

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY ON RELIGION AND EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of the National Policy on Religion and Education (NPRE) in 2003 signalled the intention by government to provide a framework within which educational institutions have to deal with religion issues. The policy was introduced “in recognition that there have been instances in which public education institutions have discriminated on the grounds of religious belief” (NPRE, 2003: 3). Therefore, the policy gives full expression to the invocation of religion in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the principles governing religious freedom. It further prescribes, in Sections 58 to 65 (NPRE, DoE, 2003), how school governing bodies (SGBs) should conduct religious observances. The study pursued the answer to the question: “Is the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools advancing the school community’s right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion as anticipated by the NPRE?”

The study examined how SGBs in two rural high schools of the North West Province engaged in the development and implementation of the policy on religion. The research used extensive interviews, questionnaires, document analysis and observations to elicit SGBs’ understanding, views and experiences of the issues of religious values and diversity through the implementation of the policy on religion and education in their schools. This interpretive case study traced the ability of the policy to enhance the school community’s right to freedom for religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination.

The findings of the study reveal a gloomy picture about the extent to which the policy on religion in schools is able to achieve the goals and objectives as intended by the NPRE. Two major challenges emerged; one is the lack of knowledge on the part of parents and learners serving in the SGBs to understand and interpret policy. The second is the minimal involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes on matters that affect their lives, such as religion. This situation ultimately allows educators and principals to manipulate the environment of policy development and implementation. The result thereof includes the situation where one religion is being given priority over others, adoption of a particular religious character because other stakeholders do not have the knowledge about their religious rights, and the direct and indirect coercion of learners and educators to attend an assembly turned into a mono-religious observance.

Key words: communicative action, deliberation, democratic participation, policy development, policy implementation, reasoning, values

DECLARATION

I declare that the study “An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools” is my own work. All sources consulted and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that this dissertation has never been submitted for assessment to the University of Pretoria or any university for any purpose.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DoE	Department of Education
EMGD	Education Management, Governance and Development
HOD	Head of Department
LO	Life Orientation
NPRE	National Policy on Religion and Education
RCL	Representative Council for Learners
SASA	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

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CHAPTER ONE:

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Religion not only has been shown to have the power to separate, but it also has a much potential to bring people together (Thomas, 2005:25). Gokulsing (2006:468) argues that religion is often the source of tension and conflict among people of different faiths and a personal matter to be kept separate from education in state schools. Adding to the above ideas is Dean (1971:54), who believes most of the ethical problems of the world - hate, jealousy, greed, violence, intolerance and arrogance arise in every school or kindergarten community and should be met with understanding and justice, and nothing is more effective than a good example of people of differing views living together. It is from this understanding that the policy on religion in schools should be such that it is able to bring the community together, rather than divide and separate, and that issues of religion in schools that create ethical problems must be handled with understanding and justice (Dean, 1971:54, NPRE, DoE, 2003: Sec 10). This would include matters that suggest that no religious ethos should be given preference over another and no discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs should be tolerated (NPRE, DoE, 2003:Sec 10).

Potgieter (2006:3), in light of the fact that Christianity as the majority religious group was openly advanced prior to 1996 under “tolerance of religion”, recognises the education system as a powerful tool that minority religions intended to use to transfer their culture, beliefs and values to their children. Potgieter (2006:3) further clarifies that the condition of “tolerance of religion” was not sustainable in particular with regard to education due to the non-homogenous society of South Africa, hence, freedom of religion is widely considered as the most fundamental human right, and as such, “freedom of religion” has also been established in Article 15 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), in section 15(1) of the Bill of Rights, states that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Section 7 of the South African Schools Act, Act No 84 of 1996 (SASA) provides for freedom of conscience and religion in public schools, aligning itself with the Constitution. The National Policy on Religion and Education (NPRE, DoE, 2003) “flows directly from constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination and freedom for conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion”. Our Constitution has worked out a careful balance between freedom of religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination (Beckmann and Sehoole, 2004:126; NPRE, DoE, 2003: Sec 12). The above is one of the constitutional values underpinning the NPRE.

Since the NPRE is very clear about issues of values and diversity, these aspects cannot be overlooked when the school governing bodies (SGBs) determine the nature and content of religious observances when developing and implementing the policy on religion in their schools. Badenhorst (1993:395) states that if the value systems which influence formal education are identified and analysed, they can enable us to gain a better understanding of what is actually taking place in our schools. Values underpinning the NPRE have been clearly outlined and provide the framework within which the policies on religion in schools should operate, and with which they can be measured.

The assumption is that through the development and implementation of the policy on religion, an attempt should be made at school level to promote these constitutional values and diversity. South Africa is a multi-religious country with a deep and enduring indigenous heritage (Beckmann and Sehoole, 2004:126; NPRE, DoE, 2003:6), and therefore care should be taken to ensure that the right to freedom of religious belief and expression, and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination of every member of the school community is respected and protected.

This study was incited by the fact that the National Policy on Religion and Education has been introduced as acknowledgement that there have been instances in which public education institutions were discriminating on the grounds of religious beliefs such that greater definition is required where in many cases learners of one religion were subjected to religious observations of another, without any real choice in the

matter (Beckmann and Sehoole, 2004:p12; NPRE, DoE, 2003:Sec. 2). Discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs constitutes a violation of constitutional human rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996, Sec 15 (i) Bill of Rights), which states that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.

The other concern was the fact that no mention was made on whether this learner discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs in public schools did or did not affect other stakeholders, like parents and educators. The assumption, through the introduction of the policy, was that the NPRE must be able to bring harmony within the school community by providing the framework within which public schools should handle issues pertaining to religion. The policy prescribes how religious activities should take place in public schools in order to bear testimony that the school community's religious values are protected (NPRE, DoE, 2003:Sec. 58-69). These religious activities must be prescribed for in the school's policy on religion that has been developed by the SGBs, adopting a cooperative and interactive type of a model, where each stakeholder would be given the opportunity to participate in the development of the policy through their representatives in the SGB (NPRE, DoE, 2003, Sec.3;Beckmann et al, 2004:125).

The provision in the NPRE (DoE, 2003:6), that the role of religion in education should be driven by the dual mandate of celebrating religious diversity and building national unity, also provides the framework for the policy on religion in public schools. It is in this case in point that an assumption is made that we cannot pretend to be saying we are successfully achieving the aims of the NPRE if the schools' policies on religion do not consider their communities' diversity regarding religion, attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours. The development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools should be such that members of the school community must be able to live together, even if they subscribe to different religions.

Observing religious activities in schools should indicate the commitment by the schools through the policy on religion that no one is prejudiced or discriminated against on the basis of their religious convictions. The main aim of the above discussion is that as much as one can try to find out more about values as discussed earlier, one would also want to understand what processes SGBs follow in the

development of the policy on religion in their schools, how SGBs work and what they do with the developed policies on religion in their schools and, most importantly, what the outcomes of the implementation of the policy on religion in schools are in an attempt to enhance religious values.

School governing bodies – as the legitimate bodies responsible for the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools – were in a better position to provide evidence in determining whether indeed the implementation of the policy on religion in schools advanced the constitutional values of freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion of all involved in teaching and learning in South African public schools, and displays the intention to recognise and celebrate our religious diverse nature as our national resource for unity. Parents, teachers and learners serving in the SGBs and the principals as resource persons to the SGBs related what their understandings of constitutional rights, constitutional and democratic values and diversity. They could also provide an understanding of how they implemented the policy on religion in their schools and account for why and how they implemented the policy the way they did.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the implementation of the policy on religion and education in South African public schools in relation to its ability to promote the school community's right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, as anticipated by the National Policy on Religion and Education, DoE, 2003.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fact that some public educational institutions discriminated on the grounds of religious beliefs constitutes a violation of the prescripts of the Constitution, in particular, section 15(1), which states that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. By ensuring equality in the enjoyment of all rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship, the Constitution

explicitly prohibits unfair discrimination on grounds that include religion, belief and conscience (Beckmann et al, 2004:126; NPRE, DoE, 2003: Sec. 12).

It is envisaged that the policy on religion and education in schools should advocate this broad-based range of religious activities through religious observances, and in so doing, to assist in addressing the problem of public institutions discriminating on the grounds of religious beliefs. An exploration into the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools shed light on how schools advanced freedom of religious belief and expression, and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination of the school community as a constitutional value and helped in recognising and celebrating religious diversity as a resource for unity.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent does the implementation of the policy on religion and education in rural high schools advance democratic values?

1.4.1 Critical questions

- What are the SGBs understandings of the constitutional values underpinning the policy on religion? (NPRE)
- What values and diversity principles underpin the policy on religion drafted by SGBs?
- What contributes to or hinders the promotion of the constitutional values in the way SGBs are implementing the policy on religion and education?
- How does the application of increased democratic participation impact the implementation of the policy on religion in schools?

1.5 THE RATIONALE

As an educator I have over the years witnessed the emergence of laws and policies intent on invoking constitutional imperatives in order to regulate activities at school level. One such invocation is the determination of the policy on religion. Additionally, the Constitution and the NPRE prescribe values that form the basis for the framework that the values in policies on religion at school level should be based on. These include values such as human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms (section 1(a) of the Constitution) and section 11 of the NPRE, which states that “the NPRE policy, for the role of religion in education, flows directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, and freedom from discrimination, conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion”. By enshrining these basic values, the Constitution provides the framework for establishing the relationship between religion and education in a democratic society. Therefore, it is imperative that public schools must enhance the core values of the democratic society within the constitutional framework and these values include equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour (NPRE, DoE, 2003:Sec 14;Beckmann and Schoole, 2004:127).

I have noted with concern, over the past decade as a teacher, the use of assembly for religious observances to enhance the ethos of a particular religion, the failure on the part of the SGBs to involve all stakeholders in the development of the policy on religion and the absence of an opposing voice to question the above two constitutional irregularities by those whose religions were not being given the opportunity to prevail and their voices to be heard. These are the issues that enthralled me to investigate the policy on religion in schools. The assumption prevailing was that there was a continuous attempt to undermine, knowingly or unknowingly, the prescripts of the Constitution, SASA and the NPRE on how schools should handle religion issues through the development and implementation of the policy on religion.

While national policy influences SGBs’ work, there are hidden contextual micro decision-making processes and dynamics which have been ignored (Smit, 2003:2).

Smit, (2003:2) continues to argue that these hidden dimensions, including SGBs' emotional experiences and resistance to policy, impact the manner in which national and provincial policy is (or is not) implemented at school. It is from this understanding that the study argues that the values underpinning the NPPE are clearly spelt out, and that the development and implementation of policies on religion in schools should display their intention to enhance such values. The question that arises is whether the NPPE, as a national policy, is influencing religion policies at schools as envisaged. It is therefore the intention of the study to investigate the perspectives, understandings and experiences of SGB members, and the effect of their schools' policies on religion as a tool to promote their right to freedom of religion and conscience.

The idea for my research exists as part of my curiosity, which is informed by the manner in which the policy on religion in schools is developed and implemented. As Thomas (2009:4), puts it, circumstances surrounding the policy on religion in schools, i.e. its development and implementation, affected the purposes of my research and in that persuaded me to analyse the policy on religion in schools. The intention is to evaluate what the impact of the introduction of the policy on religion in schools has been. What are the outcomes? In short, is the policy on religion and education in schools working?

My first major concern, as alluded by Mabovula (2010:22-23), was to explore an approach that would allow me to go beyond the surface illusions of what is taking place in the governance of some selected secondary schools in the North West Province, with specific reference to the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education, in order to help uncover what is happening in these SGBs, and thus help stakeholders in school governance to change and cultivate better governance procedures. Mabovula (2010:22-23) further points out that decision-making at the school governance level currently does not appear to favour participation of all affected parties, because decisions are not taken on a consensual basis.

Based on the above, I argue that the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools should be constantly evaluated in terms of the Government Policy Evaluations Act of 2002, the intention being to check the policy in terms of its

necessity, efficiency and validity. There is very little empirical information available about the successes and/or shortcomings of the implementation of the policy on religion and education at school level. This study aims to fill that gap by indicating what the challenges of the implementation of the policy on religion and education at school level in enhancing religious values are. This will be achieved by showing understandings and experiences of principals, educators, parents and learners as school governors, with specific reference to the implementation of the policy on religion and education in their schools.

1.6 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted, as a basis for argument and theoretical framework, the ideas of Habermas's communicative action and consensus through deliberation and reasoning. The argument is that in a democratic country a conducive environment for democratic participation should be created for people to be part of the decision-making processes on issues that affect their lives. The envisaged environment would include the one where there is an open discussion and people are able to talk about and debate issues unrestricted, a platform from where people can, through deliberations, clarify, explain and justify their positions on issues discussed.

According to Heracleous and Barret (2001:755), in democratic participation the environment should be enabling to stakeholders to exchange information through the use of language to express their opinion and feelings. This enabling, participative environment, as argued by Orlikowski and Yates (1998:2), is preceded by attempts by all stakeholders to cooperatively define the context of their interaction in such a way as to enable them to pursue their individual plans. This type of an interaction is the one envisaged in the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at qualitatively examining and analysing how school governing bodies in two rural high schools of the North West Province engaged in the

development and implementation of the policy on religion. The research used extensive interviews, document analysis and observations as a descriptive inquiry to elicit SGBs' understandings, views and experiences of the issue of religious values and diversity through the implementation of the policy on religion and education in their school. To strengthen the quality of the study, questionnaires were included, which participants had to complete. It is an interpretive and socio-constructivist case study research design.

Data analysis involved reading through the data and taking the conventional, straightforward "qualitative coding and categorising" route, taking codes straight from the data (Henning et al , 2004:102; Phatlane, 2007:15). I personally transcribed the interviews, which enabled me to better know the data and be more competent in labelling units of meaning (coding) (Henning et al , 2004:105; Phatlane, 2007:15).

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Religion is one of the pressing educational issues being debated today and therefore the undertaking to conduct this research seeks to contribute to existing information about religion issues in public schools. According to Creswell (2008:5), research is also important, because it suggests improvement for practice. The findings of this study may inform learners, parents, educators and principals involved in the research process to be effective governors. Added to the above, research creates conversation about important issues when policy-makers debate educational issues (Creswell, 2008:6). Religion in education is still a thorny issue; hence the study would stimulate education policy debates more especially on matters pertaining to religion in educational institutions. Therefore, the intention of this study is to add to the quality of literature on the development, implementation and monitoring of religion policies in South African public schools.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in two selected schools in the North West Province; hence the sample is very small, which limits the potential for generalisation.

1.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 laid down the landscape of the study. The study on the analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in South African schools was structured in such a way that it was divided into seven chapters. It sets out the problem, the research question and the sub-questions, the methodology and the conceptual framework underlying the study. It further introduces the contribution to knowledge and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews literature. The chapter provides background as to what religion and religious diversity entail, what human rights and values are, and relate the understanding to the policy on religion in public schools as a means to promoting these constitutional imperatives. The chapter provides a better understanding of the role of SGBs in schools as the custodians of policy, the policy on religion in particular, and also places more emphasis on the role and legality of learners, parents, educators and principals as governors within a public school setup. Also indicated is how international educational systems handle issues of religion compared to South African educational institutions. In conclusion, more emphasis will be placed on the reasons why an investigation is necessary to establish the effect of the policy on religion on the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience as a constitutional and democratic value.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework of the study. The idea is to provide a lens through which a determination would be made on the extent to which the policy on religion is promoting the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination. In this chapter, justification for the employment of theoretical perspectives relating to Habermas's 'Communicative Action' and 'Consensus through Deliberation and Reasoning' is

provided. The argument is two-fold, firstly that stakeholders within the SGBs would advance arguments and counterarguments on values to be enshrined in the policy on religion. Better argument reaches consensual decisions; all concerned are convinced by the decisions reached and accept them as reasonable. Secondly, SGB stakeholder participation invariably needs to result in consensus, where the rights of stakeholders in deliberation are legally institutionalised without any individual being excluded (Habermas, 1996:147; Mabovula, 2010: 4).

Chapter 4 presents the methodology employed by the study, which covered sampling procedures and data collection strategies, and included interviews, document analysis, observations and questionnaires. In this chapter a description and discussion on the choice of a qualitative research approach and how it connected with interpretive and socio constructivism paradigms are also elaborated on. The design procedures employed by the study, namely, case study and reasons why such a design and the data analyses procedures were employed in the study were also explained. The intention of the research methodology was to provide an understanding on how the researcher planned to answer the question, ‘what are the outcomes of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools?’

Chapter 5 deals with data analysis. The chapter revolves around the presentation and discussion of the data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis. The idea was to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion in schools with the intention to establish the outcomes of the policy. The data analysed consisted of four sets of information as in the categories of participants, namely, C1: principals, C2: educators, C3: parents and C4: learners. The findings reveal that the implementation of the policy on religion in schools does not equitably enhance the school community’s religious values as anticipated by the NPPE. This is as a result of inadequate training or development of SGBs to perform their duties and responsibilities, such as developing and implementing policies - religion policy in particular. Of major concern is the inability to involve SGB stakeholders in democratic participation in as far as the decision-making process in the governance of schools is concerned.

Chapter 6 presents discussions of the findings which are informed by the principles as identified from Habermas theory of ‘Communicative Action’ and ‘Consensus

through Deliberation and Reasoning'. This includes the discussion on the ability of schools to create conducive environments for deliberation and reasoning. Secondly, included would be a discussion on the empowerment of SGB stakeholders to enable them to participate on a daily basis in decision-making processes in all aspects of their lives, including policy development and implementation, in particular, religion policy. Thirdly, the stakeholders' right to democratic participation; which includes their right to freedom of expression and freedom of religion, belief and opinion, is discussed. This also involves affording them the opportunity to deliberate on religious values to be included in the policy on religion and having access to information.

Chapter 7 provides the overview of the study, conclusions and recommendations from each of the previous chapters. The recommendations that emanate from the results of this study are divided into general recommendations and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate and to understand the extent to which the policy on religion and education in schools is advancing the school community's right to freedom of religion, conscience and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination as stated in the National Policy on Religion and Education (DoE, 2003). The underlying assumption is that religion can potentially create conflict and division among the school community as and when the policy is developed and implemented. As it has emerged, these conflicts and divisions might be as a result of discrimination, exclusion and oppression based on religious grounds and/or one religious ethos being given priority over others. The study sought to understand the nature and causes of such religious exclusions, conflicts and discriminations, so that strategies and plans could be devised to eliminate such constitutional irregularities. This chapter therefore attempts to provide a review of related literature.

At first, I examine the concepts of policy and religion. The idea is to give a broader view of what both policy and religion entail in relation to the policy on religion itself. The chapter then proceeds to provide the relationship between values and religious values, because, in essence, the right to freedom of religion, conscience and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination is a constitutional value to be pursued through the advancement and application of the policy on religion in schools. The legal framework regarding the relationship between governance of schools and the policy on religion in South Africa is discussed. It provides the basis on which each stakeholder within the SGB is supposedly allowed to participate in activities of school governance, including the establishment of policies – religion policy in particular. How other educational systems, including some in South Africa, deal or have dealt with religious challenges that resulted in changes in these

educational systems, is examined. The chapter concludes with some research studies on the role of religion in education and a summary of the emerging issues.

2.2 THE CONCEPTS OF POLICY AND RELIGION

2.2.1 The concept of policy

This section presents, in relation to the policy on religion in schools, an understanding of what policy is, and what policy development and implementation entail.

2.2.1.1 What is policy?

Public policy is aimed at achieving the desired objective of all members of society, with the intention to protect, guide and address their concerns (Torjman, 2005:1). Policy is also viewed as a continuous process which involves negotiation and contestations between different groups. Therefore, “it is evident that this is no simple process and requires not only more tentative approaches to its understanding, but also further investigation into its contexts” (Smit, 2003:14).

According to Ozga and Jones (2006:1), “policy is regarded as a trajectory that is preoccupied with the construction of a ‘knowledge economy’ and ‘learning society’. Within this trajectory schooling/education/training systems are acknowledged to be significant instruments of economic and social change: for building intellectual capital, enhancing workforce development and managing communities in ways that seek to minimise alienation and exclusion, and that promote self-reliance and resourcefulness”. Moreover, Ozga et al (2006:1) are of the opinion that policy is your organisation’s position or “stance” on a particular issue, directed at internal or external users or both, and may be enforceable (e.g. punished by dismissal) or

advisory, and may also include procedures, strategies, positions and guiding principles for government, which influence its decisions.

Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002:2) look at policy from different perspectives. Firstly, they regard policy as “a declaration that defines the intention of a community, organisation or government’s goals and priorities, and outlines the role, rules and procedures, creating a framework within which the administration and staff can perform their assigned duties”. Secondly, they think policy refers mainly to “the ways in which the governments of modern states envisage what they would like and how they intend to make things happen”. They finally insist that policies are formulated through “a process involving citizens, government officials and elected officials, who, ideally, work together to set an agenda for the common good, and that policy simply guides our actions”.

2.2.1.2 Policy development and implementation

2.2.1.2.1 Policy development

Torjman (2005:4) regards policy development as “a decision-making process that helps address identified goals, problems or concerns, and most importantly, as a process entailing the selection of a destination or desired objective, which involves the identification and analysis of a range of actions that respond to these concerns”. Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002:1) on the other hand believe policy making activity involves research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of information to produce recommendations, and it should also involve an evaluation of options against a set of criteria used to assess each option. Moreover, Dukeshire et al (2002:1) believe an effective policy is made possible by community involvement. Unfortunately, for people in some rural communities, policy development appears to be a process that does not really concern them. Dukeshire and Thurlow, (2002:1) point out that member of the community must be included in policy development. Before rural communities can be involved in public policy development, they must have knowledge about policy, its importance and how it is made. Community members

must be aware that their participation in policy making is to their advantage. To achieve this, it is necessary that all affected communities should be involved in policy making or change. .

According to Corkery et al (1995:1), “weaknesses in the policy formulation process are not exclusive to Africa, or indeed, to the developing world”. There are many examples where lack of consideration to implement strategies during policy making results in shortages of required resources. For an example, other people take policy making for granted. Some African countries appear to have had challenges in relation to policy making. In developing countries there is a lack of expertise with regard to policy formulation and this create serious challenges, (Corkery et al, 1995:1).

Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002:1) conclude the issue on policy development by presenting an assertion by the World Health Organisation, 1997, which states that the making of good policies is possible by involving people. Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002:2) believe that policy making is not an easy process. Therefore, there are stages that communities can follow which may put them on the right path in understanding and impacting on policy. At times, the stages to policy making are not clear. They are obscured by different viewpoints of stakeholders’ interests and ideas. Rural communities find it difficult to influence policy. However, if equipped with knowledge and support, they can make a meaningful contribution.

More emphasis is paid to the careful development of policies. At times this does not work. Rural communities may be ignored in the process due to lack of knowledge or participation. It is not easy to implement the policy as expected. Policy makers sometimes may review policies with the aim of establishing their effectiveness and solutions to identified shortcomings. Therefore, policy making is an ongoing process, (Waller, Morris and Simpson (2008:21-2). There is also a challenge in the implementation of the policy on religion in schools that the right to freedom of religion, albeit constitutionally entrenched, is subject to reasonable and justifiable

limitations (Lenaghan, 2010: i). Schools have a challenge in implementing the policy on religion and education in the North West Province.

However, no clear guidelines have been formulated on the criteria for limiting the right to freedom of religion.

2.2.1.2.2 Policy implementation

Paudel (2009:36) indicates that policy implementation inevitably takes different shapes and forms in different cultures and institutional settings. He continues to define policy implementation to mean carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task.

