CHAPTER 6: IDEOLOGY OF THE KEY ROLE PLAYERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLUSTER-BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The theory of cluster-based school management reform assumes that school management and teaching would improve through shared and collaborative leadership and management, equitable distribution of resources, and by creating collaborative learning opportunities for teachers. This chapter examines how beliefs and views held by the key role players influence their perceptions about cluster-based school management reform.

Before the Namibian independence in 1990, the colonial education system was centralised, technicist and bureaucratic. Beliefs in ideologies introduced by colonial powers had been accepted in the Namibian society and had become part of the national culture. It seems that the designers of cluster-based school management have not anticipated how ideologies existed prior to the design of the reform can become a barrier to its implementation. The designers of the reform have changed governance structures, assuming that key implementers will implement the goals of the reform as intended. However, the values and beliefs held by the key implementers about the reform have been influenced by authoritarian, bureaucratic and managerial ideologies that are different from the tenets of the reform. The different beliefs and views about the reform held by key implementers were not only observed across clusters, but also within the same clusters.

6.1 Authoritarianism

Respect and blind submission to authority underpin the authoritarian ideology. It opposes individual and collective freedom of thought, initiative and action (Ray, 1976). Stakeholders' participation in decision-making processes is not encouraged or promoted.

Authoritarianism frames the work practices of some of the key implementers and therefore influences the way they have implemented school management reform.

The introduction of cluster-based school management reform in schools presupposes a shift in authority and responsibility for making decisions to schools and broadening of stakeholders' participation in decision-making processes. The beliefs and views held by the circuit inspectors about the school management reform influenced the way in which they facilitated the implementation of cluster-based school management reform. Both the circuit inspectors of Makalani; Hendrich and Otjimue clusters have come from strong authoritarian backgrounds. The inspector responsible for Makalani did not accept the ideology of participative and democratic leadership. He interpreted the school management reform as a means of collecting and distributing resources rather than a school management system. The inspector viewed cluster centres as 'distribution and collecting points' rather than management venues. He still believes that he has authority over schools: *'schools should call the circuit office directly if they experience a problem'*.

The Makalani inspector does not believe in delegating power and authority to clusters and cluster-centre principal: '*I don't delegate tasks to cluster-centre principal, he already has his workload as a principal; this is an added responsibility… To devolve tasks and responsibilities to him… makes me uncomfortable. This disturbs the line of reporting to the appropriate authority' (Inspector*, Makalani cluster).

The Makalani inspector interprets delegation of power and authority to cluster-centre principal as 'added responsibility' and therefore regards delegation of power to cluster-centre principal as a burden to the cluster-centre principal who has already his workload as a school principal. The argument of the inspector is actually inherent in the view that

inspectors have power and authority over schools. The inspector interprets delegation of administrative tasks to cluster-centre principals as a threat to his power and authority over schools. Being a strong believer in authoritarianism, the Makalani inspector chooses to ignore the cluster-based school management reform and clings to the authoritarian style of management.

Although the inspector responsible for Hendrich and Otjimue clusters seemed to embrace the school management reform, she imposed change upon schools and expected schools to implement the reform through authoritarian approaches. There was little if any independent input from schools and teachers. The inspector stated:

> *'Satellite school principals have to accept that cluster-centre principals have supervisory capacity…therefore we do not have cases of principals who don't respect the authority of the cluster-centre principals….. in our circuit management meetings we talk about these things…we define the roles of cluster-centre principals' (Inspector, Hendrich & Otjimue clusters).*

Instead of facilitating the implementation of the school management reform in a manner that enable the school principals understood the need for the change; the inspector imposed the change on the school principals.

The authoritarian doctrine, which underpins the management styles of the two inspectors, impedes the successful implementation of the school management reform. The Makalani inspector chose to ignore the school management reform because he interpreted it as a threat to his authority over the schools. He did not put much effort to implement the school management reform, while the inspector responsible for Hendrich and Otjimue clusters interpreted the school management reform as an intervention that could be managed through authoritarian approaches, which did not match the democratic principles and therefore facilitated the implementation of the reform through authoritarian approaches.

According to cluster-based school management reform, cluster-centre principals are central to the implementation of the school management reform. They are responsible for the overall coordination of cluster activities in close collaboration with the inspectors and satellite school principals.

