The influence of community structures on school governance with specific reference to schools in the Bushbuckridge area

BY

BARBER MBAGWA MAFUWANE

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS: MAXIMISING POTENTAIL IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

at the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

of the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR   :   PROF. T. MOLLER

CO- SUPERVISOR   :   DR. J. HEYSTEK

DECLARATION

I, BARBER MBANGWA MAFUWANE, declare that "THE INFUENCE OF COMMUNITY STRUCTURES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SCHOOLS IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA" submitted to the University of Pretoria, has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other University by me, and that it is my work in design and execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

B.M MAFUWANE

DEDICATION

This script is dedicated to my mother Tsatsawane Chistina, my deceased father Alfred Mafuwana, my wife Marinkie and our two Children Rirhandzu and Nkosinathi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CELP	:	Center for Education Law and Policy
CEPD	:	Center for Education Policy Development
DoE	:	Department of Education
D.T.T	:	District Task Team
NEPI	:	National Education Policy Inverstigation
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
R & R	:	Redeployment and Rationalisation
RSA	:	Republic of South Africa
SAPA	:	South African Principal's Association
SASA	:	South African Schools Act
SGB	:	School Governing Body
SMT	:	School Management Team
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY

The influence of community structures on school governance with specific

reference to schools in the BUSHBUCKRIDGE area

BY

BARBER MBANGWA MAFUWANE

SUPERVISOR: PROF. T. MOLLER
DEGREE   :   MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS
DEPARTMENT: MAXIMISING POTENTIAL IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This study probes into the influence of community structures on school governance in South African public schools, with specific reference to schools in the Bushbuckridge area. The study departs from the premise that education as a public domain and its governance should not be left exclusively to teachers, but to all who have genuine interest in it. It starts by looking at the partial devolution of decision-making authority to school committees, school boards and committee boards which governed schools in term of the Education Act of 1953 (Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953) and Government Notice No. R642 of 8th May 1964.

The devolution of decision-making authority to the above structures is regarded as partial because these structures were made up of parents only, leaving out teachers, learners and other stakeholders in the school governing bodies (SGBs) as representing all the groups which are directly affected by activities in the school namely, parents of learners at the school, learners in the eight grade and higher, educators at the school and non-educator

x

members. In view of the fact that parents, in particular, may belong to some structures in their communities, such as a church or a tribal authority, this study probes if such community structures may have an influence on the manner in which schools are governed.

Chapter one of this study focuses on the aims of the study, general orientation and background, the method of studying the problem, the purpose of the study as well as elucidation of operative research concepts.

Chapter two focuses on the pre-1994 school governance model i.e the governance by school committees, committee boards and school boards. This investigation is primarily aimed at establishing if this model had an influence on how schools are governed today.

In chapter three, emphasis is placed on the three community structures, namely church formations, tribal authorities and SGBs. The context within which these structures are regarded as community structures is explained and samples of members from the churches and tribal authorities are interviewed and a case study for the SGBs is conducted. An ideal typical school governance structure is also consolidated.

In chapter four the responses of the subjects to the interviews and the case study are analysed. This chapter also discusses the final research findings, presents a conclusion and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 1

1.   <u>ORIENTATION</u>

1.1.   **INTRODUCTION**

Squelch and Lemmer (1994:91) comment that "traditionally, education has been regarded as the exclusive domain of teachers, and parent participation has been very limited". In the words of Williams, Harold, Robertson and Southworth (1997:627), education has been regarded as a "secret garden" (in England) inhabited by children and teachers rather than a playground in which parents and others may spend time. A similar view is held by Negroni in Walsh (1996:200) who indicates that "the need to involve community structures in school governance in South Africa did not go unnoticed. For some decades prior to 1994, school committees, committee boards and school boards were established in public schools, in terms of Government Notice No.R.642 of 8th May, 1964. This can be viewed as the starting point for the devolution of decision- making authority from the state to the school level.

After the elections of 1994, South Africa became a democratic country with a democratic constitution. These elections resulted in revolutionary changes in the Constitution of the country. The Constitution became the supreme law of the country upon which all other law are founded. This means that the way we do things, inter alia, the way we build a new education system, and the way we go about running the system, must be based on the democratic values and principles in our constitution (DoE,1997:5). The new constitution gave birth to the South Africa Schools Act, 84 of 1996, which gave way to the introduction of School Governing Bodies in

public schools. This became a fully representative body of learners, parents and teachers, with all their powers of operation clearly defined and enshrined in the constitution. This research project will focus on the influence of community structures on school governance, with specific reference to schools in the Bushbuckridge area. The reason why this study focuses specifically on the Bushbuckridge area is prompted by the socio-political background and diversity of the people of this area.

During the revolutionary era in South Africa i.e some decades before 1994, the people of Bushbuckridge happened to be content with the status quo. When people in the other parts of the country challenged the government of the day with regard to transformation, they remained resilient. The unbanning of political parties in South Africa, triggered the unleashing of long suppressed energies in the people of Bushbuckridge, from the youth to the elderly. Learners started defying the authority of teachers, teachers, on the other hand had a lot more to defy viz. the authority of the principals and the legitimacy of their appointment, the authority of school committees, and above all, the legitimacy of their homelands i.e Lebowa and Gazankulu and the associated tribal authorities. This state of affairs made the schools in Bushbuckridge to be ungovernable. At this point it is necessary to give a short description of the geography of Bushbuckridge, its population and the governance circumstances that prevail.

Bushbuckridge is located on the South Eastern part of the Limpopo Province, and forms a boarder with the Mpumalanga Province in the North East. The following map represents the position of Buchbuckridge in relation to its locality within the Limpopo Province and its proximity with the Mpumalanga Province.

Fig. 1. BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCALITY MAP
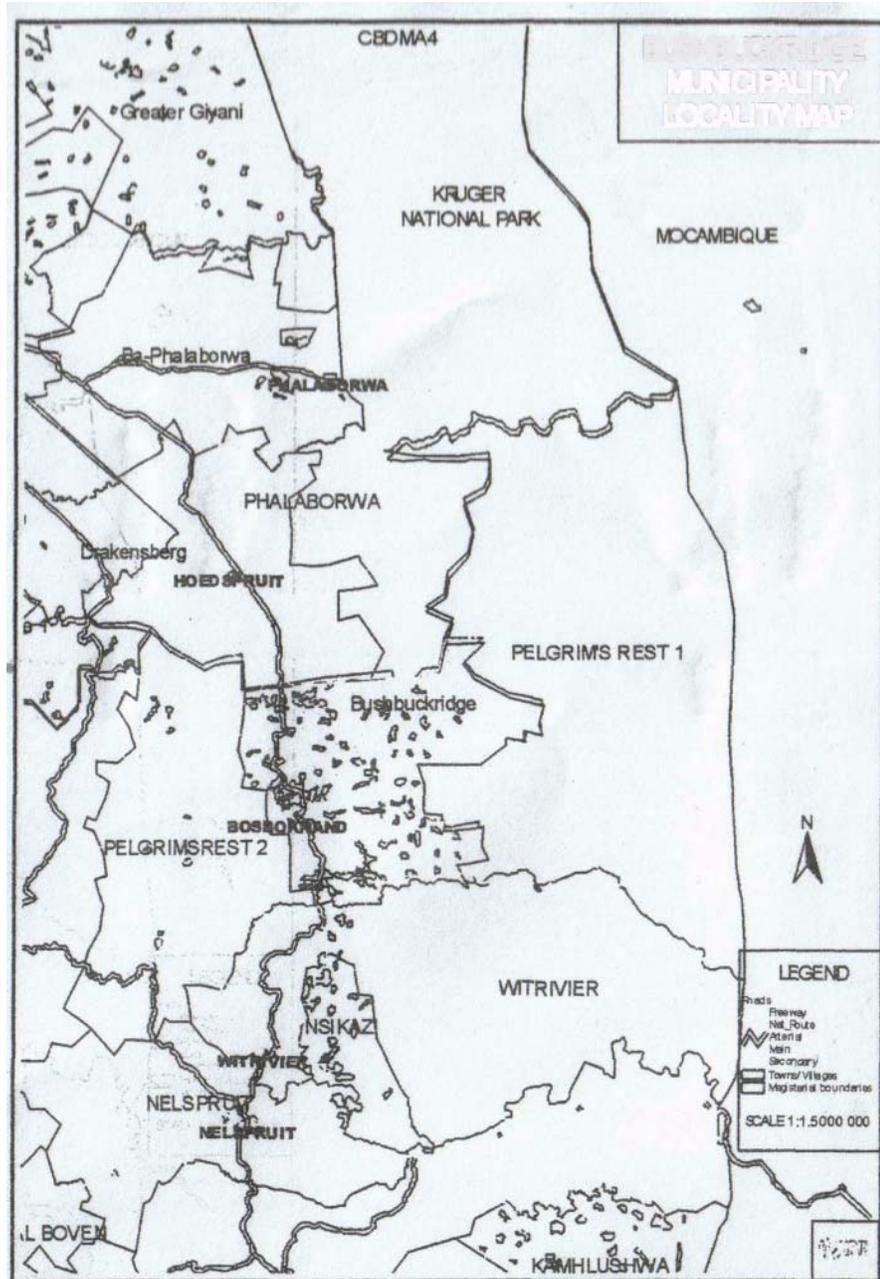
(Source: Bohlabela District Municipality: IDP Review Document   2004)

Buchbuckridge has a population of 540 454 which is made up of the people who formerly belonged to the Lebowa and Gazankulu homelands. The population demographics of Buchbuckridge can be represented as follows:

Table 1.1.
 POPULATION BY RACE:

	Persons
Black African	536 378
Coloured	587
Indian or Asian	109
white	191
Other	3198
TOTAL	540 454

Table 1.2.
AGE GROUP:

	Persons
0 -1	24 229
2 - 5	50 547
6 - 14	155 397
15 - 17	43 652
18 - 35	158 083
36 - 65	85 755
66 +	22 759
TOTAL	540 454

Table 1.3.

HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE AGED 20+

	Persons	Percentage
No schooling	87 254	39.56
Some schooling	31 130	14.11
Complete primary	10 472	4.74
Some secondary	51 303	23.26
Std 10/Grade 12	27 091	12.28
Higher	13271	6.01
Total	220 521	

Table 1.4.

LABOUR MARKET STATUS OF THOSE AGED 15 – 65 years.

	Persons	Percentage
Employed	37 393	14.01
Unemployed	65 023	24.36
Not economically active	164 417	61.61
TOTAL	266 833	

Table 1.5.

Sector of work of the employed aged 15 – 65 years.

	Persons	Percentage
Formal	26 086	69.76
Informal	9 428	25.21
Farming	633	1.69
Temp. absent	1 245	3.32
TOTAL	37 392	

Source: (Table 1.1. – 1.5) Bohlabela District Municipality and statistics South Africa – Census 2001: Key Municipal data.

5

An annual school survey conducted by the Bushbuckridge Region (education) for conditions on 29 January 2002 revealed the following information in respect of the number of schools (both primary and post primary), number of learners and educators:

Table: 1.6.

	Primary	Post primary	Primary and post primary
Total Number of Schools	210	118	328
Total Number of Educators			5 894
Total Enrolment			187 016

As the statistics above reveal, the population of Buchbuckridge is made up of people of different levels of education, with the percentage of literacy overweighing that of illiteracy. It is further worth mentioning that the majority of the schools in this area were built by the communities and this situation gives the parents and local tribal authorities the power to claim absolute ownership of these schools.

1.2.   ANALYSIS OF THE TITLE AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

At this stage the concepts of community structure(s) and school governance will be explained in order to clarify the title of this research project:

1.2.1 Community structure: refers to a social definable group of people sharing common interests, for example, political party, church formation ect

1.2.2. School governance: Embodies the shared responsibility by parents, teachers, learners and the community for school policy within a national, provincial and district framework (RSA, 1995:19) From the two definitions above, it follows that this study focuses on the influence of community structures such as church formation, tribal authorities and SGBs on the implementation of school policy. If this study establishes that the involvement of these social groups will lead to proper governance in schools, strategies for their appraisal and capacity building will be developed but if not, measures to build a cooperative relationship between these social groups and the school will have to be developed.

