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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECENTRALISATION OF EDUCATION FUNCTIONS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHEGUTU EDUCATION DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY.

BY

WELLINGTON SAMKANGE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE.

DECEMBER, 2010

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Ntombozuko Duku

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for the award of any other degree or qualification. I further declare that due care has been taken to acknowledge sources where other persons' work has been used.

Date: ----------

ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess the implementation of the decentralisation of education functions at primary schools in the Chegutu education district of Zimbabwe. The study covered six purposively selected primary schools. The focus was on two government schools, two local authority schools and two church related schools. It further focused on members of the School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Development Associations (SDAs). These were the school heads, two senior teachers per school, two parent governors, and one education officer.

The study adopted the qualitative research methodology and the interpretivist paradigm. It further adopted the case study design. For data collection, in-depth face-to-face interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis were used. The data was qualitatively analyzed based on themes.

The study showed that whilst the legislation had contributed to high participation in infrastructural development, and moderate participation in financial management at schools, the extent of the same participation was determined by '*street-level bureaucrats'* such as school heads. The areas of least to non-involvement of the school committees were recruitment and management of staff, school policy, curricular and supervision of staff. The study noted that the legislation gave parents through the committees pseudo ownership of schools resulting in the Ministry of Education and Responsible Authorities abandoning their responsibilities. As such, the decentralization of education functions has been characterized by problems inherent in both the legislation itself and implementation *praxis* which have compromised education standards and quality. The study found out that there was no absolute decentralization in the six schools, but centralized decentralization characterized by the need for committees to seek approval on key issues such as fees and levies.

The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should do away with the dual system that created two separate statutory instruments. The study did not find any justifiable reason for the two, as in practice it was observed that the SDCs and SDAs

performed the same duties and functions in the schools. The study proposes a tripartite model of shared responsibilities involving government, responsible authorities and school communities. There is need for proper monitoring and oversight, otherwise implementation of decentralization of education functions remains a façade which is meant to mean what it was never intended to mean in the first place.

Key words: Assessment, Implementation, Decentralization, Participation, Decision making, Accountability, Quality, Power.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father Enos Muzanenhamo Samkange, mother Tozivepi Karumazondo, my wife Cecilia Tariro, and our three sons Kudakwashe, Tendai and Tapiwa, and all the Samkanges.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE TEXT

T3	Teacher Training 3
O' Level	Ordinary Level
A' Level	Advanced Level
C.E	Certificate in Education
Dip.Ed	Diploma in education
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
M. Ed	Masters in Education
SDC	School Development Committee
SDA	School Development Association
E.O	Education Officer
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
UANC	United African National Council
NCA	National Constitution Assembly
PTUZ	Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The study seeks to assess the implementation of decentralization of education functions at six primary schools in Zimbabwe. The chapter first covers the Zimbabwean socio-political context, socio-economic contexts and the general organization of education in the country. In order to contextualize the problem, the chapter covers the background to the problem, through which different legislations on education in Zimbabwe are examined. Focus is on the two statutory instruments that were used to facilitate decentralization of school governance. The chapter also discusses issues surrounding the implementation of decentralization with the view of contextualizing the problem. The chapter further sets out the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and assumptions that guided the study. Furthermore, it covers the significance of the study, justification, delimitation and limitations of the study.

1.1 The socio-political context

Zimbabwe is located in Southern Africa. It shares boundaries with Zambia in the north, South Africa in the south, Mozambique in the East and Botswana in the West and its location makes it a land-locked country which has to rely on other countries' seaports for imports and exports (Campbell, 2003). It became a British colony, soon after 1890 after the arrival of the first European settlers (Chiwaro and Manzini, 1995). At one time

it was part of the Federation of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi). The Federation lasted for ten years, from 1953 to 1963, after which Ian Douglas Smith made a Unilateral Declaration of independence (U.D.I) from Britain in 1965 (Seddon and Seddon-Daines, 2005). It went through various name changes such as Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia to the present Zimbabwe (Economy Watch, 2009). During this period Zimbabwe experienced a protracted armed struggle for black majority rule. Among the reasons advanced by the liberation movements was the need to address the racial inequalities that were practised by the minority governments (Seddon and Seddon-Daines, 2005). These included lack of voting rights for the majority blacks, discrimination on the basis of race in employment, unfair distribution of resources such as land, and education among others. As such, laws that were enacted in Zimbabwe during the colonial period were discriminatory (Chiwaro and Manzini, 1995).

The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 culminated in a cease fire. The conference was attended by Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Ian Douglas Smith as the leaders of the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia delegation, and the two liberation movements led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo (Godwin and Hancock, 1993). The liberation movements Zimbabwe African National Congress (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) attended the Conference under the banner of the Patriotic Front (PF). One of the contentious issues was the land question. Although it was not part of the agreement, Britain gave assurances that in would assist in the resettlement programmes, based on a willing seller and willing buyer principle (*http://en.*

Wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimbabwe%27s-historical-land-question#cites-notepbs-4). To this end Britain promised to meet 50 % of the costs of land purchase and 71 000 families were resettled with Britain providing 44 million pounds for resettlement purposes by 1989 (ibid). However, by 1997 things had taken a new turn, with the new Labour Government in Britain declaring that it had no obligation to pay for land in Zimbabwe. This is a message contained in a letter by the then British Secretary of State of International development, Clare Short (New Africa, 2007). In the same year Robert Gabriel Mugabe announced that he would seize about

1 500 white-owned farms for resettlement purposes without compensation (*http://www.pbs.org/newhour/bb/africa/land/gp-Zimbabwe. html.*). The letter by Clare Short and the responses thereafter appeared to have triggered reactions with dire consequences to the land issue in Zimbabwe, leading to the fast-track land reforms in 2000.

The Lancaster House Agreement led to the first democratic elections in Zimbabwe supervised by Britain and observed by a number of international organizations including the Commonwealth. The elections were held on 27, 28 February and 1 March 1980 and the results were released on 4 March 1980 (Godwin and Hancock, 1993). ZANU-PF led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe won 57 seats, PF-ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo won 17 seats and the United African National Council (UANC) of Bishop Abel Muzorewa won 3 seats and the Rhodesia Front (RF) won all the 20 seats reserved for whites (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989). The elections of 1980 saw the first democratically elected government come into office with Robert Gabriel Mugabe as the Prime Minister

and Canaan Banana as the president. Robert Mugabe embarked on a policy of reconciliation rather than revenge (Godwin and Hancock, 1993). Among other responsibilities the government had to embark on reconstruction of the social services, and abolish the racial inequalities that existed before 1980. The ZANU-PF government made an attempt to base its policies on the socialist ideology guided by Marxist principles (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989).

There were problems associated with integrating the three different armies in the early years of independence. The three armies were Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), the military wing of ZANU, Zimbabwe People' Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) the military wing of ZAPU and the Rhodesian army. However, after protracted negotiations ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU signed a Unity Agreement in 1987 and Robert Mugabe became an executive President and Joshua Nkomo became the second vice president. The post of Prime Minister was abolished.

Whilst the Unity Agreement ended hostilities between the two major parties in Zimbabwean politics, there were fears that such an agreement would lead to the establishment of a de-facto one part state. This might explain why a newly formed party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) headed by Edgar Tekere was able to gain 3 seats in the 1990 elections. From 1980 Zimbabwe has been holding elections after every five years for parliament. After the constitutional amendment of 1987 presidential elections were held after every six years.

The year 1999 saw the formation of a new political party in Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). It campaigned fro a 'NO' vote in the constitution referendum of 2000 supported by civic groups such as National Constitution Assembly (NCA). The 'NO' vote won the day. In the 2000 elections ZANU-PF won 63 seats and the MDC won 57 seats of the 120 seats and this became the first election since independence in which ZANU-PF strong hold on power was threatened (*http://Wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimbabwean-parliamentary-election-2000).* In the 2002 presidential elections Robert Mugabe won 56.2 % of the votes and Morgan Tsvangirai won 42.0 % and in the parliamentary elections of 2005 ZANU-PF won 78 seats and MDC won 41 seats and the other seat went to an independent (ibid). However, the hotly contested elections were in 2008 which produced a disputed result which led to the formation of a Government of National Unity in February 2009. The elections of 2008 did not produce a clear majority in parliament. As a result of the split in the MDC in 2005, they contested the 2008 elections as MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC led by Professor Author Mutambara. MDC-T won 100 parliamentary seats and 24 senate seats, ZANU-PF won 99 parliamentary seats and 30 senate seats, and MDC won 10 parliamentary seats and 6 senate seats (ibid). As for the presidential elections Morgan Tsvangirai won 47.9 % and Robert Gabriel Mugabe won 43.2 % of the votes (AFP, 2008). Such a result called for a run-off for the presidential elections. Morgan Tsvangirai did not participate citing violence and intimidation of his supporters (*http://news.bbc.co.uk/2hi/africa/747990.stm*).

The major parties appear to differ mostly in ideology. The MDC-T is accused of being a 'puppet' of the West by Robert Mugabe and his supporters. There are allegations of the MDC-T being funded by Western organizations to effect "regime change" (People's Daily, 2000). On the other hand the MDC accuses Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF of implementing scorched policies which have contributed to both political and economic instability. These policies include the unplanned land seizures as from 2000. In response to the fast track land reform the United States government signed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act into law which put a credit freeze of the Zimbabwean government's lines of credit (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert-Gabriel-Mugabe#Sanctions*). The European Union also imposed sanctions on Robert Gabriel Mugabe and some members of his government (ibid).

The last census held in Zimbabwe in 2002 puts the population of Zimbabwe at about thirteen million (World Bank, 2009). It may be difficult to come up with the actual population of Zimbabwe due to a number of factors. These factors include the migration of Zimbabweans to other countries in the past ten years. The migration is attributed to a number of factors, chief among them is the unstable economic and political situation that has prevailed over the past ten years. Zimbabwe has an annual population growth rate of 0.5 % (World Bank, 2009).

There are a number of factors that have affected development in Zimbabwe today. Whilst there is no agreement on which of the factors has contributed to the decline in economic activity, some scholars note that politics has had a devastating effect on both

the economy and social life. Saiko (2002) attributes the problems of Zimbabwe to inappropriate economic policies and political instability. Secondly, socio-political conditions have contributed to brain drain with education being among the most affected (ibid).

Apart from the brain drain, professionals that have stayed remain demoralized because of low salaries, poor working conditions and hyperinflation among other reasons. This has resulted in a number of strikes in the public service. For instance, one of the longest teachers' strikes experienced in Zimbabwe was in 2007/8. CNNWorld (2009) notes that according to the Ministry of Education 20 000 teachers had left Zimbabwe since 2007. Other sources, for example the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) puts the figure of teachers who have left Zimbabwe at more than 25 000 (*http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/kH11-79J5L9? Open Document*). The brain drain was attributed to low salaries. For example, in 2007 a trained teacher in Zimbabwe was at one time earning about Z$5 million per month, which was equivalent to US$10 a month (IRIN Africa, 8 October 2007). Some schools could not open because of teacher shortages (ibid). Most teachers were migrating to Swaziland, Namibia, South Africa and Botswana where they were offered better salaries (The Herald, 9 January 2007). Such a brain drain is most likely to have a ripple effect on the whole economy let alone education as a sector.

1. 2 The Socio-Economic Context

The 1980-1990 period was characterized by the government's belief in a socialist economy, and education policies were designed on the basis of a socialist ideology

(Zvobgo, 1997). The Zimbabwean economy is mostly agro-based. Campbell (2003: 4) for example, notes that “Zimbabwe’s economy is based on agricultural production, a highly developed and diversified manufacturing sector and a very developed mining sector”. Whilst this might be true for the first twenty years after 1980, the economy is now in a crisis and is characterized by a high unemployment and inflation rate, and low deployment of resources (Seddon and Seddon-Daines, 2005). Whilst unemployment rates over the past ten years vary from source to source, what stands out though is they are very high. For example, Economy Watch, (2009) puts the unemployment rate as of 2009 at 95%. At the same time Seddon and Seddon-Daines (2005) puts the 2001 unemployment rate at higher than 70%. Such high employment ratios have contributed to general poverty in the country and have a spiral effect on other sectors of the economy such as education. Apart from the problem of unemployment, Zimbabwe has the problem of a large external debt (World Factbook, 2011).

The majority of Zimbabwe’s population lives in the rural areas, mostly on subsistence farming. The rural population appears to be declining as the trend demonstrates a high movement of the population from rural areas to urban areas. World Bank (2008) indicates that in 1980 the rural population in Zimbabwe was 77.6 % of the total and continued to decline to the extent that by 2008 it was at 62.66% of the total. They depend mostly on farming. The erratic rains and limited inputs have affected food production in the rural areas, resulting in most people relying on donor organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for survival.