2.2.1.2.3 Problems of effective policy implementation

Whereas Elmore (1979-1980:601) is of the opinion that implementation problems should be considered when policies are made, and better policies would result if policy-makers would think about whether their decisions could be implemented before they settle on a course of action, Makinde (2005:63) believes implementation problems occur when the desired result on the target is not achieved and wherever and whenever basic critical factors for implementing public policy, such as communication, resources, dispositions or attitudes and bureaucratic structures, are missing, there is bound to be implementation problems.

Rogan (2007:98) and Dieltiens (2008:287) indicate that much has been written about policy development and policy implementation, and among others, the lack of proper implementation as policy-makers concentrate on the 'what' of policy, but tend to ignore the 'how'. According to Rogan (2007:98), more emphasis was on the adoption of educational programmes and implementation was ignored, hence in many cases poor results came from the lack of implementation of what was initially a well intended aim. In addition, Crossley and Vulliamy (1995:6) in Smit (2003:2) emphasise that national policy influences teachers' functions; while there are hidden contextual, micro decision-making processes, and dynamics which have not been

taken into consideration. According to Rogan (2007:98), the unintended outcomes of policy, including teachers' emotional experiences and resistance to policy, affect the way in which national and local (here provincial) education policy is (or is not) put into effect at school and classroom level. In South Africa, policy-makers find it difficult to address all challenges in their policies (Mapesela, 2005:111).

2.2.2 The concept of religion

2.2.2.1 What is religion?

It would seem possible that there is no universal experience in defining what religion is, though this is not widely known as followers of any religion are likely to interpret it in terms of their religion and unbelievers in other terms, therefore it can be concluded that we can at least say that different people appear to experience this in very different degrees (Dean, 1971:18).

Whereas Dean (1971:18) believes that religion is essentially about the way we interpret the world and our place in it and that the only reality we know is the world and our experience of it, Hopfe's (1983:3) opinion is that a person's religion is that which is so vital to him/her that he or she would die for it, and that the average person seeks to explain religion in terms of a category of beliefs that have to do with the gods. In addition, the authors assert that this reality is seen from a personal point of view and the most real things to each of us are those which we take most seriously and without reservation, that teaches a moral system.

In addition, Kennedy (1984:63) thinks that "religion is a system of beliefs about reality, existence, the universe, the supernatural or the divine and practices arising out of these beliefs. These practices usually include worship and moral code and often a prayer, contemplation, obedience or meditation". Kennedy (1984:29) further informs that a belief is a concept, doctrine or philosophy in which one places one's trust, and that in a religious, political or philosophical context to have a belief implies commitment to that belief and a resolution to act accordingly.

According to the NPRE (DoE, 2003:137):

“Religion is used to describe the comprehensive and fundamental orientation in the world, mostly with regard to the ideas of divinity, spiritual and non-secular beliefs and requiring ultimate commitment, including (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews, as well as being used collectively to refer to those organisations which are established in order to protect and promote these beliefs.”

It also important to note that religion is viewed as the reason behind various cultures, and both religion and multiculturalism are often viewed as the cause of misunderstanding among people of different faiths. Religion can influence the way people dress, the food they eat, their socio-political views or the nature of the interpersonal relationships (Tomalin, 2007:625). It can also be regarded as the cause for social tensions and resentment between communities (Gokulsing, 2006:468). This notion is also shared by Kunzman (2006:518), who believes that one important factor of diversity as a cause for conflict for many communities is religion. Concurring with the above is Thomas (2005:25), who states that religion not only has been shown to have the power to separate, but it also has much potential to bring people together.

2.3 VALUES AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

This section provides the broader idea of what values are in relation to the right to freedom for religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination as a constitutional value to be pursued by policies on religion in schools.

According to Pedro (2009:iv), “values are usually abstract, but sometimes also physical entities to which human beings attach worth. Values are common in individuals or groups through physical exposure and genetic make-up. Furthermore, teaching inevitably instils values in learners. Schools often adopt a values system, which should not be imposed upon any individual learner”. Moreover, Pedro (2009:iv) is of the opinion that “moral values, must be taught in schools, because they influence attitudes, priorities, principles, norms, standards, morals and ethics, which in turn influence decision-making, learner performance and behaviour, which affect the future of learners”.

According to Rughubar-Reddy (2012:iii), education systems play a pivotal role in fostering and developing values in learners, and educational institutions have a responsibility to integrate positive values into all aspects of the school curriculum. However, he cautions that learners cannot fully benefit from values on their own. Based on the above, Rughubar-Reddy (2012:iii) thinks that all stakeholders in education need to come together to establish an informed understanding of policy documents and reconcile the complexity and challenges that surround the transmission of values, so that educators will be able to assist learners in a meaningful way. Ryan (2012:130) shares the opinion that public education be constructed as a means of shaping citizenship, the purpose of which must be understood by all relevant stakeholders, irrespective of their religious, racial or ethnic affiliation.

Human rights (upholding and promoting constitutional rights), values, and democracy infuse everything that the learning organisation involves itself with, from the learners' code of conduct to the way visitors are received and treated, from what educators teach, to the example that they set. Everything a learning school does and aspires to be should transmit messages that learners are valued, their rights are respected and protected, and their interests held dearly (Nieuwenhuis, 2008:281). In agreement is Life (cited in Figueroa, 1993:322), who contends that human rights provide the moral framework for education, which transcends the partial interpretations drawn from religious and political traditions, in that they embody universal principles and entitlements. These rights in one sense transcend cultural diversity in stressing common humanity, while at the same time affirming the right to cultural expression, and equal opportunities for all.

Badenhorst (1993:395) believes values form part of the very fibre of society and the questioning of these very deep-seated beliefs could have a disruptive outcome. He further insists that if the value systems which influence formal education are identified and analysed, they can enable us to gain a better understanding of what is actually taking place in our schools. It is for this reason that Nieuwenhuis (2007:281) asserts that learning organisations, particularly educational intuitions, should be guided and directed in their functioning by the values that they uphold and the policy frameworks developed, and that an organisation that is guided by its policies and values is an organisation that has deliberately infused them into its operation.

Education can never be value-free. How does one reconcile diversity with a need for unity? What are the core values of society that all groups can contribute to and share, and what are the areas over which we can agree to disagree? Schools should be places where this debate is begun, where connections are attempted between supposed opposites (Figueroa, 1993:323/4). Values are what we regard as important to our own being and behaviour, and what we expect to see in behaviour. They are ultimately linked to our sense of morals, morality and ethics. By creating a set of agreed-upon values, we can infuse a spirit of purpose where people work towards building an institution based on those common values (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:280).

“The National Policy on Religion and Education, (2003:6) flows directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom for conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion. Our constitution has worked out a careful balance between freedom of religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination” (Beckmann and Sehoole, 2004:126). Stakeholders within the SGBs must be guided by the constitution, SASA and NPREG as to the values to be shared in handling issues pertaining to religion. “Freedom of religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination is one of the constitutional values underpinning the National Policy on Religion and Education”. As a result policy informs practice with regard religion and education in schools.

2.4 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK CONCERNING GOVERNANCE AND THE POLICY ON RELIGION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Section 16 of the South African Schools Act, Act No 84 of 1996, states that “the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body and it may perform only such functions and obligations and exercise only such rights as prescribed by the Act”. Khuzwayo (2007:13) alluded that the South African Schools Act (SASA),

84 of 1996, mandated all public schools to form democratically elected school governing bodies (Department of Education, 1997). With the establishment of democratically elected governing bodies, the political structure and the nature of decision-making changed. The following are the key areas of governance which

school governors have to tackle, namely, financial matters; human resource management; policies and curriculum matters.

SGBs are regarded as important mechanisms in changing the shape of post-apartheid schooling. They reconfigure the power relations at the foundations of the educational system, i.e. at school level, by allowing elected representatives of parents, educators, learners (at secondary schools) and non-teaching staff an opportunity to jointly make decisions with school management. SGBs oversee a range of policy-related functions, including the policy on religion in schools (Dietiens, 2008:287). It is important also to note that the elected representatives to the SGBs are mandated for in terms of section 23 of the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 (membership of governing body of ordinary public school).

There is hardly a school in South Africa without, in accordance with the law, an elected SGB. At parents' meetings opportunities are created for them to put their independent stamp on policy, religion policy included. The issue that emerges is the lack of detail. How do parents work with policy? What do they do with it? What are the outcomes? (Dietiens, 2008:298). It is from this premise that stakeholders within the SGBs are given the opportunity to air their views on issues pertaining to religion in their school. Through this process members of the SGBs are given a chance to assert their religious needs and put their independent stamp on the policy on religion. The questions that the study wanted to ask, as above, are: How do SGBs work with the policy on religion? How knowledgeable are SGBs on issues of policy - the policy on religion in particular? How do all of the above impact on the ability of the policy on religion in schools to promote religious values and diversity as anticipated by NPREG and the Constitution?

Since the study intended to analyse the policy on religion at school level through the eyes of the SGBs as the custodians of the policy, I found it proper to provide a background of each participant from the legislative and literature point of view.

2.4.1 The principal as a member of the SGB

Participation of principals in the SGBs of public schools is prescribed for in section 23(1)(b) of the South African Schools Act, which states that “subject to the Act, the membership of the governing body of an ordinary public school comprises the principal, in his or her official capacity”.

“Education systems all over the world have undergone intense reform and change and this could be attributed to the concept of democracy that infiltrated not only the political systems, but all spheres of social, civic and organisational life (Mungunda, 2003:3, Mohajeran and Ghaleei (2008:59)). Principals are some of the main role players in educational reform. They adopt democratic leadership style. Mohajeran et al (2008:59) think that decentralisation of decision making powers, and the personality attributes of the principal play an essential role. The intention is to make stakeholders more answerable for their actions, (Mungunda, 2003:3).

An effective school in a multicultural society will be led by an informed and enlightened principal who will involve all staff, as well as pupils, parents and governors, in the negotiation of a whole school community policy on multicultural education (Figueroa, 1993:321). Everybody agrees that democratic participation in organisational matters is beneficial. It is equally important for principals to understand that democratic processes are ongoing (Mungunda, 2003:64). Mutual trust, transparency and collegiality are essential in the school.

The Head of Department in each of the provinces must ensure that principals are empowered on matters regarding democratic participatory processes in policy matters. This will make certain that stakeholders within the organisation work together for the good of the school. Policy making process entails the involvement of different stakeholders.

According to SASA, Sec 19(2), “the Head of Department must ensure that principals and other officers of the education department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of this Act”. “A change in educational management over the past decade has been the movement toward participation and empowerment, involving employees at all levels of the organisation in the decision-making process. Political transformation is rooted in the principles of democratic governance and policy options that permit the greatest possible involvement of legitimate stakeholders in the affairs of school” (Mungunda, 2003:6). Therefore there should be more emphasis on the need for the school principals to influence, and to empower each member in the school. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the principal as a leader to empower and to lead stakeholders for the good of the school. Rather than relying on his position, the school principal should have good and sound human relations (Mungunda, 2003:67; Mohajeran and Ghaleei, 2008:53).¹

Mohajeran and Ghaleei (2008:57), in their conclusion, are of the view that the type of environment in which the principal performs his functions could hamper his/her role. The situation and the culture of the school may affect the principal’s role. The principal’s views of stakeholders’ positions and power may also affect his/her role in decision-making. The study is of the assumption that the principal as a resource person to the SGB will allow stakeholders to be part in the making of the policy on religion as a constitutional and democratic imperative.

The above discussion suggests that the role of the principal in the governance of the school is of paramount importance. It was for this reason that the study sought to establish, within this framework of the duties of the principals, their views on the ability of the policy on religion to enhance their freedom for religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination.

2.4.2 The educator as a member of the SGB

Educators form part of the component in the School Governing Body. They play a significant role in education and in the governance responsibilities of the school. Hence participation of educators in the SGBs of public schools is prescribed for in

section 23(2)(b) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, which states that “elected members of the governing body shall comprise a member or members of educators at the school”. As much as the role of educators is appreciated as stated above, Smit (2003:2) is of the view that teachers who construct, and form their own ideas are not recognised as part of the educational system. Teachers must be part and parcel in the formulation of policy. They are key in assisting and sharing ideas with all stakeholders involved.

The study by Tomalin (2007:622) was aimed at presenting and interpreting the results of a recent questionnaire-based survey among the staff working in higher education in the UK. It explored the influence of cultural and religious diversity on their practices. It was also concentrating on finding out what areas staff members needed support on. There was concern from many staff members that they lacked knowledge about different cultures and religions. Some of the participants were of the view that they might unintentionally discriminate against a student on cultural or religious grounds. This is unacceptable when comparing these with constitutional imperatives within the South African context.

Roux (2006:159) draws a worrying conclusion, that moving from one religion to multi-religious schools affects many areas of teacher education. Teachers, who were trained within the old education system, are still bias in dealing with religious and cultural dynamics. These teachers are not willing to change their practices, especially in supporting new envisaged educational programmes. The researcher argues, within Roux, (2006:159), the realm of understanding that not only educators have experienced this transition, but principals, parents, as well as learners as governors have too. Teachers within School Governing Bodies are expected to come up with inputs on policies that will support and sustain educational reforms in our schools. Within this context, teachers have a very important role to play in relation to policy making. It is possible that the unwillingness to redefine their role as governors, with specific reference to their religious values, might hamper the ability of the policy on religion in schools to advance the school community’s right to freedom of religion and conscience as a constitutional and democratic value.

The conclusion made is that amid all these challenges, it was necessary to establish from educators themselves as members of the SGBs, what their perceptions and interpretations are with regard to the effect of the policy on their freedom of religion.

2.4.3 The parent as a member of the SGB

Participation of parents in the SGBs of public schools is prescribed for in section 23(2)(a) of the South African Schools Act, which states “that elected members of the governing body shall comprise a member or members of parents of learners at the school”. This discussion, which revolves around the involvement of parents in governance of the school, centres around the important role parents can play in the school setup as opposed to non-involvement of parents in the governance activities of the school.

According to Niitembu (2006:97/8), parents are aware of their powers in the School Governing Bodies and how to be involved in decision making. This led to cooperation, working together and emphasised harmonious working relationships. According to Moharejan and Ghaleei (2008:54), it is important to involve parents in school matters and in decision making. Parents can bring their expertise to support schools. In agreement are Nana, Milondzo and Adjel (2009:101), who are of the view that it is necessary for parents and the school community to be part of management of the schools. Of concern, was that there was no agreement about their involvement in school related matters. According to Niitembu (2006:91), some parents are very innovative, as they have good ideas and can assist the principal, teachers and learners. The presence of parents in school governance is very much needed.

Dieltiens (2008:297), in her study on ‘Democratic intent and democratic practice: Tensions in South African governance’, indicates that parents often bring common-sense ideas to decision-making based on past precedent, their cultural and religious ideas and the immediate need to finance schools, and that it is possible that SGBs rely on their intuitive ideas because they are unaware of policy precepts. While I understand the above argument by Dieltiens (2008:297), I am also captivated by the conclusion by Cele (2005: 25), who states that “natural wisdom and general intuition continuously seem inadequate and insufficient for accurate prediction of what will

happen to our organisations each day”. The above discourse, in relation to the policy on religion in schools, indicates that whereas we agree that the presence of common-sense ideas, cultural and religious ideas in decision-making processes on which values to be enshrined in policy on religion cannot be ignored, that in itself is not enough to guarantee the effectiveness of the policy to advance the school communities’ constitutional rights and constitutional and democratic values.

Based on the foregoing rationalisation of the involvement of parents in governance the of rate of parent non-involvement in the governance activities of schools has to be acknowledged. According to Ndlazi (1999:7/8), there is a general shortage of enthusiasm from parents to participate in the governance of schools. The vigour they displayed when they demanded involvement seems to have evaporated. Moreover, Ndlazi (1999:7/8) is of the opinion that the manifestations of parental non-involvement found in many black schools negate the efforts of the government. Therefore, what is important is to establish the rationale for the above shortage of enthusiasm from parents to participate in school governance.

It is important to note that non-parental involvement does exist in schools in whatever form it takes. It is unacceptable and needs to be discouraged (Ndlazi, 1999:110). What is of concern though, Ndlazi points out, is the presence of specific factors that contribute to the status quo and that in as much as the government has provided the legislative framework for parental involvement, which is commendable, it has done little so far to eradicate those factors that contribute highly to the non-involvement (1999:110).

To further put emphasis on the above matter, parents refuse to be responsible for something that they have not been trained to do (Nana et al, 2009:104). Furthermore, Nana et al (2009:104), suggest that “there is a need for some education to orientate parents and the communities to be involved in the management of the schools in their communities”. Parents and communities are of the view that are they are not responsible for activities for which they have no authority. Most members of the SGBs and PTAs are either illiterate or semi-illiterate and thus cannot be expected to understand academic and management procedures of the schools in their communities (Nana et al, 2009:104).

There are several challenges that hinder parents' involvement in governance of schools, such as: their socio-economic circumstances (Niitembu, 2006:92/3), lack of proper training, if any, its ineffectiveness (Ndlazi, 1999:111), and illiteracy (Hamukwaya, 2009:66). This is further supported by Pillay, (2012:v), who indicates that challenges experienced by SGBs in the implementation of the code of conduct for learners in schools include, among others, that parents seem to have abdicated the responsibility of their children's behaviour and education to the school and SGB parents play a limited role in the activities of the school due to their incapacity and lack of empowerment. Looking at the lack of parental involvement from the SASA point of view, Maboe (2005:iv) points out that parents do not know the law and schools play no part in empowering them.

Baker and Soden, 1997 (cited in Pepe and Addimando, 2010:61) suggests that in terms of practical applications, it is extremely important to try to develop both strategies and interventions directed at reducing the impact of parental challenging behaviours on teachers' work, while bearing in mind that teachers should move toward the involvement of parents in school life. To this end, it is relevant to aim to reduce the gap between family and school, while avoiding the development of feelings of exclusion and mistrust by parents toward their children's teachers. Of relevance is the fact that both parents and educators would ultimately have to work collaboratively in school governance to achieve the intended goals.

The involvement of parents in SGBs and the significance of the impact they can make cannot be disregarded. Teachers are of the view that parent community partnership can assist them in teaching and learning activities. For an example when learners are given learning activities to do at home, parents can supervise them (Nana et al, 2009:104). Concurring with the above is Hamukwaya (2009:68), who suggests that teachers should ensure that parents are given enough opportunity to bring their initiatives and creativities, as well as their inputs toward the development of the school. In so doing, it will assist and inspire learners to be actively engaged in their homework. Moreover, the emphasis should be placed on the possible strategies that allow parents to be directly or indirectly involved in school activities.

The study acknowledges, in light of the above, the recommendation by Pillay (2012:v), that schools must involve all stakeholders in the formulation of and

implementation of the code of conduct for learners in schools the policy. The contents and procedures outlined in the policy must be communicated to all stakeholders and there must be consistency in its application. SGBs must formulate innovative strategies to engage parents to actively participate in school activities. The Basic Department of Education must fulfil its obligation to capacitate parents and other stakeholders on the SGB. An empowered SGB will make a greater contribution to the governance of schools.

In conclusion, the study recognises as important that School Governing Bodies lack the understanding of how to apply the stipulations of the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996. There is a need for continuous empowerment of School Governing bodies (Adams and Waghid, 2003:17). Because of the above, most of the governors, especially the learner and parent component, have an abstract freedom, which can be considered meaningless, because one cannot expect democratic practices to be enhanced when one does not have real freedom. This form of pseudo-freedom, as mentioned by Adams and Waghid (2003:18), may retard democratic practices. Adams and Waghid (2003:18) are of the view that enabling conditions should be created, amongst others, School Governing Bodies to be trained in understanding and implementation of school policies.

2.4.4 The learner as a member of the SGB

Participation of learners in the SGBs of public schools is prescribed for in section 23(2)(d) of the South African Schools Act, which states that “elected members of the governing body shall comprise a member or members of learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school”.

The challenges of learner participation in governance issues as depicted from the pilot study by Mabovula (2010:8) need to be seriously considered, that (a) learners are not competent enough to deal with sensitive issues of school governance as they are still immature and need to be trained in matters relating to governance; (b) learners do not participate meaningfully in democratic processes within the school, as they do not have what it takes to participate meaningfully, lack sufficient understanding and tend to vent their personal problems; (c) participation of learners

in the school governing body does not add any value to management, they just sit quietly and do not make any contribution as they lack knowledge of issues related to governance; and (d) learners do not recognise their rights, they are confused, they misuse those rights that they understand, and as a result, educators feel that these rights are not given to the appropriate people. In addition, Mohajeran and Ghaleei (2008:54) assert that learners had less input in decision-making.

According to Nongubo (2004:ii), learner involvement in school governance has been a challenge in South African schools. The South African Schools Act and the Guides for Representative Councils of Learners of 1999, allow learner participation in SGBs. According to Nongubo (2004, ii), “there is an indecisive and autocratic mind-set among educators regarding the issue of learner involvement in governance and management”. Moreover, the Department of Basic Education’s documents in place indicate a narrow conception of Representative Council for Learners (RCL) participation in SGBs and still show an element of mistrust towards learner involvement. In some schools learner participation is ignored.

RCL participation in school governance is conditional and vague, and learners are still generally seen as potentially hostile ‘partners’, set on ensuring that schools are run on their terms” (Nongubo, 2004:118). According to Nongubo (2004:118) schools appear to be sites of power struggle. Schools are distinguished by political factors than community factors. There is an atmosphere of mistrust between stakeholders in schools.

Based on the above discussion, it is important to discuss the extent to which learners are interested in the content of the policy on religion in school. This would be to establish if religion plays a part in the lives of the learners. Gunnarsson (2009:3) wanted to establish whether religion played a role in the Icelandic learners’ lives and found that learners often discuss religion. The nature of discussion differs from school to school. Lewy et al, (2007:325) pointed to the fact that a limited number of elementary public school educators in the United States exposed their learners to religion and spirituality. Educators feared provoking parents by discussing religion in public schools, who would have been shocked to find wrong religion being discussed. They might be scared of fundamentalist groups who might have found

them discussing religious matters in schools. It is not fair to learners for religion is a basic fundamental part of life because for some people spirituality reaches their children through religion. The lack of religious discourse in schools makes it unimportant (Lewy et al, 2007:325). When Karstens (2006: iii) investigated the possible correlation between the lifestyle choices adolescents make and their spiritual well-being, indications were that the construct of spirituality remains salient in the lives of most adolescents, and therefore should be included in educational practices.

Hughes (2007:144) made submissions that young people in Australia are of the view that they have the right and responsibility to make decisions about their religious beliefs. He further purports that most learners are of the opinion that spiritual beliefs, practices, attitudes, sense of independence, freedom of choice and own opinion are matters of the heart. From the South African perspective learners should be afforded the opportunity to express their own views pertaining to religious matters. The freedom of choice made by learners depends on how each of the learners was taught at home. Learners' attitudes and beliefs are moulded further in schools to be in line with societal values and norms.

Indeed the right to freedom of religion and expression, to spiritual beliefs, practices and attitudes of learners is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. Therefore, in the development and implementation of the policy on religion, learners must be given the opportunity to fully express their religious opinions and beliefs, and learners should be respected for their choices as they are expected to respect others. The religious activities, practices, which may include religious gatherings, prayer meetings, clothing and diets, envisaged by the school's policy on religion should be such that it depicts a notion of respect and protection of learners' constitutional rights and constitutional and democratic values.

“Educators seek to nurture in the hearts and minds of students a sense of moral thinking, action and behaviour and what these constitutes is dependent on one's perspective or worldview” (Valk, 2007:273). Moreover, as Valk (2007:273) persists, a plural public school grounds moral decision-making in worldviews, and encourages students to increase their understanding of worldviews in general, while deepening their own in particular. The NPREG is very clear about the issue of religion education,

that “it is teaching and learning about religions of the world and other worldviews and providing opportunities for deeper sense of self-realisation and broader civil acceptance of others” (NPPE, DoE, 2003:Sec. 17-28, Beckmann et al, 2004: 128/9).