The meanings of the following concepts also need to be clarified in order to enhance understanding of their usage in this study.

(i) Public school: Refer to all school, farm schools, state schools and state aided schools (including church schools, model C schools, mine schools and others) (RSA, 1995:15)

(ii) School Governance Map: As used in this study, this concept refers to the "top down" and "bottom up" discharge of authority within the school governance set-up

(iii) School Board(s): A body established by the minister of Bantu Education to control and manage two or more Bantu Community schools in terms of the Bantu Education Act. of 1953.

(iv) Committee Board(s): A body established by the minister of education to control and manage two or more Bantu

	Community Schools in cases where the secretary decides that it is not necessary to establish school committees as well as school boards. (RSA, 19966:2)
(v) School committee(s):	A body established to assist any school board in the control and managemant of any Bantu Community School.
(vi)Bantu Tribal Council:	Means any Chief or Headman or Bantu authority , according to the Bantu management System in the area concerned.
(vii)Township council:	any council established to administer any Bantu township.
(viii)Community school:	refers to any Bantu Community school subsidized by the state but placed under the local control of a school committee, community school in a given area of a particular group, and with common interest, fall under the local administration and control of a School Board.(Rsa 1916:8)
(ix)Regional Director:	any officer in control of Bantu Education in any specific region.
(x) Federal Government:	a type of government in which several states form a unity but remain independent in internal affairs.
(xi) Decentralisation:	Jon Lauglo in Coombe & Godden (1996:17) defines decentralisation as a means of distributing authority to different agencies, groups and stakeholders.
(xii)Participatory democracy:	as a form of decentralisation – rests on the assertion that those who have their daily work in an institution – the institutions "

participarts"should have equal rigths to the institution (Coombe & Godden, 1996:47-48).

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mashele and Grobler (1999:296) indicate that "transformation is a continuous process in which all significant stakeholders of an institution collectively strive to improve the service that an institution provides in the national, regional, local and institutional interest". The enactment of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 brought about transformation in the way schools were governed.

The transition from the pre-1994 school committees which were made up of parents only to the adoption of school Governing Bodies which consisted of learners, educators, parents of registered learners at the school, the principal and other staff members, show the commitment of government to provide quality education in schools. Each group in the SGB is expected to represent the aspirations and ambitions of its constituency, hence ensuring a co-ordinated effort by the different groups in the governance of the schools. This constitution of the school governing body in public schools will ensure effective and quality education in the sense that:
  ➢ All concerned groups are involved in one body (the SGB) that is supposed to oversee that there is teaching and learning in schools; and

The current spate of socio – political changes in this country, like the changing context of the communities and legislation, will eventually have an influence on the way schools are governed now and in the future. All the different groups, which are represented in the school governing bodies come from specific structures in the

community. For example, they may belong to labour a union, religious grouping e.g. Islam or Christianity, student movement or political party. It is therefore possible that if these different social structures can be included in the school governing bodies, they may bring along their different socio – political ideologies into the school governing bodies.

The problem is how will the involvement of community structures influence the governance of schools in the Bushbuckridge area? The core of the problems can best be encapsulated by means of the following questions:

1.3.1.   Are community structures in other (Western and African) countries
          included in School Governing Bodies?
          If yes, what is their role?

1.3.2.   How were the schools in the Bushbuckridge area governed before
          1994 and how are they governed today?

1.3.3.   What are the different community structures that mayhave an
          influence on the governance of schools in the Bushbuckridge area?

1.3.4.   What are the views of the different community structures in respect
          of their role and the role of other social groupings in the governance
          of schools in the Bushbuckridge area?

1.4   AIMS OF THE STUDY

The general aim of this research is to study school governance then and now in South Africa and how the involvement of community structures will impact on school governance in future in the Bushbuckridge area. In order to achieve this general aim, the following will serve as specific aims:

1.4.1.   To undertake a literature review of school governance and the role of community structures in other countries both overseas and in Africa;

1.4.2.   To develop a school governance map for school management before and after 1994 in South Africa;

1.4.3.   To identify problems and challenges in respect of the involvement of community structures in school governance in the Bushbuckridge area; and

1.4.4.   To provide guidelines in respect of improving the participation of community structures in school governance in the Bushbuckridge area

1.5   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to review the current situation with regard to the governance of public schools in South Africa in general and in Bushbuckridge in particular. The study will investigate the opinions of various community structures regarding their participation in school governance in the Bushbuckridge area. It will also highlight the problems and challenges that school governors may have to contend with regarding the participation of community structures in school governance.

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a qualitative study of the way in which public schools are governed in South African in general and in Bushbuckridge in particular. This study will look at the functioning of school governing bodies in accordance with their mandate by the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) and the possible involvement of, and

influence by other community structures such as church formations and tribal authorities on the governance of schools.

This study will adopt qualitative methods for the following reasons:

- ➢ the purpose of qualitative research is understanding social phenomena from the respondents' and participants perspectives;
- ➢ due to its flexible nature, qualitative research ensures the use of an emergent design, which means that decisions about datd collection strategies are made during the study;
- ➢ in qualitative research, the researcher becomes the research instrument, meaning that he/she becomes immersed in the research project; and
- ➢ the context in the study is important, based on the belief that human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur. (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993: 14 – 15)

from the four reasons mentioned above, it becomes clear that since school governance is a social phenomenon, involving groups of people, interacting in their practical contexts, the qualitative research design is the most appropriate for this study. The design will consist of the following data collection strategies.

1.6.1   LITERATURE SURVEY

In a survey of literature, South African and international literature, including policy documents will be conducted. The literature search will focus on school governance policy reforms and a comparison will be made of the provisions laid down in the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) regarding the community structures that form school governing bodies with other countries. Two developed

countries, namely Canada and New Zealand, and two African countries, the Arab Republic of Egypt and Nigeria were identified and their systems of education and school governance analysed. Details of the analysis and a comparison between these countries and South African will be presented in the next chapter.

1.6.2   INTERVIEWS

Unstructured interviews will be conducted to gather information from respondents. The respondents will include leaders of different churches and members of tribal authority.

1.6.3.   CASE STUDY

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. (Merriam, 1998:27). A case study will be used in this study to highlight some potential governance problems that are experienced in most public schools.

1.6.4.   OBJECTIVITY

Objectivity is described by McMillan and Schumacher as both a procedure and characteristic. As a characteristic, it means to be unbiased and open-minded rather than being subjective whereas as a procedure, it refers to data collection and analysis procedures from which only one meaning or interpretation can be derived (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:10). In order to ensure objectivity and to avoid the distortion and misinterpretation of data, the following steps will be taken:
  ➢ the researchers' judgement will be minimized

> ➢ avoid ambiguous questions during interviews which may lead to respondents providing ambiguous responses
>
> ➢ describing every data gathering process as clear and as detailed as possible to avoid any misinterpretation of information.

1.7.   STUDY LAY OUT

This study will consist of four chapters:

CHAPTER 1:   Orientation: gives a brief description of Bushbuckridge, its population demographics and the circumstances of school governance that prevails. It further outlines in details the main aim and scope of this study including a comparison of the South Africa context with other countries.

CHAPTER 2:   Focuses on community structures in school governance by looking at school governance policy before and after 1994. A school governance map is also established to evaluate how school Governing Bodies operated then and now.

CHAPTER 3:   Concentrates on different community structures in the Bushbuckridge area, and how they operate an evaluation of the way they operate is carried out in line with the governance map established in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 4:   Analyses the responses of the respondents regarding the interviews conducted and also an analysis of the case study. It also discusses the final research findings, presents a conclusion and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

2.   **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE POLICY BEFORE AND AFTER 1994**
          IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

2.1   INTRODUCTION

One of the most striking characteristics of South Africa is its racial and cultural diversity. This differentiation between the different racial groups and their cultures has necessitated inequalities between these races throughout the century in respect of many spheres of their daily interactions. The spheres, which were of common concern, were the political, social, economical and, above all, the educational sphere with its associated governance and administration structures. This latter sphere is the concern and point of departure of this research project.

The ascension to power in 1948 of the National Party exacerbated the unequal distribution and exercise of power and control over the different spheres mentioned above. The apartheid policies, which were implemented by the National Party government, ensured that:

➢ Certain portions of the South African population did not have a political voice, and/or if they did, their voice was not heard;

➢ People were located (geographically) according to their races, colour and cultures. This led to the establishment of homelands for blacks, leading further to disparities in respect of the provision of educational and other basic needs to the different population aggregates.

It will be appropriate at this point to cite a paragraph prior the chapter on "School Ownership, governance and finance" in education white Paper 1. The paragraph provides that:

> "In creating a Constitution based on democracy, equal citizenship and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, South Africans have created a completely new basis for state policy towards the provision of schooling in the future. Unavoidably, because inequality is so deep-rooted in our educational history, new policy for school provision must be a policy for increasing access and retention of … student, achieving equity in public funding, eliminating illegal discrimination, creating democratic governance, rehabilitating schools and raising the quality of performance…"(RSA, 1996:36)

This paragraph, in concert with the context of this study, calls for a review of the education policies of the previous era, how they dictated and impacted on the models of school governance then. This chapter will focus on education policies of the past and the governance of schools in particular, and the on the education policies which came into effect after the new political dispensation (after 1994) in South Africa. It will also look at the importance of school governance, the different stakeholders who are involved in school governance and the legal status of the school governance structures. In each case, i.e. after a presentation of the governance structures before and after 1994, a school governance map will be consolidated to indicate the patterns of discharge of authority within the school governance set up.

2.2.   **THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

The importance of school governance can best be understood within the context of the devolution of decision-making authority from the state to the school site (decentralization). Williams, Harold, Robertson and Southworth (1997:626) present a case about the decentralization of decision-making authority in America, from state educational agencies and school districts to the local school site. They indicate that "the shift was being recommended in the belief that organizations will perform better if those who must implement and are affected by programs and decisions have a greater say in decision-making. The last part of this statement suggests that school governance should have a democratic base and thus be a vehicle for furthering the democratic values and principles of a nation. Kelly (1995:25) has this to say about "democracy" as a concept, and about a commitment to democracy to ensure proper school governance:

> "The concept of democracy requires that those elected to hold office in that democracy can reasonably be expected to perform the functions of that office in a manner designed to ensure the best interests of the nation as a whole and not merely to uphold the sectional interests of themselves or their party." "… to be committed to democratic forms of social living implies a commitment to upholding human rights, to maintaining equality, to promoting individual liberty and supporting the idea of the participation of all in decision-making (P30).

Finally, Kelly (1995:33) indicates that "any society wishing to claim to be democratic must undertake all of its planning and decision-

making in full awareness that the interests, the rights of all citizens must be taken into account at every stage.

From what Williams, Harold, Robertson and Southworth (1997) and Kelly (1995) said about the decentralization and democratization of decision-making authority in school governance, based on democratic values and principles:

➢ It increases and ensures accountability and transparency on all matters pertaining to the schools concerned;
➢ School governance ensures that all members of the school community who have a genuine interest in the school have a voice on the proper functioning of the school;
➢ School governance also ensures that the interests, aspirations, ambitions, human rights, equality, individual liberties, and the moral and cultural diversity of all citizens are upheld rather than upholding the interests, aspirations and ambitions of the bureaucracy.

All the above said, it will still be established in the next parts of this chapter if the two models of school governance under review propagated the enhancement of democratic principles and values or not. It should however, be noted at this point that the primary aim of this study is not to establish which model of school governance is better than the other, but rather to establish if the pre-1994 school governance model shaped or had influence on how schools are governed today.

2.3.   **LEGAL STATUS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN SCHOOLS**

Before the legal status of school governing bodeis can be indicated, it is important to first establish the different types of schools in South Africa. According to an OECD report (1992:6) the former government put in place "restrictive strategy" to prevent the provision of education by the church, private agencies and business. In spite of these restrictions, however, private and semi-private schools like the model C schools still existed. These schools opted out of government control and SGBs there became the employers (DoE, 1996:44). From this foregoing it can be concluded that the only schools which had legitimate governance bodies were the model C schools.