1.3 Education in Zimbabwe

Education in Zimbabwe falls under two ministries. There is the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, which is responsible for primary and secondary education. There is also the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education which is responsible for the administration of tertiary colleges and universities. The goals of the Ministry of

Education, Sport and Culture are to promote literacy and numeracy skills, and the teaching of basic survival skills (Zvobgo, 1997). The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education focuses on skills development and training. For example, it is responsible for the training of teachers. These are trained in teachers' colleges which are all associate colleges of the University of Zimbabwe. They can proceed to universities for further skills development.

Primary school education is seven years, though there are attempts to introduce a zero grade. In grade seven, pupils write public examinations for them to proceed to form one. Secondary schooling is from form one to form six. After grade seven the next public examinations are written in form four. Those who pass proceed to form five and in form six they write public examinations that qualify them to enroll at universities. Students who manage to pass 5 Ordinary level subjects including English may opt to go to Polytechnic and teachers' colleges which are administered by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education.

Financing of education is mostly done by the government through the different ministries. The main responsibilities of government on education include payment of teachers' salaries, training of teachers, and providing the school curriculum, monitoring the registration of all schools and the general administration of schools through the different structures (UNESCO, 2000; Chivore, 1995).

However, there are also private schools and independent colleges. According to the law these have to register with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture before they can be allowed to operate. The majority of the population sends their children to public schools owned by the government, churches and local authorities. The wealthier sections of the population send children to private and independent schools (CNNWorld, 2009).

1.4 Background to the problem

The advent of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 brought with it policy changes and reforms in many areas. Education was one such area. The government policy on education promoted growth with equity (Zvobgo, 1997). As such, there was a corresponding increase in the number of schools and enrolment. The number of primary schools increased from 2401 in 1979 to 4234 in 1985 and 4549 in 1991 and the enrolments in the years cited were 819 586; 2 216 873 and 2 294 934 respectively (Secretary's 1991 Annual Report). Later in 1987, the Zimbabwean government passed a new education act, the 1987 Education Act.

The Act stipulated, among other things, that every child in Zimbabwe should have the right to school education. It also declared that education would be compulsory and free at primary school in Zimbabwe. It further placed education in the category of human rights and viewed it as a vehicle for social transformation (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987). Such demands on the part of government created a strain on the fiscus (Zvobgo, 1997). As such, there was an amendment to the 1987 Education Act in 1991. The Amendment reintroduced school fees at primary school, and classified schools as either Government or non-Government (Government of Zimbabwe, 1991). Statutory instruments to support the amendment were put in place. These included Education Statutory Instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993, whose main purpose was to decentralize education. Decentralization therefore meant the transfer of power and responsibilities to lower levels at schools.

1.4.1 Education statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993

The two statutory instruments decentralized the school governance system in Zimbabwe. They stipulated that School Development Committees (SDC) and School Development Associations (SDA) were to manage schools. The education functions which were decentralized included recruitment and management of personnel, procurement of resources, resource management, financial management, maintenance, and school development in general. The SDCs and SDAs were to become corporate bodies capable of suing and being sued in their name (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992).They were to exercise functions and regulations so as to achieve the following objectives;

(i) to provide and assist in the operation and development of the schools,

(ii) to advance the moral, cultural, physical and intellectual welfare of pupils at the school,

(iii) to promote the welfare of the school for the benefit of its present and future pupils and their parents, and its teachers,

(iv) to promote, improve and encourage the development and maintenance of the school, (Government of Zimbabwe 1992, Govere 1995).

Parents were expected to make decisions about school governance issues, elect representatives and implement the decisions for the good of the school (Govere, 1995). They also had to advance and promote the welfare of children in both curricula and co-curricular activities (ibid). The SDCs and SDAs were to form finance sub-committees comprising of the school head, deputy head, the chairperson and the vice

chairperson. The decisions on charging of levies were to be made by voting in a parents' meeting. A majority of the parents present at a meeting called for the purpose of reviewing levies would have the power to charge or impose a levy payable in respect of each child enrolled at the school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1993). To achieve the stated objectives, the SDCs and SDAs had to perform and exercise the following powers: assist in the operation, extension and development of the school; assist in the organization and administration of secular and non-academic activities of the school; engage or hire staff; and do all things that, in the opinion of the committee or association were necessary or expedient for the operation, extension and development of the school in the best interests of its present and future pupils, their parents and its teachers (Government of Zimbabwe 1992,1993).

The Zimbabwean government advanced a number of arguments for decentralizing education functions. The arguments advanced were both political and economic. The economic arguments were two-fold. Firstly, it was said that the Act aimed at cost reduction on the part of government as part of the austerity measures supported by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Through this initiative, current and capital costs were to be shared between the government and the community. Secondly; it was said that it aimed at cost recovery, whereby the tuition paid would generate revenue for both the government and the schools. Shared responsibility was envisaged to improve quality of education by making resources available through collective effort, maintain high standards and embrace community participation in school governance. The political arguments advanced for decentralization, in general,

included the promotion of more balanced development; more co-ordination of development activities; and increase of people's participation to boost mobilization of resources and the promotion of democracy (Nziramasanga Commission Report, 1999). Hence, it was hoped that decentralized decision-making would give local voter-consumers greater voice and power in the service mix and thereby raise their welfare (Winkler and Gershberg in Burki et. al, 2000) Thereafter, decentralization as a mode of operation was instituted.

By so doing, Zimbabwe was following the example of many countries that had decentralized their education system, albeit for different reasons. For some, it had been within the context of a federal system, like in Nigeria and for others within the confines of a unitary system of government (Adamolekun, 1991). Different governments in Africa and Asia, for example, have expressed commitment to policies of decentralization as a development strategy, and in Africa alone there were more than twenty five countries that have been involved in launching different decentralization policy initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s (Adamolekun, 1991). In New Zealand, for example, local schools are run by boards of trustees, consisting of five elected parents, the principal, an elected staff representative, and in secondary school a student and four other people are chosen to provide expertise or balance (Fiske, 1996). Countries such as South Africa have gone to the extent of creating School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in an endeavor to strengthen the democratic process (Dieltiens and Enslin, 2002; Chisholm, 2004). This has resulted in decentralization of school finances and governance which are viewed as prominent illustrations of efforts

to promote social change since the advent of democracy in 1994 (Chisholm, 2004). However, Chisholm (2004) further notes that decentralization as a concept is rarely used in South African education policy documents, but the discourse is framed within the conceptualization of governance, democracy and equity. Within the South African context for example, there is general agreement that decentralization in education as a policy was underperforming (Sayed, 2002). The major problems and differences have been why this has been the case, with one school of thought attributing it to macro-economic policies which result in insufficient resources being made available to support policy intentions, and the other being lack of capacity to implement such policies (Jansen,2002). On the other hand, the problems with the implementation of decentralization at school level has been associated with the intentions of decentralizing in the first place. In cases where decentralization policies have been motivated by the need to extend participatory democracy, concerns have been raised as to the extent to which such democracy would be attainable in an educational setting (Sayed and Carrim in Dieltiens and Enslin, 2002). Other examples, of countries embarking on decentralization in education include Malawi (Davies, Harber and Dzimadzi, 2003) and Ghana (Osei and Brock, 2006) among others.

Implementation of such a policy has been, at times, supported by legislation and in others there had been no such legislation to support its implementation (Blair, 1995). As noted by Blair (1995) in a number of African countries for example, the transfer of service provision to local levels and the community has been more de facto than de jure due to central governments' failure to exercise their responsibilities, resulting in

them passing such responsibilities by default. As a result, citizens have ended up providing services in order to fill in the gap. Another approach was the use of presidential ad hoc decrees and directives as strategies to implement the policy of decentralization, as was the case in Zimbabwe in 1984 (Fiske, 1996). This resulted in district councils running education departments. However, there were disputes between the Ministry of Education and the district councils which were controlled by a different ministry, namely the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (Chikoko, 2007).

Despite the different approaches, the implementation of decentralization has been characterized by a number of problems (Adamolekun, 1991). These include issues such as lack of clarity in the policy statements themselves, contributing to ambiguity and ambivalence in the policy itself, a situation that is at times taken advantage of by politicians (Jansen, 2002). Another problem emanates from the school of thought that is critical of the implementation of decentralization as a policy. Smith (1985) in Makumbe (1998) for instance, argues that its implementation can be divisive and separatist in character and effect, which may lead to a negation of national unity and integration. This may lead to segregated development in education, where one school is better resourced than the other, as much would depend on the economic status of the parents that constitute the parent body (Dieltiens and Enslin, 2002). There are also fears that such a development could defeat the whole purpose of equality and equity in education as the poor may end up sharing nothing but their poverty (Sayed, 2002).

The Law and Transformation Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2003) in its submission to the Ministerial Committee on School Management and Governance also expressed its fears about school governance in South African schools. They expressed the sentiments that the implementation of decentralization had occurred not to empower people and communities but to shift on them the responsibility of payment and sustenance of educational provisions. This has in fact resulted in the opposite effect of promoting privilege and exclusion, rather than the democratization of the education system or facilitating more inclusion or empowering the disadvantaged (Sayed and Carrim, 1998).

In addition to the problems noted above, there is the issue of the distribution of power within the implementing agencies (Haggard, 2000). Florestal and Cooper (1997) in a study of decentralization in Chile, also noted that problems may arise if existing local entities are poorly suited to carry out education functions and if responsibilities are not clearly delimited. This, they noted, might result in local school authorities competing for power. Furthermore, they note that when it comes to decentralization, it is “crucial at the beginning to ensure that all implementation issues are dealt with in order to avoid the risk that the reforms will be made in an institutional vacuum and suffer from lack of experience, infrastructure, and implementing bodies” (Florestal and Cooper, 1997:9). Haggard (2000), Gersheberg (2000) and Gropello (2000) in their studies of decentralization in Latin America also noted that there was need to establish the objectives of the decentralization programme, following which, the legal instruments guiding implementation have to be defined. They noted that these would assist in

making sure that the implementation was conducted within a given context, and that roles of the various bodies were clearly specified.

As noted earlier, there are many factors that have influenced policy formulation and implementation. For example, from 1980 social policies in Zimbabwe were imperatively determined by the need to address the social inequities and imbalances created and perpetuated by the colonial governments (Kaseke, Gumbo, Dhemba and Kasere, 1998). Within this context, the major determinants of social policy in Zimbabwe over the years have been racial segregation issues, ideological issues, and availability of resources, politics, culture and multinational agencies (ibid). Despite the problems associated with some of the determinants of social policy and the teething problems associated with implementation, such services as education were made universal and decentralization of the public service was within the framework of the unitary system of government (Fiske, 1996). As noted by Fiske (1996), up to 1987 the rural and district councils operated three-quarters of the schools in Zimbabwe, employed teachers and received a direct grant from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development. However, there were differences between the Ministry of Education and the councils which led the Education Ministry to seek an amendment to the 1987 Education Act (Fiske, 1996). Furthermore, this amendment allowed the Education Ministry to bypass the local authorities and deal directly with School Development Committees (SDC) and School Development Associations (SDA) in which the parents had the majority of seats (ibid). However, now the major debate is how this direct involvement of parents has influenced parental participation and involvement and the

education system as a whole *vis-a-vis* issues of quality, accountability and efficiency (Lauglo, 1995). This is happening at a time when the problem of the implementation of decentralization policies has also become a global concern. The 1999 Annual World Bank Conference on Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for example, was aimed at discussing the problems that implementation of decentralization was going through (Burki et.al, 2000).

In addition to the above there have been studies about decentralization in Zimbabwe. The studies have not been conclusive, and have tended to focus on fiscal decentralization and sectoral decentralization (Conyers, 2003) with little consideration of the legal framework within which the policy attempts to function (Chikoko, 2007).

1.5 Statement of the problem

The study seeks to assess the implementation of decentralization of education functions at Zimbabwean primary schools. Since its institution, the implementation of decentralization of education functions has continued to be of concern to both parents and education officers at district, provincial and national levels. Decentralization of education functions is viewed by stakeholders as not working as well as it was originally intended. The Nziramasanga Commission (1999), for example, noted that the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture dealt with 4706 primary schools and 1539 secondary schools which makes the process of overseeing such implementation a daunting task (Zimbabwe Government, 1999). Concerns seem to be about education functions such as financial management, curricular issues, resource provision, general

and personnel management including general school development. On the other hand, there is fear that the caliber of members that constitute the committees also left a lot to desired. Further, the declining Zimbabwean economy and unemployment have had a negative impact on the lives of the populace in general in the past ten years and education, like all other sectors of the economy, has suffered silently. It is also felt that decentralization has resulted in the lowering of the standard and quality of education in schools. There is, therefore, need to assess if the implementation of decentralization of education functions has lived up to the original stipulations of the Education Statutory Instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993, both of which highlighted parental participation and involvement in school governance, using six purposively selected primary schools in Chegutu Education District of Zimbabwe.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The study is concerned with the assessment of the implementation of the decentralization of education functions at primary schools in Chegutu Education District of Zimbabwe. It seeks to examine how the implementation of decentralization of education functions has affected such issues as curricular, financing, governance, development and management at school level. It further seeks to establish the roles played by School Development Committees and School Development Associations in school governance as stipulated by the statutes.