Based on the above, I argue that not only learners should have the understanding of religions of the world and other worldviews that will provide the opportunity for deeper sense of self-realisation and broader civil acceptance because they are not living in isolation, but the whole school community should have such vital experience. These two important aspects, a deeper sense of self-realisation and broader civil acceptance are what the policy on religion is envisaging and religious activities taking place within a public school should display such a characteristic. The school policy on religion should be the guiding tool to this effect; hence the necessity for an investigation into its ability to provide such an environment with the intention to enhancing the school community’s right to freedom of religion and conscience as constitutional and democratic value.

The involvement of learners in governance activities cannot be over-emphasised. Moreover, their presence in governance like principals, parents and educators, is a legislative imperative, as it is dictated for by the South African Schools Act. Their involvement in policy development and implementation, the policy on religion in particular, should be viewed in light of advancing democratic principles. As Carr (2005:209) concluded, the principle of inclusiveness in the institutional educational governance structures has been a hard-fought battle, and is now entrenched in SASA. Unless these elected representatives are well-informed and empowered, it would nullify the call from democratic movements over the years that people should participate on a daily basis in decision-making processes in all aspects of their lives, including education. The research has indicated that learners can do so much for the life and ethos of a school. Let the resources available to schools be used prudently to release this largely untapped source of youthful energy to the benefit of the school community, as well as the wider community.

A suggestion is made that more sensitivity needs to be given to students’ religious identities in the classroom as negative comments about religion and religious beliefs made by teachers or students can greatly affect an individual’s school experience. (Patkau, 2013:iii). Furthermore, Patkau (2013:iii) argues that negative religious

experiences can be addressed by discussing religions and religious beliefs in the classrooms of public high schools, which would then lead to a greater understanding of others, and then in turn, students of all backgrounds will have an increased feeling of acceptance and a sense of belonging to the schools they attend.

2.5 RELIGIOUS CHALLENGES AND RELATED CHANGES IN OTHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

South Africa's transition to democracy set in motion new dynamics that destabilised the social structure established under apartheid. Schools were directly affected, since educational reform was at the heart of the country's reconstruction and development project, which aimed to achieve redress, equity, and equality (Herman, 2008:167). One such conspicuous challenge and change faced by educational systems was how to reform public schools to enable them to deal effectively with issues pertaining religion.

The models of English, French and US schools as presented by Gokulsing (2006:460-465), point out the different ways in which these educational systems managed religious diversity. It is clear that the English model, through a range of schooling systems, is thriving in leaving it up to its citizens to expand and pursue their own private goals, and does not necessarily persuade its pupils to embrace or even experience values other than their own. The model does not afford opportunities for students from many backgrounds and values to learn together. Therefore, it makes it complicated for children, as future citizens, to be equally tolerant and considerate of other people's traditions and ways of life.

The French model takes a obligation to neutrality as its starting point and is built on a principle of equal exclusion of the private from the public (Gokulsing, 2006:464). This model expected students, as well as all teachers and school staff, to leave their commitments at the school door in order to enter as equals of the public space represented by the school. The example presented is that they are forbidden to wear 'ostentatious' symbols of religious affiliation, to claim excused social absences stemming from religious festivals and to omit any portion of the national curriculum on cultural, religious or other private grounds (Gokulsing, 2006:464).

The conclusion drawn about the French model is that, firstly, on a structural level there is no accommodation for local or regional variations, secondly, all French schools are bound to teach the national curriculum and the ‘school is explicitly intended to mirror the secular neutrality of the public space, and lastly, the aim of the curriculum is to teach students to be French (Gokulsing, 2006:464).

“The highly debated issue has been the question of what role, if any, religion should have in America’s public schools. Wary of violating any legal constraints, many public schools have tackled the issue of religion by steering clear of it” (Khrais, 2009:1). The American model of schooling tries to create a public national identity, in which all private individuals find inclusion by adopting a policy of equal inclusion, the aim being for schools to adopt a ‘conception of shared civic identity and education built out of the interaction and accommodation of individual’s separate, private identities (Gokulsing, 2006:464). What was a cause for concern, indicates Gokulsing (2006:464), was that in practice, “some students got special treatment in the light of religious, ethnic, linguistic or other cultural differences where, for example, some religious students are excused from health class on the grounds that it contravenes religious or moral beliefs by teaching about contraception”. Even though there were significant differences between students on several items (e.g. levels of preparation, satisfaction, content, and personal beliefs), student attitudes toward the role of religion and spirituality in social work practice were generally positive (Rosenbohm, 2011:viii).

The South African model sets out the policy on the relationship between religion and education that will best serve the interests of the South African democracy (NPPE, 2003:Sec 1). The policy clearly points out that South Africa “does not have a state religion, but it is also not a secular state where there is a very strict separation between religion and the state” (Beckmann and Sehoole, 2004:124). Furthermore, the national policy is very clear about the fact that it should be particularly evident in our public schools where “no particular religious ethos should be dominant and suppress others by distinguishing between religion education, religious instruction and religious observations, where religion education in public schools is about teaching and learning about religions of the world and other worldviews”. The main aim of religion education is to provide opportunities for deeper sense of self-

realisation and broader civil acceptance of others, (NPPE, DoE, 2003: section 2, Beckmann and Sehoole, 2004:126).

2.6 EMERGING ISSUES FROM SOME RESEARCH STUDIES ON RELIGION AND EDUCATION

2.6.1 The policy on religion and related policy definitions

This section confirms, as it has emerged, that the policy on religion fits well into the definition of what policy is. Firstly, as presented by Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002:2), “policies can be guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions. They say what is to be done, who is to do it, how it is to be done and for (or to) whom it is to be done”. It is evident that the policy on religion was introduced to regulate issues pertaining to religion in public educational institutions, public schools included. The main purpose was to ensure that these educational institutions do not discriminate against anyone on religious grounds. Furthermore, schools must develop policies on religion and that responsibility is the competency of the SGBs in terms of the NPPE, the South African Schools Act and the Constitution. The National Policy on Religion and Education clearly prescribes to the SGBs on how to develop and implement the policy for the community, in which the school is embedded (NPPE, DoE, 2003:Sec 58-71).

2.6.2 The policy on religion as a product of the process of policy development and implementation

Policy development and implementation as it has emerged, is no simple process. The submission by Rogan (2007:98) and Dieltiens (2008:287), that policy makers concentrate on the ‘what’ of policy but tend to ignore the ‘how’, and that more emphasis was on the adoption of educational programmes and implementation was ignored and that in many instances low outcomes resulted from poor implementation of what was essentially a good idea, compel educational researchers to engage

vigorously to establish whether the policy on religion in schools subscribes, or does not subscribe, to the above policy development and implementation discrepancy.

Furthermore, Rogan (2007:98) indicates that the post-apartheid policy documents like C2005 do reveal a clear awareness of the 'paradigm shift' envisaged. However, as is all too often the case, the actual policy directives lacked detail on how the ideals might be realised in practice. It is the above scenarios that posed a challenge to establish whether in practice the policy on religion in schools has created a balance between the 'what' of policy and its 'how'. The idea being to make sure that the implementation of the policy on religion results in the outcomes they were or are intended for.

Supporting the above version is Dieltiens (2008:288), who argues that SGBs do have an impact in changing school practice, thus including the manner in which public schools have to handle issues pertaining to religion, but this is sometimes not in the direction intended by state policy. Adding to this dimension she concludes that there is an underlying assumption in the South African policy discourse that democratising school governance will lead to changes in schools in line with social justice principles, but, as Dieltiens disagrees, SGBs do not necessarily advance social justice.

2.6.3 The relevance of the study as it emerges from literature

In as far as the policy on religion in schools is concerned; reliable, effective school principals must prepare a school community for living in a multicultural, multi-faith, pluralistic open-minded democracy. That is not only a sound educational approach, but it fosters a context where theocratic tendencies and the temptation to religious prejudice and indoctrination are minimised. Surely this is a favoured social environment for the proclamation of religious good news, while also enhancing the prospect for creating a community where all are included in the ethical conversation.

There are challenges faced by policy as a tool to take a stance on, or to address a particular problem or issue and the policy on religion in schools is not an exception . One of the challenges faced by the policy on religion is the dynamics surrounding the

development and implementation of the policy. This version is supported by Smit (2003:14), who asserts that policy is “contested and debated from different and opposing views, which in itself may hinder the implementation process. Evidently this is no simple process and requires not only more tentative approaches to its understanding, but also further investigation into its contexts”. Adding to the above is Corkery et al (1995:1), who indicate that it should be emphasised that “weaknesses in the policy formulation process are not exclusive to Africa, nor indeed, to the developing world. They can be found, to a greater or lesser extent, in all administrations and the development of the policy on religion is not immune from the above”.

Secondly and most debatable, is the constant emergence of the fact that religion has the potential for being a source of tension, violence, intolerance and arrogance. This ideology is further enhanced by Kunzman (2006:530), who emphasises that most authors have categorically stated that conflicts emanate socially as a result of religion. As such we cannot in good educational conscience avoid the serious and volatile disputes on religions and moral matters, because they are controversial, complex and outrageously perplexing. Quite the contrary, because they are so important and since they beg for awareness, understanding, clarification and insight, they are central to significant educational inquiry.

In light of what Kunzman (2006:530) has alluded to, public schools are bound to be confronted by these serious and volatile disputes on religion and as researchers of good educational conscience, we cannot avoid that. But to continuously seek clarification and insight through educational enquiry, I argue that the development and implementation of the policy on religion in public education institutions, like a school, has the potential to divide, segregate and cause disharmony within the school community and this may impede the implementation process. The framework provided by the NPRE is such that it makes it possible for members of the school community to come together and agree on religious values to be enshrined in their school policy on religion, such that the abovementioned confrontations and disputes can be avoided. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I limited policy development and implementation to the policy on religion and education in public schools, with specific reference to its effect on the school community’s right to freedom of religion and conscience as a constitutional and democratic value.

The crucial question that this study would succinctly like to answer is the one raised by Rogan, which seeks to know, with regard to the policy on religion in public schools, “will the “harvest” be as bountiful as anticipated? (Rogan, 2007:97/8). In simple terms, I seek an understanding on whether or not the policy on religion in public schools as an innovation, amid all the challenges referred to above, is positively impacting on the school community’s right to freedom of religion and conscience as a constitutional and democratic value, and whether or not it is advancing the dual mandate of celebrating religious diversity as a resource for building national unity as envisaged by the NPPE (2003:126). This investigation of the policy on religion will shed more light on why schools are implementing the policy the way they do. The intention is to answer the question, “do we have freedom of conscience and religion in our South African schools?” as envisaged by the NPPE.

2.5 WHAT ARE THE IMPLEMENTATION GAPS?

Firstly, it has emerged from literature that SGBs are faced with enormous challenges. These range from a lack of educational background, misuse of rights, autocracy and indecisiveness, lack of inclusiveness in decision-making processes, lack of the knowledge of legislative imperatives that provide for the duties and responsibilities of the SGBs (Dieltiens, 2008:297; Tomalain, 2007:622), as well as a fear of exposing students to religion and spirituality (Lewy et al, 2007:325), SGBs being seen as places of power struggle (Nongubo, 2004:118), learners being perceived as potentially hostile ‘partners’ in the SGBs (Nongubo, 2004:118), and students having very little say in major decision-making (Mohajeran et al, 2008:54; Ndlazi, 1999:7/8). Apart from the challenges identified above, there are key solutions provided, which include, among others, direct or indirect stakeholder involvement and empowerment (Nana, et al, 2009:104; Hamukwaya, 2009:68, Pepe and Addimando, 2010:61).

Mostly, the above studies were conducted in relation to the duties and responsibilities of the SGBs in general. The question that arises out of the discussion above is, “do all these aspects affect all the duties and responsibilities of the SGBs?”, or, “are there duties and responsibilities that are not affected by these

factors?” Therefore, it is still to be established how all these factors, challenges and solutions impact the ability of the implementation of the policy on religion to enhance the school community’s freedom for religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination.

Issues of religion in schools have not been traced to the policies on religion themselves, as arguments are simply based on the prescripts of the Constitution and SASA. It is imperative that as and when challenges based on religious activities in schools emerge, care should be taken to establish the extent to which school policies on religion are providing for such a framework, in relation to the prescripts of the NPPE, which is informed by the Constitution and SASA. This will in the end provide a clear picture on whether SGBs are informed or not about the legislative framework for the development and implementation of the policy on religion. It is on this basis that there is empirical information lacking on the relationship between what the policies on religion in schools prescribe on religious activities in schools, and what is envisaged by the NPPE.

In terms of SASA, the department is obliged to empower SGBs with the necessary knowledge and skills to better perform their governance functions. There is enough evidence pointing to the fact that after being elected, SGBs are attending workshops conducted by the department. The question that arises is, “to what extent does the induction programmes enable SGBs to better adhere to legislative imperatives in the development and implementation of the policy on religion?” It is on this basis that empirical data is still required to establish the extent to which these programmes are effective in terms of aiding SGBs to better deal with issues pertaining to religion through the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

There is very little empirical information available about the successes and/or shortcomings of the implementation of the policy on religion and education at school level. This project aims to fill that gap by indicating what the outcomes of the implementation of the policy on religion and education at school level are. This will be achieved by showing challenges and experiences of principals, educators, parents and learners as school governors, with specific reference to the implementation of the policy on religion and education in their schools. Qualitatively analysing the policy on religion in schools would, therefore, shed more light with

regard to the ability of the policy on religion to enhance the community's freedom for religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 reviewed literature relating to the topic, “an analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education”. The chapter provided background on issues regarding what religion and religious diversity entail, what human rights and values are, and relate the understanding to the policy on religion in public schools as a means to promoting these constitutional imperatives. The chapter provided more understanding on the role of SGBs in schools as the custodians of policy, the policy on religion in particular and also places more emphasis on the role and legality of learners, parents, educators and principals as governors within a public school setup. Indicated is how other educational systems outside the country are handling issues of religion as compared to the way South African educational institutions are doing. In conclusion, more emphasis was on the reasons why an investigation is necessary in establishing the effect of the policy on religion on the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience as a constitutional and democratic value.

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study. The main purpose of the chapter is to provide the rationale for the employment of the theoretical perspectives relating to critical pedagogy and ‘Communicative Action’ and ‘Consensus through Deliberation and Reasoning’ in this qualitative investigation.

CHAPTER THREE:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the lens through which the study was looked at with regard to analysis and conclusions as evidenced from the data collected. The purpose of the study was to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion and education at school level as a means to promoting the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience, and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination. This analysis would be approached from the point of view of the school governing bodies as the custodians of the policy, and as actors within the development and implementation of the policy at school. The study built on the theoretical perspectives relating to Habermas's concepts of 'Communicative Action' and 'Consensus through Deliberation and Reasoning'.

3.2 THE RATIONALE FOR 'COMMUNICATIVE ACTION' AND 'CONSENSUS THROUGH DELIBERATION AND REASONING'

This section of the study is informed by the fact that the NPREG, in the minister's foreword, indicates that the "policy is neither negative, nor hostile towards any religion or faith and does not discriminate against anyone". Furthermore, the policy requires of educational institutions to adopt a cooperative type of model in the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools, which provides a broad framework within which people who agree to work together will work out their own approaches (NPREG, DoE, 2003:Sec. 3).

Habermas puts forward his ideas of 'Communicative Action' and 'Consensus through Deliberation and Reasoning', which were adopted to form a basis for argument as a theoretical framework for the study. Habermas is a contemporary philosopher with a worldwide standing. One of his best-known ideas is

communicative action, in which actors in society seek to arrive at common understanding and to direct actions by reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals. Furthermore, Habermas defines communicative action as an individual action designed to uphold common understanding in a group and to promote co-operation, as opposed to “strategic action”, intended simply to achieve one’s individual goals (Habermas, 1984:86). In his theory of communicative action, Habermas introduces the concept of ‘crises’. Crises come when modern society fails to meet individual needs and when institutions in society manipulate individuals. He explains that people cooperate to respond to this crises and he calls this interaction “communicative action” (Habermas, 1996:24; Mabovula, 2010:27).

Communicative action can be used to convey information and to express one’s own opinion and feelings. The linguistic turn in the social sciences prompted calls for more complex understandings of organisations that would emphasise language, not only as enabling information exchange, but also as constructing social and organisational reality (Heracleous and Barret, 2001:755). Orlikowski and Yates (1998:2) recognise types of communicative actions that are habitually enacted by organisational members to realise particular communicative and collaborative purposes, and that communicative action consists of attempts by actors to cooperatively define the context of their interaction in such a way as to allow them to pursue their individual plans. It is the paradigmatic form of social action oriented towards reaching understanding.

It is important to note Mabovula’s use of the Habermasian notion of communicative action, where he holds that consensus will occur in school governance once all the stakeholders reason and communicate on an equal basis. Furthermore, as Mabovula (2010:93-4) puts it, Habermas believes that for democratic participation to happen, there should be consensus, which should take place through deliberation and reasoning. For Habermas there is no doubt that participation invariably needs to result in consensus. He asserts that rationality must be dialogical or ‘communicative’, through which participants advance arguments and counterarguments. His defence of communicative reason is quite forthright about communicative rationality as the consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech. He asserts that only the force of the better argument reaches consensual decisions, so that, at the end of deliberative

process, all concerned are convinced by the decisions reached and accept them as reasonable (Habermas, 1996:299).

The above philosophy is further supported by giving rise to notions of so called deliberative democracy that extent chances for citizens to discuss key issues and reach decisions on a basis of exchange of ideas. Deliberative democracy rests on the core notion of citizens and their representatives deliberating about public problems and solutions under conditions that are conducive to reasoned reflection and refined public judgment; a mutual willingness to understand the values, perspectives, and interests of others; and the possibility of reframing their interests and perspectives in light of a joint search for common interests and mutually acceptable solutions. It promises to promote a responsible citizen voice competent of appreciating complexity, recognising the rightful interests of other groups (including traditional adversaries), generating a sense of common ownership and action, and appreciating the need for difficult trade-offs (Habermas, 1996:147; Mabovula, 2010:4).

The goal of communicative action, as argued by Habermas (1981:119) and Risse (2003:6), is “to seek a reasoned consensus in which actors try to convince each other to change their causal or principled beliefs in order to reach a reasoned consensus about validity claims”. Therefore, argumentative consensus seeking requires the ability to emphasise, i.e. to see things through the eyes of the interaction partner. Secondly, actors need to share a “common lifeworld”, a supply of collective interpretations of the world and of themselves. The “common lifeworld” consists of a shared culture, a common system of norms and rules perceived as legitimate, and the social identity of actors being capable to communicate and act. Habermas (1981:119) and Risse (2003:6) add by indicating that actors need to recognise each other as equals and need to have equal access to the discourse, which must also be open to other participants and public in nature. In this sense then, relationships of power, force, and coercion are assumed absent when argumentative consensus is sought. This implies respect for two principles: universal respect as the recognition of all parties as participants in the argumentative discourse, and the recognition of

equal rights to all participants concerning making an argument or challenging a validity claim.

Mabovula (2010:98) and Cohen (1989:33) further inform of Habermas's communication action theory that deliberation aims to arrive at a rationally motivated consensus to find reasons that are persuasive to all. That deliberation may lead to a decision that is reasoned, and may also inform the reasons why the decisions are made or are not made. Most importantly, these reasons may guide the implementation of the decision and the actions of the government (Johnson et al. 2001:235). According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:21), individuals are not considered being unreceptive vehicles in social, political and historical affairs, but having certain inner capabilities which can allow for individual judgements, perceptions and decision-making autonomy. Henning (2004:21) further points out that there is a belief that any event or action is understandable in terms of numerous interacting factors, proceedings and processes. It is evident that this is no easy process and requires not only more tentative approaches to its understanding, but also further investigation into its contexts (Smit, 2003:4).

It is on this basis that I assume that parents, learners, educators and principals serving in the SGB are not considered unwilling to listen and be passive in schools when policies, as in the policy on religion, are developed and implemented, but the understanding should be that these stakeholders are able to make judgements, and give their opinions and interpretations to events as the policy is developed and implemented (Henning, 2004:21).

3.3 CONCLUSION

From the presentation above, I argue that the development and implementation of the policy on religion in public education institutions like a school has the potential to divide, segregate and cause disharmony within the school community, namely, learners, educators, parents and principals. It has emerged that these divisions, disharmonies and segregations might be as a result of unidentified and unrevealed

religious inequalities, injustices, discriminations, oppressions and exclusions that require critical educational research to discover and bring about solutions.

Of particular importance is the application of Habermas's notion of consensus through deliberation and reasoning, which emphasises the fact that for members of school governance, preferences would be transformed through the active exchange of ideas, including not just voicing opinions, but listening, because through the act of engaging and listening, stakeholders can be persuaded and their thinking transformed (Mabovula, 2010:1). Furthermore, this combination will allow stakeholders to understand and agree with one another and to make plans for common action for the benefit of their school (Mabovula, 2010:1).

The next chapter presents the methodology employed by the study, which covered a description of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The rationale for qualitative approach and how it connects with interpretive and socio-constructivism paradigms is also elaborated on in the next chapter. An explanation of the design procedures employed by the study, which included sampling procedures and data collection strategies and reasons why such a design and the data analyses procedures were employed in the study, is also made.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology employed by the study. The rationale for qualitative approach and how it connects with interpretive and socio-constructivism paradigms is also elaborated on in this chapter. The design procedures employed by the study, which include sampling procedures and data collection strategies, and the reasons for such a design are also explained. Data analyses procedures that are employed in the study are also presented.

4.2 THE RATIONALE FOR A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches are two research approaches or perspectives that are basically different research paradigms (Kulm, 1970 cited in Golafshani, 2003:600), and glaring in the difference between the two approaches is the matter of language versus numbered data (Polkinghorne, 2005:137; Yeh and Inman, 2007:369).

Qualitative research attempts to understand and make sense of the phenomenon from the participants' perspective, (Merriam, 1998:5). All qualitative research is characterised by the search for meaning and understanding. The researcher, as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, conducts an inductive investigative strategy and a richly descriptive end product, (Peshkin, 1988:18; Patton, 1985:1). Furthermore, qualitative researches would include interviews with participants, observations, documents and artefacts as possible data sources (Polkinghorne, 2005:137; Maree, 2007:51).

The idea that qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world of participants implies that the best way to understand the phenomenon in

the setting is to become ‘immersed’ into it. This suggests that the researcher, who is the most important research instrument in qualitative research, becomes “immersed” in the setting, as well as in the research process (Golafshani, 2003:600). When I carried out interviews and observations I was at high school A and high school B. Participants answered semi-structured interview questions, where they allowed for probing and follow-ups seeking clarity. I witnessed religious activities taking place, with my participants involved in the process; and experienced some of the realities that learners, parents, educators and principals experienced in the school on a day-to-day basis.

The fact that qualitative research is an emerging design encouraged me to use this approach. This is because the intention or purpose of a study and the questions asked by the researcher may change during the process of inquiry, based on feedback or responses from participants, and this emergent design allows flexibility (Creswell, 2008:141; Merriam, 1988:71). Gillham (2000:2) emphasises that the emergent design implies that the researcher does inductive theorising, which further suggests that one does not have to do research with a previously decided on rigid design or with previous knowledge, but, instead, make sense of what one finds out while finding out and ‘only after finding out’. I did not know what to expect at first, and even though I put a plan in place, I was prepared to adjust it should the need arise.