The second cluster-centre principal of the Makalani cluster believes in authoritarianism. He chose to respect the authority of the circuit inspector by not taking the school management reform seriously. The cluster-centre principal did not attempt to initiate shared and collaborative leadership and management in schools. He believes that he should get guidance from the authority: '*authority did not give us the necessary support'*…

Because of fear for operating against the authority of inspector, the current cluster-centre principal did not make any attempt to implement the school management reform as intended: '*we act on ad hoc basis….there is no plan of action or year plan… there is a management committee….but we work informal'*.

As in the case of the Makalani circuit inspector, the second cluster-centre principal also ignored the school management reform. One explanation could be that he believes that he does not have any power and authority over other school principals. Another explanation could be that he has accepted that the circuit inspector have power and authority over the schools.

Teachers in the Makalani cluster believe that they should respect authority. Though teachers in this cluster (from both resourced and under-resourced schools) seem to view the school management reform as having potential for creating collaborative learning

environments for teachers, they are not convinced that the school management reform would contribute to the improvement of their teaching practices. They implemented the school management reform, because they were obliged to respect authority: *'teachers go to cluster meeting because they are instructed to do so…they organise meetings and told us how important to attend cluster meeting'*…(teacher from resourced school, Makalani cluster*).*

Another teacher from one of the under-resourced schools in the Makalani cluster, also indicated that teachers implemented the school management reform because they were obliged to respect authority: *'teachers do not like to go to meeting because they don't learn much,…..but they have to go because it is ministerial order' (*teacher from under-resourced school, Makalani cluster*).*

It was clear from the observation of cluster meetings that teachers were not interested in cluster-subject meetings. Cluster meetings were not planned properly. Only a few teachers contributed to discussions during cluster meetings, some teachers sat quietly, while some engaged in private conversations. Because of fear to be disobedient towards authority, teachers did not communicate their dissatisfactions of the school management reform. They continued attending cluster subject meetings, though they were not learning much. Teachers also did not attempt to come up with initiatives to make cluster subject meetings meaningful to them because they expected to receive instructions from the authority on how to run cluster subject meetings: *'we are the only one gather at these meetings…with no extra support…..some problems teachers cannot solve without the support from the central authority on how these problems can be solved'*…

Other teachers from Hendrich and Otjimue clusters were also influenced by authoritarian ideology. Teachers in these two clusters also seem to view the school management reform as having potential for creating collaborative learning environments for teachers; however, they lacked initiatives to make cluster subject meetings meaningful for themselves. They indicated that they did not have the ability to make cluster subject meetings work effectively: '*we don't do a lot during the gathering; we don't know how to go about [implementing policies]…we need to be guided on what to do*' (*teacher, from resourced school, Hendrich cluster*).

Teachers, especially in Hendrich cluster, as in the case of Makalani cluster felt that they had to attend cluster subject meetings, because the authority requested them to do so. One teacher from the resourced school indicated that teachers had not been motivated to attend the cluster subject meetings, but they are obliged to do so:

> '*Attending cluster subject meetings has become a routine, there are no specific topics for cluster meetings, like today there is a meeting, but we do not know what we'll discuss, that is why people are not motivated to come to cluster meetings*' (*teacher, from one of the resourced schools, Hendrich cluster*).

Another teacher from one of the under-resourced schools said that teachers' attendance of cluster subject meetings has become a routine rather than a commitment because of its benefit to their classroom practices:

> '*During cluster meetings, we don't really learn much, we only share ideas…I don't remember learning something new…. Sometimes there is no program… you just sit there and nothing is going on ….we need input from subject advisors to make subject groups more worthwhile*' (*teacher, Hendrich cluster*).

Teachers from Otjimue, like teachers from the other two clusters felt obliged to attending cluster subject meetings. It also clear that teachers in this cluster, like other teachers in

Hendrich and Makalani clusters, lack initiatives to make cluster-subject meetings meaningful to their teaching practices: *'you see in our cluster, teachers do not have confidence in sharing ideas….we sometimes sit quiet in meetings…. we did not come to a point where we have really a workshop to support ourselves to improve our teaching practices'* (teacher from one of the schools in Otjimue cluster).