1.7 Objectives of the study

1.7.1 To establish if the implementation of decentralization of education functions is in line with intended goals.

1.7.2 To assess how the statutory instruments affect parental participation and involvement in school development and governance.

1.7.3 To evaluate how education functions such as finance, personnel management, resource provision, school development and curricula issues are being handled at schools.

1.7.4 To assess the effect of decentralization of education functions in schools.

1.8 Research questions

The study seeks to answer the main research question which is: **How are provisions of Education Statutory Instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 which stipulate that SDCs and SDAs should manage schools, being implemented, with special reference to six selected primary schools in Chegutu Education District in Zimbabwe?** The main research question is broken down into four sub-research questions, as follows:

1.8.1 How are SDCs and SDAs established in non-Government and Government primary schools?

1.8.2 How are decisions on school governance issues arrived at in the selected schools?

1.8.3 How do the different stakeholders of the schooling system view their roles in school governance?

1.8.4 What challenges have SDCs and SDAs met in carrying out their roles in the selected primary schools?

1.9 Assumptions

The study starts with the following assumptions that**:**

1.9.1 The implementation of decentralization of education functions, as stipulated in the statutes, has encountered problems that have negatively affected education service delivery at schools.

1.9.2 SDCs and SDAs should support and assist the schools to achieve the optimal environment.

1.9.3 Schools are generally not performing well hence there must be something wrong with the policy viz., decentralization of the functions, hence the assessment.

1.10 Significance of the study

The study is important as it will contribute to the debate on the problems of implementation of decentralization of education functions. The use of different methods to assess a phenomenon such as the implementation of decentralization of education functions will help in providing feedback to the education system. An assessment makes a practical contribution as to how institutions, such as schools have progressed in decentralizing governance. Given the problematic nature of implementation of decentralization in education, the findings will be of relevance to other institutions in similar contexts and circumstances. Furthermore, the findings will be of benefit to policy makers, considering the problems that have characterized the implementation of

the policy of decentralization, in terms of how to improve on the design and monitoring of such policies. As it seeks to unveil the dynamics of what goes on at the lowest level of school governance, the study will enhance our understanding of what goes on within the 'black box' of school governance and contribute to a revision of practice for those involved. It will contribute to identifying the most effective way in which the different stakeholders can work together in order to promote quality education. Lastly, decentralization as a policy is not confined to the education sector alone; the study may therefore assist other scholars who may want to examine the broader areas of decentralization apart from sectoral decentralization.

1.11 Justification/Rationale of the study

The implementation of decentralization in education is extremely important. To demonstrate this importance, for example, The Nziramasanga Commission (1999) Terms of Reference (TOR 1.4) focused on the establishment of an appropriate framework for the organization and management of education and training systems, with particular attention to their institutional capacity and administrative, financial and legislative requirements for decentralization of functions to local authorities and communities (Government of Zimbabwe, 1999). Considering the extent to which Zimbabwe has invested in the development of human capital since the advent of independence, any malfunctioning of the education system will have adverse effects on such investment, thus having a ripple effect not only on education as a sector, but the economy as whole. Policies such as the decentralization policy have an effect on resource allocation and distribution. Decentralization of education functions has an

impact on the quality and standard of education. Participation, involvement, accountability and transparency are important tenets of the democratization process which decentralization is expected to address. An assessment of how the provisions of the legal instruments that decentralized school governance in Zimbabwe are being implemented is crucial so as to inform policy decisions. The involvement of parents in school governance is also important. Despite their importance studies, specifically on assessment of implementation of decentralization of education functions are limited. It is imperative that the gap is filled. This is what motivates this study. It is therefore important that time and resources are directed towards this study.

1.12 Delimitation of the study

The study is confined to six purposively selected primary schools in Chegutu Education District, in the Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe. The respondents that are drawn from these schools comprise school heads, senior teachers and parents who are members of the School Development Committees and School Development Associations, and one Education Officer from Chegutu Education District. The study deals with issues of school governance, which include recruitment and management of personnel, procurement and management of resources, financial management, maintenance, curricular issues and school development in general as they relate to the functions of the committees, as stipulated in the statutory instruments and goals of decentralization in education.

1.13 Definition of terms

In the context of this research study the following key terms adopt the meanings as given below:

Assessment is used to refer to the process of establishing what is happening on the ground and the extent to which performance is in line with goals. It is used in the sense in which Harlen (2007) uses it. Harlen (2007) uses the term assessment to refer to the process of collecting evidence and making judgments relating to the outcome. It is the same sense in which Anderson, Ball, Murphy and Associates (1981) use it.

Implementation is used to refer to the process of putting into action given provisions or policies. It is used in the same sense in which Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) use it. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) refer to implementation as those activities that occur after the issuing of authoritative public directives, which include both the effort to administer and the substantive effect on people and events. Edwards (1984) also uses it in a similar sense.

Decentralization is used in this study to refer to the devolution, deconcentration and delegation of power and authority to lower levels such as schools. It will be used in the same sense in which UNESCO (2005) uses it. UNESCO (2005; 12) defines decentralization to mean “the transfer, in varying degrees of decision-making powers

from central government to intermediate authorities, local authorities and educational institutions". This is the sense in which Fiske (1996) uses it.

1.14 Limitations of the study

There were a variety of constraints that militated against the study. Firstly, the researcher was constrained by limited funding. This resulted in him limiting the study to six schools in the same district. Secondly, time was also limited. As such, the study had to be conducted during the school term so as to access all the respondents. Thirdly, the study was conducted at a time when teachers in Zimbabwe had just returned from a very long strike and there was a threat of another strike action at the time of the study. This generally affected the mood of the respondents. The economic conditions that were prevailing at the time of the study made it difficult for the researcher to travel, as there was a shortage of fuel and transport. Furthermore, it was difficult to access the parent governors for interviews as they did not work at schools. This resulted in the researcher having to reschedule interview dates. Despite these constraints the researcher was able to accomplish his goals relating to the study.

In spite of the limitations cited above, the response rate in the face-to-face interviews was one hundred percent.

1.15 Organization of the study

The study is organized into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 contains the introduction in which the background to the problem, statement to the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, assumptions, significance of the study, justification/rationale of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study are discussed. The key concepts assessment, implementation and decentralization are defined.

Chapter 2 reviews literature in the areas of assessment and decentralization. It covers different assessment models and theories of assessment. The models reviewed include Scriven's goal-free model of assessment, Tyler's objective-oriented approach and Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model. It further reviews Yoshino's feedback-loop theory, which was developed from the CIPP model. It also reviews literature on decentralization and gives a conceptual and theoretical framework of the concept decentralization to guide the findings. Theories of power, development and social practice are discussed in relation to decentralization. This broadens our understanding of assessment as a concept, while at the same time learning how to conduct one on such phenomenon as the implementation of decentralization.

Chapter 3 focuses on the Research Methodology. It identifies the research methodology used in the study, which in this case is the qualitative methodology. It further identifies research paradigm and design. These include the interpretivist paradigm and case study respectively. Lastly, the chapter identifies and discusses the population, sample and the sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, trustworthiness and ethics.

Chapter four focuses on Data Presentation and Analysis. Data collected through the use of three different methods is presented and analyzed based on the research questions and themes that emerged from the responses.

Chapter five discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter six contains the Findings, Conclusions and the Recommendations proposed by the researcher.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed examination of the theory and practice of assessment as applied to the education system as a whole, with specific emphasis on programme and policy assessment. To enhance our understanding of the concept assessment, the study discusses different forms and models of assessment as applied in educational practice today. The practice and models of assessment are then related to programme and policy implementation in schools. It further discusses decentralization as a concept and policy and the context in which decentralization has been implemented in different countries. In addition the chapter reviews literature on the links between decentralization with such concepts as democratization, decision making,

accountability, quality, participation and involvement. It further examines the theories through which the policy of decentralization in education can be explored.

2.1 Assessment: the concept

The discourse on assessment has been an on-going one in educational practice. The major problem seems to lie in attempting to conceptualize the term assessment. There have been various attempts to explain assessment in terms of the purpose it serves in education. On the other hand, there have also been attempts to define it in terms of the process one goes through in order to conduct or produce an assessment thus denoting some kind of model. Another school of thought, in trying to broaden our understanding of the concept, has concentrated on distinguishing it from evaluation and, in most cases, with very limited success. It appears though that the more we tried to draw a dividing line between the two terms, the closer we have ended up saying almost the same thing about the two terms. In contributing to the debate, Harlen (2007) defines assessment as the process of collecting evidence and judgments relating to outcomes. For Harlen (2007) assessment has to go through stages. These include, collecting and interpreting evidence for some purpose, making decisions about what evidence to use, the collection of that evidence should be systematic and planned (ibid). Furthermore, the interpretation of the evidence should be able to produce a judgement which can then be communicated and be used.

Harlen (2007) is, therefore, concerned about assessment as a process that involves different activities as indicated above. Hence, the stages in the assessment process as

portrayed by Harlen bring to us the major characteristics of assessment. Chief among these is the need for collecting evidence and communicating it. However, this approach to assessment appears to portray a linear process that follows a predictable pattern. For Harlen, it appears, assessment means satisfying the conditions of each of the stages before proceeding to the next. A failure at one stage of the assessment process is most likely to have an impact on the other. Similarly, Maloney and Ward (1976) view assessment as a process. It involves meeting at least three basic demands: identifying the problem, collecting data, and interpreting the data (ibid). In this respect, their position appears to be similar to the one held by Harlen and others, but seeming to differ in their areas of emphasis. For instance, where Harlen emphasizes the need to satisfy the requirements for effective assessment at every stage, Maloney and Ward (1976) seem to stress on the importance of problem clarification. Whilst agreeing that there is need for data collection in the process, Maloney and Ward (1976) further argue that there is no point in collecting data for an unknown problem. Hence, the need for problem identification and clarification.

Ralph W. Tyler advocates for the role of objectives in assessment. Starting with his contribution in the 1930s, the role of objectives in both the classroom and programme implementation has been central in education. Since then, there have been significant contributions by different scholars and researchers in the area of assessment. His contribution has ignited interest in the role of objectives in assessment. Tyler insisted that curricular and programmes needed to be organized around objectives, and that objectives in assessment served as the basis for the systematic and intelligent study of

an educational programme (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). It is argued that Tyler's assessment model represented a major step forward in that it focused on the refinement of curricular and programmes as the central thrusts for assessment effort (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). It is not surprising that even in his definition of the term assessment, the role of objectives stands out. For Tyler, assessment is a process of determining the extent to which the educational objectives of a school programme or curriculum are actually being attained (Popham, 1975). His definition raises two pertinent issues about assessment. He stresses that there should be objectives, and secondly that there should be activities to meet these objectives. The objectives are seen as setting benchmarks for conducting an assessment. The activities should be aimed at fulfilling these objectives. An assessment is therefore concerned with establishing the gap between the objectives and the actual performance.

The Tyler model of assessment offers a guide as to what to do when conducting an assessment. It has, therefore, held an appeal in education for quite some time. Its appeal seems to be based on its simplicity on one hand, and relevance to the education system, on the other. It is found relevant to education in that it includes both the learners and the educators. According to Tyler, objectives guide teachers in selection of material, outlining of content, development of instructional procedures, and preparation of tests and examinations (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). This, it is argued, has contributed to the improvement of assessment instruments such as tests and other related measures. In a way, the use of objectives in education has positively influenced the way teachers plan lessons and teach.

The objective-oriented approach as advocated by Tyler and others has had its critics. For instance, the model is criticized for not being able to deal with the problem of stating the objectives in behavioural terms. The problem of who states the objectives and how the objectives should be stated is also not clear in Tyler's conceptual framework. Evidently, those decisions are left to the professional to determine. This alone may have its shortcomings as the professionals themselves differ in their level of training and appreciation of issues, and have often expressed divergent views about education in general and assessment in particular. There is no consensus on this matter. Concerns have also been raised about its failure to provide criteria by which standards can be judged, as well as lack of guidance on how the data should actually be manipulated and interpreted for those purposes (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

One other area of concern in assessing a policy programme as the current study, is that it may not be easy to identify the objectives on which to base the assessment. This is as a result of the ambivalence and ambiguity that tends to characterize policy statements (Jansen, 2002; Morrison and Scott, 2003; Gustafsson, 2004).