The main objective of qualitative research is not only to find out what happens, but also how it happens and why it happens the way it does (Henning et al, 2004:3). Qualitative research is more context-bound and the findings are mostly specific, although generalisation cannot be totally ruled out, because those findings can be transferred to a similar context and a similar situation at a particular point in time (Henning et al, 2004:21).

One major reason for the adoption of qualitative research in the study has been influenced by the fact that improved and knowledgeable choices regarding policy implementation could be made if proof of qualitative findings were sincerely considered in the development and formulation of policy. This is because “qualitative and interpretive research can extend the comprehension of the vastness and complexity of policy processes and may facilitate a deeper, sophisticated and more complex understanding, enabling and supporting the policy implementation process”,

Smit, 2003: 4). The qualitative and interpretive inquiry deals with contextual issues pertaining to “what happens on the ground”, or “the educational dynamics on the ground’, data is collected from real-world setting, is context-related, rich and dependent (Schwandt, 2007:203; Cohen et al, 2002:137). The study adopted a qualitative and interpretive research in order to have a deeper understanding of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools as a means to advance constitutional values and diversity.

The study was conducted at school level, which provided a real context; a more natural setting where the researcher can locate information through observations as the SGBs go through the process of implementing the policy with the intention to establish what was happening on the ground, i.e., at school level, in as far as the implementation of the policy on religion and education is concerned. Participants also filled in semi-structured questionnaires to be able to capture the specifications of the policy on religion and education in schools. The semi-structured questionnaire sets the agenda, but does not presuppose the nature of the responses and there is a clear structure, sequence, and focus, but the format is open-ended, enabling the participant to respond on his/her own terms (Cohen et al, 2002:248-9). I went on to analyse documents in schools that informed on issues pertaining to religion, for example, the school policy on religion and education and guidelines from the department.

4.3. INTERPRETIVE PARADIGMS

Interpretivism, in its epistemology, emphasises the fact that knowledge is derived from everyday concepts and meaning, (i.e. common sense terms and typical situation) (Cohen, et al 2002: 6). The social researcher enters the everyday social world, e.g. through participation observation. The understanding with regard to the relationship between human beings and their environment is that human beings are the initiators of their own actions, i.e. they voluntarily participate in the process they find themselves in (Cohen, et al 2002: 6).

According to Cohen et al (2002:22), the interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them.

Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations. It should be grounded on data generated by the research act. Researchers work directly with experience and understanding to build their theory on them. Closely interwoven is the assertion by Huberman et al (2002:20) that humans continuously interpret, create and give meaning to define, justify and rationalise their actions. People attach different meanings to the world they live in and to their actions and they also interpret it differently.

According to Thomas (2005:75), the main point about interpretivism is that we are interested in people and the way they relate, what they think, and how they form ideas about the world and how their worlds are constructed. The key word understands. What understanding do people we are talking to have about the world, and how can we in turn understand these? But Henning believes that in terms of interpretivism, knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding. The interpretive researcher analyses text to look for the way in which people make meaning in their lives - not just that they make meaning - and what meaning they make. The researchers in this paradigm are extremely sensitive to the role of context (Henning et al, 2004:20). Henning further insists that interpretive inquiry is always undertaken in natural settings in order to collect substantial situational information. Its focus is on discovering the multiple realities of all the players in a social setting (2004:21).

Moreover, Williams (2000:211) asserts that interpretive studies are conducted at a micro-level. They require dense, detailed and contextualised description from which it is possible 'to say something of something' and that the micro-level detail of a small part of a society is used to paint a picture of that wider society. Furthermore, the author indicates that in each interpretive study the researcher attempts to interpret what is going on according to the subjective frame of reference of those observed, to capture the nuances and the singular characteristics of the social environment, with the intention again to 'say something of something' (Williams, 2000:212).

The study investigated the perceptions, experiences and understanding (with the intention of discovering the multiple realities, Henning et al, 2004:21) of learners,

parents, educators and principals as players in a social setting, namely, the school governing body, on the ability of the policy on religion and education to promote the right to freedom of religion and conscience of the school community as a constitutional and democratic value (Henning et al, 2004:21). Each stakeholder within the SGB would attach different meaning to what religion policy is, what religious diversity is and what religious values are. They would provide different versions and explanations of how they perceive and understand the above and how these impact on the implementation of the policy on religion in schools as a means to promoting values and diversity. The intention was to get their understanding and interpretation of that within the school context (as a natural setting).

4.4 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In qualitative research, investigators cannot be separated from the research process; they are inextricably linked (Yen and Inman, 2007:371). In agreement is Creswell et al (2008:79), who point out that contrary to typical quantitative techniques where objectivity is the goal, qualitative studies accept researchers' subjectivity as something that cannot be eliminated and see the researcher as the "research instrument" in the data gathering process. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:140) further assert that the researcher becomes the human instrument in the research, building on his/her tacit knowledge in addition to his/her propositional knowledge, using methods that sit comfortably with human inquiry, e.g. observations, interviews, documentary analysis and 'unobtrusive' methods. The advantage of the human instrument is his/her adaptability, responsiveness, knowledge, ability to handle sensitive matters, see the whole picture, clarify and summarise, explore, analyse, and examine atypical or idiosyncratic responses.

Added to the above, as indicated by Patton (cited in Golafshani, 2003:600), "credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction." In qualitative research "the researcher is the instrument" (Patton, 2001:14). Relevant to the study is the fact that data collection tools were used: participants were interviewed and completed questionnaires with semi-structured questions, and documents provided by the schools on matters relating to issues of religion, for

example minutes, policy on religion, departmental correspondence and so on, were analysed. In participant observations the researcher's capability to recognize the experience of the culture may be subdued if they observe without participating. Therefore, the researcher was in a position to participate, thereby becoming a research instrument.

An observation schedule was completed over a period of time where the researcher was part of the religious observances and SGB meetings, seeking clarity from participants in order to understand the rationale behind their actions and behaviour. Biased reports are sometimes incomplete and are sometimes deceptive. In this case, the researcher was conscious of the subjectivity involved and resolved to be as honest in his reporting as possible. Lastly, through observations and interviews, I was in contact with participants and integrally involved in the study. It is for this reason that I made an attempt to portray the richness of the case by writing up a report about findings of the study.

4.5 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

4.5.1 The rationale for a case study

This section is informed by the principles of a case study as presented by Maree (2007:75), Yin (1984:23), Schwandt (2007:41) and Cohen et al (2002:138), who present a case study enquiry as being systematic and empirical, conducted within a real-life context, real-world setting, and that data is socially situated and context-rich and dependent. As a researcher I intended to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion in schools. The study employed the qualitative research methodology, which prescribes an organised, methodical research process that assisted in establishing the extent to which the policy on religion was advancing the school community's right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion. I collected data for the analysis of the policy on religion at school level, because schools provided relevant contexts where the policy is being implemented.

"Case studies strive towards holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact and seek to understand participants' perceptions of events" (Maree,

2007:75). I intended to examine stakeholders within the SGBs as one group of individuals within the school setting, as they engage in religious observances, the aim being to develop a clear description of how they relate and interact with one another (Creswell et al, 2008:61). It is from this premise that I employed participant observations with the understanding that observational data is attractive, as it affords the researcher the chance to collect 'live' data from 'live' situations, in this case in schools.

According to Huberman et al (2002:20), humans continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalise their actions. People attach different meanings to the world they live in and their actions, and they also interpret it differently. It was from this understanding that I argued that stakeholders within the SGB as humans will continuously interpret differently and also attach a different meaning to the policy on religion in their schools as a means to promoting their right to freedom of religion and conscience. During interviews, learners, parents, educators and principals serving in the SGBs were able to give an account of the manner of religious events, why they were happening the way they were, and were able to justify their actions, as they participated in religious observances that took place.

Case studies tend to use a variety of multiple sources and methods of data collection, e.g. semi-structured interviews and open interviews, observations, narrative accounts and documents, to provide a detailed and in-depth analysis of a single case or multiple cases over time (Cohen, et al, 2000:189; Huberman et al, 2002:4; Yeh and Inman, 2007:374; Henning et al, 2004:34). Therefore this study, in its data collection strategy, embarked on the use of participative observations and interviews, as indicated before. Also, as a means to strengthen the quality of the study, included were document analysis and semi-structured questionnaires. I deployed a variety of unified methods and strategies to have a clear focus on the experiences and interpretations of learners, parents, educators and principals, on the implementation of the policy on religion within the school context.

Case studies open possibilities of giving a voice to the helpless and silent, like children or marginalised groups. This is crucial for researchers to come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation and this aspect is a salient feature of

many case studies (Maree, 2007:75). The understanding was that the NPRE was introduced on the basis that learners were discriminated against on the basis of their religious grounds and even coerced to attend religious observances in which they had no say. Through the research, constraints, dominating attitudes and discriminatory tactics were identified and recommendations made on how to eliminate such religious or constitutional irregularities.

Regarding the use of a case study design, the real business of a case study is particularisation, not generalisation (De Vos, et al, 2011:322). It is from this understanding that since this was a small scale study involving only two rural schools, it was not the intention of the study to generalise, but to lay bare some of the challenges faced by schools in the implementation of the policy on religion.

4.6 THE RESEARCH SITE AND THE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The sampling approach was a combination of convenience and self-selection sampling (Cohen et al, 2000:102; Mungunda, 2003:35). The selection of participants was based on two criteria: willingness to participate and those participants are members serving in the current school governing bodies. To get buy-in into the research, the initial intention of the study was to request a slot to address one SGB meeting for the purpose of explaining the role of participants in the study, ethical considerations and the use of pseudonyms for purposes of confidentiality. It later transpired that this exercise was unnecessary, as the presentation of the letters of request to the SGBs by the principals of the two sampled high schools was enough to persuade participants to willingly take part in the study.

The study was conducted in the Moretele Area Project Office of the Bojanala Region of Education in the North West Province, comprising 23 high schools. Only two of these schools were sampled. These schools were chosen due to their close proximity, which saved on time and money. The total number of participants was

eight, namely: two learners, two parents, two educators and two principals from both schools.

4.7 DESIGN PROCEDURES

Participants were invited for interviews at a date and time suitable to them. The distribution of questionnaires and interviews of learners, educators and principals took place at school. To establish rapport, the researcher met individual participants as they planned the dates for the collection of questionnaires and interviews. All responded well, except one parent, whom the researcher could not meet as planned because of work commitments, but eventually the interviews were held and the questionnaire collected. All interviews were audio-taped and I personally transcribed them verbatim.

The second phase included the completion of observation schedules. As a qualitative data gathering technique, observation is used to enable the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed, and in qualitative research we also accept that the researcher can learn most by participating and/or being immersed in the research situation being observed (Creswell, et al, 2008:84). The study adopted an observer as participant, because I looked for patterns of behaviour in the school community to understand the religious assumptions, values and beliefs of the parents, teachers, learners and principals as participants, and to make sense of the social dynamics (Creswell et al, 2008:84). This included attending assemblies in the morning in schools A and B. This allowed observations in school B to be done on Mondays and Fridays, and in school A on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

I became part of the morning gatherings to ascertain whether assembly is really being used as part of the religious observances as indicated in earlier interviews. School governing body meetings in each of the selected schools were observed. The purpose was to obtain a deeper understanding of how learners, parents, educators and principals as governors related to one another when performing their governance responsibilities. Observation is an active process, which includes facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice and other non-verbalised social interaction

(Khuzwayo, 2007:29). According to Cohen et al (2002:305), observation “allows the investigator to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed or discover things that the participant may not freely talk about in an interview situation”.

I attended two SGB meetings in each school to observe behaviours and actions of participants in the meeting. I adopted running records for recording observations, as these are more detailed, continuous or sequential accounts of what is being observed. I not only focused on the actions, but also on the situation to try to describe the action in the context in which it occurred (Creswell et al, 2008:85).

4.8 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

This section moves to a closer-grained account of instruments for collecting data, how they were used and how they were constructed. This study identified three kinds of qualitative data, namely, interviews, observations and document analysis (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002:243; Hubberman et al, 2002:4). The research used extensive interviews, document analysis and observations as a descriptive inquiry to elicit the SGBs’ understandings, views and experience of the issue of religious values and diversity through the implementation of the policy on religion and education in their school. To strengthen the quality of the study, I included questionnaires (which were completed by participants).

4.8.1 Interviews

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:267) present interviews as “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, see the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasises the social situations of research data. Interviews enabled participants, be they interviewers or interviewees, to discuss their interpretations of the world they live in, and to express how they regard the situation from their own point of view”. In this sense the interview was not simply concerned with collecting data about life, it was part of life itself, human embeddedness is inescapable. Interviewing includes listening, talking, conversing and recording (Schwandt, 2007:191).

Creswell et al, (2008:87). identify three types of interviews, namely, open-ended interviews, semi-structured-interviews and structured interviews. The semi-structured interview is commonly used in research projects to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. It does allow for probing and clarification of answers. Semi-structured interview schedules basically define the line of inquiry. The researcher must be attentive to the responses of the participants so as to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied, and explore and probe these.

Participants answered semi-structured questions during the interviews. This enabled me to direct the flow of the interview and at the same time allowed room for participants to provide additional information outside of the set of questions through probing. Open-ended questions and probes yielded in-depth responses about participants' experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The interviews were captured with a voice recorder and later transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were then returned to participants for checking and elaborations, and were later submitted to my supervisor, as my trusted and knowledgeable mentor, for advice where possible. This exercise was done to strengthen the research

4.8.2 Questionnaires

Participants also completed semi-structured questionnaires to be able to capture the specifications of the policy on religion and education in schools. Here a series of questions, statements, or items were presented and the participants were asked to answer, respond to or comment on them in a way that they think best. There is a clear structure, sequence and focus, but the format is open-ended, enabling the participants to respond in his or her own terms (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002:248-9). Parents, learners, and educators serving in the SGB, as well as principals, completed semi-structured questionnaires, with some questions that allowed for participants to provide additional information that they could not during the interviews without feeling intimidated by the presence of the researcher.

4.8.3 Document analysis

When I used documents as a data gathering technique, focus was on all types of written communications that may shed light on the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools (Creswell et al, 2008:82; Huberman et al, (2002:4; Schwandt, 2007:191). I intended to analyse any document that informs the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools. The first to analyse was the school's policy on religion and education. Other documents requested were the implementation plans or programme for the policy, any correspondence from the district regarding religion policy, any curriculum document regarding the teaching and learning of religion education in schools, minutes of meetings where the issues on religion were discussed and/or any other records that informed about religion issues. This also included the SGB code of conduct, learners' code of conduct and school administration and management system.

4.8.4 Recording observations

According to Creswell et al (2008:85), the most important part of observation is the recording of the data. In recording observational data, researchers sometimes use the following: anecdotal records, running records or structured observation.

The study adopted the running records in that the researcher recorded the actions and behaviours of parents, teachers, learners and principals during the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools as the context under which the policy is being implemented. In recording the observations, I captured two dimensions, namely, the description of what the researcher has observed (i.e. thick descriptions of what actually took place, which did not include any value judgement), and the researcher's reflection about what happened (i.e. the observed).

The example of the template below was used to record the observations.

Date and time	Situation	Participant	Actions observed	Reflection
When was the recording done? In this case I recorded all the dates I observed, morning assemblies, which usually took place between 7:00-8:00 daily in both schools. Different records were kept for school A and school B	Where were the actions and behaviours taking place? I observed religious activities taking place at morning assemblies. During breaks learners assembled for prayer and were joined by some educators.	Who are the participants observed? In most of the morning assemblies, educators and learners played a major role. Parents and other church leaders were mostly invited on Fridays in both schools A and B.	What was observed? I recorded the reading of verses from the Bible, singing of hymns, and motivational talks.	What are the researcher's reflections about what was observed? All religious activities taking place were of a particular religion only.

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS

4.9.1 Techniques for data analysis

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2002:147) data analysis involves categorising, clarifying and making sense of data according to the way participants describe the situation. Furthermore, Cohen, et al (2002:147) allude to the fact that in qualitative research like this, data analysis begins during the data collection. The reason is that at a practical level, qualitative research swiftly accumulates huge

amounts of data and early analysis reduces the problem of data overload by selecting out significant features for future focus. Broadly conceived, qualitative data analysis is “an action of making sense of, understanding data by means of a range of measures that facilitate working back and forth between data and ideas”. (Schwandt, 2007:6 and 267).

4.9.2 The process of data analysis

Creswell et al (2008:99-100) argues that qualitative data analysis is usually based on an idea that is meant to investigate significant content of qualitative data. It attempts to create an understanding participants attach to observable facts by scrutinising their perceptions, feelings and understanding of the phenomenon under study. Data analysis is best achieved through a procedure of inductive analysis of qualitative data, where the main reason is to allow conclusions to surface from the important themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by more structured processes Creswell et al (2008:99-100). In the framework of this analysis, the participants’ meaning of phenomenon may include, among others, the SGBs’ understanding and experiences of religious values, their attitudes and knowledge about religious values and diversity and how they justify their practices with regard to the advancement of these religious values and diversity through the implementation of the policy on religion in their schools.

During analysis I got immersed in the data and went the conventional, straightforward “qualitative coding and categorising” route, taking codes straight from the data (Henning, 2004:102; Phatlane, 2007:15). This exercise, according to Henning, means that “the data are separated into small units of meaning, which are then thoroughly named per unit and then grouped together in categories that contain related codes. Therefore, each category will contain codes that are semantically related (Henning, 2004:102). As a novice researcher I personally transcribed the data from interviews as suggested by Henning, and this was done to enable the researcher to better know the data and be more competent in labelling units of meaning (coding), (Henning, 2004:105; Phatlane, 2007:15).

Themes included, among others, 'policy development processes'. This theme was informed by subunits, such as: were SGBs trained in the development of the policy on religion, when/by whom/where, how do SGBs allow stakeholders to air their views in the development of the policy on religion in schools, which activities are SGBs involved in when developing the policy on religion in schools, was each stakeholder involved in the process? Included also was a theme on 'different religious activities taking place in the school', which was informed by units such as: which religious activities are taking place in schools, who is responsible, who is attending, what is the response, where do they take place, when do they take place, what does the school policy say about these activities? A comprehensive discussion of the themes follows in Chapter 5.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission to conduct research was requested from the Department of Education in the North West Province and the school authorities, i.e. the school governing bodies and principals. Permission to participate in the study was sought from each respondent. Participants were informed about the research, in which interviews were used. They were assured that their privacy and sensitivity were going to be protected. They were also assured that the information was going to be used solely for research purposes and would be stored after use. It was also revealed to the respondents that information used would be treated as highly confidential.

4.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

Schwandt (2007:299) presents the trustworthiness criteria as a term that refers to one set of criteria for judging the quality or goodness of qualitative inquiry. Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires and document analysis. The use of different data collection methods in the same study is referred to as methodological triangulation. Cohen et al (2000:114) maintain that 'triangulation involves the use of more than one method in the pursuit of a given

objective'. This improved the validity of the measures of the same objective by using the semi-structured interviews and observation and documentation analysis (Golafshani, 2003:64). To strengthen the validity of the study, included were questionnaires with semi-structured questions completed by all participants.

To further validate the study, I worked closely with the two supervisors assigned by the University of Pretoria, who helped to advise on issues relating to research ethics, research language, and content and data collection strategies. Furthermore, I returned the transcripts to the parents, educators and principals interviewed for them to verify the data, give input and, to a lesser extent, become part of the analysis process.

4.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methodology employed by the study, which covered a description of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The rationale for qualitative approach and how it connects with interpretive and socio-constructivism paradigms was also elaborated on in this chapter. The design procedures employed by the study, which included sampling procedures and data collection strategies were explained and reasons for the design chosen was also made. Data analyses procedures that were employed in the study were also presented.

The next chapter deals with data analysis. The chapter revolves around the presentation and discussion of the data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis on the capability of the policy on religion to promote the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience as constitutional and democratic value and its ability to facilitate the celebration of religious diversity as a resource for national unity. The data analysed consists of four sets of information as in the categories of participants, namely, C1: principals, C2: educators, C3: parents and C4: learners. Full discussion of the themes identified

above in relation to the different categories of participants will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about the presentation and discussion of the data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis on the policy on religion and education in schools. The idea is to ascertain the policy's ability to promote the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience as constitutional and democratic value, and its ability to facilitate the celebration of religious diversity as a resource for national unity. Included is the review of theory implications to the data collected. This section also includes the biographical profiles of both participating schools and the SGB stakeholders. The data analysed consists of four sets of information as in the categories of participants, namely, C1: principals A and B, C2: educators A and B, C3: parents A and B and C4: learners A and B.

5.2 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF SCHOOLS AND THE SGB STAKEHOLDERS

This section presents background information of schools, as well as principals, educators, parents and learners serving in the SGBs that may have a bearing on their understanding and performance of their governance roles, which include policy development and implementation and the policy on religion in particular.

5.2.1 Schools' biography

Schools A and B are public schools situated in the rural communities of the Moretele Area Project Office in the North West Province. These are no-fee schools, because of the poor economic background of parents living there. Noted again, is the poor educational background as it has emerged from the data collected. The total number of educators in school A is 35 and in school B 31. Learner enrolment in school A stands at 779 and in school B it is 700.

The learner religion affiliation per school is as presented in Tables 1 and 2 for school A, and Tables 3 and 4 for school B below. The information was captured by the schools from the learner application forms, which was then recorded into the school administration management system (SAMS). This information then became easily accessible. Educators' religious affiliation was attained through the circulation of a table, with a list of the different religions wherein they ticked their choice anonymously.

Table 1: Learners and their religions: School A

Religion	Christianity	African religion	Muslims/ Islam	Rastafarian	African-Christian religion	None	Total
No of learners	708	40	09	05	29	08	799
Percentage	88,6%	5%	1,1%	0.6%	3.6%	1%	100%

Table 2: Educators and their religions: School A

Religion	Christianity	African religion	Muslims/ Islam	Rastafarian	African-Christian religion	None	Total
No of educators	25	4	-	-	3	3	35
Percentage	71%	11%	-	-	9%	9%	100%

Table 3: Learners and their religions: School B

Religion	Christianity	African religion	Muslims/ Islam	Rastafarian	African-Christian religion	None	Total
No of learners	623	39	02	02	24	10	700
Percentage	89%	6%	0,3%	0,3%	3,4%	1,4%	100%

Table 4: Educators and their religions: School B

Religion	Christianity	African religion	Muslims Islam	Rastafarian	African-Christian religion	None	Total
No of educators	24	4	-	-	2	1	31
Percentage	77%	13%	-	-	7%	3%	100%

From the above tables it was evident that the participating schools were embedded within the communities with different religions, and that the majority of the school community subscribed to Christianity. This collaborated with the evidence from the interviews. It also emerged that there are those who believed in both Christianity and

African religion and other minority religions, and therefore had to be afforded the opportunity to exist.

5.2.2 SGBs' governance experiences

All stakeholders are well represented in the SGBs of both schools, which indicate that schools have taken heed of the prescripts of SASA on membership to the SGB. Evidenced by the above statistics is the fact that participants seemed to be abreast of and experienced in governance responsibilities and they all subscribe to Christianity.

5.3 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.3.1 SGBs and their duties and responsibilities

SGB stakeholders must have a clear understanding of the expectations of their duties and responsibilities, as prescribed by the South African Schools Act.

Principals, by virtue of their position as school managers, act in an advisory capacity and as resource persons to the SGB. They act as go-between between the SGB stakeholders to harmonise their views on governance matters. Their main role is that of managing by seeing to the *“day-to-day running of the school and assisting the SGB to perform their functions well and looking after learners”*. Principal B agrees by stating that *“they manage the school concerning records and finances, look at the safety of learners and educators and advise the SGB pertaining issues of policy”*.