The ideology of authoritarianism that has been dominating the practices of teachers impedes the implementation of the school management reform. Teachers lack initiative to adjust the implementation of the school management reform, to suit their particular circumstances. Teachers respect authority and line management. They attend cluster subject meetings although they do not benefit much from these discussions. The school management reform assumes that school principals and teachers would come up with innovations to improve teaching because the responsibilities of improving school management are delegated to clusters and schools. School managers did not involve teachers in the planning of cluster-based subject meetings. Teachers were given little or no opportunities to plan professional development activities and were simply instructed to attend the meetings.

While the reform advocates shared decision-making, collective problem solving and collaborative management, there was little or no teamwork in the three school clusters. Cluster-centre principals organised cluster activities without involving school principals and teachers in their clusters, and teachers from different schools did not collaborate much.

6.2   Bureaucracy

Hierarchy and specialised division of labour are the two key characteristics of the ideology of bureaucracy. Another important feature is that initiatives and policy directives come only

from top down to the bottom of the education system. Bureaucracy is also characterised by a belief that schools, as organisations should be governed by set of rules, regulations and procedures (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995). As in the case of authoritarianism, bureaucratic control frames the work practices of the key implementers and therefore has influenced the way in which they have implemented the school management reform.

The two inspectors responsible for Makalani, Hendrich and Otjimue clusters strongly believe in bureaucratic control. The Makalani inspector rejected the idea of allowing cluster-centre principals to act on his behalf. He regards it as: '*un-procedural for the cluster-centre principal to be an acting inspector in my office…and therefore the cluster-centre principal must be at his school'*. The inspector believes in hierarchical style of management and a clearly defined division of labour. It was therefore "un-procedural" for the school principal to perform the tasks of the circuit inspector: *'Schools report directly to me, I do not allow cluster-centre principals to work in my office. The appointment of cluster-centre principals who are at the same level as other principals to supervise schools disturbs the line of authority'.*

Unlike the inspector responsible for the Makalani cluster, the inspector responsible for Hendrich and Otjimue clusters believes in delegating administrative tasks to cluster-centre principals and views the school reform as means of distributing administrative tasks among schools. She thought that the cluster-centre principals have a responsibility to carry out administrative tasks in the cluster. Although the inspector embraced the school management reform, she still expressed faith in bureaucratic control; she argued that '*cluster-centre principals have power over satellite school principals in their clusters …. they can assign task to satellite school principals'.*

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She further argued that she had to control the work of the cluster-centre principal, and the cluster-centre principal in turn should control the work of the satellite school principals. She stated: *'they have to check and control the reports from other schools; the school statistics and I will also control these in my office'*. Central to the way she perceived her job was collecting the information and completing the forms required by the Ministry of Education. The circuit inspector also tried to implement the decentralisation changes through well-defined, linear processes. She explained:

> *'We do not have satellite school principals in my circuit who are not clear about the roles and responsibilities of cluster-centre principals. In our meetings we define the roles and responsibilities of cluster-centre principals. We have given cluster-centre principals extra power over the satellite school principals….they have to carry out the instructions from the cluster-centre principals because they are their supervisors'.*

One can argue that the beliefs and views held by the two inspectors about cluster-based school management reform demonstrate that although the reform advocates shared and participatory leadership, its implementation is not immune against a power struggle. The issue of power disguised by the rhetoric of school-based management is highlighted in the literature of school-based management. The critical theorists argue that 'school-based management cannot be seen as an unproblematic democratic education reform; it is viewed as a form of participative decision-making occurring in a context of power inequality' (Chapman, 1990:36). He further argues that 'it cannot be assumed that equal participation is offered in an educational arrangement which is legitimate, neutral and free from power' (Ibid:40).

One can also argue that the way in which the two inspectors facilitated the implementation of the school management reform has been influenced by inherent power and authority that they had been exercising over schools before the introduction of cluster-based school management reform. The beliefs of the two inspectors in bureaucratic control impede the implementation of the school management reform. Both inspectors discarded shared and

collaborative leadership and management styles in implementing the school management reform. The Makalani inspector rejected the view of delegating administrative tasks to cluster, while the Hendrich and Otjimue inspector employed bureaucratic control in supervising the work delegated to cluster level.