The advent of a democratic constitution in 1994 saw the re-organisation of schools in South Africa into public schools and independent schools. The community schools, farm schools, state schools, and state-aided schools (including church schools, Model C schools, mine schools etc) became known as public schools, and all the private schools belong to the category of independent schools (RSA, 1996:13). This re-organisation of schools has been a move by the Ministry of Education to ensure that it breaks with the past and lay a foundation on which a democratically-governed and equitable system of high quality is built. Furthermore on the basis of this re-organisation, the South African Schools Act was established in 1996, which ensured that all the different categories of schools belonged to a single category of public schools.

From the information above, the legal status of school governing bodies can be summarised as follows:

The legal status of the school committees, committee boards and school boards can be legitimated only as far as they were a product of an Act of Parliament (the education Act of 1953). It can also be pointed out that the non-representative character of these governance structures, deprivation of decision-making power, and lack of access to the policy formulation machinery in education, rendered the legality of these structures questionable.

The non-representative character of the pre-1994 school governance structures can further be explained as follows:
  - ➢ The immediate stakeholders in the schools i.e learners, educators and non-educator members were excluded; and
  - ➢ Even those parent members who formed the governance structures then, did not have the mandate and power in terms of policy formation, except in model C schools, which were semi-privatised and the SGBs there became the employers.(see 2.2).

The school governing bodies, which replaced the governance structures indicated above obtained their legal status from the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996. They have been accorded this legal status on the basis of their being fully representative of all the immediate stakeholders in the teaching learning interaction i.e. parents, teachers, learners and non-teaching people.

2.4.   EDUCATION GOVERNANCE POLICY BEFORE 1994

The previous paragraph has reflected briefly on the re-organisation of schools in South Africa into a single category of public schools to

ensure legitimacy and proper governance and administration. According to Berkhout (1998:9):

> "The past decade's criticism of education focussed on the inequalities and illegitimacy of the structures and their effects – the emphasis on equality by redressing historic imbalances (redistributing the nation's resources) and ensuring participation of all stakeholders or " grassroots consultation" (especially previously underrepresented groups) for legitimacy, has consequently become two most pervasive values underpinning the public discourse on reform of education."

This paragraph has its roots on the education policy of the past and how it impacted on, and shaped the education system of the countries. The education policy fostered separate education systems on the different racial groups, whites, coloured, African and Indian. Consequently, even the governance Structures in schools differed according to the specific racial groups. While whites had governing bodies fully represented in the education system, the other racial groups had none. Berkhout (1998:6) indicates that:

> "The introduction of so-called Model C schools in the White subsystem was accompanied by a rationale of greater parental participation or the rhetoric of "privatisation" and competition among schools. These schools have become visible symbols of educational privilege and inequality."

The following section will indicate the different school governance structures i.e. school committees, committee boards and school

boards which were put in place prior to 1994. Each of these structures will briefly be discussed on the basis of its characteristics, legal status, its composition, qualifications for membership and its duties and powers.

2.5. SCHOOL COMMITTEES

2.5.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF A SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A school committee is a body established to assist any school board in the control and management of any Bantu Community school. The people who are elected to serve in school committee represent the school and the community.

2.5.2. LEGAL STATUS OF A SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School committees were established in terms of the Bantu Education (Act, 47 of 1953) and accorded the function of assisting any school board in controlling and managing any Bantu Community school under subsection (1) of section 12 of the Act. From this it can be concluded that a school committee is a legal body because it has been established by an Act of Parliament.

2.5.3. COMPOSITION OF A SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A school committee consisted of five parents elected at a meeting of parents, and four members nominated by the circuit inspector, after consultation with local interest groups such as the Bantu affairs Commissioner, the Churches, Bantu Tribal Council or township council, Urban Bantu Council or Bantu advisory board,

according to Bantu management system in the area concerned (RSA, 1966:2).

From these members, the circuit inspector then nominates a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. All these nominations and elections of parents into the school committee have to be approved by the Regional Director. The Regional Director had the powers to determine the term of office of the school committee, to approve and to dissolve a school committee if he deemed it necessary.

2.5.4.   QUALIFICATION   FOR   MEMBERSHIP   OF   A   SCHOOL COMMITTEE

For a parent to qualify for nomination and election to be a member of any school committee, they had to meet the following requirement:

- ➢ Must be a Bantu (i.e. should be Black);
- ➢ Must be 25 years of age or older;
- ➢ Must not have been found guilty of any offence or crime for which he was sentenced to imprisonment for a period of six months or more;
- ➢ Must be of sound mind and has been certified as such by a competent;
- ➢ Must not be a serving teacher at the school and if she is a woman she must not be a wife of any teacher, any school board secretary or any other Bantu Officer whose duties are connected with school matters; and
- ➢ Must not be a Bantu who is not allowed under section 6 of the Bantu (Urban areas) Consolidation Amendment Act,

1995 (Act No. 16 of 1955), to reside in the area concerned (RSA, 1966:3).

2.5.5.   DUTIES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Duties, powers and functions of a school committee were to:

- Be a link between the school and the school board, by bringing to the attention of the latter, any matter which, in its opinions, affects the welfare and efficiency of the school;
- Expel any pupil from the school on the grounds of immorality, constant misconduct, lack of cleanliness or for any other reason which the school committee may regard as of sufficient importance to the school;
- Recommend to the school board that an inquiry be held if in its opinion, the principal or any teacher on the staff:
  - Does not have the required qualifications for his post;
  - Is incompetent in teaching by means of the prescribed medium;
  - Is incapable of teaching efficiently owing to any physical or mental defect.

- Advice the school board on all matters concerning the appointment of teachers;
- Be responsible for the supervision of the buildings, sites, fencing and other accessories of the school concerned and to remind the school board timeously on any inadequacies regarding the school building;
- Establish, control and administer any school fund, subject to the regulations regarding school board funds and the

> regulations regarding the establishment, control and administration of school funds at Bantu community schools.

➢ See to it that during March of each year, an income and expenditure statement for the previous year and a budget for the new year are presented to a general meeting of parents and that the principal compiles and submits a general report concerning the school.

2.6.   **COMMITTEE BOARDS**

2.6.1   CHARACTERISTICS OF A COMMITTEE BOARD

A committee boards is a body established in terms of the Act to control and management one or more community schools in cases where the secretary for education decides that it is not necessary to establish school committees as well as school boards. This situation may have been applicable in territorial schools with low enrollments, leading to only one governance structure taking charge of these schools. The role of the secretary for Education reveals the important role that was attached to the position and this further adds to the list of authority figures within the school governance set up of the past.

2.6.2.   LEGAL STATUS OF A COMMITTEE BOARD

Subregulation (1) of regulation 34 of the Act provides that a committee board shall be a body corporate and shall in its own name be capable of suing or being sued in any court of performing all such acts as may be necessary for or incidental to the performance of such duties and functions or the exercise of such power as may be conferred or imposed upon or entrusted to it by

the Act. This implies that the committee board becomes a legal representative of all the schools under its control.

2.6.3.   COMPOSITION OF A COMMITTEE BOARD

The composition of a committee board and the procedures for its establishment are similar to those of a school committee (see 2.5.3. above).

2.6.4.   QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF A COMMITTEE BOARD

The same qualifications which apply for school committee membership (see 2.5.4. above) also apply for committee board membership.

2.6.5.   DUTIES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF A COMMITTEE BOARD

On the basis of the similarities on the composition and qualification for membership between school committees and committee boards, the duties, powers and functions of these structures will always overlap. The following functions apply to committee boards only. In terms of sub-regulation (1) of regulation 33 of the Act, a committee board shall be responsible for:

➢ The establishment, maintenance and control of community schools and to optimum distribution of schools;
➢ The acquisition of school sites, erection or hiring of school buildings and the maintenance of such buildings and sites;
➢ The employment of teachers on conditions of service prescribed by the minister;

> ➢ The acquisition, allocation, control and maintenance of school equipment;
>
> ➢ Inquiring into any complaint concerning the school or teaching staff under the control of the committee board;
>
> ➢ Consideration of any report referred to it and advising the department on all matters concerning the school(s) under its control; and
>
> ➢ Collecting and accounting for all moneys due to the committee board from whatever source.

2.7.   SCHOOL BOARDS

2.7.1.   CHARACTER OF A SCHOOL BOARD

A school board is a body established to control and manage two or more community schools.

2.7.2.   LEGAL STATUS OF A SCHOOL BOARD

Subregulation (1) of regulation 54 of the Act provides that a school board shall be a body corporate and shall in its own name be capable of suing or being sued in any court of law. It is important to note that school committees, committee boards and school boards were put in place in schools to act as duly appointed agents of the schools as juristic persons. Since schools cannot participate in law in the same way and to the same extent that persons do, the school boards, committee boards and school committees will have to act on behalf of the schools under their care.

2.7.3.   COMPOSITION OF A SCHOOL BOARDS

The composition of a committee board differs from that of the school committee and committee boards. School boards were made up of:

- Five parent members from among the group of parent members elected for the school committees in the area of the school boards concerned;
- Four members nominated by the circuit inspector from among his nominees on school committees in the area of the school board concerned after consultation with locally interested persons; a person chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members of the school board.

2.7.4.   QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF A SCHOOL BOARD

The same qualifications, which apply for, school committee and committee boards apply, for school board membership.

2.7.5.   DUTIES, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL BOARD

The school boards were responsible for:

- ➢ Exercising control over the finances of the school committees;
- ➢ Inquiring into any complaint concerning any school or teaching staff under the control of the board;
- ➢ Hearing appeals against decisions of any school committee on any matter which, in the opinion of the school committee, effects the welfare and efficiency of the school;

> ➢ Consideration of any report which be referred to it;
>
> ➢ Keeping such records and statistics and to furnish such returns and reports as the secretary may require from time to time.

2.8   Summary and critical reflection

In the brief review of the governance before 1994, we have seen the three different bodies, which were put in place to govern community schools. One striking feature of this governance model is that it was not fully representative of all the immediate stakeholders in the schools. The school committees, committee boards and school boards were made up by parents only, leaving out learners, educators and non-educator members in the schools. This situation can be traced from non-consultative; "top-down" and 'close" policy-making style of the government, which made wider participation in policy formulation difficult, and subject to the control of a bureaucracy that is not neutral (NEPI, 1992:13).

This model of school governance fell shot of upholding the principles of democracy, which, according to Kelly (1995:30)

> "….to be committed to democratic forms of living implies a commitment to upholding human rights, to maintaining equality, to promoting individual liberty and to supporting the idea of the participation of all in decision-making."

The non-consultative character is evident where the circuit inspector(s) plays a role of nominating members into the three different structures. Conversely, the interest groups are the ones who were suppose to nominate the members in consultation with

the circuit inspector because they are supposed to know such members as members of their communities. This further confirms the top –down discharge of authority within the education governance set up of the time and the non-neutrality of the bureaucracy (see 3.3.6).

This review has also revealed that in the execution of their duties and functions, these bodies did not have equal powers and also that the highest degree of accountability was between the bodies themselves rather than to communities that put them in place. The school boards had more powers and authority than the school committees and committee boards such that the former was the main and only link between the latter and the education ministry. In some cases, these structures were put in place all of them, with their similar functions and duties and this created confusion on the basis of who is who?" According to an OECD report, this fragmentation these structures and the duplication of their duties and functions

"…. Created very long lines of accountability, so that even when official wish to respond to local demands, they were often unable to do so." (NEPI, 1992:11).

This school governance model had to be challenged in favour of a democratic model, that would have more responsibilities and decision-making powers.

2.9.   **EDUCATION GOVERNANCE POLICY AFTER 1994**

The previous era revealed a centralized form of educational and school governance, meaning that the people on the ground, who are directly involve in education, had little or no voice at all with

regard to policy issues. The solution here would not merely be the decentralisation of governance to the local level, but this had section of this chapter will focus on the second model of school governance which replaced the previous model.

