B, the principal dominated decision making. However, the LEA was silent about what should be done when there was conflict amongst members of the school board. In effect, there was no relationship between the school board and the Ministry of Education at district level in terms of the LEA.

The respondents pointed out that there was no line of demarcation between the function of the school board and the principal on the issue of the proper and efficient running of the school. The teacher representative in school A believed that this legislation

empowered the school board to be responsible for efficient running of the school. Also that the principal was to be responsible for the discipline, organization and day to day running of the school (LGGE 1996:471). He argued that though parents were empowered to do this job, the capacity to perform this job did not exist among parents.

4.54 Teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal

All the respondents pointed out that in terms of the LEA, members of the school board were empowered to make recommendations of teachers promotion and demotion to the appointing authority on advice of the District Education Officer. Teacher representatives and the principals in both schools stated that the legislation did not make clear whether the promotion of teacher included promotion of a head teacher, senior teacher, or head of department. The teacher representatives and the principals in both schools pointed out that the school board had to know the criteria under which the teacher could be transferred, promoted and demoted in order to discharge its responsibilities.

The teacher representative in School B pointed out that the LEA did not give clarity on how the process of teachers' appointment, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal should be arrived at. The result of this intended policy had in one instance been the dismissal of a teacher by the principal without a discussion process with other members of the school board. The teacher reported this matter to other school board members. Majority of the school board members agreed that the letter of dismissal must

be withdrawn, but the principal did not allow a teacher to resume her duties. The response of the principal suggests that though the state attempts to foster parental participation in key aspects of school governance, the principal was still adhering to the old system. This justifies the argument of Mankoe (1994:29) that principals do not desire greater involvement in decisions pertaining to (the) appointments of teachers.

On the issues of teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal, all the respondents in both schools stated that the legislation empowered the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) to make final decisions on these areas. This meant for them that the school board did not have real decision making power in this area.

4.55 School financial affairs

The Church representatives and the principal in both schools were satisfied that the school board had to approve the school budget prepared by the principal. The principals were reluctant to involve parents in school financial affairs. For them parents could only advise but not be involved in real decision making. In contrast, teachers were willing to increase the power of parents in this issue.

Addressing the issue of the involvement of the school board in school financial affairs, the parent representatives and teacher representatives in both Schools A and B stated that the LEA granted the principal more power than the school board. The LEA states that the principal is responsible to the school board for the management and the use of the

school funds. The LEA also grants the principal the rights to prepare an annual budget for the school and submit it to the school board for its approval. They argued against the preparation of the school budget done only by the principal. As defined by the respondents in both schools, the work of the school board was just to approve the school budget and to audit the school books but this did not happen in practice. The parent representatives were no satisfied with this principle.

The parents representatives in both Schools A and B pointed out that the principals did not discuss the funds spent on sports, books, library and food. The parent representatives Argued that most of the school developments are hindered by mismanagement of school resources. They pointed out that very little money was spent on educational activities. The parent representatives feared that decision making was still undemocratic in relation to this key aspect (school financial affairs) of school governance.

In both Schools A and B, the parent representatives were not satisfied that parents were involved in school financial matters only when they paid user fees, contributions for school buildings and when they paid for the uniform of their children. Parent representatives pointed out that because the legislation did not provide guidelines for performing this function on the issue of school fees and building classrooms, the principal dictated the terms of how to do things and as a result no real decision making took place on the school board in relation to school financial affairs. Parent representatives in School B pointed out that the principal did not consult them when she

wanted to increase school fees or when she wanted to introduce fees of any form. She simply informed them about the final decision.

In both schools, the parent representatives wanted more power than that granted to the school board in the area of school financial affairs. The parent representatives stressed that they wanted to participate in the preparation of school budget. They wanted to be actively involved in the discussion of how the user fees were spent. Parents said that many learners' parents were self-employed and they strive hard to survive and educate their children. Parents believed that they must decide the level of the user fees and how these monies were spent on education developments. They therefore felt that they were competent enough to take part in decision concerning preparation of the school budget and all financial matters of the school.