As in the case of the inspectors, the school principals and teachers also clung to the bureaucratic doctrines. Thus the Makalani cluster-centre principal excluded the satellite school principals from the planning of the cluster activities. He was the only one who had planned the cluster activities: *'when there is something that needs to be discussed, me and the secretary meet, plan and set up an agenda and other principals just attend the meeting'*.

The Hendrich cluster-centre principal managed the decentralisation according to the instructions of the circuit inspector. The circuit inspector instructed the cluster-centre principals to have authority and power over the satellite school principals. She took the responsibility of administering the cluster activities with little involvement of the satellite school principals. Though the cluster has created a year plan and formal structures for the coordination of cluster activities, the cluster-centre principal has done much of the coordination of cluster activities:

> ….*'I have to visit satellite schools… I have to check school statistics from other schools and send these to the circuit office and write monthly report on cluster activities'. (cluster-centre principal, Hendrich cluster).*

The power and responsibility of managing the cluster activities is invested in the cluster-centre principal. She has to supervise the work of the satellite school principals. From the words of the cluster-centre principal, the implementation of the school management reform

has been carried out according to hierarchical bureaucratic control rather than through a participatory and democratic manner as per intentions of the school management reform.

However, the Hendrich cluster-centre principal recognised the shortcoming of using bureaucratic styles of management. She contends that the school management reform requires the efforts of all principals in the cluster. The fact that she has been running the cluster activities on her own, has created low commitment and dedication from the satellite school principals: *'some principals expect to be reminded by my secretary before cluster management meeting, although they have their own secretaries who don't take the cluster seriously'.*

She also asserts that the school management reform does not have any benefits for her school. She doubts the viability of proper collaboration and cooperation if schools have different conditions. She contends that teachers from satellite schools are also not cooperative and unwilling to participate fully in the cluster activities:

> *….'as a cluster centre, we find that teachers from other schools who really need help are not interested….sometimes it is so tiresome to drag them along to the expense of your schools....
......why are most of the teachers from satellite schools unwilling to admit that they need help or that they don't know how to teach…..why do the cluster centre teachers get upset with the unwillingness of most of the other teachers to participate'* (cluster-centre principal, Hendrich cluster).

The cluster-centre principal maintains that her school remains a provider for other schools while other schools are just on the receiving end. From the point of view of the cluster-centre principal, the reform has not brought any benefits to her school.

One can conclude that the cluster-centre principal could not make a shift from bureaucratic styles of management to participatory leadership and management. The satellite school

principals rejected her bureaucratic style of management and showed little commitment to the cluster activities.

As in the case of the Hendrich cluster-centre principal, the Otjimue cluster-centre principal was also influenced by the doctrine of bureaucratic control. She took the management of the cluster activities upon herself, because she believed that she had power and authority over the satellite school principals. She was meticulous about defining her role and outlining her responsibilities:

> 'I am responsible for distributing information, check statistics of other schools, coordinating of ordering of stationers and materials of schools, reporting back to principals on developments, writing and submitting cluster reports to the inspector, coordinating activities in the cluster and arranging cluster meetings' (cluster-centre principal, Otjimue cluster).

The bureaucratic control has influenced the way in which the cluster-centre principal has implemented the school management reform. Instead of running the cluster activities in democratic and participatory manner, the cluster-centre principal has been controlling the administrative activities of the satellite schools. It is clear from the words of the cluster-centre principal that her management style is entrenched in the hierarchical bureaucratic control and top-down approaches.

Like in the case of the Hendrich cluster-centre principal, the Otjimue cluster-centre principal recognised that managing the school management reform, using bureaucratic styles of management has shortcomings. She lamented that the management reform put extra administrative burden on her as well as created dependency over her school resources:

> 'To be a cluster-centre principal… your school has to incur expenses on behalf of other schools…..I am now charging other schools for the use of the photo copier…. because I cannot continue using my school resources to support other schools' (cluster-centre principal, Otjimue cluster).

As in the case of the Hendrich cluster-centre principal, the cluster-centre principal lacks skills needed for facilitating shared and collaborative leadership as well as skills and techniques needed to facilitate the implementation of school management reform and therefore clings to what have been familiar to her.