The education system is a diverse area. A problem may arise from an attempt to devise objectives that cater for such diversity. An assessment based on the Tyler model of assessment tends to ignore other factors that may not be contained in the objectives but are equally important to the programme. Scriven and other scholars, in reaction to the limitations of the objective-oriented approach to assessment as argued

by Tyler, proposed different models. For instance, Scriven argued that in one programme they had started, concentrating on the objectives for which each product had been designed, they soon realized that many of the products had side effects which seemed to be equally important as the initial objectives (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

In critiquing the objective-oriented approach, Scriven came up with the goal-free model. Scriven's argument was that too much emphasis was being put on the objectives at the expense of what really went on in programme implementation (Borg and Gall, 1983). Scriven argues that assessors should not know the objectives in advance, as this could distract them from discovering the actual effects of the programme (ibid). If the assessor knows the objectives in advance, it might have a negative effect on the assessment as "he may become co-opted by them," and therefore overlook the unintended effects of the programme (Borg and Gall, 1983). For Scriven, not all unintended effects are bad. In maintaining the argument, Scriven posits that programme implementation has both intended and unintended impacts, and that, therefore, it makes little sense to perpetuate a distinction between intended and unintended outcomes, since the final appraisal should focus on importance and value, not intention (Borg and Gall, 1983).

In practice, the goal-free model as advocated by Scriven, seems to experience a number of problems which render it unworkable. Whilst Scriven's argument widens our understanding of the theoretical base of the assessment concept, in practice, it has

been found lacking in many respects. It is criticized for lacking standards to guide assessment. Without guidelines, assessment may be reduced to some kind of mirage, with no beginning and no end. Despite all this, it is credited with broadening our conceptual understanding of the concept. Guba and Lincoln (1981) argue that the model demonstrated firstly, that assessment could occur even in the absence of information on objectives; secondly, it revolutionized our thinking about assessment; and thirdly, it drew our attention to the need to consider every possible effect of a programme, including unintended effects.

The model advanced by Scriven is, however, not clear on how to identify assessor's skills, yet it relies on the assessor's skills rather than the process itself. It seems to oversimplify the role of the assessor, with a lot taken for granted. For instance, it is silent on how to judge standards because of his over-reliance on the assessor for judgment without a proper guide.

Another critic of Tyler's objective-oriented model is Cronbach (1982). In critiquing Tyler's objective-oriented model, Cronbach raises a number of issues worth noting here. Cronbach (1982) argues that if assessment is to be of maximum utility to the developers of new programmes or courses, it needs to focus on the decision that the developers have to make during the time that development is occurring. Assessment should be more concerned with performance characteristics than comparing individuals (ibid). Here, in some way, Cronbach introduces the idea of formative assessment. For instance, Cronbach (1982) strongly argues that assessment should be used to improve

the course while it is still fluid, and that this contributes more to improvement of education than the one used to appraise a product already on the market. Cronbach's (1982) contribution is a welcome relief in many ways. Firstly, it is observed that Cronbach, at least, moves away from the emphasis on objectives as the main organizers of any assessment. This is a position that Cronbach shares with other scholars like Scriven, albeit for different reasons. Secondly, it is noted that Cronbach concentrates on decision making as the main organizer of an assessment. The advocacy for assessment for formative purposes was also found appealing in the United States of America considering the competition that existed then between the Russians and Americans in many fields of science, including education. By then poor assessment and evaluation in education were being blamed for America's inadequacy in technology.

It appears though, that Cronbach's contributions are a movement from one extreme to another. The proposal on comparative studies attracted some criticism from different quarters. In reacting to Cronbach's proposition that assessment had to be concerned with course performance characteristics rather than comparative studies, Scriven, for instance, openly advocates for the use of comparative studies in order to establish programme performance. This is a weakness generally noted in Cronbach's conceptual framework. It does not tell us much about the real assessment process; neither does it say much about the characteristics of programme performance it advocates for. Another problem worth noting about Cronbach's framework is that relying on what the decision makers had in mind from the planning stage of

implementation may be misleading in a number of ways. Firstly, this may not be clear even within the decision makers themselves. Secondly, policy statements contain ambiguity and ambivalence that have often been taken advantage of by programme designers. Thirdly, some policies and programmes are merely symbolic and are therefore statements of intent that are not meant to achieve much (Jansen, 2002). These different roles and scenarios may be confusing to the assessor if we were to concentrate on assessment within Cronbach's framework.

Approaching the debate on assessment from another perspective, Curzon (2004) goes deeper into describing what it is that we do when we say we are assessing. In order for us to say we are assessing, there should be collection of data, there should be measuring of what is and what ought to be, and interpreting of information relating to a specific process (ibid). In that respect, Curzon's (2004) position is similar to the one argued by Maloney and Ward (1976), Harlen (2007) and others. However, Curzon (2004) goes further to highlight that assessment involves the process of documenting of knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. In addition, Curzon (2004) also highlights four important issues about assessment, worth considering. These include appropriate timing, suitable form and structure in relation to subject matter and purpose, issue of validity of form, and a high degree of reliability (ibid).

The position as postulated by Curzon (2004) reminds us that assessment is a process, and as such, it involves a number of activities. These activities include measuring and drawing conclusions from the data collected in a manner that is perceived to be valid

and reliable. This is a position that has been postulated by scholars like Harlen and others. However, Curzon's emphasis on measurement makes his contribution slightly different from that of those who tended to argue around the inclusion or exclusion of objectives in assessment. Curzon does not seem to propose any particular way of measuring performance, as such, deliberately left this to the assessor to decide on how to measure. This also tends to weaken the 'how' part of the argument which stresses that the whole assessment process should be based on correct timing, and following a particular form (ibid). Curzon (2004) is however, credited with reminding us that assessment should be time related, should be structured properly, and should serve a purpose. The stress on the need for validity and reliability in assessment makes Curzon's contribution quite relevant in education today.

Nevertheless, Stufflebeam (1983) another renowned scholar in the area of evaluation and assessment, proposed a model that attempted to explain assessment in terms of both objectives and organizers, such as decisions. This was an attempt to deal with the issues that had polarized the debate on assessment in education. This became known as the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model. According to Stufflebeam (1983), the model identified these four major educational decisions required in assessment. Stufflebeam's model of assessment is credited for its ability to identify four essential elements of assessment relevant to modern day assessment of educational programmes and policies. These include identifying objectives, methods used to meet the objectives, methods of improving accountability and the relation to decision making in the change process (Stufflebeam, 1983). In an attempt to explain

his model, Stufflebeam raises at least four major questions that he feels should be posed at the initial stage of an assessment. These include:

(i) What unmet needs exist in the context served by a particular situation?

(ii) What improvement-oriented objective should be pursued in order to meet identified needs?

(iii) What improvement –oriented objectives will receive the support of the community?

(iv) Which set of objectives is most possible to achieve? (ibid).

In trying to answer these questions, Stufflebeam (1983) suggests that unmet needs be determined by examining the goals of the school and the performance of its students and then compare the two; secondly, examining the literature published by other assessors who have experienced similar problems may also help explain performance (Stufflebeam, 1983). Contributing to the debate on the role of context assessment as postulated by Stufflebeam, Borg and Gall (1991) posit that context assessment involves analysis of problems and needs in specific educational settings, and the delineating of programme objectives that alleviate the needs. Two important issues seem to stand out here about context assessment. These are needs and objectives.

The second stage of the CIPP model is input assessment. Like the first stage this stage is also expected to respond to a number of questions. Stufflebeam (1983) raises five questions which input assessment should be able to answer. These include the following:

(i) Does a given project strategy provide a logical response to a set of specified objectives?

(ii) Is a given strategy legal?

(iii) What strategies already exist with potential relevance for meeting previously established objectives?

(iv) What specific procedures will be needed to implement a given strategy?

(v) What are the operating characteristics and effects of competing strategies under pilot conditions? (ibid)

It appears, from another perspective, that the input assessment stage leads to the examination of resources within institutions. Borg and Gall (1991) explain the role of input assessment in the context of the model. They maintain that the input stage concerns judgments about the resources and strategies needed to accomplish programme goals and objectives. They further maintain that information collected should help decision makers choose the best possible resources and strategies within certain constraints. Whilst the argument by Stufflebeam shares similarities compared to that of other scholars, the questions that he raises at every stage of the implementation process are very pertinent. Stufflebeam highlights and reminds us that an assessment should provide a response to specific objectives, that it should be legal, and the strategy to be followed should be clear.

The third stage of Stufflebeam's model is the process stage. According to Guba and Lincoln (1985) process assessment monitors and "debugs" the decisions and

processes that keep them in close conformity as possible with the intended means. The stage of assessment also deals with the actual experiences related to the educational programme implementation. This, in a way, provides a guide as to what to assess in institutions such as schools. It is also expected to provide a guide as to what is going on within the implementation process as it examines personnel and activities. Sax (1980) also argues that it helps provide feedback on how the project is progressing. Its purpose is to help monitor the various aspects of the project so that potential problems can be identified, rectified and remedied (ibid). Stufflebeam (1983) raises a number of questions that have to be answered at this stage. These include the following:

(i) Is the project on schedule?

(ii) Should the staff be retrained or reoriented prior to completion of the project cycle?

(iii) Are the facilities and materials being used adequately and appropriately?

(iv) What major procedural barriers need to be overcome during the present project cycle?

Of interest, however, is the management of different processes. Its emphasis on examining the activities and personnel at school level in relation to the expected behaviour and objectives, appears to have held some appeal to scholars of assessment. In a way, it examines the ‘black box’ of what happens within institutions in relation to pronounced policies and programmes.

The final stage of the CIPP model worth considering is the product assessment stage. Borg and Gall (1991) remind us of its role in the whole assessment process. It is concerned with determining the extent to which the goals of the programme have been achieved and how measures of the goals are developed and administered (ibid). As noted by Guba and Lincoln (1985), product assessment is concerned with comparing actual to intended ends taking into account unintended effects.

It is observed that by concentrating on different stages of programme implementation, the CIPP model is characterized by formative assessment. In a way, it shares the advantages of formative assessment as well as its limitations. Its contribution to assessment has been noted by different scholars and researchers. For instance, as part of the formative process of assessment, it is able to provide feedback to the system and the stakeholders, whilst the implementation is in progress. By providing us with the different stages to assess, and how to assess them, the model goes beyond theorizing on the assessment process. It attempts to be practical. Its strength seems to lie in its attempt to incorporate the different organizers of assessment, such as objectives and decisions. These have been the centre of dispute between those who subscribe to the Tyler model of assessment and its critics. Guba and Lincoln (1985) inform us that the CIPP, as a model, fits in well with the emergent interest in systems theory. The system theory emphasizes the interdependence nature of organizations and society as a whole. They also observe that it is very rational and systematic in its approach. In addition they further maintain that, as a model, it is very much

operationalized, and has clear guidelines. It is also worth noting that it appears to be encompassing in its approach.

Concerns have been raised about its use in education. Guba and Lincoln (1991) note that it is blamed for making unwarranted assumptions about the rationality of the decision-makers. It would appear that it tends to over-rely on decision makers. For instance, activities at every stage of the implementation process are compared with the decisions taken at each of the stages. This alone might be misleading in assessment, as the decision making process is not as open as portrayed in the model (ibid). Decision-making goes with accountability and yet it is not all that easy to identify operational decision-makers (ibid).

Eisner, another scholar of note in the field of assessment, has made a contribution that sees a departure from the commonly held positions about assessment in education. Eisner disagrees with the position taken by such scholars as Tyler and Stufflebeam. Eisner advocates a different model of assessment that represents a departure from more conventional models in a number of respects (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Eisner's model is one of a number of judgmental models that utilize the human being as a measurement instrument. It also differs from other models in terms of how data is collected and analyzed. For Eisner, data collection, analysis, processing and interpretation, take place within the mind of the judge and thus are not open to direct inspection (Sax, 1980). As a result, it raises a number of questions, such as to what extent can we trust educational critiques; secondly, with what confidence can we treat

critics and their findings? According to Eisner, the judgmental processes are based on the 'critical guideposts' that the assessor has internalized through training and experience (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Guba and Lincoln (1985) further inform us that, unlike other models that are exposed to the educational and scientific rigours of doing assessment, the model uses the art of critique for the generation of its basic concepts. This became known as the 'connoisseurship' model of assessment. This perception of assessment is also contained in Eisner's definition of his connoisseurship model. Eisner defines connoisseurship as the art of perception that makes the appreciation of such complexity possible (Sax, 1980). However, in methodology, it tends to use interviews, observations and document reviews, which are not structured since the intention is not to establish replicable data (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

Nonetheless, despite its appeal at face value, the model has been criticized for a number of weaknesses. The major weakness that seems to stand out is its over-reliance on an individual assessor, where there are also no clear guidelines to follow. Even though he raises questions of validity of the findings by educational critiques, Eisner appears to have failed to provide an answer to the same questions that he attempted to address by introducing the idea of 'critical guideposts'. These tend to advocate for dependence on training and experience, which may be misleading in assessment. It raises the question of the extent to which we can rely on these, given their varied nature. This may also raise the issue of subjective judgment and bias. Concerns about these have been raised by scholars and sociologists such as Haralambos (1985) who argues that in cases where the researcher's values, attitudes

and expectations may dominate, the use of expert judgment tends to be more subjective and less valid than the more scientific approaches.