After the first democratic elections of 1994, South Africa became a democratic country with a democratic constitution. These elections resulted in revolutionary changes in the constitution of the country, with a view to restructure the social, economic, political and educational structures of this country. This suggests that the way we do things, inter-alia, the way we build a new education system and the way we go about running the system, must be based on the democratic values and principles in our constitution (DoE, 1997:5). The democratic proposals on education are equality, quality, efficiency and individual liberty. To ensure that these proposals become a reality, the National minister of Education endorsed that SGBs of all public schools be responsible for a set of basic functions ("basic powers"), and should be entitled to negotiated with its provincial education department to take responsibility for additional functions ("negotiated powers") DeO(1995:22). These functions would then enable the public schools, through their SGBs and within the National and Provincial framework, to carry out functions like the language policy of the school, religious observances, academic policies and the recommendation and appointment of educators.

Since the adoption of the democratic constitution in South Africa, a legal provision has been made, in concert with the provisions of section 247 of the constitution, for the active participants of parents, learners, educators, workers and other members of the community in the school governance. The introduction of School Governing

Bodies in public schools marked the birth of a new body of learners, parents, and teachers, whose powers of operation are clearly defined and enshrined in the constitution. (It should be noted that from now on, the acronyms SGBs, RSA and SASA will be used for School Governing Bodies, Republic of South Africa and South African Schools Act respectively). In the light of the above, the introduction of SGBs in public schools meant that the decisions which were, before 1994, taken by parents only (as members of school committees, committee boards), would henceforth be joint responsiblility of parents, teachers, learners and other members of the school community. This part of the chapter will focus on school governance as it is today with specific focus on SGBs. A school governance map will hereafter be consolidated to depict the "top-down" and "bottom-up" discharge of authority within this governance model.

2.10.   SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBs)

2.10.1.   CHARACTERISTICS OF A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

The term "governing body is used uniformly to describe the body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt policy for each public school in terms of national and provincial education regulations (RSA, 1996:17). De Villiers (2000:102) defines a governing body as a body established by law, and consists of people who are elected to govern a school. Contrary to the pre-1994 model of governance, which had to operate strictly within policies formulated by the bureaucracy, SGBs have a mandate by SASA to formulate and adopt policies that will serve as guideline on how they want the schools under their control to be. These policies however, will have to be in line with National

and Provincial policies and legislation. The people serving in SGBs represent the schools and their communities i.e. they are there to promote the best interests of the school and to ensure that the learners at the schools receive the best education possible (DoE, 1997:7). Holt & Hinds (1995:83) have this to say about members of SGBs:

> "As an individual governor or head, you come from a local community of some kind and in that sense you are representative of that local community. What you bring to the governing body, what you say and do outside carries something of the governing body and the school."

This statement further emphasizes the constitutional duty of the SGbs
That of promoting the best interest of the school.

2.10.2   LEGAL STATUS OF A GOVERNING BODY

- Section 16(1) of SASA provides that the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body. This suggests that the school as a juristic person has a right to have its name, for example, protected. Since the school cannot participate in law in the manner and to the same extent as a natural person, it has to act through its duly appointed agent (Davies, 1999:60) and in this case, the agent being the SGB..

2.10.3.   PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHING A GOVERNING BODY

Section 23(2) of SASA provides that elected members of the SGB shall comprise a member or members of each of the following categories:

Parents of learners at the school; educator at the school; members of staff at the school who are not educators; and learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school. Each component as responsible for voting for its own members, i.e. only parent are allowed to vote for parent members; educators for educator members; learners for learner members amid non-educators for non-educator members (NPDE, 1997:29).

The number of members per component will be determined by the status of the school (primary or post primary) and the enrolment of the school e.g. in the primary school there will be no learner members in the SGB whereas in post primary schools there will be some. An SGB is a statutory body in the school and therefore its establishment must be compatible with the principles and values of democracy enshrined in the constitution of the RSA. Against this background therefore, the procedures of nomination, election and voting are followed in the establishment of an SGB.

2.10.4.   COMPOSITION OF A GOVERNING BODY

Section 23 (1) of SASA provides that membership of the SGB of an ordinary public school comprises elected members, the principal in his/her official capacity and co-opted members.

2.10.4.1.   ELECTED MEMBERS

Elected member's form the largest group of members of the SGB and this group consists of:

> ➢ PARENTS

Parents here refers to parents of officially enrolled learners at the school and who are not employed at the school (DoE,1997:12). The term "parent" may also be used to refer to the person who is legally entitled to custody of a learner.

> ➢ EDUCATORS

Refers to teachers /educators who are employed at the school

> ➢ LEARNERS

Refers to officially enrolled learners in grade eight and higher. The Representative Council of Learners (LRC) will elect such learners to the SGB.

> ➢ NON-TEACHING STAFF

This component refers to people who are employed at the school on a non-educator capacity e.g. clerical staff, security guards, cleaners etc.

2.10.4.2.   THE PRINCIPAL IN HIS/HER OFFICIAL CAPACITY

The principal can also be referred to as an automatic member of the SGB since he serves ex officis i.e. he may not be elected to become a member of the SGB. By virtue of his appointment as the head of the school, he becomes a member of the SGB.

2.10.4.3.　　CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Co-opted members are those members of the community who can be invited by the SGB to serve without being formally elected. These members helps the SGB to perform its functions but they do not have the right to vote. if a school is on private property, one of the co-opted members will be the owner of the property or someone the owner chooses (doe, 1997:13). other potential co-opted members are individuals who successfully served in previous SGB of the same school or another neighboring school.

2.10.5.　　RESPONSIBILITY OF A GOVERNING BODY. THE GOVERNANCE/MANAGEMENT CONTROVERSY

A controversial situation often arises in most public schools with regard to who governs and who manages the school. Section 16 of SASA draws a line between the governance and management of schools by assigning school governance to the SGBs and the professional management to the principals.

In a practical sense, the differences between the management and governance of schools are not clear-cut. A good relationship between the principal and the SGB is very important to balance the relationship between governance and management. SGBs are given full responsibility for the governance of schools. According to SASA, there are eleven functions which the SGBs of public schools must perform and, aver and above these functions, there are other functions which the SGB may apply for to the MEC of education in the particular province and these are referred to as the allocated functions. The compulsory and allocated functions will be highlighted.

2.10.5.1.   COMPULSORY FUNCTION OF THE SGB

Section 20 of SASA stipulates the compulsory functions of SBGs subject to this Act, the SGB must:

➢ Determine the character and ethos of the school. The following may be considered revealed to the determination of the character and ethos of the school:

- The right to determine the admission policy for the school [S5 (5)]

- The discretion to determine a language for the school (S6 (2)};

- The discretion to lay down the rules for the conducting of religious observances at the school, under conditions prescribed by the Act (S7);

- The obligation to determine the code of conduct for the learner of the school [S8 (1)];

- The obligation to recommend to the provincial Head of Department the appointment of educators to the subsidized post establishment of the school subject to limiting provisions [S20 (1)(I)], also the recommendation to the Head of Department, on the appointment of non-educators to the subsidized post establishment of the school, subjected to limiting provisions [S20 (1)(j)].

➢ The SGB is responsible for the funding of the school and matters related to the management of its finances includes:

- Establishing a school fund and administering it according to the guidelines set by the National Department of Education [S37 (1)];

- Opening a banking account [S37 (1[;

- Preparing a budget each year according to the guidelines set by the MEC for education in the concerned province [S38 (1)].

2.10.5.2.   ALLOCATED FUNCTIONS OF THE SGB

Section 21 of SASA stipulates that some functions the SGBs may need to perform over and above the compulsory ones may be applied for to the MEC of Education in the particular province. Some of these functions are:

➢ Permission to maintain and improve the school property, buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels where applicable By doing this, the SGbs reveal a moral responsibility to ensure that the school buildings and grounds are well maintained in order to prevent anyone from being injured at the school (de Villiers, 2000:109).

➢ To purchase textbooks, educational material and equipment and to pay for services rendered to the school [S21 (1)(c)].

In executing those functions, the SGB must be accountable, transparent and scrupulously honest (de Villiers, 2000:110). It should be noted that for an SGB to be allocated these functions, it must prove to the MEC for education in the particular province that it has the means and abilities to carry out these functions.

Overall, the duties and functions of SGBs as listed above, reflect the democratic basis of these structures. In line with this, Berkhout and Wielemans (1995:10) argue that:

> "Models that merely reflect the devolution, delegation, deconcernstration or privatization of powers or competencies may be reflected in the policy or laws of a country. "Raab (19994:14) in Berkhout and Wielemans (ibid) states that" such models assume an imperative command through hierarchies that overlook the powerful interactive force of networks and/or other structures and actors in a world of pluralistic policy-making."

The integration of the government's policies with the policies which school governors formulate ensure that the imbalances of the past in respect of school governance are addressed. With the new powers allocated to the SGBs by the Constitution and SASA, the SGBs are now capable of formulating and implementing policies which, while they challenge the inequalities and discriminatory policies of the past, they still operate within the legal framework stipulated in the Constitution and SASA.

2.10.5.3.   <u>SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MAP AFTER 1994</u>

This review has revealed that the adaptor of a democratic Constitution in South Africa has resulted in the democratization of education and its associated governance structures. Decision-making powers and functions have since been devolved to the local levels (schools and communities). This model has adopted SGBs, which are made up by parents (representing the community); teachers (representing the teaching staff); learners (representing other learners); Non- teaching staff and the principal as ex-officio member. This structure of the SGBs called for a high degree of cooperation and partnership between the different stakeholders to ensure maximum productivity in schools. From this foregoing, a

school governance map, depicting the discharge of authority within this governance set-up will be constituted.

FIG: 2. School governance map after 1994
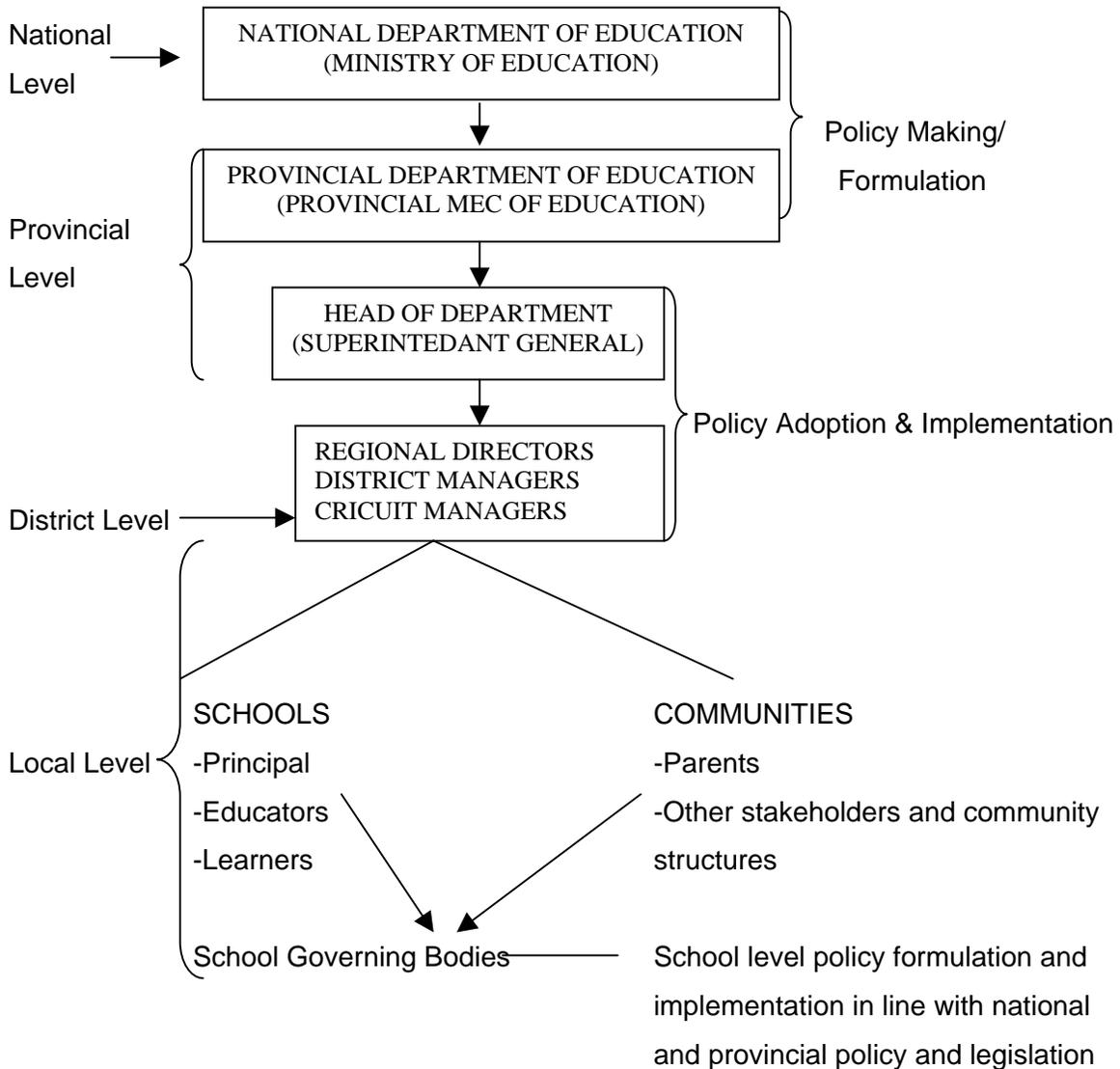
This school governance map outlines the framework within which school governing bodies should work. It indicates the interaction between five different levels in which policies are formulated, adopted and implemented. This map is compatible with the

proposal of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEP1, 1992:38), which states that:

> "A new governance system for South Africa must be dedicated to promoting the widest participation of all constituencies in the governance of the system, balanced against the need to ensure efficiency, coherence, and national unity. A new governance system should provide for the maximum level of accountability by ensuring that decision are taken at a level as close to the people directly affected by that decision as is compatible with efficient and effective administration.

The above school governance map, in concert with the NEPI proposals, outlines the democratic principles, which should underpin the governance of education in general and schools in particular, to ensure legitimacy of the system. This school governance map however, while it reflects the involvement of the stakeholders as prescribed by SASA, it does not give room for the participation of other stakeholders such as the church, tribal authorities (in Bushbuckridgeas a rural area) and business.

The following of this chapter will critically reflect on the two governance structures (the pre-1994 and the post 19940 by way of comparing them, using the principles of participatory democratic indicated in the NEPI proposal above i.e. efficiency, accountability, equity, equality and effectiveness.

2.11.   COMPARISONS AND CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE TWO SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MODELS.

Before embarking on the comparison of the two school governance models, it will be appropriate to have a bird's eyeview of the

governance of schools and the education policies of developed countries such as Canada and New Zealand. The choice by these two countries is prompted by the fact that both countries have a federal system of government, which is close to the South African type of government. A federal government in, which several states form a unity but remain independent in internal affairs.

The school governance policy in New Zealand is similar to that of South African. Schools are governed by boards of trustees (site councils), which consist of three to five parents representatives, principal, a staff representatives, and, in secondary schools, a student representatives. (Williams, Harold, Robertson, and Southworth, 1997:627). New Zealand is thus moving in the direction of school self-management, where a systematic approach to decision-making allows governors, parents, pupils, teachers and other interested parties appropriate participation (Caldwell and Spink, 1988:30).

School governing bodies in Canada, like in South African and New Zealand, include students, especially at universities and colleges. The general trend of school governance in Canada is in the direction of increasingly devolving power and authority to local level.

A survey of literature regarding the governance of schools in some African countries was also conducted for the purpose of this study, only two counties will be cite, namely Nigeria and Egypt.

In Nigeria and the Arab Republic of Egypt authority for primary and adult education is decentralized to the education offices of the local government authorities, which are also responsible for the appointment of teachers, the provision and maintenance of all physical facilities and teaching materials. Cowen (1982:57) states that:

> "The state has full supervision of education from both the financial and administration point of view. Local bodies undertake the responsibility of implementation."

The difference between the two African countries cited above and South Africa, in respect of school governance can be traced from the governments of these countries. South Africa has a democratic government, which advocates democratic governance, which allows its different provinces some degree of independence in internal affairs. If therefore happens that all the different states in Nigeria and Egypt favour the central control of their education system rather than opening it up for public participation like South Africa, Canada and New Zealand.

In a nutshell, the governance of schools in South Africa is similar to that of Canada and New Zealand. All three countries involve parents, teachers and learners in their governing bodies.

In comparing the pre-1994 and post 1994 school governance structures, it becomes clear that during the pre-1994 era, major functions of governance were performed by the bureaucracy, making the governance structures a simple window dressing. The restrictive measures which were used to prevent the provision of education by the church, private agencies and business are evidence to the suppression of democratic values and principles which were supposed to underpin the models of governance before 1994.

The first democratic principle that emerges, and has been mentioned a number of times by different scholars in this chapter, is participation which is one of the components of equality. The Dutch Contours Memorandum (1976) in Kogan (1979:39) has this to say about participation and equality:

> "The school should be a community in which its pupils should be involve in the determination of teaching arrangements. Older pupils should not only choose courses but have a say in the way the school is run, in the appointment of staff and be responsible for pupil oriented school activities."

Put differently, the above statement suggests that people need to have a voice on matters of matters of policy that affect them. The former school governance model gave room for the participation of parents to a minimum degree, and no room at all for learners, teachers, and other community members in the governance of schools. On contrary, the post 1994 SGBs ensure the participation of all groups, teachers, learners parents and other members of the community who have a genuine interst in the way schools are run.

To recap on this comparison, the influence of the former model of school governance and how this model shaped the new model highlighted. Paras (1977:13) argues that:

> "Many of our present-day community problems have roots that extend to the very origin of our school system."

These words can also be modified to say that even the "successes" and further "challenges" that shaped our present day education systems may have their roots in our past systems. To this, it can be added that:

> "An education system's culture reflects a blend of that system's past and present it is defined by its values, its traditions, its teacher corps, its students and parents bodies, and its current policies and practices. An education system's culture should not be viewed as something, which stays the

44

same. It changes constantly as its community changes and as the world within it exists changes the manner in which schools are governed today. (SASA UPDATE, APRIL 2003:3).

The shift from the non-participative structures of the past to the new governance structures confirms the truth of the above statement.

2.12.   **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

2.12.1.   SUMMARY

This review has revealed that the adoption of a democratic constitution in South Africa has resulted in the democratization of education and its associated governance structures. Decision-making powers and functions have since been devolved to the local levels (schools and communities). The post 1994 school governance model has adopted SGBs, which are made up by parents (representing the community); learners (representing other learners); teachers, non-teaching staff and the principal as ex-officio member.

2.12.2.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the new governance structures (the SGBs) called for a high degree of co-operation and partnership between the different stakeholders to ensure maximum productivity in schools. The membership in the post 1994 governance structures has been improved to include teachers, non-teaching staff and learners, contrary to the pre-1994 school committees, school boards and committee boards, which had only parents and the principal as members.

The pre-1994 school governance structure did not have the powers to influence school policy like the post 1994 structures do. Their powers were limited to mobilizing community funding (payment of school fees) in order to pay for new buildings, maintenance costs, and other running expenses.

The post 1994 school governing bodies have more powers, accorded them by the SASA which included the formulation and adoption of policy at school level, in line with national provincial policy and legislation, appointment of educators on the staff establishment of the school and also the promotion and dismissal of staff members subject to applicable labour laws.

CHAPTER 3

3.   **DIFFERENT   COMMUNITY   STRUCTURES   IN   THE
        BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON
        SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

3.1.   **INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter has revealed that the decentralization or
devolution of decision-making authority in education is not a new
concept, or, put different, it is not a product of the new democratic
constitution of South Africa; it has its roots in the past.

The formation of the school committees, committee boards and
school boards in public schools is evidence enough of the
awareness of the previous government of the necessity of involving
the grassroots in decision-making. But the pre-1994 school
governance structures as   indicated above, revealed an
undemocratic character in respect of their representativity in
education, such as teachers and learners. They only consisted of
parents. These structures were a product of apartheid, which
according to Karlson (1998:4) was:

> "a special form of colonial domination and privilege based on
> racial differentiation and that is deeply entrenched through
> an inequitable schooling system…"

This chapter will focus on the different community structures in the
Bushbuckridge area and influence that they have on the
governance of schools in this area. In line with Casanova (1996) in

de Carvalho (2001) above, chapter one of this research project indicated that if this study establishes that the involvement of community structures will lead to proper school governance, strategies for their appraisal and capacity building will be developed but if not, measures to build a cooperative relationship between these social groups and the school have to be developed.

Maxcy (1995: 169-170), in analysing the restructuring education system of the United States of America, has this to say about school governance:

> "School governance has historically dealt with the internal operations of the school as well as the relation the school has with the community… older patterns of school organization cut off teachers, parents and students from choices, with the result that their characters were built in partial and truncated fashion. Many of our modern problems attached to schools (discipline, drugs, violence, etc.) may be explained from this point".

Both Karlson (1998) and Maxcy (1995) have, in their analysis, foreseen an imperative for a possible paradigm shift from the manner in which schools were traditionally organized. Their analysis further revealed a necessity for school governance reform, which gives recognition for the participation of teachers, parents, learners and community members. This has been a point of departure of the previous chapter and it further gives ground for this chapter.

A consolidated analysis of the inputs of these two scholars further calls for a revisiting of the concept of democracy, which also formed the core of the previous chapter. The principles and values of

participatory democracy will shape this chapter. Karlsson (1998:4) argues that;

> "… a democratized society and education system nurtures mechanisms and forums at the various tiers of decision-making through which civil society and relevant stakeholders in the community are able to participate on an equitable basis with the state and its executive arm, i.e. department of education."

From this citation, two principles of participatory democracy have emerged viz. democratization of education, which means "the democratic participation in school affairs" (Coombe and Godden, 1996:17) and equity. To the two principles above can be added the principles of redress, quality, efficiency and accountability, which were dealt with in chapter 2. This study seeks to establish the structures which are better positioned to ensure that the values and principles underlying participatory democracy as mentioned above, are accomplished and cultivated in a South African education system in general and in particulary the Bushbuckridge area.

According to Apple and Beane (1995: 4-5):

> " democracy is the basis for how we govern ourselves, the concept by which we measure the wisdom and worth of social policies and shifts, the ethical anchor we seek when our political ship seems to drift. And it is the standard we use to measure the political progress of the other countries as well as their trade status with our own."

From this conceptualization of the concept of democracy, we can safely deduce that school governance should be a duty of all who have a stake and interest in education. Abrahamson (1977) in MacBeth (1989:128) indicates that:

" Stakeholder theory is integral to notions of local democracy, especially that those affected by a decision should be able, through representatives, to influence-though not necessarily to make-that decision."

Casanova (1996) in de Carvalho (20001; 2) cautions that:

"The meaning of parental involvement is neither consensual nor is its practice necessarily positive, leading sometimes to undesirable excess on the part of parents (as individuals or organized groups) with negative consequences for children, teachers, and the school community."

The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, which is a product of the democratic Constitution of South Africa, has given way for the establishment of School Governing Bodies in all public schools. These SGBs have to be made up by learners, teachers and parents of the enrolled learners of a particular school. This composition limits the number of stakeholders who can contribute towards better school governance. Furthermore, this composition of the SGB would be interpreted as implying that within a particular school community, teachers, parents and learners are the only legitimate group that can govern schools. MacBeth (19989:129) argues that:

" Members of the Community have an interest in school matters as local residents, as tax-payers and rate payers, as

local politicians, as potential employers, as those involved in linked services, or simply as citizens. Yet it would be difficult to claim that these groups had a stake in the school comparable to that of parents, staff and senior pupil."