Principal A was adamant when he mentioned that *“SGBs cannot do anything which is being required by the South African Schools Act without the guidance of the principal, because members of the SGBs are not learned people as they did not go far in educational matters”*. In this instance, as argued by Dukeshire et al, (2002: 1), these communities can be involved by empowering them with the knowledge about policy, its importance and how it is made.

In this particular response, the suggestion made was that without principals SGBs will not be functional, as they do not have the necessary knowledge (education) to deal with educational matters. The above suggestion is contrary to what Kelly (1995: 104) regards as the main function of education in a democracy, which is “to provide all its future members with the opportunity to develop these intellectual and moral qualities as required for meaningful participation in a democratic life”. In this case, SGBs should have been properly empowered to deal with democratic governance practices.

Both educators see themselves as a “*link between*” the SGB and the parents and as a “spokesperson” for the educators (teacher A) and as people who “*represent the aspirations of educators in the SG*” (teacher B).

Parents view their role as that of “*developing policies and seeing to it that the educators have the resources that they need*” (parent A), and that of “*knowing and driving policies with the principal and the SMT... and recommending the code of conduct for learners*” (parent B).

It was, to a greater extent, evident that learners understood their role in the SGBs. This was made apparent by the fact that they were able to indicate that they “*represented learners in the SGBs and that they reported to them on issues discussed in the SGB*” (learner A). Furthermore, mention is also made of the fact that their role was to “*discuss learner discipline with the principal, for example if there are learners who come late to school*” (learner B).

The conclusion drawn from the above is that the perceptions of SGB stakeholders about their role are positive as they displayed the knowledge and understanding of their duties and responsibilities as governors.

5.3.2 SGBs and the policy on religion

Educational policy plays a vital role in every educational institution like a school. To achieve the objectives of the policy, a clear understanding of what policy is and what the rationale for the presence of policy in schools is, is an essential element for SGBs’ knowledge and understanding. Principals see policy as “a guiding measure

which directs certain activities” (principal A). In addition, they perceive it as “a set of rules or laws that enable or help to manage schools” (principal B).

Whereas educators regard policies as “*guidelines based on the laws and are used to run every institution*”, (educator A), they also view them as “*guidelines held at school ... on how to implement certain aspects at school*” (educator B).

It is also important to note that educators believe in the role of policy in schools, most importantly the role of the policy on religion. “*Religious policy must cater for diversity and must be based on the supreme law of the country which is the Constitution*”. (Educator B)

Whereas parent B was confident that policy is “an educational guideline as to how certain activities should be done”, they also believe the policy on religion to be about “*the different beliefs that are experienced in the school community... and how these beliefs can be accommodated and tolerated*”... (Parent B). Parent A simply believes Christianity to be the best religion in the school.

Policy is believed to be “*guidelines that are put in place by the school ... and everybody must be satisfied about these policies*” (learner A), while on the other hand, policy is about “how things should be run” (learner B).

While learners are doubtful about the presence of the policy on religion in their schools, they believe that it should be because “*if there wasn't a policy there wouldn't be any religious activities taking place at school*” (learner B), but, as learner A indicated, “*I am not sure, never heard of it, ... but I assume that there is a policy on religion*”.

Participants' views on what policy is concur with what Khuzwayo (2007:46) mentioned, that policies are “*guidelines of action in the day-to-day running of a school and are useful in that they ensure fair methods, which all stakeholders know and agree to, of dealing with issues and problems*”. All schools acknowledged that their schools have policies on religion.

5.3.3 Training and workshops on policy on religion

SGBs must be empowered with the necessary skills and knowledge in order to successfully perform their duties and responsibilities as expected.

It has been apparent from the learners that they have never been workshopped, nor taken for training on matters pertaining to religion or the policy on religion, either by the department or the school. This scenario, as argued by Mabovula (2010: 8), aggravates the challenges of learner participation in governance matters as they are still immature and need to be trained on sensitive issues like religion.

This is further corroborated by educators who made it clear that they did not receive any training with regard to religion in schools or the policy on religion itself. *“On the issue of religion there were no specific training around the policy on religion”* (Educator B).

Both educators agree that they only received training from the department on the general functions of the SGBs that also included policy formulation. *“They used to call us, and training was based on what is our role as SGBs in policy formulation, what is our role in the school development, what is our role in making sure our kids they get the best education, what is our role in finances”* (Educator A). This is also agreed upon by learners who indicated that *“workshop attended taught us on how we should rule as SGB and how the meetings should go”*.

What has emerged is that educators were able to deal with issues of religion as they received training from organisations other than schools or the department, for example unions.

“... I used to have workshops with my Union, where we are talking about issues of policies, like HIV, so I just (have) that knowledge and experience” (Educator B).

The failure on the part of the department to fully empower educators, as argued by Tomalin (2007: 622), can result in educators unknowingly discriminating against learners on religious grounds. This would be the results of the actions of educators who lacked the knowledge about different cultures and religions.

Principals are in agreement with what learners and educators indicated that they never received training on the policy on religion or religion itself. Principals further

agreed to what educators indicated that they received information on religion outside the school and the department.

“I have not been trained on the policy on religion. There was something on policy in my studies when I was doing my BEd. I did not do any course on policies. There was a workshop on policies when this government started. I think it was the main issue. I think there were those workshops on how to formulate policies.” (Principal B).

“I must be honest; we were never taken to any training... they just instructed us to make a policy on religion. They just push documents and say draft the policy” (Principal A).

Munguda (2003: 3) argues that an effective school in a multi-religious society will be led by an informed and enlightened principal who will involve all staff. The argument is, if the principal has not been empowered to be religiously intelligent, how will he then, be able to positively involve all stakeholders on matters of the policy on religion?

Both parents are unwavering on the matter of training regarding religion policies, because the issue of religion is *“not being taken serious and it is very rare that learners are also conscientious about religion issues”*. Parents further feel disgruntled, as they are only being *“told to develop policies without being given guidelines or without giving them the district or provincial policies pertaining to religion”* (Educator A).

It is clear that training and workshops on issues pertaining religion in schools is an unusual occasion. The only workshops that have taken place are those on the general functions of SGBs, which, according to the SGBs, is not enough to help them in dealing with religion matters, including the development and implementation of the policy on religion. This concurs with what Khuzwayo (2007:56) indicated:

“...training programmes were not effective enough in helping both principals and chairpersons of the SGBs to adequately understand their governance roles, especially the newly elected principals and SGB chairpersons”. In this case, it also includes educators and learners serving in the SGB. This particular matter is further

accentuated by Adams and Wighad (2003:18), who argue that “enabling conditions should be social conditions, which included access to training and education, without which an individual cannot be free, and this understanding of freedom incorporates a conception of self-development”.

The above is further made clear by Kelly (1995:105), who mentions that at the very basic and practical level, it makes no sense to place responsibility for governance in the hands of people, without making adequate provision for them to be educated to participate in governance.

5.3.4 Framework for policy development and implementation

The most common documents used by schools for reference with regard to the development and implementation of the policy on religion include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the South African Schools Act, the National Policy on Religion and Education and the North West Provincial Government’s guidelines on policy formulation. Reference was also made to Education Labour Relations documents for assisting on religion issues in schools.

“There are some provincial drafts and the national policy on religion. I refer to policies from other schools so that we can fine-tune our policy” (Principal A).

“Our policy on religion has been designed in conjunction and collaboration with that of the government and the Constitution” (Principal B).

Principal B indicated that the Constitution set the limits of what can be done in schools: *“The Constitution does not allow us to force learners to come and listen to biblical aspects”*.

Whereas one educator indicated that *“they needed to have the constitution ... and drafts from the departments to guide them on religious issues they needed to discuss”* (Educator B), the other was of the opinion that *“normally the policy is based on ELRC documents, SASA, and ... common laws, government is supplying us with guidelines”* (Educator A).

Parents were precise on the use of the Constitution and SASA that provided the framework for the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools (parent A). It was evident in her response that parent B, as well as learners, had no knowledge of the policy framework, including that of the policy on religion.

5.3.5 The policy on religion and human rights values

It is the responsibility of the SGB to ensure that through the development and implementation of the policy on religion, the school community's right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion is advanced. To a larger extent the advancement of rights, such as the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, will depend on what SGBs perceive as human rights and values.

Principals had a strong belief in human rights which they defined as:

"In this context, freedom of choice and association as basic human rights" (Principal A).

"Human rights are things that we are morally, legally or officially allowed to do or have. For example, everyone has a right or is entitled to know the truth" (Principal B).

When asked to relate the definition to their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, principals pointed out that:

"Choice of association, expression and conviction" (Principal A).

"It basically implies that one is at liberty to engage, join, have a belief of one nature he or she deems fit to believe" (Principal B).

The NPRE is founded on core values, such as tolerance, diversity, openness, accountability and social honour. In answering the question, 'which values underpin the NPRE and what values underpin the school's policy on religion?', both principals were unable to succinctly spell out the values underpinning the NPRE, but were able to relate values underpinning the policy on religion in their schools. They mention *"values such as respect, love and respect for human dignity"*.

Schools as institutions within the educational system must play an important role in developing religious values in learners. This concurs with what Rughubar-Reddy (2002: iii) argues for, the educational institutions have a responsibility to foster and develop values in learners. However he cautions that learners cannot fully benefit from values on their own. In this case it will be a difficult task to accomplish if principals themselves cannot identify values underpinning the NPRE.

Added to the above is the fact that “unfortunately schools are struggling to get the school community to respect and love each other” (Educator B). One of the reasons given was the fact that:

‘Schools are battling with learners who do not get all these values at home, because I believe schools should take the learners from where parents have started, a child who has been grounded at home’ (Educator B).

This highlights the point of view of educators that learners should learn proper religious values from home, so as to allow schools to nurture those values.

Educators’ views on human rights indicate that their understanding of constitutional values is infused within human values.

“Human right refers to any doing that is morally and legally correct. Therefore, a human is born with this right by virtue of being a human being. E.g., as a human being you deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, you also have a right to name” (Educator A).

“Freedom of religion refers to any kind of practice whereby an individual is free to engage into religious activities of that particular religion without any prejudice of some kind from other people” (Educator B).

While one educator informs of values that underpin their policy as *“those that cater for various cultural groups and the second value is not to undermine any religion irrespective of its origin”* (Learner A), the other believes *“respect which addresses the issue of discipline is values that inform their policy on religion”* (Learner B).

Parents are of the view that *“human rights are basic rights naturally endowed to humans”* (parent A) and that *“human rights are to do with what one wants to do without hurting other people”* (parent B).

Parents are of the thought that values such as tolerance, accountability, honour (parent B), and values such as respect, and agreeing that we are not the same and do not believe the same thing (parent A), should form a basis for the policy on religion in schools.

Learners accept human rights as a means for government to provide basic needs to society and also as ways in which people can protect themselves in life.

“Human rights are rights that every human is entitled to for humanity in order for the government to meet the basic needs of all citizens living in the country” (Learner A).

“Human rights are things that we share because we are all human beings, are things that protect us against any bad circumstances that we come across in life” (Learner B).

Learners specified that “everyone has the right to express his or her opinion and follow the religion of his or her choice, *“everyone has the right to belief in the religion of his or her choice”* (learner A), and that *“everyone has the freedom to practice any religion that would not under any circumstances violate the human rights or go beyond the Constitution”* (learner B), was indicative of the fact that learners can identify with the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion.

Learners are of the opinion that one has to have values such as respect and communication in order to solve problems (learner A), and that values are the way people live and feel, choosing the right things in our live and teaching us to respect other religions and accept them” (learner B).

5.3.6 Religions and policy development processes

In terms of section 16(1) of SASA, 84 of 1996, *“the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body”*. This means that the governing body is entrusted with the duty and power to formulate and adopt school policy on a number of issues, such as the mission and ethos of the school, code of conduct of learners, school community relations and curriculum programme development, and most importantly, to develop and adopt the policy on religion in their schools.

Principals believe their schools are embedded within diverse religious communities and that it was their responsibility to ensure that SGBs are aware of the scenario.

“Various practices from the various learners should not divert us from what we came for at school ... we used to come into contact with people of Rasta religion...Islamic religion and...normal religion” (Principal A).

“We have to tell the SGB about the different religions in our school, so that they understand that there are learners who are following Muslim or Bahai, and that they must also be given a chance within the school to practice their religion...according to their beliefs” (Principal B).

Principals are content that they have been part of the development of the policy on religion in their schools.

“With us somebody will take the role and make a draft and bring it to parents for discussion, then after that we take it to the learners until everybody is satisfied” (Principal B).

“Yes, I was involved in the development of the policy as I actually made the draft guided by the NPPE and then took the draft to the SMT, it had to go and land in the hands of the SGB...then we presented it to the parents with SGB...some improvements...then the policy was ultimately approved” (Principal A).

Principals feel that they do provide the opportunity for different stakeholders to air and give their views during the development of the policy on religion.

“When we are seated around the table and discussing the policy on religion... and ask them to be free and air their views as you leave them discussing the policy” (Principal A).

“With us usually a bosberaad would be organised for discussing policy issues, where we would go for two days... all stakeholders...would be called. So we would converge to one place, take all the policies and discuss them so that they must voice their views concerning the policy” (Principal B).

Educators had opposing views on whether they were given the opportunity to air their views during the development of the policy on religion. While one educator

believes they experienced challenges from the majority of Christians who overruled them in this process (Educator A). The other educator acknowledged that his school allowed them to be part of the policy development process and also that an attempt was made to involve all stakeholders in the development of the policy on religion, including educators (Educator B).

Principals and educators agree they were part of the policy development process. This is in concurrence with what Habermas, through communicative action, argues for, that in a democratic participation people should deliberate to be able to convey information to one another and to express the opinions and feelings about religious values to be enshrined in the school policy. This is what Dukeshire et al (2002: 1) argues for, that an effective policy is made possible by community involvement.

Learners were not hesitant to inform that they were not involved in the development of the policy on religion in their school and that they did not even know they were supposed to be involved. This defeats what Habermas argues for, that the learners' interests in the development of the policy on religion need to be recognised, a principle which educators disregard.

With regard to the different religions within the school community, learners were unable to differentiate between different religions and the different churches subscribing to Christianity. To them the latter is regarded as the different religions. However, there is consensus among the learners to the fact that Christianity is the dominant religion in the school and that is all that is being practiced. It is also important to note that learners have not been exposed to other religions, and therefore are not in a position to indicate whether all religions within the school community are treated on an equitable basis or not.

5.3.7 Schools' religious activities and the policy on religion

SGBs must strive for equality among religions within the school communities to ensure that all stakeholders enjoy equal rights to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, and this will be made evident by religious activities taking place at school.

Parents acknowledged the fact that there are indeed religious activities taking place in their schools. Both agreed that their school community is predominantly Christian (parent A). The most common religious activities identified by both parents in their schools are morning devotions at assembly, where there is singing and praying, preaching and inviting pastors from different religious churches.

Both parents agree that their schools are embedded within religiously diverse communities:

“We have isolated groups of people from religious background of Islam, and also the traditional religions of black people or African. We also have those who maybe do not believe in any other religion” (Parent A).

‘We have got religions of Rastafarians, Muslim and we depend on Christianity’ (parent B).

Learners are in agreement with what parents alluded to, that there are religious activities taking place at school. Noted though, is the fact that learners were unable to indicate whether religious activities are enshrined in school policy on religion. It was also clear that religious activities taking place, as learners alluded, were predominantly Christian, characterised by an “assembly, whether it is singing of hymns, prayers, motivational talks” (Learner B) and also “poems, preaching, reading from the Bible, inviting people from the community to give the word of God” (Learner A).

It is import to note that sometimes not all learners attend assembly and the suspicion, as learners alluded to, could be that they have different religions than the *one practiced at assembly*.

“Some of the learners do not attend...they just go around the school. I think it is because of they do not have the knowledge or they are so ignorant about the word of God and about the method used in school...I think they have different religion that is why they do not attend” (learner A).

The above scenario, as argued by Rogan (2007: 98), indicate that the policy on religion was developed for compliance purposes as its implementation did not produce the envisaged results.

Noted from the discussion above is the fact that learners believe that those who do not attend assembly because they subscribe to different religion are ignorant, not only about how important Christianity is, but also about how the school operates. This in itself indicates lack of knowledge of the principles of democracy and democratic values on the part of the learners. This is what Habermas regards as a crisis, because schools as democratic institutions are failing in this case to meet the religious needs of other individuals.

Religious activities taking place at school are Christian in character, as confirmed by educators. Moreover, these activities are symbolised by “organisers of Christian treatment in school and also, we are the organisers of cultural groups at school and also there are certain days that we use in our year plan in order to teach these learners about the importance of religion in their lives” (Educator A).

“That is why we are having those SCMs; sometimes we have those Christian educators inviting pastors from outside to come and preach. But we are not making it compulsory for learners to attend, to say they need to attend to the event, only those who are interested in the event can attend” (Educator B).

Principals concur that reading from the Bible at assembly and preaching, and the activities related to SCM, are activities that characterise religious activities at schools.

“There are those teachers who are still reading the Bible and we still have the SCM where learners discuss about things that are from the Bible, they read the Bible and discuss issues from the Bible” (Principal B)

Activities in both schools concern the Student Christian Movement as one of the major religious activities. It should be noted that this movement is Christian-inclined and therefore not all learners will attend, but the movement is prevalent in both schools. The activities of this movement usually take place during breaks where some educators also attend.

The presentation above presents a challenge for SGBs on how to deal with the dominant character of Christianity in schools. Without proper training as alluded earlier, schools will continue to experience challenges of religious inequity and intolerance in schools. This in essence is against what Habermas, through

communicative action, envisages, that democratic institutions like schools should create conditions that are conducive for stakeholders within the SGBs to reason, reflect and redefine their religious perceptions and value the religious interests of others, rather than promoting one religious value.

5.3.8 SGB stakeholder interaction

The interaction of stakeholders, even among parents themselves, where an informal discussion can take place, can assist in easing the tension from a formal setting where burning issues like religion can be discussed.

Parents' responses suggest that such interactions never take place. Educators are in concurrence with what parent said about stakeholder interaction regarding religious issues.

“That one is very, very rare. The only time religion is discussed is when parents are given the problem and in parents' meeting there is no item on the agenda which concerns religion” (Educator A).

“I can say it does not happen often, because it happens when it is time to revise issues pertaining religion” (Educator B).

It was obvious from principals' responses that they also do not interact with other stakeholders on matters pertaining religion.

“I usually do not get that chance to tell the honest truth. I do not remember discussing issues of religion with anyone. Unless when we are in staff room when some teachers are concerned about other teachers not attending assembly then that is when we interact” (Principal B).

With regard to interaction with other stakeholders, learners indicated that the only time learners discuss issues related to religion is when they are with their fellow Christian learners discussing the Bible.

These responses suggest that issues of religion are not discussed in schools and the conclusion drawn is that those in charge would use this opportunity to manipulate the situation by advancing their own religious values. The above defeats what Habermas

regards as the creation of an environment where stakeholders within a democratic setting like the formulation and implementation of the policy on religion, would be able to communicate, share common world and deliberate about problems regarding religious values to be enhanced by their schools policies on religion.

5.4 PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION (RELIGION POLICY)

This section presents participants' views and observations of the implementation of the policy on religion in their schools.

5.4.1 Principals' views on policy implementation

The most vocal on the matter were principals and educators. It was evident from the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews that principals were not satisfied with the manner in which the policy on religion was implemented in their schools. Both principals believed the policy on religion in their schools was not well implemented, because of the following reasons:

Firstly, attempts were made to involve all religions, but only Christianity is catered for.

“Overemphasis on Christian values shows that not enough work was done to ensure a policy where every learner was accommodated. It is assumed that all learners are Christians; therefore enough was not done to draw a comprehensive policy that would accommodate all religions” (principal B; Q.9, Questionnaire).

Furthermore, as admitted by principals, schools scrutinise learners admitted, especially if there is doubt about their religion. This is to avoid having to constantly address problems related to religion and therefore immediately emphasise the values of a particular religion.

“Schools are very sceptical in admitting learners of peripheral religions like Rastafarians, and the school is only involved in matters of religion when learners assemble for morning devotions and all learners are expected to attend” (principal A; Q.9, Questionnaire).

According to principals, not enough consultation took place during the development of the policy on religion.

“It was difficult to involve the community through the SGB. This is because many parents of the learners are always away on work commitments and many learners are left alone at home. Moreover, the Department of Education did not do enough to support schools in drawing up their policy on religion and help cater and accommodate different religions” (principal B; Q.9, Questionnaire).

It is the principals' view that policies on religion in schools are just tokens, as they are not being applied. They also compromise other rights stipulated by the schools' policies on religion.

“The policy on religion is not effective and merely exists on paper as learners are instructed on values that are Christian-inclined and not in reference to the policy on religion” (principal A; Q.9, Questionnaire).

“On paper it embraces all rights, but as an institution sensitive to danger of freedom of expression, some rights are being compromised” (Principal A, Interviews).

Whereas principal A was satisfied that he was exercising his right to freedom of belief, religion and conscience because the school advances values they subscribe to, principal B thought he and others were not. When asked whether they were exercising this right they indicated:

“Yes, because the values that are being practiced are of my religion” (Principal A).

“I don't think as the principal I exercise this right. However, this is done to some extent. This is because, as I said, there is only one religion that is given a chance to flourish, Christianity. This seems to be dominant, while others are not given a chance” (Principal B).

According to principals, religions in school are not treated on an equitable basis as they use Christianity to neutralise other religions that they believe have the potential to disrupt teaching and learning and cause ill-discipline.

“In as far as equity is concerned, our choice as a Christian society, multiple and diverse religious practices would result in main custodians of these diverse

institutions intruding in the core business of the school as an institution for teaching and learning. It is hard to open the school to even satanic practices witnessed all over the universe” (Principal A).

With regard the above: Principal B said:

“Inter-religious tolerance is not existent, though this seems to be not deliberately done. There is no diversity because multi-religious knowledge and understanding is not promoted. The spirit of openness is non-existent, therefore there is culture of indoctrination since only one religion seems to flourish at the expense of others”.

Principal A believes schools as custodians of different religions must be guided by what the majority of the school community believe in, and use the belief of the majority in school to govern religious issues. This has been the practice and there has never been a descending voice to the practice.

“As a custodian of all these diverse religious practices, you must be guided by what is a universal practice that submerges unrecognised religions and minor cultures and stand by, what you can account for to the best of your ability...believing in what is common practice to the majority that you lead, the principal should stand firm and tall in what brings the majority to common practice... there has never been any clash of religions and a religious practice as far as the implementation of the policy is concerned” (Principal A).

Principal B is of the opinion that thorough revision on content and implementation of the policy on religion in schools is required to allow policies to promote relevant values.

“The policy on religion in our school does promote some values. However, it does not do enough. For example, it is compulsory for all learners to go to assembly, even though Christianity is the most dominant religion. This is a problem, because some learners and educators seem to be not Christian. Overall, our policy will need to be revised to make sure that it complies and particularly ensure that it promotes those values”.

5.4.2 Educators' views on policy implementation

From a legal point of view, educators think that their schools have policies drawn by the SGB, including the policy on religion, and that their SGBs are representative as all stakeholders are represented in the SGBs. Of importance is the fact that educators believe the drawn policies are not well implemented.

Adding to the above, educators are of the opinion that the implementation of religion policies in their schools is not as anticipated by NPRE.

“Through SGBs, policies are drawn at school and in the SGB there are all stakeholders. Drawn policies are not well implemented as there is a lack of diversity address by educators as in the policy on religion, e.g. one religion is much emphasised as most activities arranged in school are Christian religion-related” (Educator B; Q.6, Questionnaire).