Though the Makalani satellite school principals regard that the school management reform as having potential of providing opportunities for collaboration and cooperation among schools, they believe that initiatives and directives on how to facilitate the implementation of the change process should come from top:

> *…..'The former cluster-centre principal gave us some guidelines…he explained to us what we supposed to do…..I know I have to advise teachers…the current cluster-centre principal is not really clear on what to do…what the cluster-centre principal should do and what satellite school principals suppose to do …we need more clarity'* (satellite school principal, Makalani cluster).

Another satellite school principal also states that although the school management reform has a potential for improving the school system, schools need guidance on how to implement it:

> *……'is a system of group schools together to share ideas and experiences and the system might be promising and can support teachers…. the problems are that there are no proper guidelines on how to manage it'* (satellite-school principal, Makalani cluster).

There is a strong belief among the satellite school principals that the cluster-principal should provide guidance to them as to what they must do. They expressed a preference for hierarchical styles of management and well-defined roles and responsibilities for the cluster-centre principal and satellite school principals. The satellite school principals said that initiatives should come from the cluster-centre principal, being at the top in the management of cluster activities. However, the cluster centre principal lacked initiative on

how to facilitate the implementation of the school management reform; because the inspector rejected the school management reform and therefore ignored its implementation.

The hierarchical bureaucratic style of management to implement the school management reform used by two cluster-centre principals of Hendrich and Otjimue clusters and lack of initiative among cluster-centre principals and satellite school principals on how to implement the school management reform, impede its the implementation. Instead of strengthening the management of the satellite schools, the bureaucratic styles of management created dependency among the satellite schools over the resources of the cluster centres. The two cluster-centre principals lack skills to implement the school management reform in a participatory and democratic manner. The satellite school principals especially in the Hendrich cluster resisted the management style of the cluster-centre principal and showed low commitment towards the implementation of the school management reform. The Makalani satellite school principals expect initiatives and directives on how to implement the school management reform to come from the top. Although the satellite school principals in the Otjimue cluster did not resist much the management style of the cluster-centre principal, their commitment towards the school management reform was also low due to lack of resources.

6.3   Managerialism

A technocratic ideology which concerns with efficiency of organisations and managers are regarded as critical agents for the efficient functioning of organisations. Its primary value is economic efficiency, or the pursuit of maximum output with minimum inputs as well as efficiency in public administration (Krantz and Gilmore (1990). Managerialism puts emphasis on the importance of the individual's freedom as opposed to group or social

interests. While the bureaucratic administration puts emphasis on managing institutions by set of rules, regulations and procedures, the managerial ideology emphasises the importance of the skills and techniques of the managers in managing institutions effectively.

School inspectors, school principals and teachers have expected the reform to improve the management of weak schools by providing them with managerial techniques and skills to carry out their work better.

The circuit inspector responsible for Hendrich and Otjimue clusters regards the school management reform as a means for improving the running of weak, poorly organised schools and as a means to empower the school principals: *'I see the system as a means of trying to put the management of weak schools on certain standards… therefore we assist our principals during cluster management meeting…we should educate them'* (Inspector, Hendrich & Otjimue clusters).

She believes that the school management reform would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the weak schools. Here, the circuit inspector shows a mixed of bureaucratic and managerial beliefs.

The former Makalani cluster-centre principal interprets the school management reform as has a function of improving the administrative efficiency and effectiveness of schools:

> *……'clustering system is supposed to be an effective school administration through networking and sharing of information and expertise, and requires the commitment and co-operation of every principal in order to a strong team for decision making and the willingness to work hard to enhance the improvement of the quality of teaching'* (former cluster-centre principal, Makalani cluster).

According to the former cluster-centre principal, the school management reform could improve the management skills of the school principals. He says that knowledge, skills, commitment and willingness are important factors for successful implementation of the school management reform. The former cluster-centre principal also regards the school management reform as having potential to improve the quality of teaching. It is not clear how exactly this would take place. It was noted that teachers did not find the cluster meetings meaningful in enhancing classroom practices. Observations of all the cluster meetings suggested that specific intervention programmes on management and teaching that were followed through at schools and in classrooms might work better than discussions about the reform's broad goals (see Chapter 7).

The knowledge and skills referred to by the Makalani cluster-centre principal appears to be technical expertise as opposed to, for example, dealing with the web of social relations, or engaging with the purposes of decentralisation and its implementation in schools.