This foregoing is not intended to challenge or rather to discredit the constitutional composition of SGBs. If is rather intended to establish if the involvement of these other stakeholders such as church formations, SGBs, and tribal authorities, to mention a few, will not lead to better school governance. Negroni, cited in Walsh (1996:200) indicates that:

"The complete and total interdependence of community, schooling and democracy must be recognized …… Schools are much more than organizations that are instruments to create and achieve goals. Schools are communities that are infused by the common values of the people in them."

The latter part of this citation directs us back to the principles and values of participatory democracy, which are supposed to form the core of this study. Learners come to school with entrenched values from their communities. School Governing Bodies have to make sure that the activities, which take place in their schools, uphold and cultivate, among the learners, respect for the values and the cultures of others.

Before investigating the influence of the different community structures mentioned above, it is important to indicate that the introduction of SGBs in public schools in South Africa was a move to decentralize decision-making authority from the state to the local

levels, as Abrahamson (1977) in MacBeth (1989:129) indicated (seep4). Lauglo, (1995:9) indicates that:

> "… there are three main values invoked in rationales for decentralization: a politically legitimate dispersal of authority, the quality of services rendered, and the efficient use of resources."

By these words, Lauglo advocates that in the process of decentralization, any government has to ensure that authority is dispersed or rather devolved to those individuals or groups that will not challenge the political legitimacy of the government, those that will have the capacity and expertise to deliver quality services with limited resources. A question that may be asked from the analysis of Lauglo's perceptions of decentralization is whether the SGBs as they are constituted, better positioned to carry out their mandate as laid down by the South African Schools Act, by loyally serving, to the satisfaction of their local communities and the government.

The second question is whether the involvement of other community structures in school governance will make any difference.

The following is an ideal typical structure which strives to indicate the representativety which this study is probing.

Fig 3.1. Ideal typical structure of community structure representativity in school governance.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           NATIONAL GOVERNMENT                 │
│        National Ministry of Education         │
│          School Governance Unit               │
│   Member(s) of School Governance Consortium   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      ▲
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT                │
│      Provincial Department of Education        │
│          School Governance Unit               │
│   Member(s) of School Governance Consortium   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      ▲
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              DISTRICT LEVEL                    │
│          School Governance Unit               │
│   Member(s) of School Governance Consortium   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      ▲
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               SCHOOL LEVEL                     │
│  Schools jointly form a School governance      │
│  Consortium consisting of: church leaders,     │
│  tribal leaders and members of SGBs.           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

This ideal typical School Governance structure is based on the understanding that sine, for example, members of parliament represent their constituencies at provincial and national level, and as such they are well positioned to influence legislation, the members of the School Governance Consortium will as well be able to influence legislation regarding the governance of schools. The school governance consortium should consist of members from the formations indicated under "school level" above, who will be able to

influence decisions at the highest levels of government, thereby empowering the SGbs at the school levels, to carry out their mandate.

The following section will give some insight into the reasons that prompted this investigation.

3.2.   **REASONS UNDERPINNING THE INVESTIGATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNITY STRUCTURES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE BUSHBCUKRIDGE AREA.**

In chapter 1, the population demographics of Bushbuckridge was presented and a survey of the circumstances that prevail in schools (SNAP survey) was also presented and analysed. The analysis revealed that the population of Bushbuckridge is made up of people with different literacy levels. According to the survey, 60.44% of the population is literate, consisting of teachers, in the majority, followed by nurses and clerks, and then other skilled and semi-skilled people in the other sectors of the economy. According to the survey, 39.56% of the population of Bushbuckridge is illiterate. The majority of the literate parents in this area send their children to better equipped schools i.e former model C schools and private schools, with the hope that they get better education there.are educated and that the total enrolment per year in schools will lead to more people being educated. However, of particular note in the Bushbuckridge area is that the majority of the educated parents send their children to better equipped schools in towns with the hope that they get better education there.

To prove the authenticity of the above point, interviews were condacted with principals of primary and secondary schools

regarding the exodus of learners from their schools. Responses from secondary school principals revealed that many learners take transfers from their schools every new year but it was not clear whether these learners were going to the types of schools mentioned above. Only in a few circumstances where parents request testimonials which have to the submitted to the new schools.

Responses from primary school principals revealed that a larger percentage of learners who leave their schools every year left for a former model C or private school in the neighbouring towns.

Further evidence is found on the number of minibus taxis that commute children every morning and afternoon from the townships and villages and back. The number of these minibuses, according to one transport provider, is increasing every year. Some of the private schools have their own buses which transport learners to and from school everyday.

Against the background of this information, the majority of the children who fill up the classes in the schools in Bushbuckridge come from families where the parents have little or no education at all. It is these very parents who have to be members of the SGBs since they have children in the schools, according to the provisions of the SASA. The problem that emanates here is that those parents who do not have children in the schools, as individuals i.e as members of church formations, tribal authorities and as member of SGBs in other schools also belong to the school community and have an interest in the education that is provided in their schools.

The following section will provide a motivation for possible involvement and / or the reasons for the involvement of the church, tribal authorities, and school governing bodies in schools in the Bushbuckridge area. After this, interviews will be conducted with members of these community structures and the outcomes of the interviews will be analysed and presented in the next chapter.

Furthermore, most of these parents whose children are not in the local schools, and those whose children are already in tertiary institutions want to be involved in the governance of the schools on the grounds that they contributed money in the building of the school(s) (building fund). These parents, as groups or as individuals therefore, put pressure on the School Governing Bodies. With the majority of SGBs made up by illiterate and semi-literate parents, its becomes difficult for them to govern the schools.

3.3. CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY STRUCTURE.

The church is a community structure in as far as it is made up of members of the community. Members of a particular community are looking up to the church as an institution of spiritual healing. Parents of learners, teachers and other stakeholders who have an interest in education belong to specific churches and they pursue particular religious beliefs, which may somehow inform the type of schools which they envisage in their communities.

With regard to Bushbuckridge, like the far northern part of the Limpopo province, the church is regarded as a pioneer of civilization. The British missionaries built and resourced hospitals and schools in this area, some of which are still functional today. An

example of a school that was established by a church and is still being run and funded by the church is the Nazarene Technical College in Bushbuckridge. Many other churches in the Bushbuckridgearea are running Adult Basic Education and Training centers.

With the mushrooming of different denominations, pursuing different religious belief and convictions, these churches should, instead of promoting their individual cultures, promote a general culture of teaching and learning in the schools. This can be achieved through the intervention of the SGBs of the school who will have to unite the different groups, provide a code of conduct, which is in line with the applicable legislation religious observances in South African public schools, which will bind all.

3.4.   **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF TRIBAL AUTHORITIES AS COMMUNITY STRUCTURES**.

In chapter one, it was indicated that Bushbuckridge is the last part further east of the Limpopo Province, which forms a border with Mpumalanga province. Like the most parts of Limpopo which comprises of different language groups, namely, Pedis, Shangaans and Vhavenda, Bushbuckridge is no exception.

Prior to the new political dispensation in South Africa, neighbours in Bushbuckridge were separated by arbitrary boundaries, based on ethnicity and tradition. An ordinary street, river, railway line, shopping complex, to mention a few, were just enough to separate the people of Bushbuckridge on the grounds that they spoke different languages and that they belong to different homelands and different tribal authorities.

For the sake of this study, focus will be placed on two tribal authorities, which were and still are separated by arbitrary boundaries. These are Hoxani Tribal Authority (Shangaans-former Gazankulu) and the Mathibela Tribal Authority (former Lebowa).

During the previous era in Bushbuckridge, tribalism and ethnicity led to the homeland leaders (Ntsan'wisi and Phatudi) building the so-called "boundary schools." The primary purpose of these boundary schools was, on the part of the homeland leaders, a political indicator of service delivery and to ensure that the ethnic and tribal tendencies remained in force between the homelands. This type of school further ensured that Shangaan learners, teachers, principals and inspectors remained in their territory and the same applied with the Pedis.

The dissolution of the three homelands, Gazankulu, Lebowa and Venda after 1994, led to the dissolution of the arbitrary boundaries that separated neighbours in the three homelands. People from different kraals, with different historical backgrounds, traditional/political beliefs and practices, came together as one people of one province, namely, Limpopo (formerly known as North Province). As indicated earlier, the dynamics of the diversity of the people of Limpopo have been behind the rivalry that has plagued the province for the better part of the past decade in respect of administration and governance. Bushbuckridge is no exception to this.

Learners are now free to move from one tribal jurisdiction to another. Principals, school inspectors and inspectors of education, who historically operated within circumscribed areas in their homelands, are deployed to various parts of the province and this,

in many instances, has been a source of conflict between these professionals and the tribal authorities of the area to which they are deployed. It is some of these controversies that prompted this study to investigate, among others, the influence of tribal authorities, as community structures, on school governance in the Bushbuckridge area.

Another area of conflict which characterizes the governance of schools in this area concerns the parent component of the School Governing Bodies. Parents who geographically belong to the former Lebowa homeland (Mathibela Tribal Authority) may sit on the SGB of a boundary school which historically belonged to the Gazankulu homeland (Hoxani Tribal Authority) on the grounds that their children are enrolled in that school. This situation, is justified by the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, which knows no boundaries between tribes and ethnic groups, but in the practical situation (governance of schools), it is a source of friction between the people concerned.

It is necessary at this point to indicate the context in which tribal authorities are regarded as community structures. Unlike the churches, which are regarded as a community structures since they are made up by ordinary community members, the situation with tribal authorities is different.

Tribal authorities are not just community structures but they own the land and the village where the schools are built. By virtue of their royal backgrounds, tribal authorities are supposed to have absolute control over all institutions on their land, including churches and schools. It is on the basis of the latter fact that the governance of schools under school committees, school boards

and committee boards (see chapter1) during the previous era, had the following charactestics:

- ➢ Members were not democratically elected (not the choice of electorate);
- ➢ Committees were dominated by parents, who, at most, were local indunas and members of tribal authorities; and
- ➢ Interference of school committee members on the administration of schools, particularly the appointment of teachers e.g. the appointment of principals, led to nepotism, where a teacher from one tribal area would not be appointed to become a principal in another tribal area.

3.5.   CONTEXTUALISATION OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY AS A COMMUNITY STRUCTURES.

A school governing body is a community structure since it is primarily made up of parents of learners in the school, and these parents, joined by teachers and learners, are mandated to serve the best interests of the school and the school community. All public schools in the Bushbuckridge area have, since 1997, put in place SGBs to replace the school committees, school boards and committee boards, which served as governance structures in schools.

The construction/constitution of the SGBs in Bushbuckridge is in line with the provisions of SASA. The membership includes teachers, parents, learners, non-teaching staff members and the principal. Furthermore, they are put up through the legal procedure of nomination and voting. Other community structures such as churches, tribal authorities ect are simply acknowledged but not include in the SGBs. The "adopt a cop" program, where each

school is required to identify and adopt a police officer by the department of safety and security is one way of acknowledging other community structures. Many schools in the Bushbuckridge area have identified a group of religious leaders, who take turns to come and preach at the schools.

School governing bodies are, by law, mandated to govern all public schools, accordance with the applicable national and provincial legislation. Over and over the functions that are allocated and delegated to them by SASA, SGBs are also allowed to apply for additional functions which will assist them to steer their schools towards a particular direction. The influence of SGBs on school governance in the Bushbuckridge area will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.6.   CONCLUSION

In this chapter dealt specifically with three community structures, namely the churches, tribal authorities and SGBs were identified. The context within which each of these structures is regarded as a community structure was explained. An ideal typical school governance structure was also consolidated, which strives to indicate how other community structures, such as those indicated above, would be represented in the school governance, from the school level up to the national level. The applicability of this ideal typical school governance structure in the Bushbuckridge area will be established in the next chapter.

Interviews were conducted with members of church formations, labour unions and tribal authorities and a case study concerning the influence of SGBs was also presented.