In addition to the above, educators ascertain that:

“The implementation of the policy on religion reflects some kind of subtle indoctrination due to the fact that stakeholders are not fully aware of the policy, as they were not involved in its development. Present operational policies do not promote the core values of a democratic society as the policies do not cater for different religions but are centred on a particular religion” (Educator A;Q.6, Questionnaire).

To further elaborate on the lack of implementation of the policy on religion, educators feel the policy is not known to all stakeholders as there was no participation in its development, and therefore no proper implementation.

“Stakeholders are not fully aware of the policy; they were not involved in the development of the policy” (Educator A;Q.6, Questionnaire).

The major concern that impedes implementation of the policy on religion in schools, as raised by educators, is the matter concerning a Christian assembly that supersedes the prescripts of the law. This, they ascertain, is due to lack of knowledge of the law.

“Christian assembly over-rules, ignorance of policies prevails, e.g. in some instances the South African Schools Act is ignored, SGB involvement not fully done, educators are given policies, but do not utilise them accordingly (just file)” (educator B,Q.6; Questionnaire).

Educators believe that the implementation of the policy on religion in their school is not enhancing their right to freedom of religion belief and opinion.

“According to my observation the religion policy at our school is not advancing this right to the learners, but instead it is advancing a particular religion, namely, Christianity above others, due to the following reasons. Various stakeholders – learners, educators, and parents, are not afforded the opportunity to honour their individual religious observances, instead the focus is directed to one religion - hence I personally refer this as a subtle indoctrination by the school” (Educator A).

Educator B had this to say:

“The policy on religion has been drawn at school, which addresses diversity. The challenge is that the school is not adhering to the policy as much emphasis is on one religion, Christianity”.

Educators are of the opinion that they are unable to exercise their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, because of a lack of knowledge on the part of the school management. When asked whether as educators they are exercising this right they responded:

“No. Individual stakeholders are not exercising this right as it is supposed to be. According to any personal observation, the school management is either not understanding the right correctly, or they are practicing this deliberately to advance their own individual interests” (Educator A).

In as far as democratic values are concerned; educators believe there is enough evidence to believe there is much harm and damage done by schools instead of enhancing the values of equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability, and social honour.

“... the school’s religion policy is sabotaging and devaluing the democratic society due to the following reasons: The implementation of this policy does not show any

sign of equity among various stakeholders. Various religious traditions are not considered. A particular religion is upheld so as to advance its interests above others. The practice of religious observances guided by the religious policy in our school does not contribute anything towards advancement of interreligious tolerance, instead this kind of practice casts disrespect above all, belittling of any religion different from what is being upheld to” (Educator A).

Educator B indicated that:

“Schools do not make learners aware of other religions as observed and acknowledged by the nation/country. NB: Very little is done to address issues of religion as stipulated in the Constitution and school policies”.

Adding to the above, educators feel individual stakeholders are not afforded the opportunities to understand religion in totality, therefore, they are unable to make an informed choice regarding diversity. There are signs of misunderstanding and confusion in this concept of religion. This is clearly demonstrated by a lack of religious education in the school’s curriculum as a subject. As a result, there is none or little appreciation for religious diversity in the country and the entire world.

As mentioned earlier, educators think that justice is not done to exercise human rights, either due to ignorance or deliberately so.

“The aspect of openness is not promoted. What is being done in this institution is a sheer indoctrination of learners towards Christianity, According to my observation, the entire process of religious observance is directed to the advancement of a particular religion and participants are not aware of consequences of such practice” (Educator A).

Adding to the above:

“The challenges experienced are that little is played to show that all religions are equal, less tolerance of other beliefs (e.g. the way they treat experiencing ‘Badimo’ (African way of communicating to ancestors), as they believe these are the demons” (Educator B).

Educators state there will be no accountability unless proper, honest, and moral principles are cultivated. Furthermore, educators strongly believe that it will be of no use for schools to have policies that do not practice what they preach.

“Moral values and ethical commitments can only be cultivated through systems that are well understood and correctly implemented...where implementation occurs in good faith, moral values and ethical commitments can be inculcated. Once the society has lost moral values and ethical norms, the issue of accountability is just but a dream. Summarily, the policy that we have at our school appears to be accommodative to other beliefs, unfortunately, the actual implementation is aimed at promoting particular religion, therefore not advancing the cultivation of moral values at large” (Educator A).

5.4.3 Parents’ views on policy implementation

According to parents the policies on religion are not implemented as expected by the NPRE. As far as they are concerned, the environment does not permit the schools to do so.

Both had this to say:

“The policy is never implemented; it is just put in the main file.” (Parent B; Q.6, Questionnaire).

“These policies are rarely consulted and needed, because most of the time in school only Christianity is practiced” (Parents A and B; Q.6, Questionnaire).

Parents feel that the policy on religion is implementable and they are happy about the values of Christianity being enhanced.

“I think this policy on religion and education can’t be maintained, or even thought of being implemented, the best religion in my school is Christianity” (Parent A; Q.6, Questionnaire).

Parents are of the opinion that the policy on religion in schools is not well implemented, because of being ignored, developed for obedience and forgotten.

“It is ignored by stakeholders, only done for compliance purposes...the existence of policy on religion is a forgotten thing and not recognised” (Parent B;Q.6, Questionnaire).

Parents believe the policy on religion is far from advancing their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, as the value of religion has been ignored at school.

“The policy on religion at school is unknown to many stakeholders within the yard. Religion is never considered to be (an) important aspect of the school activities. It is considered to be additional to the central need of the school curriculum” (Parent Interviews).

When asked whether as a parent they are exercising this right and why they thought so, they responded by indicating that the school environment does not permit such, as educators only enhance their religion.

“As a parent there is little room to practice religious convictions, religion is considered to be a family issue and therefore not a school issue. Parents rarely are given a chance to articulate their religious beliefs, therefore leaving their children exposed to external convictions. Most parents also are ignorant of other existing religions and take it for granted that Christianity is the only religion existing in South Africa, this is exacerbated by teachers who push their religious conviction on learners. In this way parents are closed out and have a very little room to express themselves religiously” (Parent B).

Parents are of the view that the policy on religion in their schools does not enhance democratic values as expected. This is because on paper they address these values, but in practice, it is a different matter.

“No equity. Christian values held above other religions. There is no tolerance in our school as we only allow one religion to prevail over other religions” (Parent A).

With regard to the issue of on values, parent B indicated that:

“The policy on religion on paper (it) values all our people’s diverse cultural, religious and linguistic traditions. The practice on religion is highly influenced by the religious convictions of those in control and not what our constitutional obligations demands.”.

Furthermore, parents are of the view that teachers and principals are afraid to address religious issues different from what they believe in.

“Teachers and leaders have phobia of religious beliefs contrary to their own and they are the ones that play a major role in developing such a policy. There is an assumption that all learners are Christians. Religious tolerance is much a paper work than a practicality. Learners from minority religions are not considered in the religious practices at schools. Most of the schools invite religious leaders from their religious conviction to attract learners into their fold than allow learners to sustain their own religious beliefs. So more time is spent on castigating other religions than allowing and encouraging religious tolerance” (Parent B).

It is important to note the concern raised by parents that knowing and encouraging religious issues is considered as unimportant at schools. Schools never address issues of religion with learners and they can openly practice them. Instead, schools allow educators to manipulate the situation.

“Our school does promote multi-religious knowledge because the school only invites one group of a particular religion to preach to learners. There are no other religious leaders from different religious groups other than Christianity. Learners are coming to assembly without being told that they have the right not to if the assembly is turned into religious observances of a particular religion. So they are indirectly being forced to attend religious observances that they do not subscribe to. There is an indirect indoctrination of learners on Christian values” (Parent A).

When relating to the above parent B informed that:

“Multi-religious knowledge promotion is never considered as religion is treated as a peripheral issue theoretically left with parents at home. Schools rarely teach religious diversity and appreciation of such. The responsible educator or committee on religion tend to push their convictions than preach diversity. Openness - the practice is skewed, more of religious conviction is done, than allowing other religions to openly practice their beliefs. Religion is considered as a resource for learning at home and not at school. There is no religious link between home and the school. Immediately when a child leaves to school, he/she is then on his or her own. This

then allows covert or overt to indoctrinate learners, therefore leading to denigration of other religions or beliefs”.

5.4.4 Learners’ views on policy implementation

According to learners, the implementation of the policy on religion is not implemented as it should be. An emphasis is on the promotion of a particular religion at the expense of other religious values. This does not sit well with other learners.

When they were requested to give their opinion on how they thought the policy was being implemented, they indicated that:

“The policy of the school is not well implemented...the school needs to make suitable decisions that will create peace” (Learner A;Q.7, Questionnaire).

On this matter, learner B indicated that:

“It is implemented, but not for all the learners in our school...because there is only one religion that is being followed in school...but it seems as if some of the learners in our school feel a bit somehow because their religions are not recognised and not respected” (Learner B;Q.7, Questionnaire).

Both learners are of the same opinion that learners do not know about the policy on religion as they were never told about the policy, or told what is expected of them in term of the implementation thereof.

“In our school the policy on religion and education is not known by other learners, because the school didn’t even bother to let us know what it is that we are supposed to do (Learner B;Q.7, Questionnaire).

Schools do not involve learners in the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education and this, according to learners, is not fair.

“They just did it and showed it to a few of the learners and then it ended there; which is unfair” (Learner B;Q.7, Questionnaire).

“When the school is making the policy all people must be involved...working together we can do more” (Learner A; Q.7, Questionnaire).

Of importance to learners is the fact that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa must guide the school in the development of the policy on religion and no one person must be allowed to draw the policy for the entire community. Moreover, learners are worried that care should be taken about assembly as it affects other religions.

“What is significant on the policy on religion is to apply the constitutional laws...the situation in assembly affects other peoples’ religions...so what’s best for the school is to ignore every person, every decision that is made by one person on behalf of the school” (Learner A;Q.7, Questionnaire).

It is a concern to learners that the SGBs fail to use the policy on religion to remedy ill-discipline in schools. The reason is that other members of the SGB know the policy on religion, but they cannot apply it to discipline learners at school because there are learners who behave badly.

“The members of the SGB planned the school policy, but there is no progress. Sometimes the school is facing problems where you find the learners of the school misbehaving...the learners of the school are out of control (uncontrollable) because the members of the GBS do not know how handle the situation” (Learner B;Q.7, Questionnaire).

In this particular response a suggestion is made that there is a strong belief in the application of religious values to instil discipline in learners. On this matter, Jones (2011:3) argues that previously, the school was an open mission field to evangelise and discipline children, but currently spiritual guidance must be done in a religious-unfriendly secular environment.

Whereas learner B has a strong view about the failure of the policy on religion in schools, as there is enough evidence that there are other religions that are not being recognised, learner A believes through teaching information on religions is provided and he is satisfied because his values are catered for. When learners were asked how the policy on religion in their schools was assisting in advancing their right to freedom of religion belief and opinion their response was:

“Eighty percent of learners in our school are not enjoying their right to religion, so the school’s policy discriminated other people’s religion” (learner B).

“By promoting other different religions by providing information to learners through the process of teaching. Also, by holding a prayer session now and then” (Learner A).

When asked whether as learners they were exercising this right and why they thought so, they said:

“Yes, because the religion that I believe in is regarded as the best religion that people can believe in” (Learner B).

Learner A simply answered:

“Yes, because we do attend prayer sessions.”

It has become clear from their responses that learners believe the policy on religion in their schools do not promote core values of a democratic society, which include equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability, and social honour. When asked to what extent they thought the policy on religion in their schools was promoting these values, they responded by saying:

“The policy of our school doesn’t promote equity, because there is only one religion that they are interested in and expect all the learners to follow it. So it means the constitution/policy of the school is oppressive. Again, there is no tolerance in our school. The school’s policy must be tolerant of other people’s believe” (Learner B).

5.5 CHALLENGES IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section addresses challenges experienced by participants in the implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

5.5.1 Principals on challenges in policy implementation

Principals acknowledge that they have experienced conflict during the development of the policy on religion in their schools, as members of the SGB disagreed on issues pertaining to religion. The use of assembly, which is automatically turned into Christian religious observances, posed a serious challenge as there were those learners and educators who refused to attend assembly for this reason. Some of the

confrontations included issues where there were conflicts of religious interests between learners with different religious convictions to those of their parents.

“What I know there are some learners who do not feel comfortable to come to assembly...sometimes we find learners who are not prepared to come to assembly. But we always pursue them as to why and they will always give reasons. But if a learner does not always go to assembly then we obviously know that maybe it’s because of religious reasons.” (Principal B).

Principals acknowledge the fact that they found some of the religious practices upsetting, as they conflicted with the school dress code.

“There are some certain religions of which we find very disturbing as far as the school community is concerned. For instance the Rasta religion, because learners would want to come wearing some big hair, weaved hair and as far as the code of dress and the uniform policy is concerned, our uniform policy does not allow for learners to have big hair and big weaved hair” (Principal A).

Of major concern to principals is the question of lack of monitoring of policies and lack of feedback from the department.

“Policies are not being moderated by powers that be, so we draft the policies, they just demand the policies, send a circular saying bring all the policies you are having at school. You can send about 50 to 20 policies, but we are not going to get a single feedback on a single policy...judge for yourself if whether maybe this policies on religion in various schools are they moderated and approved policies or not...” (Principal A).

What is more worrying to principals is the problem of illiteracy among the parent component in the SGBs.

“The problem with our SGBs is that most of them are not educated. So even if you take them to a bosberaad to discuss policies, you must always be with them and look at what they are doing and maybe ask them what they are doing regarding religion. Find out about their views because most of them are not educated. So you will only find one or two of them who will be able to interpret what has been written. But with religion they will only think of Christianity as the religion that must be taught

to learners. They will tell that we need to read the Bible to them, because if we do not do that these learners will end up being thugs, ...” (Principal B).

On the matter concerning a lack of knowledge of parents to interpret policy, principal A indicated that:

“Taking into cognisance that usually the SGB members are not learned people, they did not go far as education is concerned, I do not know why because it is equal in almost all the schools. Educated members of the community are not very much interested in being members of the SGB...most of the parents don’t know much about religion and how it can bring cohesion of learners from diverse races or maybe diverse tribes of different languages and so on...”.

Principals are concerned about the continued violation of the constitutional rights of learners and educators in schools. This is informed by the fact there is a continued practice of one religion in schools, like reading from the Bible at assembly.

“For example in our school, let me start with the government policy we are not allowed to force the learners to come and listen to Biblical aspects, maybe things that concern the Bible. So as the result many of our teachers do not even read the Bible at the assembly. But there are those teachers who are still reading the Bible and we still have the SCM where learners discuss about things that are from the Bible, they read the Bible and discuss issues from the Bible” (Educator B).

5.5.2 Educators and challenges in policy implementation

According to educators, the use of assembly is a burning issue that requires careful consideration on the part of the SGBs. Of concern is of course the inability of the SGBs to healthily deal with the dominant character of the Christian religious ethos over other religions in schools.

In response to the question, “As a component of the SGB, has the SGB ever experienced challenges where issues of religion were contentious?” educator A had this to say:

“Yes, in most cases the issue of assembly gave us a problem. Some educators were saying they could not be forced to go to assembly and some saying it was the culture of the school that everyone must attend assembly”.

On the above issue, educator B had this to say:

“To be honest, the problem was that of Christianity, hence we have issues of the Student Christian Movement and whatever that has been happening in our school is Christian...The policy on religion has been drawn at school which addresses diversity. The challenge is that the school is not adhering to the policy as much emphasis is on one religion, Christianity”.

Educators believe it is a challenge to engage other stakeholders on matters related to religion, as people are afraid to express their religious views for fear of victimisation. Educators argue that this is even made worse by the fact that issues of religion are never discussed at parents’ meetings. This in essence defeats what Habermas argues for, that in a democratic institution like a school, actors, in this case stakeholders within the SGBs, should be ready to appreciate the need for difficult trade-offs. Accepting and tolerating other religions might indeed be a difficult exercise that all within the school community must be able to accept.

“In most cases, if you speak the language of religion people are afraid to express their views. Some are regarding themselves as religious people, but they are failing now, they do not practice what they preach...even if we have parents’ meeting there is no item on the agenda which concerns religion” (Educator A).

In addition to the above, educators are concerned that not much is done to address issues of religion as stipulated in the Constitution and school policies. This is made evident when others within the school community look down on other religions. Educators are resolute that the school is aware of religions other than Christianity, *but are unable to create an environment for them to exist as Christianity does.*

“Religious belief does build learners to a particular adulthood (to be accountable in future). Issues of equality and tolerance are important (e.g. the way they treat experiencing ‘Badimo’ (African way of communicating to ancestors), as they believe these are the demons” (Educator B).

Educators acknowledge the strong emergence of African religion in their school community, which is not being considered by schools.

“But we have observed that African religion does exist in our community, even though the Christian one is the dominating religion in the community” (Educator B)

“Our SGB is still learning. They only know the main dominant religion, which is Christianity, but there is also African religion” (Educator A).

From the submissions made by educators it was clear that educators experienced challenges during the development of the policy on religion, namely, the majority were of a particular religion (Christianity) and those who brought up opposing views were overruled. In this school educators even voted for a particular religion to be practiced in school. The results were that all those who did not subscribe to Christianity as the minority were overruled and they claim it was a democratic process (educator A).

The above shows a lack of knowledge of the constitutional imperatives on the part of all at school on what is meant by all religions in democratic institutions like schools needing to be treated on an equitable basis.

5.5.3 Parents and challenges on policy implementation

Although parents believe they never had any major challenges in the development and implementation of the policy on religion, what emerged from the data tells a different story. Parent A indicated that they never experienced any extreme challenges, but they had a problem with an educator:

“When one learner was in a trance and a traditional ritual was performed according to the learner’s culture, one educator overruled all that with the notion that the learner had an evil spirit” (Parent A).

This suggests that there was intolerance towards other beliefs and it should be regarded as serious, as this constituted a violation of someone else’s constitutional rights.

Parent B is of the assumption that the children attended school in North West; therefore they could not be influenced by religions such as Rastafarian and Muslim from provinces like Gauteng. She is content with Christian practices at school as she is a Christian. The mere fact that the school does not accommodate other religions simply because parents in the SGBs are satisfied with the practices of their religion shows lack of understanding of what is expected of them with regard to the policy on religion.

Parents argue that the use of curriculum to enhance religious understanding is not fully utilised by schools, because educators are not empowered enough to be able to deal with such religious challenges.

“...matters of religion are not discussed and they can be discussed in LO and this is not discussed vigorously, because LO educators do not have extreme information when it comes to issues of religion, so they will propagate their own religion as the most important, thereby putting learners under their spell” (Parent B).

Whereas parent A was concerned about the use of assembly in that those who hold assemblies tend to believe that their religions are the best, the concern is about those vulnerable learners who do not have any power or choice and are forced to adhere to religious practices, because of the tendencies which are being practiced in assemblies (parent A).

Parents acknowledge the fact that there are certain religions within the school community that are being given preference over others. This is confirmed by parent B:

“They as parents they only know of Christianity and they are happy about the school adopting a Christian character, and this is because they subscribe to Christianity”.

Of concern to parents is the fact that educators play an important role in the indoctrination of learners on a particular religion. This is evidenced by parent A:

‘One learner came to school wearing the African beads and educators said that was evil spirit...and by so doing they are trying to convince other learners that this

religion that this young girl was in is evil, which is unconstitutional and unfair to the child's belief'.

5.5.4 Learners and challenges on policy implementation

Whereas one learner had no knowledge of any religious problems or challenges that that they were notified about in the SGB or in school, there was a concern raised by learner A that other learners thought they were better as they practiced their Christian religion during breaks. When learners were asked whether as part of the SGB or as learners they have ever experienced any challenge or problem regarding issues of religion in their schools, learner A responded by saying:

"Yes. Like I said they do not attend even the church during the breaks and some of them are criticising saying we think we are better. So it hurts because I am a Christian".

5.6 PARTICIPANTS' PROPOSITIONS ON IMPROVING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section addresses strategies proposed by participants to improve the implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

5.6.1 Principals and improvement of policy implementation

According to principals, the implementation of the policy on religion can be improved if SGBs can be empowered for the sake of consistent compliance and elimination of labelling of people according to their religions.

"Policy is for the uniform compliance and religion touches diverse cultures. It is for this reason that principals must draw a line between cultures and strive for the common good for the sake of uniformity...SGB members must be thoroughly inducted by the school and the EMDG unit on policy development. ...all stakeholders must be warned against all sorts of stereotypes" (Principal A).

In addition, principals are of the opinion that support and guidance on policy development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy and

involvement of stakeholders in policy development and implementation is of paramount importance, as it will ensure that not only one religion is catered for, but all religions within the school community are treated on an equitable basis.

Principals strongly believe that learners need to be taught about issues pertaining to religion, as they are important for learners' spiritual being.

“There is this spiritual part of the learner, especially if religion is practiced in the correct way, if there are activities whereby learners participate. So I think it can help towards making our education to be in such a way that it will be a good leader in future” (Principal B).

Principals believe that engaging parents on learner ill-discipline through the use of religious values helps schools in addressing disciplinary matters in schools. Of concern to principals is the fact that ill-discipline on the part of the learners is as a result of not being brought up well from their homes. “...when learners do steal, swear and lie” (Principal A).

Principals are of the opinion that the issue of compulsory assembly should be avoided, as stakeholders subscribe to different religions.

“Compulsory assembly is causing problems because some learners and educators seem to not be Christians, the overall policy need to be revised to make sure that it complies and ensures that it promotes those democratic values” (Principal B).

5.6.2 Educators and improvement of policy implementation

From the educators' perspective, there are practices that schools either have to improve on or refrain from engaging in. This is because educators are of the opinion that as an educational institution, the school must embark on an awareness campaign of the different religions, and provide the latitude to practice them as an individual right. For educators, time must be made for all stakeholders to be given the chance to practice their religious activities and that educating SGBs is of the utmost importance (educator B).

Most importantly, the role that the curriculum can play in education on matters pertaining to religion in schools is what educators wish to see taking place. Educators are also of the view that an improvement on the implementation of the policy on religion can take place through workshops and involvement of stakeholders.

“...every stakeholder should be made aware of the institution’s status on religion prior to further processing of application forms for admission, notional time for religious observances should be taken into consideration...it is also the responsibility of the curriculum department of the individual school to slot in religions education to be one of the school subjects...” (Educator A).

5.6.3 Parents and improvement of policy implementation

Sharing information among themselves as stakeholders within the SGB, with educators and principals assisting parents and following up on policy implementation, is what parents believe the schools should strive for.

“Discuss it together, guide and make follow-ups as required” (Parent B).

Parents have a strong belief that enhancing values such as tolerance and respect would assist both the schools and homes to address challenges brought about by issues pertaining religion. Parents propose that the department must engage in advocacy programmes on issues such as religion policy, to make sure everybody was on board.

This is in agreement with what Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002:1) indicated - that in order to accomplish successful policy development and implementation, *“public and community awareness of how people who are directly affected by policy can contribute to policy development or change is necessary”*.

“If there can be religious tolerance and respect, there can be some form of a feeling of equality and peace at all levels,..” (Parent A).

Moreover, parents are of the view that respect for the Constitution needs to be encouraged as they are concerned about the use of assembly for religious purposes, which are made compulsory. Of relevance to parents is the fact that communication between parents and educators on religious issues is of importance so that educators can be knowledgeable about the religious backgrounds of the learners they teach. Moreover, schools should provide for religious days where different religious organisations and stakeholders can be given the opportunity to freely practice their religions (Parent B).