In both Schools A and B, teachers representatives and parent representatives pointed out that in terms of the LEA, the school board had to submit, at the end of each school year audited statement of accounts of the school to the proprietor and Principal Secretary. Teacher representatives and parent representatives in both Schools A and B pointed out that the recordings of transactions in the books of accounts are complicated and only people who are exposed to the knowledge of accounting were able to understand the accounting procedures. Teacher representatives in both Schools A and B suggested that the Ministry of Education should find an independent body to audit the books because the school board may not be in a position to audit books of accounts.

4.56 How do parents participate in school governance?

This study reveals that in both schools studied, many parents that participated in parents meetings were poor and uneducated, a few educated and middle class parents attended.

Parents felt that they were not given real decision making power in the area of teachers' appointments, transfer, promotion, demotion and dismissal. They pointed out that they were actively involved but in most cases the principal dominated decision making. Parents did not deny that they were not competent enough to make the decisions about appointments of teachers but felt that if they were told job descriptions before hand they could do well. The Principal in particular did not value parental participation in this issues. The reason the principal gave was that parents did have neither skills nor knowledge that could help them make fair decisions.

Educators and the principals were not satisfied with the attitude of parents towards them. In some cases they thought that parental involvement did not improve administration or promote educational quality. Educators stated that parents liked to point out mistakes of teachers and not to help teachers improve the provision of education.

4.57 Why do parents participate the way they do?

Teachers and the church were reluctant to involve parental participation in educative decision making. These participants believed that parents were not in a position to know

how to teach well or improve the performance of the students. Parents that participated in such decision making were silent and supportive of decision made by educators and the principals because their contributions were ignored.

4.58 Where does power lie?

All the participants in both Schools A and B pointed out that the ambiguity of definitions of the supervision and management of schools, left the members of the school board out of the process of educational management. Parent representatives in both Schools A and B argued that since the definitions of management and supervision in school affairs was vague they had become passive participants in school governance.

The respondents stated that the function of teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal was complicated. They pointed out that the legislation hindered them to perform this function because decision on teachers promotion and demotion, could not be made without the advice of the District Education Officer. The respondents pointed out that the body that was responsible for making final decisions in this area was the TSC.

They stated that because they did not take part in the drawing up of the budget they felt that they were not given real decision making power in the school financial area. Parent representatives and teacher representatives in both schools maintained that there was no change in this area. They pointed out that even before the introduction of the legislation,

principals were responsible for drawing up the school budgets alone and only informed the parents about the increase of the school fees as they still did.

4.59 What are the forces that support and that hinder parental participation in school governance?

(a) Clarification of the definition of powers of the school board

All the respondents in both Schools A and B stated that the powers and responsibilities of the school board needed clarification particularly on the issue of management and supervision. They maintained that lack of definition of the powers of the school board is a hindrance in implementing parental participation in school governance. They therefore called for clarification of the definition of the powers of the school board so that the school board could perform their work effectively.

(b) Training needs

All the respondents in both School A and B stated that parental participation in school governance could be improved by training the principal, the church representatives, school personnel and parent representatives to enable all the parties to have basic knowledge about managerial skills of sharing ownership. The church representative in School B pointed out that it can help the school board members to work effectively and

harmoniously because the principal would know her/his limitations and at the same time other school board members would know the limits to which their power is confined.

© **Dissemination of information**

All the respondents in both School A and B stated that dissemination of information is important for the improvement of parental participation in school governance because the school board members would be clear as to what the Ministry expected them to do. The principal of School A maintained that the circulation of information by the Ministry of Education to the school board members and by the school board to the Ministry of Education, could enable members of the school board and the Ministry of education to solve controversial issues which were seen as a hindrance for the implementation of parental participation in school governance.

(d) **Language**

Teacher representatives and parent representatives in both schools A and B pointed out that the education documents by the Ministry of Education were only available in the English language. These participants were of the opinion that the sole use of the English language in education documents was a hindrance for the effective implementation of parental participation because some parents did not understand these documents. The participants suggested that education documents be written in both the Sesotho language and the English language.