The satellite school principals and teachers criticized the reform because they said, while it had the potential to do so, it failed in providing them with the managerial skills required to carry out their work better. One of the satellite school principals commented on the inadequacy of the reform to improve the management of her school: *'cluster system did not influence the management of my school…..it did not upgrade my managerial skills…one workshop was held ….the cluster-centre principal does not provide support to school principals…….he does not have information on how to manage the cluster'* (satellite school principal, Makalani cluster).

A teacher from Makalani cluster also indicated that the school management reform did not improve the management of her school: *'the management remains the same ……the*

clustering did not influence the management of my school…..we are totally on our own' (a teacher from under-resourced school).

The satellite school principals were encouraged to compete among themselves. They believed they could work on their own, without the support from other schools. The desire to be self-sufficient is the key feature of how schools in the rich urban cluster responded to the introduction of cluster-based school management reform. The inspector responsible for Makalani cluster commented on the self-adequacy of satellite schools in Makalani as follows:

> *The system in this cluster is not working properly. I don't know …..there is a strong competition between schools…the schools find it difficult to cooperate….you know …almost of all schools in this town are on par in terms of strong leadership and resources.*

> *School principals have been reluctant to accept the authority of another principal ….there was strong competition among the schools in the cluster and the schools did not cooperate effectively.*

It can be argued that the competitiveness and individualistic oriented beliefs of the satellite schools in Makalani cluster impede the successful implementation of the school management reform. Competitiveness and individualism are not congruent with the tenets of the school management reform.

The satellite school principals in Hendrich cluster view the reform as having potential for providing opportunities for improving the management of weak schools: '*it is a system of grouping weak schools with strong schools so that the weak schools can benefit from strong schools'* (satellite school principal, Hendrich cluster).

The satellite school principals believe that they should be given the rights to participate in the management of the cluster activities:

> *…'.our ideas are that each principal has a responsibility in the management of the cluster, we have to be part of the management of the cluster and not only one principal' (satellite school principal).*

> *….'we are not really involve in the management of the cluster, the CCP is the only one who coordinate the cluster activities; we do not want the CCP to manage the cluster alone' (satellite school principal).*

The satellite school principals believe that their freedom to manage and participate in the management of the cluster activities is blocked. They felt disempowered, resisted the management styles of the cluster-centre principals and showed a low commitment to the implementation of the reform. The sentiment that the school management reform has not empowered the satellite school principals confirms some of the criticisms of 'decentralisation that it does not automatically lead to stakeholder empowerment' (Govinda, 1997:281).

Because satellite school principals felt disempowered, they resisted the management styles of the cluster-centre principals and showed low commitment towards the implementation of the school management reform. As indicated earlier, the satellite school principals in the Hendrich cluster believe that they should be given the rights to manage their own schools: *'the cluster system did not change the way I manage my school, … you see we are also principals of our schools, we have skills to manage our schools' (*satellite school principal, Hendrich cluster). School principals appear to be accustomed to individualism and independence in the organisation and management of their schools and resisted interference with their authority to run their schools.

As in the case of Makalani satellite school principals, the self-centredness and individualistic oriented mind-sets of the Hendrich satellite school principals impede the successful implementation of the school management reform. The satellite school principals in both clusters needed to make a shift in their beliefs and practices in order to support the implementation of the school management reform, which advocates shared and collaborative leadership.

The satellite school principals in Otjimue cluster, like their colleagues in the other two clusters, also view the school management reform as having potential for improving the management of rural schools: '*cluster system could help rural schools to perform better because the resources are near and teachers need to be encouraged to work together'* (satellite school principal, Otjimue cluster).

…'cluster system is a good system….if strengthened it will improve the standards of schooling in rural areas' (satellite school principal, Otjimue cluster).

The satellite school principals have had expectations that the management reform would improve the effectiveness of the rural schools. Unlike the satellite school principals in Makalani and Hendrich clusters, the satellite school principals made the point that the provision of more resources to rural schools was critical. As the implementation process unfolded they realised that the system might not be sustainable because of limited resources. The satellite school principals cited the following issues, which linked to limited resources: '*the meetings are not held regularly because of distance and transport'; 'there is no visit from cluster-centre principal because of transport problems' and 'there are limited funds to sustain the cluster activities'*.