5.6.4 Learners and improvement of policy implementation

Learners are of the opinion that encouraging schools to respect other people's religions and treating all religions on an equitable basis to avoid conflict, (Learner B) and involving all stakeholders in policy development and implementation would definitely improve practice (Learner A).

“The school must respect other people's religions, practice equity in all religions, because if the school's policy can continue to violate the rights of other people this can lead to conflict...” (Learner B).

The above suggests that learners are aware that issues of religion have the potential to cause conflict if not well handled, and treating all religions equally by involving everyone in decisions relating to religion would be the solution.

5.7 OBSERVATIONAL DATA

This section presents observational data that consists of two sets of data. The first is the information regarding religious activities taking place at school, including during breaks. This was done over a two-week period allowing for five days in each school. The second set of information is derived from observing SGB meetings.

Observations dates for school A included 19/08/2011, 22/08/2011, 26/08/2011, 29/08/2011 and 02/09/2011, while for school B, dates observed were 15/08/2011, 23/08/2011, 27/08/2011, 05/09/2011 and 09/09/2011. Religious activities during

assembly and during breaks in both schools corroborated with information from interviews, as they were characterised by the singing of hymns and choruses, and reading and preaching from the Bible, all of which are predominantly Christian. Educators have different days on which to hold assembly. It is during this time that the principal and the educators would use the opportunity to make announcements and emphasise disciplinary measures in relation to what was preached about. In this case, the use of Christian values to instil discipline was evident, which corroborates what principals alluded to in the interviews - that Christian values were used for discipline purposes.

Invitations were also extended to priests and pastors from different Christian religious groups to come and give sermons. They also read from the Bible and there were singing of hymns, which are Christian in character. Learners were also given a chance to preach and give motivational talks to their fellow learners. Most of these talks were also of a Christian nature. It was in school B where educators who were not interested in assembly were requested to help with discipline. This particular observation suggested that educators were indirectly being requested to attend an assembly that is turned into a religious observance that they did not subscribe to, all in the name of maintaining discipline.

I observed three SGB meetings in each school. Each meeting began with a prayer, where reference was also made to the Bible. Learners were excluded from a meeting in school B, because the recommendation for the appointment of the principal was going to be discussed. In school A, the SGB excluded learners because important issues such as finances and educator discipline were to be discussed. From the discussions that ensued in the presence of learners it was clear that learners were just present as they rarely said much on issues discussed.

From the observational data, it was evident that in one school, one religion, namely Christianity, was allowed to dominate or suppress others, even though both schools were embedded within religiously diverse communities. Adding to the above, it became apparent that educators and learners were not given options when it was time for assembly, which was automatically turned into Christian devotions. Thus, it can be concluded that this in itself was contrary to what the NPPE and the schools'

policies are preaching - that all religions will be treated on an equitable basis and attendance of such gatherings must be free and voluntary.

Also, as revealed from the observations, there is minimal involvement and participation by learners in SGB meetings. This supports what Mabovula (2010:298) indicated, that learner participation in school governance is far from ideal. She further pointed out that learners are invited to act as monuments to decorate the structure of governance, so that anyone who is a spectator would be able to say that the democratic principles, as advocated by the South African Schools Act and the South African Constitution, are adhered to by schools. Learners are expected to appreciate the fact that they have been promoted as members who sit alongside educators and parents, as this means that their status has been elevated, their ego has been boosted, and they should be thankful for this. This means that they are being used or coerced to endorse or rubber-stamp all kinds of decisions or policies that other stakeholders intend to implement (Mabovula (2010:299).

5.8 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The objective behind analysing documents was to find out if there was evidence on how SGBs intended to deal with religion issues and relate the information to religious activities taking place at school. The participating schools were able to provide me with copies of their schools' policies on religion, SGBs' constitutions and SGBs' code of conduct.

The schools' policies on religion provided more guidelines on how schools intended to deal with matters of religion. Evidence from the policies confirms what emerged from the interviews. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the South African Schools Act and the National Policy on Religion and Education were the documents consulted in the drafting of the policies.

In the preamble, school A mentions that:

“The Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, belief and opinion”.

With regard to the above, school B states that:

“The Constitution of SA recognises the diversity of religions. It protects people from discrimination or prejudice on the basis of their religion”.

It is very clear from the contents of the policies that the schools as democratic educational institutions must promote the core values of the democratic society. This is evidenced by the fact that these values are clearly spelt out in the policies, as mentioned by school A:

“The policy draws on the core values of a democratic society, and the practice in our school is tested against the following national priorities: tolerance, diversity, openness, accountability and social honour”.

Mention is also made of the South African Schools Act by school A, who indicates that *“SASA upholds the constitutional rights of all citizens to freedom of conscience, thought, belief, opinion and freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including religion in public education institutions”*. As above, school B mentions that SASA allows the SGB to determine the nature and content of religious observances in their schools and attendance of observances for both learners and educators is free and voluntary.

Furthermore, it has emerged from the policies that schools were aware that they were embedded in communities subscribing to different religions and that no one religion will be allowed to dominate or suppress others. This is evidenced by school B, which asserts that Christianity, Muslim, and African traditional religions are found in their school community. School A emphasises that as a democratic educational institution in a religiously diverse community, they need to uphold the rights of everyone to have his/her religion respected. This also supports evidence from the interviews where participants acknowledged the presence of different religions within their communities.

Both schools, as mentioned in their schools’ policies on religion, clearly spell out what types of religious observances are to take place in their schools and how these observances should be conducted. It is important to note that on this particular matter, it was evident that the National Policy on Religion and Education was consulted, as there was agreement between what the NPRES dictates and what the

schools' policies envisaged with regard to how religious observances should be conducted in their schools.

On religious observances school A's policy states the types of religious observances as:

“Voluntary public occasions using facilities for religious observances, when the school community gathers for religious observances, voluntary observances where pupils and educators gather during school breaks and that these observances might entail other dimensions such as dress, prayer times and diets, that must be respected and accommodated in a manner agreed upon by the school”.

School B's policy informs that religious observances are to be conducted in the following manner:

“A particular group of religion may meet privately with the permission of the SGB to conduct their practices/services, learners are allowed to observe their religious holiday (religious calendar), attendance to sermons/services will be free and voluntary, learners who choose not to attend will be supervised by class managers for study”.

In addition to the above, school B mentions how the school, through the policy, will promote tolerance. The policy states that the school intends promoting tolerance and understanding between learners of different religious groups in the following manner (including both circular and extracurricular):

“Educators will handle the learning content with great care so that no religion is prejudiced, both curricular and extracurricular will be conveyed in such a manner that it does not temper with the religious values of learners, our teaching will at all costs embody tolerance and respect for all cultures, learners will not be compelled to partake in school activities that are contrary to their religious values”.

It was noticeable from the code of conduct that members of the SGB were not allowed to use their positions for their own selfish ends (school A). Furthermore, members of the SGB were to uphold the rights of all stakeholders including learners, uphold the democratic values and combat all forms of unfair discrimination (school B). School B was very clear in its SGB constitution that its objective was to allow

religious practices to be done in a fair way and to allow attendance on a voluntary basis in relation to section 7 of SASA, the information which was in total agreement with the schools' policies on religion.

The conclusion drawn is that evidence from documents contradicted this information. Observations and interviews revealed enough evidence to conclude that only one religion was promoted at the expense of others, thereby unfairly discriminating against other religions. This also suggested that the practice was different from the prescripts of the policies, in that not all stakeholders' right to freedom of religion was upheld and as it has emerged, learners and educators in both schools had no choice but to attend assemblies turned into Christian religious observances, even though they subscribed to different religions.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with data analyses. The chapter revolved around the presentation and discussion of the data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis. The idea was to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion in schools with the intention to establish the outcomes of the policy. The initial understanding was that the policy must promote the school community's right to freedom of religion and conscience as constitutional and democratic value and facilitate the celebration of religious diversity as a resource for national unity. The findings strongly reveal that much still needs to be done to improve practice in the development and implementation of the policy on religion, such that greater care is taken to ensure that policies on religion in schools promote core values of a democratic society as anticipated by the NPRES.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, presents discussions of the findings which are informed by the identified themes and categories as mentioned in Chapter 4 and arguments from literature review. This was in an attempt to pursue answers to the research questions as presented in Chapter 1, which seek to explore, among others, the school governing bodies' understandings of the constitutional values underpinning the policy on religion, values and diversity principles underpinning the policy on religion drafted by school governing bodies, what contributes or hinders the

promotion of the constitutional values in the way school governing bodies are implementing the policy on religion and education, and how the application of increased democratic participation impact on the implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

CHAPTER SIX:

DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of this study. The aim of the study was to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools and examine the extent to which the implementation of the policy in rural high schools advances democratic values. In presenting the findings, the study sought to answer the following key questions:

- What are school governing bodies' understandings of the constitutional values underpinning the policy on religion? (NPRE)
- What values and diversity principles underpin the policy on religion drafted by school governing bodies?
- What contributes or hinders the promotion of the constitutional values in the way school governing bodies are implementing the policy on religion and education?
- What democratic principles influenced the implementation of the policy on religion in schools?

This study aimed at qualitatively examining and analysing how school governing bodies in two rural high schools of the North West Province engaged in the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education. The selection of participants was based on two criteria: their willingness to participate, and that they are serving members in the current school governing bodies.

The research used extensive interviews, document analysis and observations as a descriptive inquiry to elicit SGBs understandings, views and experiences of the issue of religious values and diversity through the implementation of the policy on religion and education in their schools. Additional information through interviews had to be collected to ascertain SGBs' understanding of human rights in relation to their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion as a constitutional value. To strengthen the quality of the study the questionnaires which were completed by participants were

included. This allowed participants to provide additional information that they could not during the interviews, freely at their own comfort without feeling intimidated by the presence of the researcher. This is an interpretive case study research design.

6.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The discussion of the findings infuses aspects of the research questions above, together with the principles of Habermas's "Communicative Action and Consensus through deliberation and reasoning" as basis for my presentation.

The study argues, through communicative action and consensus through deliberation and reasoning, firstly, that through training and development initiatives SGBs would be afforded the opportunity to get a better understanding of their religious rights and values, which are of course, accompanied by duties and responsibilities. In the same breath, the study is of the assumption that through proper consultative processes, the schools, through the SGBs, would have a better understanding of the different religions within which their schools are embedded. Furthermore, the consultative process would allow stakeholders to recognise each other as legitimate participants, having equal rights. Added to the above, the content and nature of the policies on religions in schools should depict core values of a democratic society by clearly outlining religious values to be enhanced, which will be informed by religions within the school community.

Moreover, it should be evident, through religious activities taking place at school, that there is a clear intention by the school to provide a platform for all religions within the school community to exist and enjoy equal rights and freedoms. These would be evidenced by, among others, religions treated on an equitable basis, no direct or indirect coercion, no religion given preference over others and the provision of a conducive environment for decision-making processes regarding religious issues at schools.

To sum up the above, there must be mechanisms in place to ensure schools have policies on religion, that the contents of the policies are in line with the relevant

legislation, and most importantly, that they achieve what they are intended for, i.e. enhancing the school community's right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion.

6.3 REVIEW OF THE INFERENCES AND THEORY CORRELATIONS TO SCHOOL A

6.3.1 Democratic participation

There was evidence that school A was taking the issue of democratic participation into consideration. This was evidenced by the fact that every stakeholder was represented in the SGB. In as far as the policy on religion is concerned, parents feel they were part of the development and implementation of the policy on religion as they were taken on board from the beginning: "We just call the parents and tell them, and explain what the policy is all about, what it means and then they give us advice".

The principal also agreed that he went through the drafts with the SMT and SGB representatives and allowed it to be approved by parents after corrections. "I made a draft and then took the draft to the SMT. After having taken that particular draft to the SMT, it had to go and land in the hands of the SGB as representatives of the parents. Then we presented it to the parents with some SGB improvements here and there of course, and then the policy was ultimately approved".

It should be noted though, that the process of democratic participation was compromised by the fact that in the process of engaging parents and educators, the issue of learner participation was not considered. Learners were not even sure whether there was a policy on religion or not. Learners were forthright about the fact that they never attended an SGB meeting where issues pertaining to religion were discussed. This is what Habermas argues against. Through communicative action all stakeholders within the SGBs need to have the same opportunity to the whole religious discourse and stakeholders must reason and communicate on an equal basis. In this case learners did not have the opportunity to argue for their religious values to be enshrined in the policy on religion, thereby, they were denied access to religious discourse and deliberations.

The educator in school A agrees with what the principal and parent indicated, that they went through the drafts so as to be allowed to make inputs. What emerged though is that stakeholders did not recognise each other as equals and that the perspectives and interests of others need to be considered. This was evidenced by voting for a particular religious character and allowing the majority to rule on religious issues. “The majority are following a particular religion so in the discussion even if you can come up with something very much good for religious development of the learners, at the end of the day you are being overruled because majority rules. After the voting all the educators had to attend assembly”.

Parents also agree to the above, “...we sat down and drafted the policy first. After drafting we gave the draft to teachers to read and SMT, then vote, if they agree with it I recommend as an SGB parent and chairperson”.

The involvement of people from the community in school A, as acknowledged by the principal, educator and learner, to talk about religious issues, signalled the intention of the school to be inclusive. Having said that, this type of interaction was limited by the fact that people invited to school were of a particular religion and other religions were not afforded the same opportunity to do so. The conclusion drawn in this case was that the different religions in school A were not afforded the same platform to exist and this compromised the basic right to religious equality.

6.3.2 Decision-making

Decisions regarding values to be pursued through the school policy on religion, should be preceded by the creation of a favourable environment where all stakeholders can be afforded the opportunity to pursue their individual, religious plans through the agreed plan of action. Evidence such as an assembly turned into Christian religious observance, failure to identify values underpinning the policy on religion in schools, and voting for a particular religion above others, indicated the inability of school A to provide proper decision-making processes for the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education.

The failure on the part of school A to provide such a platform for decision-making, defeats the notion of deliberative democracy as advocated by Habermas, which argues that the provision of deliberative democracy increases chances for stakeholders to discuss key religious issues and reach agreement on a basis of such a discussion. This, as argued from a Habermasian notion of communicative action, would allow for stakeholders to reach consensual decisions, so that, at the end of the discussions, all involved are persuaded by the decisions reached and accept them as realistic.

Elected SGB members represent a link between the school and the community. They must be enabled to express themselves and take part fully in the decision-making processes that have to do with all educational matters in a school, including religion. I argue that for stakeholders to successfully engage in such an important school activity, a conducive environment must be created. This includes a platform for deliberations and argument for the purposes of reaching a consensus, as argued by Habermas.

6.3.3 Educational empowerment

The study agrees with the notion that the provision of education is both a moral and practical imperative in a democratic society. Furthermore, the provision of education to empower SGBs is entailed both by the value system, which the concept of democracy encapsulates, and by the practical demands of preparing stakeholders for appropriate forms of participation in governance.

In as far as the policy on religion and education in schools is concerned, the principal in school A feels they were not empowered enough to be able to deal with issues of the policy pertaining to religion, but were expected to submit such policies. *“I must be honest; we were never taken to any training... they just instructed us to make a policy on religion. They just push documents and say draft the policy”.*

The educator feels that the workshop they received was on the general functions of the SGBs that also included policy formulation “They used to call us, and training was based on what our role as SGBs in policy formulation is, what our role in the

school development is, what our role is in making sure our kids they get the best education, what our role is in finances”. This is also agreed upon by the learner who indicated that “workshop attended taught us on how we should rule as SGB and how the meetings should go”.

Parent A was content with the training she received, as it helped them to know their rights as governors, as well as not allowing principals to take decisions without their knowledge. Parents feel principals are there because of their children. “The training was too good coming from them. I value it so much because they showed us that we have got power to work in the school and that we must show the principal we are in governance of the school because without parents no students will come here and then without the children the principal will be without any student”..

It should be noted though that even when parents believe they were trained in as far as their duties were concerned, there was little evidence suggesting empowerment with regard to the development and implementation of the policy on religion as indicated by other stakeholders.

Through educational empowerment SGBs were supposed to be informed of their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, and what their duties and responsibilities were in advancing this right through the policy on religion and education in their schools. Lack of such primary knowledge, which resulted in the SGBs failing to clearly articulate the values that inform the nature and content of the schools’ policies on religion in their schools as contemplated by the NPPE, compromised the intentions of the constitutional imperatives for the right to basic human rights.

This lack of educational empowerment on matters concerning religion on the part of school A constitutes the major argument that it makes no sense to place responsibility for governance in the hands of SGBs without making adequate provision for every SGB stakeholder to be educated to participate in governance matters, such as the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools. Failure to provide the above important educational aspects completely defeats the notion of communicative action where empowered SGB stakeholders would be able to convey information by expressing their own religious opinions and

feelings, which, in turn, will assist stakeholders to cooperatively define the context of their religious interaction.

The above concurred with the earlier argument by Adams and Waghid, (2003: 18) who stated that “participants in school governing bodies need to be educated and empowered regarding the principles of democracy”. In their case study, they show that school governors are not sufficiently trained to deal with the obligations of democratic school governance. As a result, they argue that school governors from among the parent sector require a special education programme whereby they could be skilled to become realistic agents of democratic school governance.

6.3.4 Freedom of expression and the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion

According to section 15 of the South African Schools Act everyone has the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion. In public school this would include, among others, freedom from religious coercion and discrimination and that everyone may be excluded from some of the school activities if they conflicted with their religious beliefs.

It was apparent in school A that stakeholders could not, without a doubt, identify values underpinning their school policies on religion, even though the policy was outright on values it intended to pursue. This indicated that the policy was just drawn up for compliance purposes, the content of which was never intended to be implemented.

In school A there was no total freedom of speech since the freedom was enjoyed by the Christian majority. The above is proven by the fact that stakeholders had to vote and through voting allowed the majority of Christians to overrule suggestions from the minority religions, like African religion. Through this exercise, (adopting a Christian character), the minority’s right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion was compromised. The results of the above were evidenced by Christian religious activities such as preaching and reading from the Bible, and using time for assembly where educators and learners not subscribing to Christianity were indirectly forced to attend.

These, according to the Habermasian notion of communicative action, went against the principles of democratic participation where relationships of power, force and coercion were assumed absent. In this instance the school used the voting power to suppress minority religions and, indirectly, through assembly turned into religious observances, forced them to attend religious observances that were not their choice.

6.4 REVIEW OF THE INFERENCES AND THEORY CORRELATIONS TO SCHOOL B

6.4.1 Democratic participation

As in school A, in school B there was also evidence that issues of democratic participation are taken into consideration. This is proven by the fact that every stakeholder is represented in the SGB. Moreover, parents, principals and educators feel they were involved in the development and implementation of the policy on religion as they were taken on board from the beginning. The principal indicated that “I was involved in the development. With us somebody will take that role and make a draft and bring it to parents for discussion, then after that we take it to the parent and once satisfied we take to the learners until everybody is satisfied with the policy”.

Educators and parents indicated that, “what we do we take all the stakeholders to be part of the process...we met in a neutral place, arranged by the school, and then we break into commissions, in every commission each stakeholder is represented, whereby all stakeholders will be represented in every commission, they would discuss and give feedback. So that is how I was part of the process”.

It is important to note that unlike school A, in school B learners were involved because they were also invited to the neutral venue for the discussion of policies. In this instance it can be concluded that stakeholders’ religious values were recognised as important. Having indicated the above, the participation of stakeholders was compromised by the fact that too little time was allowed and some policies were not discussed, as indicated by the principal, “For me it was not enough because we did not even manage to discuss all the policies, only other policies were discussed. But this one of religion I still remember that it was discussed”

Like in school A, school B allowed members of the community to motivate, preach and read from the Bible. Learners were also involved in religious activities happening in assembly. This included poems and motivational talks, which indicated the intention of the school to be as inclusive as they could. What negated the above democratic intentions was the fact that all these activities were of Christian character. This, as indicated in school A, allows for a conclusion to be made that the different religions in the school were not afforded the same platform to exist and this compromised the basic right to religious equity.

Supporting the above argument is Dukeshire and Thurlow, (2002: 1), who argue that good policy is carried out by and with the people, not on or to people. The implication is that for the policy on religion in schools to be effective, it can only be realised when stakeholders are involved in the process through consultation. In as far as the study is concerned, not enough consultation was made during the development of the policy on religion, as alluded to by principal B, many parents are always away on work commitments and many learners are left alone at home. The above submission highlights, on a serious note, challenges faced by principals in making sure the necessary processes are followed in the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

6.4.2 Decision-making

This section is informed by the fact that schools should strive to continuously create an environment, which will afford stakeholders with the opportunity to engage on religious issues. This would enable stakeholders within the SGBs to communicate, share and generate a sense of common ownership and action on matters of religion.

It was apparent that in school B decisions regarding religious issues were not taken into consideration to ensure inclusivity, but they were taken by individuals who had access to manipulate the environment of the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools. Principals, for example, would make drafts because parents do not have the know-how. “SGB members are not learned people, they did not go far as education is concerned, but now if you can happen to allow learners to be free in choosing activities of different religions of which they come from in the

school, there is going to be confusion and then conflict. So we are trying to direct religious activities”.

The inference here is that principals and educators would direct religious activities in the direction that will make them comfortable by exploiting the inability of parents and learners to interpret policy. This is further confirmed by the fact that learners indicated that they were not involved, nor have been made aware that they should be involved in the development and implementation of the policy in schools, which contradicts the initial suggestion that learners were not part of the process of the development and implementation of the policy on religion.

Based on the above, I argue that through 'Communicative action', stakeholders within the SGBs must interact to reach consensus on religious values to be pursued by the policy, with the intention to meet individual stakeholder's religious needs. When an act of coming together and agreeing takes place this will allow school governance stakeholders to understand and agree with one another and to make plans for common action. It became clear that such an interaction does not take place. The lack of such an interaction results in the manipulation of the processes where those who lack the know-how, like parents and learners, are used to rubberstamp decisions by those who are enlightened, namely, principals and educators.

6.4.3 Educational empowerment

Principal B agrees with what principal A indicated, that they were never trained on issues pertaining to religion, but indicated he received information on religion outside the school and the department. What emerged was that there was an attempt from the department side to workshop SGBs on policy development in general. “I have not been trained on the policy on religion. There was something on policy in my studies when I was doing my BEd. I did not do any course on policies. There was a workshop on policies when this government started. I think it was the main issue. I think there were those workshops on how to formulate policies. ”

It has been apparent from the learners that they have never been workshopped, nor taken for training on matters pertaining to religion or the policy on religion, either by the department or the school. This is further corroborated by educators who made it clear that they did not receive any training with regard to religion in schools, or the policy on religion itself. “On the issue of religion there was no specific training around the policy on religion” (Educator B), but added that they were able to deal with issues of religion as they received training from organisations other than the school or the department, for example unions. “With me the advantage was that I used to have workshops with my union, where we are talking about issues of policies, like HIV, so I just that knowledge and experience”.

Parent B held a considerably different view than what Parent A indicated. He was unwavering on the matter of training regarding religion policies, because the issue of religion was “not being taken serious and it is very rare that learners are also conscientised about religion issues”. Moreover, he felt disgruntled as they were only being “told to develop policies without being given guidelines or without giving them the District or Provincial policies pertaining to religion”.

The deduction made from parent B above was that when the department requires schools to make policies, they should supply them with District and Provincial policies for consistency purposes. Like in school A, a lack of educational empowerment on the part of SGBs in school B, regarding their religious values, which in turn would create a platform for a conducive environment for consultation, deliberations and argumentative interaction, compromised the principles of communicative action, which seeks consensus through purposeful communication.

Like in school A, school B has allowed the principal and the educators to draw policies for compliance purposes. It was clear that learners and parents were just used to rubberstamp their decision. Drawing from their experiences to identify values underpinning their school policies on religion, which were not as evident as in their school policy indicated SGBs were not well empowered regarding the dynamics surrounding religion issues.