Divergent views expressed about assessment seem to bring a number of important issues to the fore. What seems to stand out is that assessment involves measurement, and that as a process, it has clear techniques for collecting and analyzing information. This reminds us of the measurement tools and techniques commonly used in education today, to judge student performance and programme performance.

Yoshino (2001), contributing to the debate on assessment within the context of Stufflebeam debate, tried to explain assessment in terms of a theory based on the CIPP model. To advance this theory, Yoshino (2001) identified at least four basic elements that are crucial for any assessment to take place. These included:

(i) Identifying goals, objectives, and criteria;

(ii) Systematic generation of information;

(iii) Systematic evaluation of information generated;

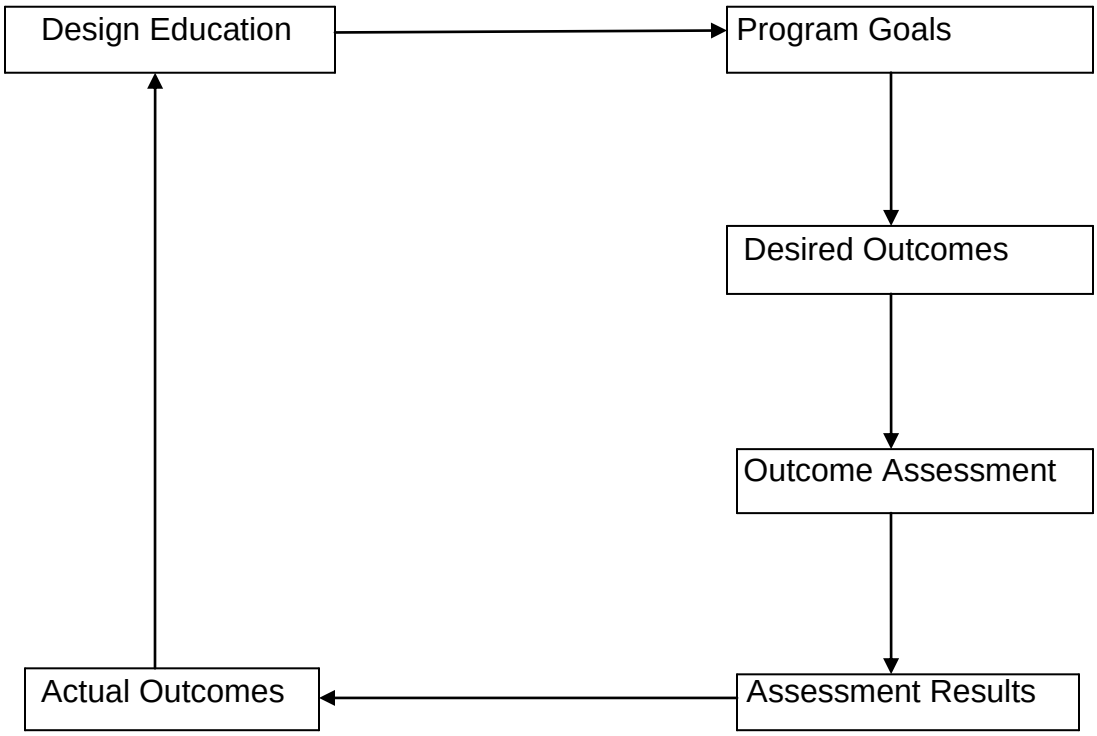
(iv) Systematic comparison of information generated against known goals, objectives, and criteria (ibid).

Yoshino's theory stresses the need to have objectives and clear criteria for determining these objectives. In that respect, Yoshino shares ideas with Tyler's model of assessment. Yoshino also argues for a clear pattern for gathering information and that there should be some mechanism for checking on the data. The final stage in the

assessment theory occurs when the assessor compares and analyzes data collected against the known objectives. It is then that the assessor accounts for the gap between the performance and the set objectives. Accounting involves engaging with the information that has been generated in relation to the goals and objectives. It is an activity that cannot be done willy-nilly, but requires some preparation and training.

Yoshino (2001) further argues that the role of evaluation is to improve the outputs or outcomes by means of a feedback loop. For Yoshino, it is proper that every level of the assessment process is somehow evaluated. Yoshino (2001) further highlights the role of feedback in assessment, arguing that the feedback mechanism, in any assessment, is the heart of assessment, as it provides information on the actual performance. To help us understand the feedback loop concept Yoshino uses an illustration that demonstrates the process as shown below;

Fig. 1 Assessment feedback loop



Adapted from Yoshino (2001)

Yoshino's (2001) greatest contribution has been the theorization of the CIPP model on one hand, and the practical attempt to make his theory work. Yoshino attempts to explain assessment in terms of the need for clear objectives and the translation of goals into assessable outcomes. The emphasis on objectives and outcomes makes Yoshino, in a way, a proponent of the Tyler model. What seems to stand out though is that the theory makes use of the available tools in assessment, whilst placing emphasis on feedback. Yoshino (2001) therefore makes an attempt to explain assessment in terms of the feedback concept. The emphasis on feedback

distinguishes Yoshino's work from that of most of the contributions of other scholars, since he makes an attempt to demonstrate how the process actually works. Yoshino (2001) also stresses the use of common tools such as the questionnaire, brainstorming, literature review, documents, benchmarking and interviews. Yoshino's contribution provides us with a theoretical framework of the concept assessment that views it in terms of its function in education, by providing for evaluation within the assessment process itself. Yoshino's theory provides for checks and balances within the assessment process. This is a feature that is not common in most of the other models and theories advanced so far. Like Swaffield and others, Yoshino is credited for the attempt to explain assessment in terms of the feedback concept.

Hence, approaching the concept assessment from a similar position, Swaffield (2008) concurs with Yoshino's feedback concept. The functionalist feedback concept, as postulated by Swaffield, holds much appeal in education today. This is premised on the assumption that such an assessment addresses issues that have to do with education, and therefore promotes accountability. In fact, Swaffield raises a number of questions that assessment has to deal with. For Swaffield (2008), assessment as feedback has to address the why, who, what, when and how it is involved? Trying to answer such questions justifies the actions that we take in the process (ibid). For instance, in trying to answer the question "why feedback?" we end up discussing the formative and summative functions of assessment. These are important functions in education if assessment is to serve a purpose. Formative feedback is concerned with contributing to future development as it tends to concentrate on the process; and that feedback

related to the summative function has an evaluative focus (ibid). Swaffield (2008) also takes note that assessment for formative feedback is mostly for developmental purposes, whereas assessment for summative feedback is mostly for accountability purposes.

Swaffield (2008) further observes that another aspect of assessment as feedback concept has to address the “who” question. In our attempt to address this question raised by Swaffield it may be necessary to consider both the traditional view of feedback and the contemporary view. Swaffield (2008) says that the traditional view of feedback is that it is given by the teacher to the student, and that the contemporary view is that it is not a linear system as it can come from different stakeholders, including students. This implies that, assessment of programmes may provide feedback to participants of the programme, the organization being assessed, the funding agencies, the designers and planners of the programme, and the community at large.

With regards to assessment of educational interventions and reform programmes, Mayer, in Phye, Robinson and Levin (2005), has identified obstacles that make it difficult for assessors. The first obstacle identified is that much educational reform appears to be based on slogans rather than reality. Whilst this may be appealing to stakeholders, in practice, it may not easily be translated into action. In such a scenario, it becomes difficult to come up with an assessment criterion. The problem that Mayer raises is that a slogan does not easily translate into effective educational practice, as it

may not necessarily be based on empirical evidence of how people learn and act (Phye et. al, 2005).

The second obstacle Mayer identifies is the problem of basing reform on doctrine. This may pose a number of problems in education, including that the doctrine on which the reform or intervention is based may ignore evidence- based theory (ibid). As such, input from other sources may end up being ignored if it is in conflict with the position of the advanced doctrine. Mayer therefore, notes that the major shortcoming of the doctrine-based approach is that it can lead to educational practices that lack research support.

The third obstacle indentified by Mayer is the political nature of the education system. As such, Mayer argues that most educational reforms and interventions seem to be based on the political agendas of those in power. The result is that changes in education may have very little to do with educational aims and goals. As such, basing reform on political agendas becomes an obstacle to educational assessment especially when reformers seek to make changes not based on political agendas, but on educational goals (Phye et. al, 2005). Such obstacles may also have an impact on the implementation and outcome of policy.

2.2 Assessment, quality and accountability in education

Most debates on assessment in education appear to credit assessment with working towards or contributing to quality and accountability. These are terms that are also illusive. Grisay and Mahlck (1990) who have made considerable contributions on the

debate on quality education, note that the quality of an education system, or part of it, is often described in terms of the inputs into the teaching-learning process. Coombs and Hallak (1987) add that quality should also include content, methods of teaching, management of the education process and adapting education to changing needs through innovations. Within this context Hallak (1996) further identifies the determinants of quality in education as inputs, the process, the outcome and the fitness of the education produced. For Hallak (1996) there is need to concentrate on the resources and the related mechanism to mobilize the same resources. When it comes to the processes, Hallak (1996) argues for the need for integration of the content, methods and organization of educational management. Like the afore-mentioned, outcomes and fitness for purpose are used to measure quality in education (ibid).

It appears that the arguments for quality education as postulated by Coombs and Hallak (1987), and Hallak (1996) provide us with key elements that need assessment at school level to determine the quality of education in schools. This position is also supported by Fuller (1986) who observed that the quality of an educational enterprise is the function of inputs and their efficient management in relation to observed targets. These arguments tended to support the CIPP model in that the model identifies the same areas as requiring assessment, if we were to assess for quality in education.

It should be noted that it is simplistic to say that assessment contributes to quality. But the major problem is to try to show how it does so, and secondly, that in so doing, to establish what quality in education constitutes. In trying to enhance our understanding

of this dichotomous situation, Stanton (1995) makes observations about assessment and quality that are worth considering. Stanton's (1995) assertions support the point raised by Coombs and Hallak (1987) which postulates that an organization, such as a school, is a system and as such is comprised of subunits; that if we assess for quality, we have to consider all these subunits. In a similar view, Stanton posits that to assess the quality of public institutions requires analysis of the legal framework that influences the performance, capacity, accountability and life cycle of government agencies and private instrumentalities (World Bank, 1995). Stanton raises pertinent issues. The concern for a legal framework is useful as it guides operations at institutional level.

Stanton's (1995) argument shows that establishing the extent of quality in institutions such as schools, is not the same as in other economic activities. For Stanton, assessing the quality of public institutions can be problematic in that these institutions are more than merely economic rules of the game. They are the way that a society chooses to organize itself to carry out public and private activities (World Bank, 1995). This argument presents us with a problem because, at times, we are attracted to assessing quality, using economic indicators such as how much is being spent per student, or trying to establish the ratio of resources in relation to the number of students. This can merely tell us what is going on within an institution and not necessarily the quality of the product produced. Despite this problem, Coombs and Hallak (1987) still argue that if we are to assess for quality purposes, there is need to consider the inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes.

Materu (2007) argues that assessment in education serves a quality assurance purpose. For Materu, quality is fitness for purpose. It allows us to measure the extent to which the programme is serving its purpose. Implicit in the argument is the issue of standards. Quality in education has to do with satisfying the client's expectations. In that respect, Materu (2007) supports Hallak's (1996) argument on quality as fitness for purpose. However, in a business organization, it may be easy to identify the clients. In a school set up, the clients are diverse and, at times, have different expectations. In education, the clients could be students, teachers, parents, education officers, and other users of the products of the education system. Harvey (2004) accepts Materu's concept of quality as fitness for purpose. Harvey (2004) further informs us that fitness for purpose equates quality with the fulfillment of a specification or stated outcome. For Harvey, quality has to deal with standards as well. It provides a measure of what ought to be.

Critiquing the quality as fitness for purpose concept, Campbell and Rozsnyni (2002) argue that the concept concentrates on the purpose at the expense of the process. Their argument is that if we are to concentrate on the purpose, this may be misleading and ignoring reality; that it could mean that as long as students are passing examinations, it would not matter much how they are being taught and how they are learning. Teachers may teach for examination purposes, ignoring the pedagogical needs of the students. Similarly, as long as a programme is achieving its goals, it would not matter by how much. For Campbell and Rozsnyni (2002), the process is just as important as the purpose served by that process. This means, therefore, that if we

are to establish quality, and at the same time assess for it, we also have to make provisions for monitoring the processes and the system as a whole. The means should, therefore, justify the end and equally so, the end should also justify the means.