The position of the churches with regard to their involvement in school governance was that they would not be involved as members in the SGB. They indicated that their involvement would be through a philosophy that they filter through the parents, teachers and learners in to the schools. The church representatives further advocated that if they were to be directly represented in the SGB, it could be through "joint faith organizations" and not as individual churches, otherwise there would be an overpopulation of church members in the SGB.

Finally, the position of labour unions, tribal authorities and the SGBs with regard to their involvement in school governance was investigated and this cannot be further rerterated here.

In conclusion, the picture painted from the investigation of the four community structures and their involvement in school governance should not be regarded as a final product of this study. In the next chapter, an empirical investigation will be conducted to solicit more information about the influence of these and other community structures on school governance in the Bushbuckridge area.

CHAPTER 4

4.   **INFLUENCE OF THE DIFFERENT COMMUNITY STRUCTURES
          ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA**

4.1.   **INTRODUCTION**

After stating the research problem, outlining the aims and objectives of this study, and drawing from the contextualisation of the three identified community structures namely, the churches, tribal authorities, and SGBs, an analysis of the results of the interviews conducted with the above structures will be presented. Findings from the interviews will both provide insights into current views and opinions about school governance, and form the basis for suggestions and recommendations in shaping future governance policies or improving the current school governance policies.

Before discussing the results in detail, a description of the sampling method and the sample, the participants and the data collection method will, for each community structure, be described. Finally, a synthetic description of the results will be presented and these results will serve:

  (i)   to explain and interpret main research findings in greater detail; and

  (ii)   to draw implications on which to base recommendations.

4.2. **THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA.**

This section of the study concerns the outcomes of interviews conducted with five church leaders from different congregations. Before reflecting on the respondents' responses, the sample from which the respondents were drawn and sampling procedure will be explained.

4.2.1 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

For the purpose of this section of the study, a purposive and convenience sampling procedure was adopted. According to Merriam (1998: 63), " purpose or purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned." in order to solicit detailed information regarding the influence of the church on school governance, five church leaders from different congregations were selected on the basis of the following three reasons:

➢ Having served or serving in an SGB of a school;
➢ Serving or having served in a sub-committee of an SGB such as finance committee; and
➢ Some church leaders are also principles of schools.

The same set of questions, in respect of the involvement and influence of the church as a community structure in school governance were tendered to each of these church leaders. The questions ranged from whether the respondents would prefer the church to be represented as a church in the SGB or not, the

position of the church with regard to: determination of school fees, religious observances against the background of the different religions which are found in schools today, the curriculum, with specific reference to the teaching of sexuality education to children, and the discipline of learners since the abolition of corporal punishment and the possible alternative measures that could be implemented instead of corporal punishment.

4.2.2.   FINDINGS

The perception of the respondents with regard to the question of representation in the SGB is that the church should not be represented in school governance as a church. The position is that of involving the church as a philosophy and not in SGB membership. This position is based on the fear that due to the diverse religious groupings, which are found in the Bushbuckridge area, there can be an overpopulation of church members in the SGB. The respondents all proposed that the church can be represented in the schools through parent members who are members of the SGB. Alternatively, joint faith organizations can be established to represent the church in school governance.

With regard to the determination of school fees, the position of the church leaders is that, considering the poverty level of some families, the church can only contribute towards the well-being of schools by volunteering to supply labour for the carrying out of certain activities that would have an impact on the finances of schools. The church can also offer financial assistance by sponsoring a certain number of financially needy learners per annum, and also by volunteering the expertise of church members.

The respondents also indicated a project, which a group of churches is jointly planning with the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education called "Community as school." Through this project the churches plan to capture learners from the streets after hours and teach them, using "Foster teachers" in respondents such as Mathematics, Physical Science, and Accounting. They would them compare the end of the year results of these learners and the results of those learners who will be in the mainstream.

With regard to the question of religious observances against the background of different religious groups which are found in schools today, the perceptions of the different church leaders are that the major role of the church will be in the area of ethics and moral values. One of the church leaders indicated that:

> "we have a meaningful role in modeling out a behaviour of high moral standards in communities plagued with moral decay and spiritual deprivation. The same culture would filter up to National level and this, being a government that gets its feed from the grassroots, would not escape such a moral influence spiraling from grassroots having its influence of the church."

The church leaders further indicate that the church plays a special role in that the parents and teachers may not have the credentials to address the spiritual person. The church leaders believe that:

> "If you develop a well rounded intellectual, well nourished with a balance diet, but spiritually starved to death, you have only succeeded developing half the person. Man is spirit too

and this view should inform our curriculum and guide school policies."

Regarding the question of the curriculum with specific reference to the teaching of sexuality education to children, the position of the church is that the person who presents the program should be a role model in the community with regard to his behaviour. Children do not only receive the subject matter, but also the spirit of the teacher. In a nutshell, the position of the church is that there is no wrong in teaching sexuality education to children. The wrong can only come in if the teacher is not sexually disciplined. In such a situation, an ill-disciplined teacher can arouse the children's excessive sexual desires in the process. One of the interviewees indicated that:

> "The Church cannot assume a direct correlation between the high rate of teacher-pupil sexual abuse and sexuality education, but it leaves much to be desired."

Regarding the position of the church concerning the question of learner discipline in the light of the abolition of corporal punishment, the church leaders indicate that:

> "Human nature requires self-constraints. The assumption of the abolition of corporal punishment is that pupils take charge of themselves."

The church indicates that there are negatives that come with corporal punishment but there are also good sides. The abolition of corporal punishment should not leave a disciplinary vacuum. Learners should know that retribution is a part of life. The church

suggests the following alternative measures of enforcing discipline instead of corporal punishment:

> ➢ Learners who have committed gross misconduct should be disciplined by giving them manual work that adds value to their own. This work has to be done after school when everybody has gone home.
> ➢ The offenders should be supervised and the manual labour should not exceed one hour.

The church leaders emphasize that this option can work only if there is a team of committed educators who will be willing to stay after hours and supervise the offenders. The church can also offer a dedicated person from its ranks to do the supervision. This practice should be clearly explained to the learners that it is not punishment but a measure to correct and stop the reccurrence of the unacceptable behaviour.

4.2.3.   CRITICAL REFLECTION

A closer look at the position of the church with regard to all the questions asked and the responses given portray the church from a very special perspective. While it is a reality that even the South African School Act does not give room for the membership of the church in School Governing Bodies, their philosophies should somehow be filtered through to the schools. The moral decay that is plaguing our schools today and the declining moral values in our communities that make up, require the infiltration of the church to enhance harmony in our schools. From this, it can be deduced that while the church takes a "back seat" with regard to the question of

representatively, its influence or involvement in school governance is indirect.

4.3.   THE INFLUENCE OF TRIBAL AUTHORITIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA.

This part of the study will reflect on the responses of respondents from two different tribal authorities, on a number of questions posed to them during an interview. Before reflecting on the respondents' responses, the sample from which the respondents were drawn and sampling procedure will be explained.

4.3.1.   SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

For the purpose of this section of the study, a convenience sampling method was adopted. This method implies selecting members from the councils of two tribal authorities, who have an understanding of the topic under discussion and in this context, members who understand the concept of school governance and the policies governing it.

Bushbuckridge has nine tribes with nine tribal authorities. The languages spoken by these different tribes are dominantly Xitsonga and Sotho with sporadic instances of Swazi speaking people. Two tribal authorities were selected for this study, namely, Hoxani tribal authority and Mathibela tribal authority. The reason for this choice was the accessibility of the members of these tribal councils. A sample of five members from each tribal authority was selected and they willingly participated in the interviews. The respondents from each tribal authority were interviewed as a group (focus group) on the same questions which were used to interview the church

representatives. A special feature of this interview was that some of the questions had to be rephrased in order to fit the different education levels of the respondents, in terms of the language medium and the scope of the questions. The interviewees from the different tribal authorities were interviewed at different times and their responses to the questions compared.

4.3.2.   FINDINGS

An analysis of the responses of the interviewees with regard to all the questions asked revealed many commonalities between the tribal authorities. Despite the traces of ethnicity and tribalism, which characterized most of their responses, the interviewees responded constructively to the questions.

With regard to the question of representativity, the interviewees indicated that:

  ➢ There is no need for the tribal authority to be represented by a member or members in the SGB because the parents who are elected into the SGB represent the tribe there (they are the servants of the tribe).
  ➢ Any parent who sits on the SGB of any school should be representing the aspirations and the socio-cultural interests of the electorate (i.e. the parents that voted them into the SGB).

One of the interviewees commented that:

> "The parent members in the SGBs of our schools are to us (the tribe) what the principals in our schools are to the Department of Education."

This statement suggests that for the Department of Education to have charged principals with the responsibility to manage schools shows the trust that it has on them. The same is the case with the tribe, entrusting the responsibility to govern schools to the parents. With regard to the question of the formulation or designing the school curriculum, the interviewees showed no interest of participation. They unanimously regarded this as a competency of the government and its educated executive arm i.e. the Department of Education. Some members, however, indicated that those responsible for drawing up the curriculum, should take into consideration the cultural backgrounds of the learners. The curriculum should not alienate the learners from their roots.

On the whole, with regard to the question of discipline, the respondents indicated that corporal punishment cannot be substituted with anything. They insisted that before passing any laws such as the one on the abolition of corporal punishment, the government should have consulted extensively with different stakeholders at the different levels of our societies. One of the interviews indicated that:

> "The democratization of education has bedevilled the entire system and eroded the power of parents to exercise authority over their children. The constitution has looted our God given authority to spare the rod and spoil the child."

On the question of religious observances in schools, like in their involvement in the designing of the school curriculum, the members of the tribal councils indicated that such observances should not alienate the learners from their cultures. SGBs should encourae policies that will promote and cultivate respect for the religious and cultures of others.

On the questions of the determination and payment of school fees, the tribal councils held the following views:
  ➢ Parents should determine school fees which would be affordable to all;
  ➢ Parents who are not working and hence cannot pay fees for their children will have to volunteer their services to the school e.g. many mothers in many primary schools in the Bushbuckridge area are preparing food for the learners (feeding scheme) in return for the exemption of their children from paying school fees.
  ➢ This position, as proposed by the tribal councils would, in the long run, cut down on the numbers of parents who are applying for exemption from paying school fees.

4.4. THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE BUSHBUCKRIDGE AREA

Chapter 2 of this study contains detailed information about the formation of SGBs in public schools and the appropriate pieces of legislation that underpin such a process. This section will shed some light on the damages that can be incurred in schools where the controversy between governance and management (see Chapter 1) is not properly addressed. Furthermore, this section will reflect on the extent to which territorial politics, which are

homogenous with ethnicity and tribalism, can adversely influence good governance and management of schools. In order tosolicit information for this section of the study a case study will be presented.

4.4.1.   CASE STUDY

This case study concerns the SGB and School Management Team (SMT) of a primary school X in Bushbuckridge, where the process of Redeployment and Rationalisation (R & R) had to be finalized. This process is an initiative of the National Department of Education, which came as a directive to Provincial Education Departments to rationalize the number of teachers in schools. Primary school X had since the year 2000, a shortage of educators and in order to address this impasse, educators who were declared in excess in other neighbouring schools, were redeployed to primary school X.

When the redeployed teachers reported for duty at primary school X, the SGB of the school locked the school, turning learners and teachers away. The Circuit and District officials summoned several meetings with stakeholders in order to solve the problem. During discussions, the SGB and SMT of primary school X revealed that they closed the school for the following reasons:

 ➢ The circuit office deployed teachers to the school without involving them (the SGB) in the redeployment programme;
 ➢ the SGB was not clarified on the criteria which were used to redeployment the teachers to the school;
 ➢ the SGB was treated unprofessionally by the department officials;

73

➢ that the SGB wanted to be clarified on its duties as an SGB if the redeployment of educators at their school falls outside their jurisdiction.

 An investigation carried out by a District Task Team (DTT) on the R & R process at primary school X, in the light of the above reasons cited by the SGB revealed that:

➢ The principal of primary school X incited the SGB to lock the school because she had personal differences with some of the educators who were sent to the school;
➢ The SGB, backed by the principal and some community members, did not want the new teachers because these educators did not belong in that community and that they wanted their own children, who are qualified but not employed, to be appointed into the vacant posts.