6.4.4 Freedom of expression and the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion

Like in school A, in school B the school community's right to freedom of speech as a basic human right was limited. All religious activities in school B were of Christian character, even though they did not vote as school A did. Participants were content that they were exercising their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion as the religious values pursued by their school were of their choice. Having said that, principal B argued that he was not happy because other minority religions, like African, were not provided with the same opportunities that Christians had, i.e. to have their say and be allowed to engage in religious activities of their choice.

The conclusion drawn from the above, as argued through the Habermasian notion of communicative action, is that school B does not provide an environment where the school community's representatives can deliberate about religious problems and solutions, and through deliberation and reasoning, have a mutual willingness to understand the religious values, perspectives and interests of others.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented discussions in pursuit of answers to research questions which aimed to explore, among others, school governing bodies' understanding of constitutional values and diversity, religious values and diversity principles underpinning the policies on religion drafted by school governing bodies; religious activities contributing towards advancing constitutional values and diversity in the way school governing bodies are implementing the policy on religion and education and the justifications by school governing bodies of their religious practices and actions. Aspects about the gap that exists between policy prescripts and religious activities at school level, the symbolic nature of the NPPE and schools' policies on religion and the review of theory implications are also presented in this chapter.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, provides conclusions drawn from the findings. It is in this chapter where general recommendations from the conclusions, together with recommendations relating to further research, are made.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools. As a final chapter, an effort is made to draw conclusions from each of the previous chapters and to make recommendations. The recommendations that emanate from the results of this study are divided into general recommendations, and recommendations for further research.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

The study's initial proposition was that there seemed to be a continuous attempt by public schools to undermine, knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly, the prescripts of the Constitution, SASA and the NPPE on how schools should develop and implement the policy on religion and education. The argument was that the implementation of the policy should be such that it enhances the school community's right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion.

The initial findings from interviews showed that to a larger extent SGBs understood their duties and responsibilities as related to school governance. A deeper examination of the SGBs' understanding of their school governance duties and responsibilities in relation to the development and implementation of the policy on religion in their schools suggests that this apparent clarity is somehow shallow. This is confirmed by the fact that most stakeholders within the SGBs could not clearly articulate the values that inform the development and implementation of the policies in their schools as contemplated by the NPPE.

Involvement of stakeholders on matters pertaining to religion was selective. Learners would not be involved on matters pertaining to religion and finance, as these were

regarded as sensitive and problematic matters. It has also emerged that the school community rarely engaged one another on matters pertaining to religion.

Policies on religion clearly outline values to be pursued, which are in line with the values prescribed by the constitution, SASA and the NPPE. What was evident though was the inability of the SGBs to speak on the values underpinning the NPPE and schools' policies on religion. These suggested stakeholders were not aware of the prescripts of the NPPE and schools' policies on religion as they were not fully engaged in decisions regarding policies in schools.. Also evident was the use of religious values to deal with issues of ill-discipline in schools.

Representation in SGBs was as prescribed by SASA. This pointed to the fact that stakeholders were allowed to democratically choose their own representatives to the SGBs, the process which then upheld the principles of a democratic society.

There was evidence that pointed to numerous religious activities taking place at schools, most of these during assembly and break time. Most of the activities were of a Christian character, including motivational talks, even though there was evidence of other religions, such as African religion. The conclusion drawn in this particular instance is that religious observances in schools were not in line with the prescripts of the Constitution, SASA and the NPPE, which state that all religions be allowed equal rights and freedoms.

Even though the members of SGBs were taken to workshops on the general functions of the SGB that was not sufficient to reduce the level of illiteracy of SGBs in rural schools so as to enable them to have the knowledge and understanding of the processes of the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

The use of assembly for religious observances has become a regular occurrence in schools. This suggests schools are still struggling to establish proper mechanisms for religious observances that would be accommodative.

Even though schools have policies on religion, which they have also submitted to the department, not much is done to monitor and evaluate the development and implementation of policies in schools, to establish if they achieve the intended objectives.

Schools have successfully achieved the democratic representation of stakeholders in the SGBs, however, still lacking are democratic principles where stakeholders would recognise each other as equals, sharing common life world, appreciating the difficult trade-offs, recognising the legitimate interests of other groups and where there is no one forced to accept issues as they work towards an agreement..

There is evidence of symbolic elements emanating from the discussion of the study. In this case, the NPPE created a framework for schools on how to develop their policies on religion based on the problem identified. On the contrary, the NPPE does not indicate how the government will empower principals and SGBs on the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools. Moreover, schools' policies on religion do not provide how they would engage in programmes that would enable them to fulfil the requirements as envisaged by the NPPE. The NPPE prescribes to the SGBs how to conduct religious observances, but it also does not bring about mechanisms on how SGBs would be assisted in terms of guidance and support in order to successfully develop and implement the policy in their schools.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that emanate from the findings of this study are divided between general recommendations and recommendations for further research.

7.3.1 General recommendations

Schools should make sure learners and educators are not coerced, directly or indirectly, to attend religious observances they do not agree to. Direct coercion would occur when learners or educators are coerced to be part of religious activities or instruction, forced to read the Bible, forced to sing hymns or forced to wear something signalling adherence to a particular religion. Indirect coercion is more subtle. This can happen when an institution approves one religion over another or religion over non-religion; the effect would be coercive in nature.

The support and guidance by the department is crucial in providing training and developing SGBs and principals on matters pertaining to the development and implementation of the policy on religion in schools.

Monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure that every school does have a policy on religion and this will also ensure that if there were shortcomings in terms of standards, like adherence to legislative imperatives, corrective measures could be taken.

The involvement of stakeholders forms the basis of drafting the policy on religion. This will assist in balancing and ensuring that not only Christianity, but all religions such as Muslim, Hindu, etc., are accommodated.

It is important for the Department of Education in South Africa to ensure that learners serving in the school governing bodies acquire religious intelligence or become religiously intelligent, thus enabling them to positively contribute towards the successful development and implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools.

The level of illiteracy among parents serving in the SGBs poses a serious challenge for proper school governance, as principals have to solely address issues of interpretation of religion policies in schools. Furthermore, this situation is a receipt for principals to manipulate and influence the direction of the content of the policy. It is therefore important for the department to establish rigorous training programmes for parents serving in the SGBs to alleviate the possible manipulation of the SGBs by principals as resource persons. This can further be made possible if SGB members can be thoroughly inducted by the school and the department on policy development.

The school community needs to be educated about its rights of freedom of religion, belief and opinion, and the responsibilities, obligations and limitations that go along with it. Furthermore, SGBs must be equipped with skills and knowledge to be able to understand and interpret legislation (SASA, Constitution) and policies governing the policy on religion in schools.

There is also a need for proper training and education on procedures and processes that may be followed in the event of parties discontent about the manner in which the

policy on religion and education is being implemented in schools. This would include mechanisms to be followed to register dissatisfaction, either with the SGB, or the department in cases where educators, parents and learners feel that their constitutional rights are being violated.

The fact that there is no interaction between stakeholders to discuss issues pertaining to religion calls for a platform, where such dialogue can take place. Educating about the different religions and appropriate mechanisms in the ultimate development and implementation of policies on religion in schools will enhance a better understanding, which can further be enhanced by making religion education an independent learning area, as tolerance comes when you know what other people believe in.

Greater care should also be taken to alleviate the use of assembly for religious purposes or conviction. Furthermore, the study is of the opinion that the establishment of school societies within the school for different religions can be a tool for the realisation of our religious diversity to be a source for national unity.

As there are problems associated with time constraints, parents' commitments and lack of finance, I would advise SGBs to get in touch with non-governmental organisations that would teach them fundraising skills, so that they are able to pay for, for example, the training of SGBs.

7.3.2 Recommendations for further research

There is a belief that religion is important for the spiritual growth of learners. The emphasis is on the use of religious values to discipline learners and maintain order. There is a tendency to associate learner ill-discipline with a lack of home-based religious ethos.

1. In this case there is a need to establish, through research, the extent to which the application of religious values in schools helps advance learner discipline.
2. With the same understanding, since there is an assertion that religion has an important role to play with regard to learner discipline and that schools associate bad behaviour from learners with lack of good religious morals from home, there is a

need for research to be conducted to establish whether learners who are from family backgrounds with a firm belief and adherence to a particular religion are more disciplined than those learners from families that adopted a nonreligious type of policy.

In essence, the above researches proposed an endeavour to establish if there is a relationship between learner discipline or ill-discipline and adherence or non-adherence to a particular set of religious beliefs.

3. Research on the policy on religion in a heterogeneous school environment is needed to properly harness the perceptions of stakeholders from different religious backgrounds on the ability of the policy to enhance their right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion.

4. There is a notion that the prescripts of the policy on religion are used for disciplinary purposes and for the sake of maintaining order. This prompts a research where the results of an interaction between religion policy and other policies within the school, like the code of conduct for learners and SACE code of conduct for educators, etc., can be explored.

5. The study also recommends that further studies be conducted around the effect of induction programmes of school governing bodies on the successful performance of their governance responsibilities, most importantly in policy development and implementation.

6. The role of the principal in school policy development and implementation is of paramount importance. It is therefore important that a study be conducted on the relationship between the effective leadership role of the principal and the successful development and implementation of school policy, such as the religion policy in schools.

7. Policy intermediaries, like school principals, are people who play important roles in assisting others in the education system make sense of policy, relate one policy to the other and come to an understanding of what is required of them. It is in this context that the study recommends that further research be conducted on the

effectiveness of the role of principals as policy intermediaries, i.e. principals as critical support elements for effective policy implementation.

7.4 CONCLUSION

The intention of the study was to analyse the implementation of the policy on religion at school level. The main aim was to establish the outcomes of the implementation of the policy regarding its ability to enhance the school community's right to freedom of religion. The study established that much still needs to be done to assist SGBs in the processes of the development and implementation of the policy on religion in order for schools policies on religion to achieve the objectives as intended by the National Policy on Religion and Education, DoE, 2003. One major challenge is the lack of knowledge on the part of parents and learners serving in the SGBs to understand and interpret policy. The second is the minimal involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes on matters that affect their lives, such as religion.

This situation ultimately allows educators and principals to manipulate the environment of policy development and implementation. The result thereof includes the situation where one religion is being given priority over others, a particular religious character is adopted because other stakeholders do not have the knowledge about their rights, and learners and educators are directly and indirectly coerced into attending an assembly that is turned into a Christian religious observance.

The study acknowledges the importance of the principles of critical theory and 'Communicative Action' and 'Consensus through Deliberation and Reasoning' as applied in the study. Through the principles of critical pedagogy, emphasis is on the emancipation of the disempowered and the promotion of individual freedoms within a democratic society. Critical theory seeks to interrogate, among others, the outcomes of illegitimate, domatory and repressive factors where one person or group's freedom and power is bought at the price of another's freedom and power. The emergence of evidence such as assemblies turned into Christian religious observances, the official adoption of a Christian character, and the suppression of the 'emergent' African religious trends that were regarded as evil by Christians signal

the lack of tolerance among people of different religions within the school community and the importance of the critical pedagogic approach as mentioned above.

Through the adoption of a cooperative type of a model, the NPRE provides a framework within which people of goodwill will work out their own approaches to the development and implementation of the policies on religion in schools (NPRE, DoE, 2003:Sec 3). In agreement are the perspectives of 'Communicative Action' and 'Consensus through Deliberation and Reasoning', which argue in favour of increased democratic participation to address a crisis where modern society fails to meet individual needs and freedoms and when institutions in society manipulate others, which might positively influence life in SGBs as anticipated by the NPRE. Through consensus, stakeholders within SGBs will interact with each other, educate one another about their rights and obligations, and through deliberation and reasoning, stakeholders will advance arguments and counterarguments and ultimately this combination will allow school governance stakeholders to understand and agree on which religious values to underpin their schools' policies on religion and make plans for common action.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A (Dissertation approval)



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DEGREE AND PROJECT

INVESTIGATOR(S)

DEPARTMENT

DATE CONSIDERED

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE NUMBER :

EM 11/04/02

M.Ed

An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools

Thabo Isaac Modipa

Education Management and Policy Studies

24 July 2013

APPROVED

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS
COMMITTEE**

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

DATE

24 July 2013

CC

Jeannie Beukes
Liesel Ebersöhn
Dr MAU Mohlakwana
Prof. C Herman

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

APPENDIX B (Ethical clearance)

APPENDIX C (language Editor)



Reg no.: CK97/41133/23

17 December 2013

Language editing

This serves to confirm that the dissertation, “An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools”, submitted by Thabo Isaac Modipa for the Master’s in Education in Education Management, Law and Policy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, was edited for language use, spelling and grammar by a qualified language editor. The edited dissertation was provided to the author in track changes, and the author had the responsibility to accept or reject the editor’s recommendations.

Kind regards



Janine Smit

Bachelor of Arts (University of Pretoria – 1983)

Postgraduate Diploma in Translation (University of South Africa – 1990)

Conducting publication excellence

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APPENDIX D (Request/District)

21 October 2010

The Area Project Office Manager:
Moretele APO
North West Department of Education
Private Bag X365
MAKAPANSTAD
0404
Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE MORETELE AREA PROJECT OFFICE

I hereby kindly request permission to conduct research in the Rekopantswe Cluster of Moretele Area Project office of Education for my Masters studies with the University of Pretoria.

The title of my research is: "An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools". I further guarantee that research ethics will be highly observed during this project and that a copy of the research report will be made available to you for perusal.

The intended period of research is February 2011 to April 2011. The intended target group would be parents, educators and learners serving in the School Governing Bodies as well as the principal. The data collection instruments to be employed would be questionnaires and focus group interviews intended to take 90 minutes as well as document analysis in the form of schools' policies on religion and education and any other relevant document pertaining religion and education in schools

For further clarity you can contact me at: Cell: 079 490 8236' Fax : 086 275 5400

Attached please find a letter of confirmation from my study supervisor.

Thanking you in advance

Yours truly,

Thabo I. Modipa (Student

Mokgadi Mohlakwana (Supervisor)

Signed(Student)

Signed (Supervisor)

APPENDIX E (Reply/District)



education

Lefapha la Thuto
Onderwys Departement
Department of Education
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

OFFICE OF THE AREA MANAGER: MORETELE AREA PR

Enq : Thakanyane T.A
078 802 0165

To : The School Principal
Rekopantswe Circuit

From : The Circuit Manager
Rekopantswe Circuit
Moretele Area Project Office

Date : 05 December 2010

Subject : **Permission to allow Modipa T. I. to conduct research in schools.**

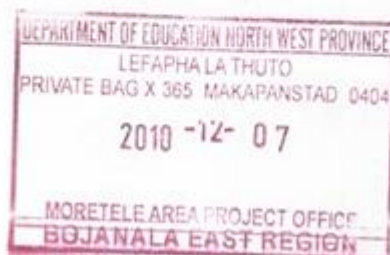
Modipa Thabo Isaac is currently a fulltime Master Of Education student at the University of Pretoria. Permission has been granted to him to carry out a research study in the Rekopantswe schools. The research is part and parcel of the requirements for the completion of his Masters degree. This office wishes to solicit your support for this student to conduct his research successfully.

Your understanding will always be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Thakanyane T.A - Rekopantswe Circuit Manager

Cc . Mosala M.K.Z. – Moretele APO Manager.



APPENDIX F (Letter to schools)

The Principal And SGB Chairperson

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I hereby kindly request permission to conduct research in your school for my Masters studies with the University of Pretoria.

The title of my research is: "An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools". I further guarantee that research ethics will be highly observed during this project and that a copy of the research report will be made available to you for perusal.

The intended period of research is February 2011 to April 2011. The intended target group would be parents, educators and learners serving in the School Governing Bodies as well as the principal. The data collection instruments to be employed would be questionnaires and focus group interviews intended to take 90 minutes as well as document analysis in the form of schools' policies on religion and education and any other relevant document pertaining religion and education in schools

For further clarity you can contact me at: Cell: 079 490 8236' Fax : 086 275 5400

Attached please find a letter of confirmation from my study supervisor.

Thanking you in advance

Yours truly,

Thabo I. Modipa (Student

Mokgadi Mohlakwana (Supervisor)

Signed(Student)

Signed (Supervisor)

APPENDIX G (Informed consent)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

INFORMED CONSENT

I..... hereby agree to participate in research regarding “An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools”

My participation in this research project is of my own free will and I am in no way being coerced to do so.

I am aware that I can terminate my participation in this research in any point should I not want to continue and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this research project and my participation in the project will not benefit me personally.

I understand that my identity as well as the responses during the interview will remain confidential.

I understand that if possible, feedback will be given on the findings and recommendations on the completed research.

I have received the details of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issue that may arise from my participation in the research project. I also give permission to the researcher to record the interview with the understanding that everything mentioned above will be adhered to.

Signature of participant:.....

Date:.....

Signature of Researcher:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX H (Letter of assent)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF ASSENT

I..... hereby agree to participate in research regarding “An analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools”

As a learner I have not been forced to take part in this study and my participation in this research project is of my own free will.

I am aware that I can terminate my participation in this research in any point should I not want to continue and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this research project and my participation in the project will not benefit me personally.

I understand that my identity as well as the responses during the interview will remain confidential.

I understand that if possible, feedback will be given on the findings and recommendations on the completed research.

I have received the details of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issue that may arise from my participation in the research project. I also give permission to the researcher to record the interview with the understanding that everything mentioned above will be adhered to.

Signature of participant:.....

Date:.....

Signature of Researcher:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX I (Interview protocol)

Interview Schedule

Dear Participant

I would like you to take part in the 30-40 minutes interview based on the study entitled:

“An Analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools”

This study focuses on the values enshrined in the National Policy on Religion and Education, more specifically, how the policy on religion and education in schools promote religious values and issues of diversity b as a uniting factor.

It will also address pertinent issues relating to what stakeholders in the School Governing Bodies understand about and how they assert their religious values and how they deal with issues relating to religious diversity in their schools.

Your participation in the research will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and your name will not appear anywhere in the transcribed data and data will further be cleaned for any identifying aspects. You may also withdraw from the study without reprisal if you feel you no longer wish to continue participating.

Your willingness to participate in the research project is highly appreciated.

Thank in anticipation

Kind regards

Thabo Modipa (Masters Student: UP)

Interview Protocol

1. What component of the SGB do you represent?
2. When did you become a member of the SGB?
3. What are the duties and responsibilities assigned to the position you hold?
4. Please describe what you do as an educator, parent or learner and a member of the SGB?
5. What is your understanding of policy?
6. What is your understanding of the policy on religion and education?
7. What activities are you as an educator; parent or learner involved in, with regard the policy on religion and education in your school?
8. Does your school have a policy on religion and education?
9. What religious activities are taking place in your school?
10. Are these activities in line with the school' policy on religion and education? Why do think so?
11. What is your understanding of human rights?
12. What is your understanding of your right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion? Sec 15 of the Constitution.
13. How is the policy on religion in your school assisting in advancing this right?
14. Are you as a principal exercising this right? Why do you think so?
15. What us your understanding of values?
16. What is your understanding of religious values?
17. What values do you think are being advanced by the NPRE?
18. What values does your school policy on religion and education advance?

19. Were you involved in the development of the policy on religion and education in your school? /
20. Were you given a platform to give your view, expectations in the development of the policy on religion and education in your school?
21. Which policy documents do you refer to in order to implement the policy on religion and education in your school
22. What type of training did you receive as the principal in terms of the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education? When was it done, and by whom?
23. How do you give stakeholders in the SGB a chance to air their views about their religious values and diversity?
24. How do you find engagement by stakeholders in the SGB on issues of religion? Why do you think is the case? / What is the attitude of learners, teachers, and parents toward issues of religion?
25. How often do you as an educator, parent or learner interact with other stakeholders to discuss religious issues in the school?
26. Have you ever experienced any challenge/problem of any kind where issues of religion were contentious?
27. How you do you think the policy on religion and education in your school is being implemented? Give reasons for your answer
28. What monitoring tool does the school have in place to make sure religious activities are taking place as they should?
29. What do you think as an educator, parent or learner, can be done to improve practice in the development and implementation of the policy on religion and education in your school?

APPENDIX J (Observational Schedule)

Observational Schedule

The study adopted the running records in that the researcher recorded the actions and behaviours of parents, teachers, learners and principals during the implementation of the policy on religion and education in schools as the context under which the policy is being implemented. In recording the observations the researcher captured two dimensions, namely, the description of what the researcher has observed (i.e. thick descriptions of what actually took place which did not include any value judgement) and the researcher's reflection about what happened (i.e. the researcher's own thoughts or ideas about the meaning of what the researcher observed). The example of the template below was used to record the observations.

Date and Time	Situation	Participant	Actions observed	Reflection
When was the recording done?	Where were the actions and behaviours taking place?	Who are the participants observed?	What is that that was observed?	What are the researcher's reflections about what was observed?

APPENDIX K (Questionnaire)

Questionnaire

Dear Participant

I would like you to take part in completing this questionnaire based on the study entitled:

“An Analysis of the implementation of the policy on religion in schools”

This study focuses on the values enshrined in the National Policy on Religion and Education, more specifically, how the policy on religion and education in schools promote religious values and issues of diversity b as a uniting factor.

It will also address pertinent issues relating to what stakeholders in the School Governing Bodies understand about and how they assert their religious values and how they deal with issues relating to religious diversity in their schools.

Your participation in the research will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and your name will not appear anywhere in the transcribed data and data will further be cleaned for any identifying aspects. You may also withdraw from the study without reprisal if you feel you no longer wish to continue participating.

Your willingness to participate in the research project is highly appreciated.

Thank in anticipation

Kind regards

Thabo Modipa (Masters Student: UP)

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The purpose of this section is to gather biographical data to answer the research question. Data drawn will help in making conclusions and recommendations.

Instructions:

Answer each question by putting a cross on the appropriate number:

1. What is your current position in the SGB?

SGB Chairperson	
Principal	
Educator	
Learner	

2. How long have you been in this position?

Less than one year	
Two years	
Three years	
More than four years	

3. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

4. What is your racial group?

Black	
White	
Coloured	
White	
Other	

5. What is your religion?

Christian	
Hindu	
Islamic	
African religion	
Other	

6. In which area is your school situated?

Urban	
Semi-urban	
Metropolitan	
Rural	
Semi-rural	

7. What type of school is your school?

Early childhood Development Centre	
Pre-school	
Primary school	
Secondary school	
Further education and Training College	

B. POLICY UNDERTSANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this section is to assess SGBs' knowledge and understanding of religious values and issues of religious diversity as prescribed by the NPPE

8. What is the level of policy understanding of SGB stakeholders?

Use the following scale to the following statements: 1=Never (N) 2=Rarely(R)

3=Sometimes(S) 4=Always(A)

	N	R	S	A
SGBs have adequate knowledge and understanding of policies				
SGBs can describe the different types of educational policies				
Schools are well resourced to implement policies				
SGBs are given sufficient support in applying the policy on religion and education in their school				
SGBs are given sufficient training and support on policy development and implementation				
Stakeholders in the SGBs are given know that there is a policy				

on religion and education in their schools				
Stakeholders within the SGBs have been involved development and implementation of the policy on religion and education				
SGBs are comfortable with the degree of support which they receive from the Districts on matters of the policy on religion in their school				
Stakeholders understand their religious values				
Stakeholders' religious values are enshrined in the school's policy on religion and education				
Stakeholders understand the different religions in the school community				
Stakeholders understand that the different religions in the school community are catered for in the school's policy on religion and education				

9. How do you think the policy on religion and education in your school is being implemented? Give reasons for your answer.