Psacharopoulos, (1995) however, raises problems that we are most likely to encounter in our effort to assess for quality in education (World Bank, 1995). Psacharopoulos raises the point of time and the timing of the assessment in relation to measuring the quality of the school or college, given that it takes time for a school to have products after construction (ibid). If we are to concentrate on the product, it would be very difficult to assess for quality at primary school level as these rarely go to other markets except perhaps to proceed to secondary school. And, in arguing for the use of products, the major problem we face is how to get the products, and who assesses the quality of the product. On the other hand, schools are in different situations and circumstances. Any assessment for quality, based on the same criteria, may be misleading and unfair to the disadvantaged institutions.

Despite the divergent views expressed by Psacharopoulos and others, the position that assessing the different components of the schooling system tells us more about what is happening within a school in relation to a specific programme remains valid. It is also worth noting that the inputs and processes are equally important. If we are to satisfactorily gauge quality in education, different components of the schooling system need not be ignored. In assessing the education functions in schools, it is therefore

important to note how these contribute to improving the subsystems that constitute the education system. Education, as a system, is comprised of subsystems.

These subsystems are comprised of educational inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes as earlier noted, and a change in one part of the system is likely to have repercussions on other parts (Coombs and Hallak, 1987). In assessing programmes and courses, it is imperative that each of the subsystems be examined at different stages. This allows assessment for quality as it provides feedback mechanism already alluded to. It also brings into the fore the formative nature of assessment in issues of quality. Any assessment of educational programmes requires examination of the units that comprise the schooling system. Coombs and Hallak (1987) explain the different stages and subsystems in terms of the production function model.

The production function model enables us to assess the different subunits of the education system, which provides a measure of educational productivity and the quality of education (Coombs and Hallak, 1987). This is done through examining what is happening at each of the stages of the process. A weakness at one stage is most likely to have a negative effect on the outputs and outcomes and on the system as a whole.

Whilst the production function model is now applied to educational settings, the major problem in education seems to emanate from the problematic nature of attempting to measure performance and productivity mathematically. In assessing the education system, one should be aware that any significant change in one part of the system,

such as a change in the proportions of its inputs or the intensity of their use, or a change in its technology, organization, or management, is likely to have substantial repercussions on other parts of the system (Coombs and Hallack, 1987). One such change could be the involvement of parents in school governance. This could be viewed as a significant change and reform in the education system. Their involvement would be expected to positively contribute to each of the stages of the schooling system as demonstrated by the production function model. They would contribute to the system's inputs. For Coombs and Hallak (1987), inputs are the various resources and elements required to enable the system to function. These include instructional materials, physical facilities, equipment and supplies of various sorts, in addition to students and teachers. Arguments and illustrations by Coombs and Hallak help us to understand what goes on inside such institutions as schools and, at the same time, resonate with Stufflebeam's model of assessment.

In discussing quality in education, related terms such as accountability and efficiency are often mentioned. Assessment in education is attributed to having contributed to their improvement. Very often the discussions seem to fall short of demonstrating how accountability is improved in an education system. The question of who is accountable to whom is often raised when discussing issues of accountability. Harlen (2007) provides us with a definition that may provide answers to the questions raised. Accountability has to do with being responsible for one's actions, and being able to explain to stakeholders why and how things were done or why they were not done (ibid). The problem is that a school is a system and, as such, there are different

stakeholders involved who have divergent views about how education programmes should run. For instance, students, teachers, school heads, the community, parents, education officials and the nation at large have different perceptions about what constitutes sound education. What is important to note, however, is that any form of assessment should be able to provide some information to different stakeholders.

Approaching the debate from a similar angle, Bush and Burnham (1994) make an attempt to explain accountability and its relevance within the school system. Accountability means being required to give an account of events or behaviour in a school to those who have a legitimate right to know (Bush and Burnham, 1994). For Bush and Burnham, assessment, in this respect, assumes the responsibility of balancing and convincing different views on performance. However, it should be noted that any assessment of the activities in the school should be an information base for both insiders and outsiders, especially as it relates to the phenomenon under study, decentralization in education.

2.3 Conceptual Framework: Decentralization

2.3.1 Decentralization: the general concept

Decentralization as a concept has been found to be very complex, much of this emanating from its history and the various meanings and connotations derived from such history (Pollitt, Birchall, Putman, 1998). One definition of decentralization that has acquired popularity is that, decentralization involves the deliberate and planned transfer of resources away from central state institutions to peripheral institutions such

as district councils, local government, schools or churches (Olowu in Bangura and Larbi, 2006). This popularity was as a result of the notion that decentralization was seen as a way of sharing power on one hand and as a concept that meant much in terms of empowering local communities on the other, especially in Africa soon after the advent of independence (Hyden, 1983, Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). The global discourse on 'good governance' and the need for effective forms of decision making has also contributed to making decentralization reform the *modus operandi* in education and indeed in other sectors (Davies, Harber and Dzimadzi, 2003). These perceived tenants of decentralization and others such as participation, democracy and decision-making are discussed later in the chapter.

The concept decentralization has also been interpreted in terms of the purpose it was expected to serve. For instance, Adamolekun (1991) noted that decentralization involved the organization of government functions and activities outside the headquarters of the central government. Such organization could be done as an administrative measure which involved the transfer of resources and responsibilities to lower levels and also as a political arrangement that involved the devolution of specific powers, functions and resources to the same levels (ibid). Adamolekun (1991) does not confine decentralization to government structures only, but goes further to show that it may also include non-governmental and community organizations performing the same functions as government units.

In the decentralization discourse, of note by such scholars as Bangura and Larbi (2006), Adamolekun (1991) and Davies et. al, (2003), is the emphasis on the transfer of resources, functions and decision making powers to sub-regional levels and community organizations. However, the issue of resource transfer has been a contentious one in decentralization. For instance, there have been arguments that in most developing countries, such transfer has not always been accompanied by the relevant resources (Burki et. al, 2000). The other issue that has characterized decentralization is the dichotomy that exists between decentralization policy and structures and decentralization process and cultures (Davies et. al, 2003). As noted by Fullan (1993) and Hanson (1998) decentralization has to change both the structures of the organization and the organizational culture as well. Decentralization has to perform both functions; thus restructuring organizations and reculturing organizations, in which members have to learn new roles, alter leadership roles and communication patterns (Hanson, 1998). Such attempts to reform organizations either structurally or culturally or both seem to have contributed to the emergence of different forms and practices of decentralization.

These forms of decentralization have been classified in terms of how power, responsibilities and resources are distributed. They include deconcentration, devolution, delegation and de facto decentralization among others.

2.3.2 Decentralization as deconcentration

Over the years debate on decentralization has tended to focus on what form really constituted decentralization. The arguments have been between deconcentration, devolution, delegation and even privatization. Some scholars have referred to decentralization in terms of the purpose it serves, for example, fiscal decentralization, administrative decentralization, and political decentralization (Burki et. al, 2000). At the same time, others have referred to decentralization in terms of its form and degree of power, for example deconcentration, devolution, delegation and privatization (Naidoo, 2002; Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983; Lauglo, 1995; Makumbe, 1998).

Deconcentration involves greater geographical decentralization of state authority (Lauglo, 1995). Deconcentration results in the transfer of more authority to such lower levels as regional and local officials for them to take initiative for new activity, to budget and to recruit and deploy staff (ibid). Some researchers however note that in deconcentration, central government retains authority, but allocates responsibilities to the lower levels of government (Sharma, 2006). Whilst concurring with Lauglo (1995), Hyden (1983) raises pertinent points about deconcetration as a form of decentralization. Hyden notes that transfer of authority to local levels alone was not enough to constitute deconcentration. The authority transferred from central ministries and their agencies to staff of the same ministries or agencies who are situated outside the national headquarters should be adequate enough to enable them to carry out specified functions (Hyden, 1983). This becomes an intra-organizational pattern of power relations (ibid).

There are a number of issues that seem to emerge from the views expressed by Lauglo (1995) and Hyden (1983) about deconcentration as a form of decentralization. With deconcentration there is movement of authority from the centre to the periphery within the same organization or ministry. It focuses more on sharing of responsibilities. However, the overall decisions remain with the central ministry. At the same time Lauglo and Hyden provide us with the functions and the responsibilities that can be decentralized. These include management of resources, budgeting, recruitment and deployment of staff, areas that are also key in the decentralization of education functions. However, decentralization in the form of deconcentration has been blamed for perpetuating inequalities among communities (Sayed, 2002; Naidoo, 2002).

2.3.3 Decentralization as devolution

Devolution as a form of decentralization involves the transfer of legally defined elements of political power to lower units of government (Crook and Manor, 1998). It shares similarities with deconcentration in terms of relegating power and authority to lower levels, but it allocates authority and resources to other organizations outside. In that respect, devolution maintains inter-organizational transfer of power from the centre units outside the normal command structure of central government (Hyden, 1983). What appears to stand out though, is the issue of power and how and by whom it is exercised in both forms of decentralization. Whilst in deconcentration power is retained by the centre, in the case of devolution there is autonomy in the exercise of power by the lower levels. In that respect policy decisions and political power are distributed to the lower levels (Crook and Manor, 1998).

Naidoo (2002) brings in important elements about deconcentration and devolution. Devolution is much to do with “the distribution of authority to make decisions and to take action by local governments or local communities independently of central administrative oversight” (Naidoo, 2002:18). By comparison, devolution appears to occur much less frequently than deconcentration (ibid). The other distinction noted lies in lack of independence in deconcentration which is found in devolution. Naidoo (2002) further notes that deconcentration involves local entities acting largely as the local agents of central governments, managing personnel, and expending resources allocated to them by central government authorities. Decentralization in such countries as Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe is much more on the deconcentration side, whilst in Uganda and Mali there is greater devolution (Naidoo, 2002). What appears to emerge though in both cases and forms of decentralization are the issues of the decision making process, resources and power. In deconcentration, for example, there is no independent authority from the centre, whereas in devolution there is complete independent decision-making authority from the centre (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983).

2.3.4 Decentralization as delegation

Gasper (1997) brings in another aspect of decentralization, delegation. For Gasper (1997), there should be a transfer of managerial responsibilities and such transfer should be for functions that are specified. The transfer should be from central government to public corporations or parastatals which normally lie outside the regular

bureaucratic structure (ibid). Gasper (1997) appears to place emphasis, not only on the issues of authority and power, but brings in the pertinent issue of managerial responsibilities. In that respect, decentralization through delegation performs a management function. Within the school context, delegation can involve granting lower levels of the managerial strata the necessary authority to carry out work that should have been done by the top management (Musaazi, 1982). There should be control mechanisms to ensure that standards are being maintained and that the manager (central authority) retains accountability (ibid).

Fiske (1996) further notes that delegation is a more extensive approach to decentralization under which central authorities lend authority to lower levels of government. Furthermore, Fiske (1996) notes that delegation can result in semi-autonomous organizations such as churches and schools getting authority to run institutions. This is done with the understanding that the authority can be withdrawn (Fiske, 1996). Taking Fiske's (1996) concept of delegation as decentralization, the attempt by the government of Zimbabwe to directly deal with the School Development Committees and School Development Associations appears to indicate decentralization in the form of delegation in Zimbabwe. This is a position that appears to contradict Naidoo's (2002) argument about decentralization in Zimbabwe. Whilst Naidoo (2002) describes decentralization in Zimbabwe as in the form of deconcentration, Fiske's (1996) description of the same points to the delegation form of decentralization.

There appears to be not much of a difference when one looks at what is involved in both forms of decentralization; deconcentration and delegation. One source of difference could be in terms of how they deploy power. Fiske (1996) tended to view decentralization in terms of the purpose it serves, thus political decentralization and administrative decentralization. Political decentralization involves the assignment of power to make decisions about education to citizens or to other representatives at lower levels of government, whereas administrative decentralization is a management strategy (Fiske, 1996). In that respect, the decentralization in education in Zimbabwe falls essentially within a management strategy as noted above (ibid). Similarly, the use of different concepts to describe decentralization in Zimbabwe appears to indicate the thin line between the different forms of decentralization alluded to above; much depends on theory espoused and in use guiding the implementation process (Naidoo, 2002).

Naidoo (2002) notes that despite the form decentralization can take, there should be a framework for analyzing decentralization experiences. For him, the framework should include at least five categories. These include the environment and context in which the decentralization is to take place, rationale, form of decentralization, level of implementation, stage and outcomes of implementation.

Naidoo (2002) notes that within the environment and context stage, decentralization has to look at the national context including economic, political, and social influences.

Another stage of the decentralization analysis is the rationale for the decentralization. There should be clear motives and reasons for educational decentralization; there should be organization structure and design to support the process of decentralization; the level of implementation should also be clear, for example, whether it is the provincial, state, district or school level at which implementation is to take place and the function of each of the levels should be equally clear (Naidoo, 2002). Lastly, the agencies have to progress with the implementation of the policy of decentralization and there should be mechanisms to check the same progress (Naidoo, 2002).