Parent representatives and teacher representatives in both School A and B maintained that the use of both Sesotho and English languages in education documents would help both English language speakers and Sesotho speakers to read and understand the education documents. They pointed out that reading material written in their home language would increase their understanding of the contents of the LEA and on the other hand, the English language speakers could read the same documents written in the English language.

(e) Ignorance of parents' contribution

Parent representatives in both schools complained that other parties in school governance often ignored the contribution of parents in the school board meetings and parents meetings. They pointed out that parents meetings include teachers, parents and the members of the school board, and in most cases meetings were dominated by the teachers, church representatives and the principal to the exclusion of the voices of the parents.

(f) Lack of education

The principals and teacher representatives pointed out that parents from rural areas and parents who possessed lower levels of education were silent and submissive during the discussion about school matters because they believed that the teachers and the church representatives were senior to them.

(g) Attitudes of the principal

Parent representative and teacher representative in School B, maintain that the attitude of the principal in their school hampers effective implementation of parental participation in school governance. According to the LEA, the principal is the secretary of the school board and must see that all things happen. But since the principal is not willing to involve parents in real decision making of school governance, the school management was regarded by the parents as undemocratic.

(h) Distance

The principal in both Schools A and B state that the children that are enrolled in these schools come from different places. Some of them come from mountainous districts such as Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Qacha'snek and Quthing. The principals in both Schools A and B maintained that it is difficult for parents in these areas to get involved because of the long distance areas. They stated that in these districts, transport was a problem particularly on weekends.

Chapter five

Interpretation of findings and conclusion

The LEA was initiated with the stated goal of contributing to equitable and democratic representation in educational management. Most studies undertaken in Third World countries indicate that despite a commitment to democracy and devolution, policies designed to promote the decentralization of school governance did not achieve desired outcomes of decentralization approaches in response to the promotion of democracy and equity.

Both schools that were surveyed were Catholic High Schools. It therefore represented a very specific sample of education governance in Lesotho and cannot be generalized.

Though the Lesotho government stated that parental participation in school governance was means of strengthening the position of parents in educational management (LGGE 1996:44), equitable and democratic decision making did not exist as far as the representation of the different denomination groups was concerned. Parents were represented in educational management by only Catholic parents.

The aim of improving participation in school governance might be hampered by the undemocratic representation of the parents on the school board. The representation of

only Catholic parents on the school board might be based on the assumption that the proportion of Catholic students to non-Catholic students was higher. Even though non-Catholics could be the minority as indicated, they also had a right to make their needs and interests heard. The representation of parents on the school board needs to be both Catholic and non-Catholic. In this way, there could be diverse experience that would help to make democratic decisions for both Catholic and non-Catholic parents in the process of parental participation in school governance.

The representation of parents in school governance also differed according to the school location. Only middle class parents were represented on the school board in the school located in the urban area. In contrast to school located in the urban area, both middle class and lower socio-economic parents were represented on the school board in the school situated in the rural area. Democratic participation could not be achieved where the other groups of the society are not represented.

The representation of only Catholic parents in both schools, showed the area in which the LEA needs to develop. It appeared that in both schools Catholic students are more than Protestant and non-Christian students. This implies that Catholic parents would always out number Protestant and non-Christian parents when the election of parent representatives are held. Lesotho Government needs to develop the LEA in the area of election of parent representatives so that Protestants and non-Christian parents are represented in school governance.

Literature reviewed in this study shows that participation of poor and uneducated parents was low and that of rich and educated was high in school governance (Skau 1996:44), Thody (1989:145) concludes that participation of parents that held higher levels of education and income was more than that of poor and uneducated because of their social background. In contrast, this study found that participation of poor and uneducated parents was more than that of rich and educated parents. This evidence is supported by Verhoeven (1999:427). He reports that parent representatives that were educated did not appreciate the parental participation more.