4.4.2.   FINDINGS AND CRITICAL REFLECTION

From the reasons cited by the SGB above and findings of the investigation conducted by the DTT, the following critical point about the influence of SBGs in the governance of schools in the Bushbuckridge area are worth mentioning. The actions of the SGB of primary school X have revealed that:

➢ the SGB has an understanding of the difference between governance and management. This is evidenced by their quest for involvement in the R & R programme since it is the responsibility of both the professional management of the school and the SGB;

> ➢ the SGB had a legitimate claim over their representation in the R and R process since the appointment of educators in public schools is one of the primary responsibilities of the SGB as provided for by section 20 (1) (i); 20(4); and section 20 (8) of SASA.

Contrary to the above two statements, the SGB acted outside the scope of its mandate and the law by:

> ➢ adopting non-job related criteria only 9ethnicity and tribalism) in the appointment of educators; and
> ➢ disregarding the rights of the learners to learn by locking the school gates.

This state of affairs, regarding the latter two points above, is common in many schools in the Bushbuckridge area. This situation requires the SGBs themselves, to rethink and align themselves with the consideration of criteria that take into consideration the skills, qualifications and experience of the educators and not their tribal or ethnic belonging. Furthermore, the actions of the SGB of primary school X might contravene the constitutional provision which warns against unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, colour, religion etc (RSA 1994:section 8(2).

4.4.3.   DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study looked at the education systems of two African states I.e Nigeria and Egypt and two other Western countries i.e Canada and New Zealand. This was intended to establish if these countries have SGBs in their schools and if they do, compare their structures

with those in South Africa and also establish if their SGBs included other community structures such as church formations, civic associations and tribal councils.

The study of the four countries mentioned above revealed that Egypt and Nigeria do not have SGBs in their schools. School governance is the responsibility of the central governments and the local bodies have no authority with regard to policy formulation/ no jurisdiction to policies such as finance of schools and appointment of educators. On the contrary, Canada and New Zealand have SGBs like South Africa, ensuring that their education systems are open for public participation. What these countries have in common is that they do not involve other community structures in the governance of schools. If South Africa wants to include these structures officially as members of the SGB, it will be the first country in the world to have such a model of school governance.

4.4.3.1.   CONCLUSION

The following section presents the outcomes of the research conducted in the Bushbuckridge area, in the form of literature review, interviews with church leaders, tribal authorities and a case study on a SGB of primary school X. It will however be appropriate to first reflect on the pre-1994 school governance structures (school committees, committee boards and school boards) which are supposed to have leveled the ground for the present day SGBs.

As outlined in chapter two, membership to the pre-1994 governance structures was restricted to parents only, excluding educators, learners and other community members. Parents were involve in election of five parents members, the circuit inspector

also conducted the local interest groups before nominating four extra members into the structures. These two activities can be regarded as democratic because the structures formed became a product of a joint effort. However, the nomination of the chairperson and vice chairperson by the circuit inspector and not the electorate is cause for concern. An analysis of the duties, powers and functions of these structures, particularly the school committees which they were supposed to represent in the schools since, instead of being a link between the school and the community, they formed a link between the school and school board.

Contrary to the duties of school committees, a closer look at the duties, powers and functions of committee boards and school boards indicates that these structures shaped and influenced the way in which schools are governed today. These structures became more involved with for example, the establishment, maintenance and control of schools; employment of educators according to conditions prescribed by the minister; and collecting and accounting for all monies due to the school. These are some of the functions which, even if these structures did not have the authority to formulate policies to guide them in their execution, they were at least given the mandate to perform them.

In chapter three and four, three community structures were identified, contextualised and the influence of their possible involvement in school governance analysed.

The church leaders and the tribal authorities were exposed to the same set of questions which ranged from; representation in the SGB, formulation of the curriculum, discipline and determination of school fees. Their responses to these questions revealed a lot of

commonalities. They both did not prefer to be represented by individuals in the SGB. The church believed that the presence of parents in the SGB can do to filter the philosophy of the church into the schools while tribal authorities regarded the parent member in the SGBs as servants of the tribe who can pursue the aspirations and ambitions of the tribe into the schools. Both structures distanced themselves from the formulation of the curriculum, regarding this as the competency of the government and the Department of Education.

The question of learner discipline in the light of the abolition of corporal punishment was responded to with mixed feelings by the two community structures. The church responded by outlining alternative measures to corporal punishment while the tribal authorities regarded the abolition of corporal punishment as an erosion of parents' powers to discipline their children. They further indicated that the government was supposed to have consulted extensively with different stakeholders at the different levels of society, before abolishing corporal punishment.

The fact that the government was supposed to have consulted extensively suggests that tribal authorities would like their voice to be heard in certain school governance policies. To recap on the responses of these two community structures, it is appropriate to indicate that even though they did not favour the idea of being fully involved in the governance of schools, their influence is indirect since the parent members in the SGBs may pursue some agendas formulated within these structures.

4.4.4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Flowing from the above discussion and all other preceding discussions of the research findings, this research has the following recommendations:

4.4.4.1   that the ideal typical model of school governance suggested in the previous chapter (school governance consortium)be adopted at the different levels of the education department. This would ensure that:

4.4.4.1.1.   School governance policies formulated at higher levels are also spiced with the cultural and religious values of the constituencies on the ground; and

4.4.4.1.2.   There is constructive debate on matters of school governance between policy makers and members of the school governance consortium before policies are promulgated as legislation and laid down for implementation in schools.

4.4.4.2.   School governing bodies should be thoroughly familiarized with school governance policies and the application of such policies, regarding the appointment of educators in their schools. This would ensure that:

4.4.4.2.1.   there is no conflict between educators and SGBs in schools; and

4.4.4.2.2.   there is no unnecessary disruption of teaching and learning in schools.

4.5.   CONCLUDING REMARKS AND POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In order to do justice to the study of this magnitude, I need to highlight some of the important observations and findings, which it has made. At the end of this work, it become clear that because of the complexity and the comprehensive nature of issues surrounding school governance, this field of study remains inexhaustible. Whilst government (Nationally and Provincially) has an obligation to develop and promote stakeholder participation in school governance, particularly in the rural areas like Bushbuckridge, the different stakeholders in the communities have an obligation too to support the SGBs in their schools. It also is a prerogative of all school governance structures, at all levels of the department of education, to unsure that research projects in this field are continuously undertaken with the aim of trying to find solutions and better understanding of the school governance practice.

Some of the areas which this study has identified as possible future research areas are the following:

    (i)   the extent to which SGBs contribute towards democratic governance in schools;

    (ii)   possible problems and their causes, experienced by SGbs in the appointment of educators: and

    (iii)   the capacity and expertise of SGBs to perform their duties as mandated by the South African Schools Act(84 of 1996).

The list of the possible future research areas is endless and with the transformation that is going on in our education system, a lot more areas will be coming out for intensive and extensive research.

REFERENCES

1. Apple, M.W. & Beane, J.A. (eds) 1995. Democratic Schools. Alexandria, Virginia.

2. Berkhout, S.J 1998. Some Dimensions of the challenge posed by the transformingSouth African Education System. University of Pretoria. Course material.

3. Caldwell, B. and Spinks, J. 19988. The self-management school . Basingstoke: Falmer Press.

4. Coombe, C & Godden, J (eds) 1996. Local / District Governance in Education. Lessons for South Africa C.E.P.D.

5. Cowen, R. 1982. International yearbook of Education Vol. XXXIV. NESCO.

6. Davies, E.H. 1999. Administration of the Education system and school governance. CELP. Pretoria.

7. De Carvalho, M.E.P. (2001) Rethinking Family-School Relations: A Critique of Parental Involvement in Schooling. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers

8. Department of Education. 1997. First Steps: School Governance starter pack. A resource for School Governing Body members – Issued by the National Department of Education. Pretoria.

9. De Villers, et al. 2000. Ethics for Partners in Education. CELP: Pretoria.

10.   Holt, A &Hinds, T. 1994.   The New Governor.

11.   Mashele, A.E and Grobler, B.R.   The influence of interest group organisational structures on educational management/ governance in Kathorus. South African Journal of Education, 1999, 19(4).

12.   Karlsson, J. (1998).   The Role of Local Government in the provision of Public Schooling in South Africa.   EPU Research Report.

13.   Kelly, A.V. 1995. *Education and Democracy. Principles and Practices*. Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

14.   Kogan, M. 1979.   *Reviews of national Policies for Education. Education Policies in Perspective*:   An Appraisal. OECD

15.   Lauglo, J. (1995)   forms of Decentralisation and their Implications for Education. Comparative Education Vol.(31)   1:5-29.

16.   Maxcy, S.J. (1995)   Democracy, chaos and the New School Order. Corwin Press Inc.

17.   McBeth, A. (1989) Involving Parents. Effective Parent-Teacher Relations. Heinemann Educational.

18.   Meriam, SB. 1998.   Qualitative research and case study applications in Education.   San Franscisco: Jossey-Bass.

19.   National   *Education Policy Investigation (NEP1). 1992. Governance and Administration*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press/NECC.

20.   Ntombela, B.S. 1999. *M.Ed Dissertation*: Rau Afrikaans University.

21.   Paras, J. 1997.   The role of the Elementary School principal in establishing sound community relationships.   PhD Dissertation. UNISA.

23.   RSA. 1994. Constitution of the republic of South Africa . Pretoria: government printers.

23.   RSA. 1966.   Government Notice No. R429 of 1966.

24.   RSA. 1962.   Guide for Principals of Schools. The Government Printer; Pretoria.

25.   RSA. 1995.   The Organisation, governance and funding of schools: a draft policy document for discussion   (Daft education white paper 2). Pretoria: Government Gazette Vol. 365 No. 16839.

26.   RSA, 1996. The Organisation, Governance and Funding of schools. Education White Paper 2:Pretoria.

27.   RSA. 1996.   South African Schools Act. Act No. 84 of 1996.   Cape Town: Government Gazette Vol. 377 No. 17579.

28.   SAPA UPDATE. APRIL 2003:3

29.   Shoai, C. 1997.   Leading together: A handbook for school Governing bodies: Catholic Institute of Education.

30.   Squelch, J & Lemmer, E. 1994.   Eigth Keys to effective management in South Africa: Southern Book Publishers.

31. Walsh, C.E. (ed) 1996. <u>Education Reform and Social Change. Multicultural voices, struggles and visions</u>. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. Mahwah, New Jersey.

32. Walshe, J. 1999. <u>A new Partnership in Education. From Consultation to legislation in the nineties</u>. (IPA). Institute of Public Administration.

33. Williams, Richard C.; HAROLD BARBARA, ROBERTSON JAN, & SOUTHWORTH HEOFF. 1997. <u>Sweeping Decentralization of Educational decision-making authority: Lessons from England and New Zealand</u>. Phi Delta Kappan Vol. 78(8) pp 626-631.

APENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following is a list of questions used to interview the church leaders and members of the tribal councils. This schedule indicates the questions in their original form but their phrasing was varied in order to accommodate the members of the tribal councils who would sometomes not understand some of the concepts used.

QUESTIONS

1. School Governance concerns itself with the shared responsibility by parents, teachers, learners and the community for school policy within a national, provincial and district framework.

   1.1. As a head of a church / tribal council (authority), what is your position with regard to this representativity? Would you prefer the church/ tribal council to be represented in the SGB. Give reasons for your answer.

2. The SGB is, among other things responsible for the formulation of school policies e.g. funding (school fees0 religious observances, curriculum and discipline of learners. If you were to represent a religious formation/ tribal authority in the SGB of a school next to your home or village, what would your position be with regard to:

2.1. Determination of school fees, considering the poverty level of some families;

2.2. Religious observances, against the background of the different religious and cultural groups which are found in schools today;

2.3. Discipline of learners, since the abolition of corporal punishment in schools. What alternative measures would you put in the place of corporal punishment?

2.4. The curriculum, with specific reference to the teaching of sexuality education to children.