Naidoo's (2002) framework of analysis provides a conceptual framework on how to view decentralization in education. It appears to enhance understanding of decentralization not only in education but the wider spectrum as well. However, there have been arguments that the implementation of decentralization as presented by Naidoo tended to present a typology or continuum pattern in the decentralization matrix which seems to suggest that the clear definition of the stages as indicated in the analysis would be a guarantee for successful implementation of decentralization in education. Saito (2001) for example, points out that the concept of decentralization is wide and as such, for meaningful analyses, outcomes had to be negotiated and bargained over how political power and material benefits are shared and contested. According to Saito (2001), for meaningful analyses to take place, there is need to decompose the impact of decentralization.

Naidoo (2002) and Saito's (2001) views tend to agree that decentralization involves the issues of functions by the different levels of the implementing agencies and power. Explicit in these are that resources and benefits are spread within the institutions (ibid).

2.3.5 De facto decentralization or "decentralization by default"

As noted earlier, decentralization as a reform policy can be supported by legislation to facilitate its implementation as was the case with Ghana (Osei and Brock, 2006) and South Africa in the case of South Africa Schools Act (SASA)(Sayed,1999). One such example is Zimbabwe which later legislated for the creation of School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Development Associations (SDAs) as organs of decentralization through the Education Amendment Act of 1991 (Government of Zimbabwe, 1991). In other cases, decentralization could be by ad-hoc presidential decrees and directives as was the case in Chile and Zimbabwe in 1984 (Gropello, 2000; Stewart, Klugman and Helmsing, 1994) as noted earlier. In both cases, functions of the lower levels of governance can be clearly defined with the role of the stakeholders clearly stated.

There have been instances where central government has failed to perform its function despite the promise to do the same (Blair, 1995). This has resulted in communities taking over the responsibilities of central government (Bangura and Larbi, 2006). In some cases the central government remains silent about the provision of certain resources, and in others it fails to provide the basic resources for its citizens. The citizens have to make important decisions to provide for themselves. This becomes

decentralization of functions by de facto than de jure (Blair, 1995). Cases where citizens are forced by circumstances to provide services where state institutions had failed are common in developing countries. Bangura and Larbi (2006) attribute such practices to a number of factors which include the propensity of African governments to design decentralization policies on the basis of ideological arguments than on the analysis of the empirical reality on what exists on the ground. As a result, this has contributed to “decentralization by default” as noted above (Bangura and Larbi, 2006; 247).

2.4 Decentralization as a reform policy

Central governments throughout the world have always adopted reforms in administration, be they fiscal or political (Lauglo, 1995). Education as a sector has also been entangled in between the reform processes. The reforms have at times resulted in the deliberate and planned transfer of resources away from the central state institutions and also in national governments sharing some of their powers with other groups, particularly those that are either geographically dispersed, or are responsible for specific functions (Bangura and Larbi, 2006; Makumbe, 1998). The motives to distribute power and responsibilities in a way, have led to governments adopting different policies and strategies within the decentralization framework (Lauglo, 1995).

Policy in this sense is used to refer to the direction and strategies that the state chooses to employ to accomplish set goals, thus what governments choose to do or not to do (Dye, 1987). Policy is about intent, which can also be supported by law (Van

Niekerk, van de Waldt and Jonker, 2001). National policy in this sense refers to a declaration of intent and as such, it is legislation that should contain elements such as: firstly, specific objectives which address a specific societal problem or need, secondly, it provides certain provisions or needs, and thirdly, within the confines of decentralization policy, legislation powers are conferred on subordinate institutions (ibid). Of note is that regulations and instructions provide guidelines to implementing agencies. Van Niekerk et. al, (2001) appear to stress the importance of legislation and regulations to support the implementation of policy.

In the same vein, implementation of such policies as decentralization has been influenced not only by legislation, but the approaches adopted to effect such reform process (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989). The position taken by Van Niekerk et. al, (2001) appears to support Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) who argue that implementation of policy normally runs through a number of stages beginning with the passage of the basic statutes, followed by the policy outputs (decisions) of the implementing agencies, the compliance of the target groups with these decisions, the actual impacts, and the important revisions in the basic statute. The view, whilst important in enhancing our understanding of implementation of policy such as decentralization, appears to be premised on the assumption that once a statute is enacted, compliance becomes automatic. However, despite the existence of statutes, policy formulation and implementation have been dominated by a “policy subsystem” composed of the relevant agencies and interest groups (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989).

Apart from the conditions noted above, Parsons (1995) advanced other conditions that are conducive for ‘perfect implementation’. These include the following: need to have clear lines of authority; that norms would be enforced and objectives given; that people would do what they are told and asked; that there would be perfect communication; and that there would be no pressure of time (ibid). The argument by Parsons appears to bring in the issues of control and oversight in the implementation of such policies as decentralization. Control and oversight have been viewed as contributing to policy implementation success much more than the statutes. These have much to do with supervision and monitoring of agencies, at the same time taking into consideration the initial policymaker (the centre); the field-level implementing officials (the periphery), and the private actor (the target group) (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989). The arguments above tend to portray a top-down approach to policy implementation, which tends to emphasize the use of control from the top.

The evolutionary models have argued that the policy implementation process was much more complex than the top-down approach tended to portray. For instance, Parsons (1995) further posits that what is really important is the relationship of policy makers to the deliverers and the extent to which ‘street-level’ implementers use their discretion on how to apply policy. The evolutionary approach to policy implementation also notes that in reality, there are disagreements about policy goals; vagueness and ambiguity about policies and uncertainty about their operationalization in practice;

procedural complexity; inconsistency between powers available and existing problems; and conflict arising from public participation (Lewis and Flynn 1978 in Parsons, 1995).

The argument by Lewis and Flyn appears to highlight the issue of power, and how social relations and activities are influenced and at times controlled by power. In that respect, they appear to support Foucault's view about power. Foucault argues that all social relations are systems of power and as such, fundamental power is not exercised by individuals, but is dispersed (Blackburn 1996). He further notes that power is an impersonal aspect of society which is manifested in the modes of surveillance, regulation or discipline that adapt human beings to the surrounding social structure (ibid). In that regard power dynamics are therefore seen as controlling behaviour and action much more than enacted laws. Foucault's contributions to the discourse on power have increased metatheorists' concern for the link between power and social theories (Turner, 2006). Foucault's theory on power is discussed later in the chapter, under poststructuralist theories of power and development.

Within the same context the power dynamics as alluded to are seen as not only regulating action, but at times limiting it. Power is therefore seen as central to the dynamics of a policy-action continuum (Barret and Fudge, 1981 in Parsons, 1995). In that case, policy implementation becomes an interactive bargaining process between those who are responsible for enacting policy and those who have control over resources (ibid).The above argument shows that there are a number of factors that influence successful implementation of any policy. These include the issue of who

really has the power and control of the activities and secondly the issue of recources.The availability of resources in that regard becomes a determinant of successful policy implementation.

2.5 Assessing implementation of decentralization

Assessing implementation of decentralization, the focus of this study, is characterized by a number of problems. These have included not only the problems associated with the assessment approaches as earlier noted, but the problems of the different approaches used in implementation. For instance, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) argue that implementation can be viewed from three different perspectives. These included the part played by the following in the implementation process: the initial policy maker (the centre); the field-level implementing officials (the periphery) and the private actors (the target group) (ibid).These three groups have important roles in the policy implementation matrix, which should contribute to successful implementation of policy. The argument by Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) is that in policy implementation, despite the policy intentions, there are a number of factors that that have to be considered. The factors can be classified into independent and dependent (ibid). These included tractability of the problem, ability of statutes to structure implementation and non-statutory variables, which have a bearing on policy outputs, compliance, actual impacts and perceived impacts (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989).

In explaining the tractability of the problem, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) give four independent variables which include technical difficulties, diversity of the target group

behavior and extent of behavioural change required (ibid). There should be a positive correlation between the diversity of the behaviour regulated in the policy and the discretion to be exercised by implementing agency. They note that “the more diverse the behavior being regulated, the more difficult it becomes to frame clear regulations and thus the greater the discretion which should be given to field-level implementers” (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989:23).

Furthermore, Mazmanian and Sabatier, (1989) explain their policy implementation process in terms of the ability of the statutes to structure implementation. Under this variable, they emphasize the need for clear and consistent objectives, initial allocation of financial resources, hierarchical integration within implementing institutions and decision rules of implementing agency (ibid).They also take note of non-statutory variables. These include the commitment of the implementing officials, public support, socio-economic conditions, attitudes and resources among other factors (ibid).

The use of statutory instruments in the policy implementation process as noted above tended to maintain a top-down approach to policy implementation. There appears to be a disconnection when one considers Mazmanian and Sabatier’s (1989) theory within the motives for decentralization in education. Decentralization, especially devolution, is supposed to limit the involvement of the ‘centre’. However, their contribution remains relevant in the study of implementation of policy as it reminds us of what variables to consider when assessing implementation of a diverse policy reform such as decentralization in education. It is important in that it reminds us of the different

variables that influence policy outputs and outcomes. Their view is supported by Anderson (1994) who noted that whilst a statute is able to confer legal authority for implementation, the success of such action was very much determined by the 'political milieu' in which the agency is able to exercise its discretion.

The top-down approach which has very much been associated with bureaucratic management, assumes a great deal about definition and human interaction and behaviour (Parsons, 1995). In that case, as noted by Lipsky (1976) in Parsons (1995) programme success was much more dependent upon the skills of specific individuals in local implementation structures than upon the efforts of central government officials, as implementation was determined by the street-level bureaucrats as already noted. In that regard, implementation is then very much influenced by the major players in the matrix of implementation. These are viewed as possessing the ability to modify or even veto instruction from central policy-makers should they choose to do so (Morris and Scott, 2003). Within this argument, the impression is that, it did not matter much how a policy or law was crafted, rather much depended on the implementing agency. Such an argument tended to weaken the role of regulating policy, and legal frameworks that guide implementation.

The implementation process could also be viewed as more complex than portrayed by both the top-down and bottom-up perspectives. The argument advanced has been that policies contain an interpretive element and it did not matter much whether the mode of implementation is top-down or bottom-up, those on the front line had varying bands of

discretion over how they chose to exercise the rules (Parsons, 1995).The argument is that implementation is viewed as political. This view was further posited by Bardach in Parsons (1995) who viewed implementation as a political game which involved bargaining, persuasion and maneuvering under conditions of uncertainty. This argument tended to support the view by Lipsky, that success in implementation of policies and programmes was influenced by factors other than the nature of the policy itself. These included how the implementers played the 'game'.

2.6 Rationale for decentralization in education

The reasons for decentralization in general and decentralization in education in particular have always been varied. They range from political, educational, and administrative to financial among other reasons (Fiske, 1996). As noted earlier political and economic developments in developing countries influenced the movement from centralized governance to decentralized governance (ibid). This development was also attributed to early development economists who discouraged local government by advising developing countries that they could maximize growth by centralizing control over economy (Bangura and Larbi, 2006; Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). The movement from centralized systems to decentralized systems is just political as it was economic in some instances. It is argued that the political motives were aimed at increasing the citizens' participation in the election of their leaders (Adamolekun, 1991). Within the context of the political motives, was the desire for political legitimacy. In education for example, it was argued that decentralization "legitimates governance of education by persons who have been selected through a political process that

permits groups in society to express their preferences" (McGinn and Welsh, 1999:31). At times, like in most African countries, change of government accompanied by political reform has contributed to the shift to decentralization (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). The shift is attributed to the disillusionment with the results of central planning and the shift of emphasis to growth-with-equity policies, as well as the realization that development is a complex and uncertain process that cannot be easily planned and controlled from the centre (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983).The debate accompanying the shift has now tended to focus not only on decentralization in education but the consequences of such a shift.

In some cases, decentralization was meant to improve efficiency in service delivery, and in others, it was nothing more than political symbolism (Jansen, 2002). Yet in some cases, decentralization was perceived as a way to improve technical and social efficiency, as a tool for addressing issues of quality, equity, and accountability (Winkler, 1994; Fiske, 1996). The need to satisfy administrative objectives, political objectives and economic objectives was also paramount (Adamolekun, 1991). In the education sector for example, it was argued that education decentralization would improve the amount and quality of inputs to schooling, and the relevance of programmes and thereby increase learning outcomes (McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

There has been an emerging trend in fiscal decentralization (Bangura and Larbi, 2006). The trend has developed based on three arguments. These included the argument that centralized planning had not been successful in promoting adequate development, that

changing international conditions and structural adjustment programmes designed to improve public sector performance created serious fiscal difficulties for developing countries, resulting in large budget deficits, and that the changing political climates also encouraged the development of local government in developing countries (ibid).