Though the intentions of the management reform were to break the isolation of schools in rural areas, these intentions were not realised. The management reform provided limited

resources to rural schools. The satellite school principals maintain that the management reform has little significant effects on the management of their school: '*we have skills to manage our schools….principals still manage their schools (satellite school principal, Otjimue cluster);* '*the CCP sometimes give us some ideas when she visited some clusters on how to improve our schools' (*satellite school principal, Otjimue cluster).

The satellite school principals in Otjimue cluster believe that the effectiveness and the efficiency of the school management reform depend on its ability to provide sufficient resources to schools. The fact that the school management reform could not provide sufficient resources to rural schools leads to low commitment among satellite school principals towards the implementation of the school management reform. The feeling of being disillusioned is the key feature embody in the response of the schools in the rural cluster as the implementation of cluster-based school management unfolds in schools.

As in the case of satellite school principals in Makalani and Hendrich clusters, the teachers from resourced schools felt adequate and were individualistic oriented. The teachers, especially from the Hendrich cluster strongly believe that they could improve their teaching practices without the interaction of teachers from other schools: *'our own teaching practices will improve more without the rest of the cluster…. If schools have different surroundings, can they really interactive in a* positive way?' (teacher, from the resourced school, Hendrich cluster).

Teachers from the resourced school maintain that the school management reform does not have any benefits for them. They also maintain that there is no co-operation from other teachers in the cluster and therefore argue that the school management reform has not promoted collaboration and co-operation among teachers as it predicts it would. They

preferred to remain self-sufficient in terms of resources and to work on their own. *'As a cluster-centre, we find that the teachers from other schools, who really need help, are not interested….sometimes it is so tiresome to try to drag them along…at the expense of your school'* (a teacher from a resource school).

The teachers from under-resourced schools maintain that the cluster-based subject meetings lack content and therefore teachers are not motivated to attend the meetings: *'there are no specific topics for cluster meetings …. we do not know what we should discuss …. that is why people are not motivated to come to cluster meetings'* (a teacher from one of the under-resourced school).

The teachers argue that the school management reform lacks clarity on how the meetings can be utilised to benefit teachers. The fact that the school management reform does not has a clear focus on how to support teachers improve their teaching practices causes low commitment among teachers from the under-resourced schools towards the school management reform in the Hendrich and Makalani clusters.

Cluster subject meetings are no longer held regularly, especially in Makalani cluster. From the observation of cluster subject meetings, it was clear that teachers did not have any clues on how to conduct cluster subject meetings to support each other improve their teaching practices.

The teachers from Otjimue cluster, like the satellite school principals, consider that the effectiveness of the school management reform depends on its ability to provide sufficient resources to schools. Teachers have had expectations that the school management reform would provide opportunities for rural schools and teachers to perform better.

However, as the implementation unfolds in the cluster, teachers have begun to doubt the extent to which the school management reform could be sustained in rural areas. The teachers stated the following drawbacks why the school management reform did not progress well as well as their doubts of the sustainability of management reform in the rural areas:

> *'Effective and regular well attended and organised meetings have not been conducted due to transport problems.'*
> *'We meet after a very long time to share and divide ideas and materials', and*
> *'The meetings took place, may be once a year or even not at all due to long distance and transport problems.'*

It can be argued that teachers from rural schools have lost their commitment towards the school management reform due to its inability to provide sufficient resources to rural schools.

6.4   Conclusions

Drawing on the data about the beliefs and views of circuit inspectors, school principals and teachers about the school management reform, one can conclude that authoritarian, bureaucratic and managerial ideologies (which existed prior to the introduction of cluster-based school management) had been deeply entrenched in school practices. The culture and practices that prevail in the clusters echo more with the past practices than with the goals of promoting democratic participation, resource sharing and collaboration. School inspectors, school principals and teachers continue operating as they used to prior to the introduction of cluster-based school management reform. The two inspectors continue practicing bureaucratic and authoritarian control, while school principals and teachers continue operating within the ideological frameworks of bureaucracy, authoritarianism and managerialism.

Two inspectors, who were responsible for facilitating the school management reform through democratic and participatory leadership, could not make a shift from authoritarian and bureaucratic control to democratic and participatory approaches. The Makalani circuit inspector rejected the idea of delegating authority and administrative responsibilities to cluster-centre principals and therefore regarded it as 'un-procedural' for the cluster-centre principal to perform the tasks of the circuit inspector. He did not accept cluster-centres as governing structures, but rather as 'distributing and collecting' points.