Educators wanted parents to be actively involved in administration matters such as disciplining their children and helping these children to keep the rules of the school. Educators felt that parents were not competent enough to participate in educational matters. As Robinson (1994:84) indicated in his study of the community school partnership in the management of New Zealand schools, educators maintained that parents could not make fair educative decisions because they did not have professional expertise. However, Robinson (1994:84) argues that “the interests of parents and students in the quality of educational provision are greater than that of the professional since it is the former rather than the latter that experience the consequences of that quality”. (Robinson 1994:84).

The evidence gathered in the Leribe context, reveals that the definition of powers of the school board was unclear particularly on two functions of the school board. These were supervision of the school and management of the school. Members of the school board stated that they did not see the difference between supervision of school and management of school. According to them, supervision meant management or administration of the school. In terms of the legislation, management and supervision were two different concepts. Therefore, participants had some difficulty in gaining a clear understanding of what to do since the LEA did not provide guidelines that made it possible for the school board members to differentiate these two concepts.

The unclear powers and functions of the school board were constraint for the effective implementation of parental participation in school governance. Participants stated that because the powers and functions of the school board were unclear, supervision of the school and management of the school, the administration of the school remained the responsibility of the principal. The evidence gathered in the Leribe context, justifies Mankoe and Maynes (1994:29) argument that the problem with unclear roles and responsibilities in school governance resulted in educators leaving parents out of the process of participation.

Parents and the teacher representatives of the school situated in the rural area pointed out that they had been experiencing problems in their schools because of this ambiguity of the definition of powers and functions of the school board. The principal expelled the students from the school without a discussion with other school board members. This act

of the principal led to conflict between the principal and the parent representatives. The matter was not resolved even after the parents had taken measures to readmit the students.

This study showed that there were problems and tensions that were experienced in putting this policy into practice. The dismissal of the students by the principal had been a controversial issue that had to be settled. It was difficult for the members of the school board to resolve this problem because the legislation was silent about how the school board could solve the conflicts in the process of parental participation in school governance.

The problem of the school board members of not getting involved because of ambiguity of roles and responsibilities, raises a question of the issues of accountability and transparency. If the participants of the school board were not clear about the definition of their roles and responsibilities, it was difficult for them to be accountable to the concerned. Riley (1997:167) states that "if accountability is not clear to those working within the system, it is unlikely to be clear to users and beneficiaries of services".

The evidence gathered in this study showed that the school board members were not satisfied with the level of their involvement in the area of teachers' appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal. The reason for their discontent was that they were not given real decision making power in this area. The legislation grants the TSC the power to make final decisions. This evidence upheld the view of

Kinyanjui (1998:284) and Hallak (1995:111) that although governments devolved power of educational management to local authorities, they still retain control of teachers appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal.

However, equitable and democratic participation means more than the recommendation of teachers' appointments, transfer, discipline, promotion and dismissal. It referred to the participation of stakeholders in real decision – making (Shaeffer 1992:280).

The rhetoric of this policy was that Lesotho government devolved the power of education management to local authorities. The reality was the LEA shifted the power of teachers appointment, transfer, discipline, promotion, demotion and dismissal from the churches to the government in order to control education governance.

The involvement of the school board in area of school financial affairs is fine in the eyes of the principals and the church representatives. The function was clear to both parties because there was no change made in the powers of the principals. Parents were only involved in paying for the education of their children. Even before this policy was initiated, parents responsibilities covered the payments of user fees, books, buildings and uniforms. Parents are included in school governance so that they can pay more for their children. For example parents can see that school furniture needs to be repaired if they are included in school governance. They can then pay for school furniture repairs. This evidence correlates with the argument of (Graham – Brown 1993:43; Fataar 1998:12;)

that parents were included in educational governance so that they could pay for the education of their children.

However, this study reveals that although the LEA grants parents to approve or disapprove the school budget, parents felt that their participation in this area was limited. They wanted more power in school finance area such as participating in preparation of the school budget. This evidence correlates with evidence gathered in Belgium by Verhoeven (1999:425). He concluded that parents' representatives wanted to have more influence in school financial affairs.

The parents and the teachers were generally of the opinion that the government did not consult them in the initial stage of the LEA. Parents believed that if they were included in the formation of the LEA their wishes such as involvement in the preparation of the school budget and decision on the level of user fees would have been considered.

The oversight of local people's perceptions and needs in the process of formulating the parental participation policy, has a grave implication in the implementation of this reform. It is obvious that local people are likely to resist the effective implementation of this reform if they were not informed about it. The process of formulating education policies and strategies must include not only national and international forces but also views of local people (Maclure 1993:75).

This study reveals that teachers were not satisfied with the attitudes of parents towards them. As Yaffee (1994:704) indicated in her study of parental participation in school governance, parental involvement resulted in “the loss of trust between the parents and the teachers”. This evidence shows that there is a need to create a conducive environment for both parents and educators in school governance so that each group feels comfortable.

In response to where their participation in educational governance lies, the members of the school board stated that the legislation empowered them only to supervise and manage the school. The evidence gathered in Leribe context and education documents shows that the legal education framework: financial and academic control of the formal education, inspection and training system are retained by government (Ministry of Economic Planning 1997:169). This evidence justifies the argument of Gould (1993:121), Watson (1995:6), Hallak (1995:111) and Sayed (1992:4) that most governments of Third World countries that initiated the educational decentralization policy, still retain control of education frameworks such as certification, curriculum, staffing and education budget.

There was considerable evidence that the members of the school board were less informed about their roles and responsibilities in the process of parental participation in school governance. There was no way that the members of the school board could do their functions effectively if they were not informed about their functions in school

governance. This evidence suggests that there was no adequate information about the operation of parental participation in school governance.

Hallak (1995:111) argues that the improvement of the organization capacity of each school requires both a clear communication line among the actors and improved group work. The circulation of information is a necessary condition for solving problem. Sharpe (1996:8) raises a similar view that for effective implementation of decentralization approaches districts must communicate goals, guiding images and information. In this way, school board members would know and understand their responsibilities, and thus be in a position to implement parental participation effectively.

Currently the initiated parental participation policy in educational governance suffers from a number of shortcomings. There is no change in the administrative levels. The Lesotho government has made no changes in the Ministry of Education at district and central levels. Hence parental participation is limited to school level.

Improvement of educational governance for equity and democracy was only injected in school governance. The Lesotho government have made no changes in the Ministry of Education at district or central level. It was essential for governments to make changes and establish relationships between all administrative levels (Hallak 1995:108), so that all the stakeholders could be in a position to influence decisions made at all levels (Mankoe and Maynes 1994:30).

The principal of the school located in the rural areas was less co-operative with other school board members and had made no effort to support the implementation of parental participation in school governance. She dominated decision-making and did not encourage other school board members to participate in school governance. The attitude of the principal seemed to limit parental participation in school governance. A successful implementation of school based decision making is only possible if both the traditional administrator and the new partners are willing to share ownership and both realize that change is needed (Shaeffer 1992:280).

Domination of educational decisions by the principal could not only be seen on the question of attitude or a power hungry of administration. In the absence of training for the members of their school board, and clear lines of power and accountability it was fairly understandable that the person in charge of the day to day affairs of the school should display a cautious attitude to change. It may not have been necessary for the participants to blame the principal in order to explain this state of affairs, though in specific instances it was possible that the head might abuse the situation.

All the school board members were not trained for their current position in school governance. This was confirmed by the Ministry of Education (1997) that the members of the school board of the post- primary school were not trained.