Although the inspector responsible for Hendrich and Otjimue clusters embraced the school reform and its participatory styles of management, she employed bureaucratic and authoritarian control in supervising the work delegated to the cluster level.

Cluster-centre principals could not make a shift from bureaucratic styles of management to participatory styles of leadership and management. They find it difficult to implement shared and collaborative management.

Satellite school principals and teachers have been accustomed to receiving instructions and directives from the central authorities, and they could not come up with initiatives to modify the school management to suit the needs of the schools and teachers. The bureaucratic styles of control and faith in the virtues of line management facilitated the creation of dependency in decision-making. Decision-making was perceived to originate and emanate from the top and to filter down.

Schools and teachers have been accustomed to working in isolation, being competitive and individualistic oriented, and have had trouble giving up their ethos of competitiveness and individualism in order to accommodate values of collaboration and cooperation. It is

evident that the resourced schools in Makalani cluster and the resourced school in Hendrich cluster find it difficult to accommodate the under-resourced schools because they feel self-sufficient and therefore continue to protect their resources.

While the advocates of cluster-based school management reform assume that school management improves through participatory styles of management, schools have expected the reform to improve the management of weak schools through providing 'technical' skills and techniques that can assist school principals to manage their schools better and therefore the reform had been criticised for not having done so.

One can conclude that the reform goals of promoting democratic participation, collaboration and participatory styles of management have not been implemented as intended. The ideological legacies of colonial system have proven to be resilient and have deeply entrenched in the practices of the key implementers, making it difficult for the democratic ideologies to take off the ground. The designers of the initiative did not anticipate that the values and beliefs that govern the school practices prior to the introduction of cluster-based school management reform could be a source of resistance to the reform. The decentralised structure based on consensual and participatory democracy was grafted on bureaucratic, authoritarian and managerial ideologies which existed prior to the implementation of cluster-based school management reform.

Traditional norms and values that previously governed schools are powerful factors that have influenced the implementation of cluster-based school management reform. The traditional norms and values upheld by schools are not congruent with the notions of shared decision-making and collaborative management and therefore could be powerful implementation constraints. School dynamics play an important role in determining how a

school operates and how it relates to other schools. Therefore, in order for schools to work in collaboration, schools are required to develop shared values and beliefs to uphold the participatory leadership and management, because histories and institutional organisational culture dictate whether schools will uphold the new values and beliefs.

Drawing on data on the ideologies of the key role players, one could conclude that there is insufficient evidence to draw conclusions that school management reform relates to teaching. The evidence from the three case studies shows that the strong convictions of circuit inspectors, school principals and teachers in the ideologies which are incongruent with the tenets of the school management reform have challenged the implementation of cluster-based school management reform. This finding is consistent with Bjork (2004:257) who argues that 'delegating authority to local levels required fundamental changes that go against the core values and structures that have anchored the foundation of the education systems'.

Advocates of the school management reform assume that teaching would improve through a framework of collaboration and democratic participation. The evidence from the three case studies revealed that the school management reform did not build the culture of sharing and teamwork in clusters and schools. Cluster-centre principals have been managing clusters with little or no involvement of satellite school principals and teachers. Individualism and competitiveness continued to dominate clusters and schools. Cluster-centre principals, satellite school principals and teachers were unable to work as a team to improve teaching.

Although cluster-based school management reform created structures for sharing and collaboration on the assumption that these structures would improve teaching, school

managers and teachers did not see the value of these structures in improving teaching. In addition, the reform lacks clarity and guidelines on how shared, collaborative and participatory ideology transforms teaching in schools.

The school management reform assumes that school principals and teachers would come up with initiatives to improve teaching, because the responsibilities related to improving school management and teaching are delegated to clusters. The data from the three case studies revealed that school principals and teachers could not come up with initiatives to improve teaching, because they had been accustomed to receiving instructions from the top. Because of strong belief in authoritarian and bureaucratic control, school managers did not involve teachers in the planning of cluster-based subject meetings (structures which are assumed to improve teaching). Teachers were given little or no opportunities to plan for their professional development activities, but were instructed to attend cluster-based subject meetings without being involved in the planning of the meetings.