However, the evidence suggests that the Lesotho government did not have enough resources to cater for training needs. Lack of resources may be seen as a barrier towards

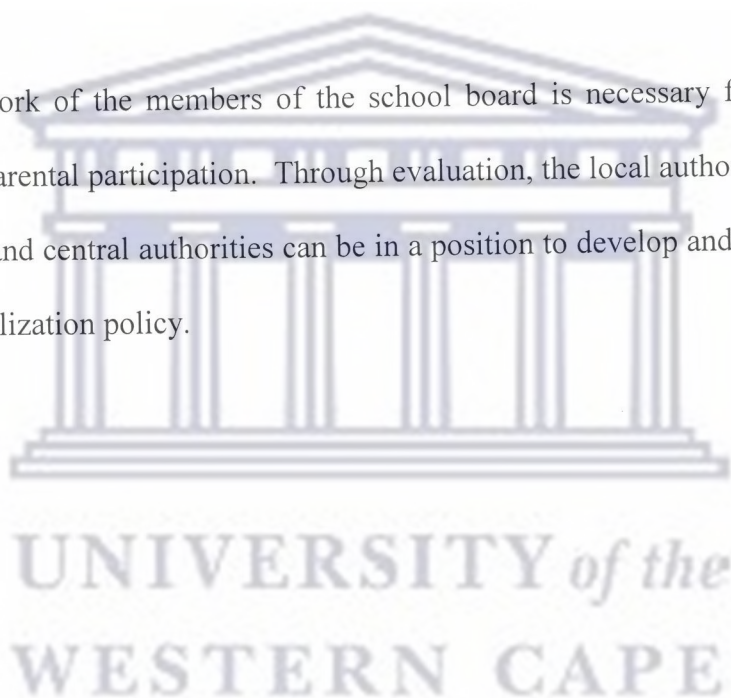
the implementation of parental participation in school governance. For one thing, education reforms cannot be effectively implemented if the state cannot amass the required resources to carry out reforms (Dei 1993:44).

The aim of equitable and democratic participation in educational governance is very difficult to achieve without addressing the training needs of the participants in educational management. The Lesotho government needs to make provision for training needs of the principals, the teachers, the school board members and district administrators for successful implementation of parental participation in school governance. Training may overcome constraints such as the unclear definition of the powers of the school board, ignorance of parents contribution by other parties, the negative attitudes of the principals towards the parents and his/her domination of decision making. Training ensures that all participants understand their role, develop skills to be effective team members, and develop understanding of education issues that affect student learning (Bloehlje 1995:14).

As in most countries that initiated educational decentralization, the Lesotho government still retains control of staffing, curriculum, inspection, examination and funding. Parents are involved in school governance only when they pay their children's education. Hence the rhetoric of this new policy to involve parental participation in school governance, and the reality is that parents are included in educational governance because they are expected to pay more for their children's education.

Both Sesotho and English languages are necessary in education documents. The Lesotho government needs to clarify the definition of powers of the school board and establish relationship between the administrative levels. Adequate dissemination of information is ✦ needed for the effective implementation of parental participation in school governance. The process of administration becomes ineffective if communication channels are aborted and if the roles and responsibilities of all the various stakeholders are opaque (Hallak 1995:108).

Evaluation of the work of the members of the school board is necessary for effective implementation of parental participation. Through evaluation, the local authorities, districts authorities and central authorities can be in a position to develop and reshape the educational decentralization policy.



Conclusion

Parental participation is a determining force for overcoming unequal participation in educational management in Lesotho. This study reveals that contrary to many developed countries where educated and rich parents participated more in school governance, at two of the Roman Catholic high schools of Leribe, in Lesotho, poor and uneducated parents participated more than the parents that held higher level of education and income.

The evidence gathered in Leribe shows that the aim of promoting an equitable and democratic decision making in educational governance has not yet been achieved. Parents were only represented by Catholic parents in school governance. Undemocratic representation of parents shows that the LEA needs to be amended in the area of the election of parent representatives. All groups of parents should be represented in the school governance, and it is only through a careful election strategy that a democratic representation of members of the school board is achieved.

This study shows that members of the school board struggled to do their job because the functions of the school board are unclear. The responsibilities of the school board need clarification. The LEA needs to provide guidelines that make it possible for the members of the school board to participate.

This study shows that principals dominated decision making. The study also reveals that there was a loss of trust between educators and parents. Contributions of parents were

ignored when educative matters were discussed. Educators and parents could not work harmoniously in education governance if the training needs are not considered. The Lesotho government needs to make provision of training needs for educators and parents.

It appears that there is no change in the Ministry of Education at district and central level. Democratic participation in education management may be achieved only if parents are represented in all administrative layers. This will ensure more effective and rational relations between the administrative levels.

Parents revealed that they were not informed about their job. The improvement of educational governance for equity and democracy needs a clear communication line between the levels of administration and among the participants and improved team work. The government needs to be improve a line of communication between the administrative levels and among members of the school board.

This study shows that there had been conflicts between the principal and other school board members. Lesotho government needs to state how the school board can solve the conflicts in the process of parental participation in school governance. In this way, members of the school board may know what to do if there are misunderstandings among themselves.

Parents were not satisfied with their involvement in the school financial affairs. Parents wanted more power in this area.

Parents believed that education documents could be more comprehensive if they are written in both English and Sesotho languages. The reason for this is some parents do not understand education documents that are written in English language. Sesotho language is largely spoken throughout the country. It could therefore be advantageous to use both English and Sesotho languages in education documents because parents could understand their responsibilities more clearly.



Appendix

Interview questions for the school board

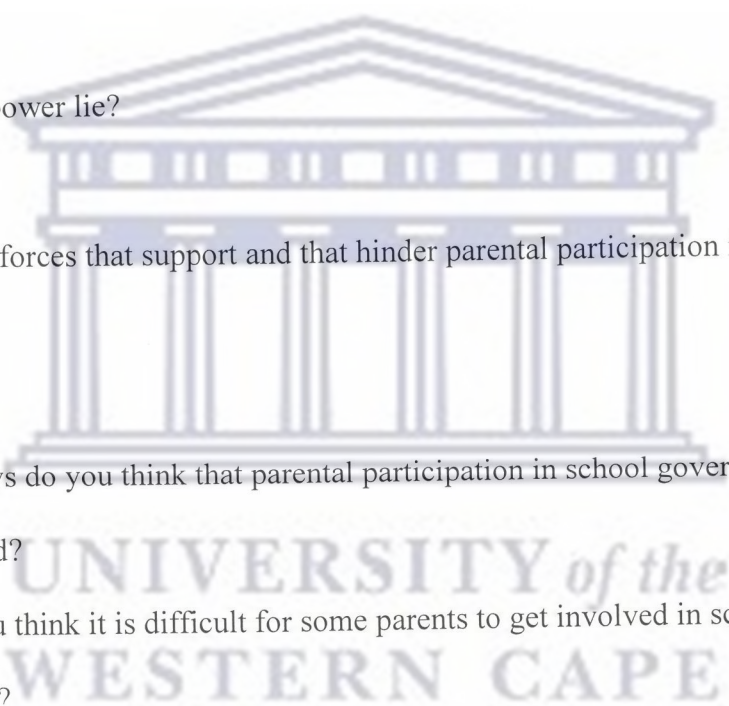
1. Who are the representatives of parents in school governance?

1.1 What is your religion?

Religion	
RCC	
LEC	
ACL	
AME	
OTHER	

1.2 Make a tick to the category appropriate to you.

Socioeconomic level	
Entrepreneur	
Unemployed	
Worker	
Professional worker	
Self – employed	

2. What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the school board?
 - 2.1 Were you informed about your roles and responsibilities?
 - 2.2 Have you had any training for your current position in school governance?
 - 2.3 How do you understand the role and responsibilities of the school board?
 - 2.4 How decisions are made in school governance?
 - 2.5 How do parents participate in school governance?
 - 2.6 Why do they participate the way they do?
 3. Where does power lie?
 4. What are the forces that support and that hinder parental participation in school governance?
 - 4.1 In what ways do you think that parental participation in school governance can be improved?
 - 4.2 Why do you think it is difficult for some parents to get involved in school governance?
- 
- The logo of the University of the Western Cape is centered on the page. It features a stylized illustration of a classical building with a pediment and several columns. Below the illustration, the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' is written in a serif font, with 'UNIVERSITY' and 'WESTERN CAPE' in all caps and 'of the' in lowercase.

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