Whilst in reality the tangible benefits of decentralizing power and authority may be problematic to measure, decentralization is still credited with improving participation and community involvement (Saito, 2001). As earlier noted, decentralization has been credited with enhancing equity, strengthening accountability, promoting liberty, equality and welfare (Lauglo, 2005). Assessing decentralization motives and effects, especially in Africa is characterized by a number of problems. One among them was that decentralization policies and programmes in Africa tended to be designed more on the basis of ideological arguments than on the analysis of the empirical reality of what exists on the ground (Olowu, 2006). This, on its own, showed that change of interests had revitalized the call for decentralization with the passage of time. This is further noted by Olowu (2006) who argues that in the 1990s there were several causes that contributed to renewed interest in programmes and policies on decentralization in Africa. Apart from supporting Lauglo's (2005) reasons for the renewed interest, Olowu (2006) emphasized that such movement emanated from the failure of centralized public sector management evidenced by economic, fiscal and political crises. Secondly, that pressure for political reform in developing countries and the world over by domestic actors had played its part. Thirdly, it emanated from external donors (ibid). Lastly,

Olowu (2006) also attributes the change of heart to growing urbanization and metropolitanization which gave rise to fundamental changes to the modes of economic production.

Olowu (2006) raises a number of pertinent issues. Chief among these was the role of the external donor in determining implementation of policy. For example, as noted earlier, in Zimbabwe the creation of the committees to run schools in an effort to decentralize education functions also had much to do with the Economic Reform Programmes introduced in the country in the early 1990s.This was a programme supported by multinational agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Fiske, 1996). Within that context, decentralization in education could be introduced as an austerity measure.

On the purpose of decentralization in education in African countries, Olowu (2006) also argues that decentralization was meant to remedy what he considered to be the most serious institutional weaknesses. These included weak accountability, poor integration between formal and informal structures of governance and poor outputs in terms of the quantity and quality of basic service delivery (ibid).

The different arguments above about the rationale for decentralization contain the different objectives for decentralization, which can be summarized into at least three categories. These include administrative objectives, political objectives and economic objectives (Adamolekun, 1991).

2.6.1 Administrative objectives

The arguments for decentralization in education have much to do with the desire to achieve administrative objectives. These can further be divided into two, namely administrative convenience and administrative efficiency (Lauglo, 1996). Of the two, the former is perceived as serving central government in at least three ways. First it is noted that it relieves the central government of extra political problems, secondly, it relieves the central government of financial burden and lastly, it contributes to reducing corruption at national level (ibid). In that regard, decentralization characterized by the administrative convenience objective appears to transfer not only responsibilities, but national problems to local level. Such problems may include the transfer of corruption to local levels (Saito, 2001).

Another dimension of the administrative objective is administrative efficiency. It is premised on the argument that decentralization would contribute to increasing the capacity of local levels, which could then contribute to an increase in revenue, resource mobilization and efficient delivery of service (Lauglo, 1996). However, the assumptions on which such objectives are designed appear to ignore reality. For instance, not all local levels have the revenue and resources required to implement programmes. In such a scenario, it may be difficult to achieve administrative efficiency.

2.6. 2 Political objectives

Decentralization in its different forms was viewed as a tool for enhancing a search for local institutions that are genuinely participatory and responsible to local communities (Olowu, 2006). This would then involve participation and making decisions on governance issues (ibid). Such participation would involve election of representatives and provide for self-governance. In that regard, decentralization could be viewed as having an empowering effect to local communities. However, studies have shown that election of representatives does not always guarantee participation. Such studies have shown that there are many challenges inhibiting the empowering objective emanating from gender, social class and culture (Duku, 2006; Sayed, 1999). The issue of power is to be discussed later in the chapter. Other problems that have characterized the political objective have to do with the unwillingness of political and administrative leaders to share power (Olowu, 2006; Sayed, 1999). As such, decentralization has to deal with the fear of losing such power. In addition, there is also the fear attributed to a zero-sum power game, in which local actors are perceived to gain at the expense of the centre, rather than a positive-sum power game which results in both the local and centre gaining over time (Olowu, 2006).

Apart from the issues of participation and power noted above, the political objective has to deal with issues of handling political legitimacy and professional expertise (McGinn and Welsh, 1999). The question is, do political legitimacy and professional expertise always converge? Or can such convergence be negotiated? As such, this raises another concern as to whether education is the right forum to exercise political

rights *vis-a-vis* professional expertise (ibid). This is necessary so as to avoid “negative-sum” tendencies among the groups that have to work together for the good of the education system, as noted earlier.

2. 6. 3 Economic objectives

The economic objectives for decentralization can be fragmented into at least four categories. Decentralization as an economic development strategy can come about as a result of economic structural adjustment programmes advocated by international agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Conyers, 2003; Olowu, 2006). It was therefore argued that decentralization of education functions would contribute to reducing government expenditure as noted earlier. Secondly, the economic objectives are based on the notion that local units are more conducive to both formulation and implementation because of their close proximity to the people they are supposed to serve (Adamolekun, 1991). Thirdly, it is envisaged that citizens are more likely to be more willing to contribute financially in support of local programmes (ibid).

The economic objectives as noted above appear to ignore economic realities in developing countries, especially in Africa. For instance, the notion that it makes resources available to the local communities as they are willing to contribute, ignores the poverty levels in communities, which may render such contributions almost impossible. In addition to that, choice at local level is limited as competition is not

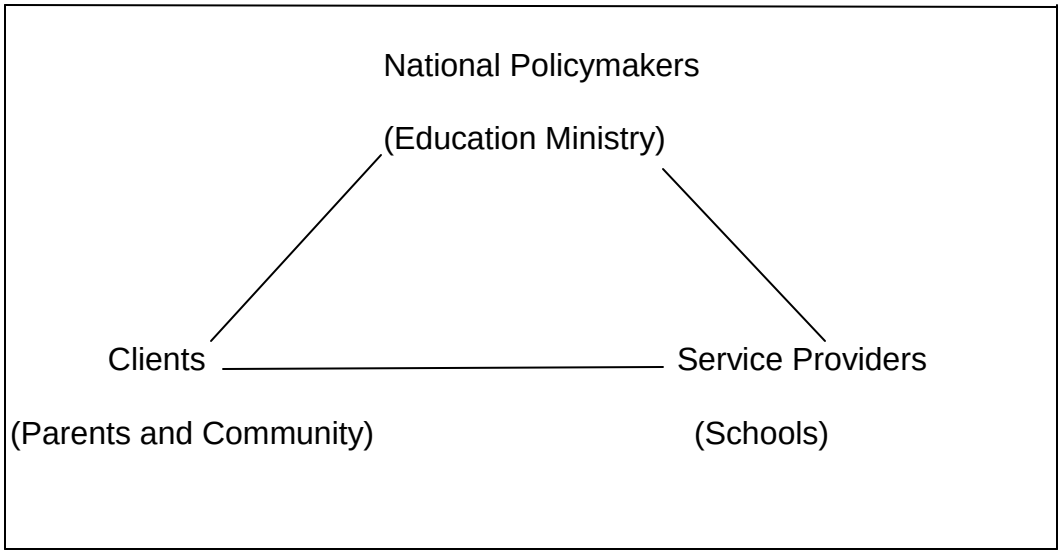
always in the direction of reducing costs (Adamolekun, 1991). Instead of contributing to economic efficiency, it may increase corruption at local level (Saito, 2001).

The objectives discussed above demonstrate the interconnections between the different notions of decentralization, which despite the problems noted appear to make a strong case for decentralization (Lauglo, 1995).The next section deals with the interconnection between decentralization, accountability and quality.

2.7 Decentralization, accountability and quality in education

As noted above, one of the aims for decentralizing the education system had much to do with the need to improve on accountability. Winkler (2005) for example, provides some insight into the link between decentralization of education functions and accountability. For Winkler (2005), there are three major factors that have to be considered if we are to have decentralization in education working optimally. These are the national policy makers, who in the case of education, are represented by the Education Ministry, the service providers (schools) and the clients (parents and community). Winkler (2005) explains the tripartite arrangement involving the three groups in the form of an illustration as shown below.

Fig. 2 Accountability in Public Education



Adapted from the World Bank's 2004 World Development.

In an attempt to explain the relationship between decentralization at school level and accountability, Winkler (2005) makes use of the above illustration. Within the traditional model, clients make their preferences known to the policymakers through voting. Winkler (2005) notes that policymakers should then formulate policies that reflect those preferences; they also command the service provider to implement the policies and regulations delivered from above. The service providers have an obligation to deliver instructional service to children.

Furthermore, Winkler (2005) argues that devolution may increase accountability and efficiency. This happens as decentralization of education functions shortens that distance between the different stakeholders, and as a result of the shortened distance decisions are made at local level (ibid). Such interaction between the various

stakeholders increases not only the voice of parents, but also strengthens system management through reducing the opportunities for schools to evade policymakers' directives (Winkler, 2005).

In the case of delegation, Winkler (2005) notes that the use of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) further shortens the distance in the figure. This comes about as those who are elected are able to meet periodically with parents, thereby giving participating parents a strong voice, thereby contributing to an increase in accountability (ibid).

Winkler (2005) raises a salient point about accountability itself when it comes to such sectors as education. There is a difference between accountability in public education and in private education. With private education clients directly purchase education services from private schools and money flows directly to the service providers who are directly accountable to the clients (Winkler, 2005). In that respect, the relationship becomes strictly a business one. In public education, accountability may be difficult to establish, as it depends more on the level of participation and involvement of the stakeholders. There is lack of direct accountability to clients (Winkler 2005). In a sense, in public education it becomes difficult to establish who is accountable to whom.

Contributing to the relationship between decentralization and accountability, Samoff (1993) notes that experiences with decentralization in terms of increasing accountability had been mixed and often at times disappointing. The source of disappointment has been that the expected benefits from improved administration,

increased efficiency, and reduced bureaucracy to enhance democratic participation have been illusory (ibid). This has made accountability a rhetorical gesture, as in practice decentralization in education has not been accompanied by a real transfer of authority (ibid).

The illustration by Winkler (2005) and the counter arguments by Samoff (1993) remind us of the role that decentralization in education was expected to play. Though Winkler and Samoff appear to differ on the extent to which decentralization can achieve this, they converge on the expectations that decentralization in education has raised, as a measure to improve on quality of education. In addition to that, Samoff goes a step further and raises concerns about accountability. For Samoff, if there is to be accountability in education through decentralization, there is need to examine not only participation in terms of interaction, but accountability in education should involve the methods that are needed to judge performance of processes within the system. Samoff does not only raise the contentious issue of quality in education, but how to account for it as well. In that respect, accountability becomes more than a transparency issue, but a key component of the quality of education discourse.

Accountability as a systematic method should assure stakeholders that schools are producing the desired results (ibid).

Ross and Mahlck (1990) contributing to the debate on ‘quality of education’ make the observation that the phrase ‘planning the quality of education’ has been interpreted as being concerned with educational planning which could then result in an improvement

in the environment. They further note that such improvement should express itself in the form of detectable gains in the knowledge, skills, and values acquired by students (Ross and Mahlck 1990). However, the major concern remains that of how decentralization in education, and participation and involvement of lower levels in particular, such as the districts and community are able to do this.

Ross and Mahlck (1990) appear to concentrate on students' achievement as a way of assessing quality of education. This is a view that is also supported by Grisay and Mahlck (1989) who also note that public debate on the quality of education usually concentrates on a small number of issues, the most frequent of which is the students' level of achievement.

The concept of quality of education has been widened to include inputs, process, outputs and outcomes (Coombs and Hallak, 1987). Their argument has been that it is not enough to simply judge quality in terms of student achievement alone, there are a number of factors that contribute to quality of education. Whilst they acknowledge these other factors, they argue that the following should stand out as we try to achieve quality in education: content and the methods of teaching; management of the educational process; what the students learn and what the learners are; and what attempts are being made to adapt education needs through innovation (ibid).

Coombs and Hallack (1987) appear to focus on the processes and activities that take place within the education institution as factors that constitute quality of education. On

the other hand, Grisay and Mahlck (1989) note that despite the complex and multidimensional nature of the concept of educational quality there is need to examine the products or results. The following should stand out: firstly, the determinants of educational quality should involve the extent to which the products or results of the education provided meet the standards stipulated in the system's educational objectives (ibid). In addition to that, Grisay and Mahlck (1989) further note that quality in education had to deal with the extent to which the knowledge, skills and values acquired are relevant to human and environmental conditions and needs. In further contribution to the debate on quality of education in relation to decentralization in education, Coombs and Hallack (1987) and Grisay and Mahlck (1989) identify common issues that contribute to quality education. These include accountability, a curriculum that incorporates different views of different stakeholders within the education system, clear assessment procedures that incorporate feedback from stakeholders and meeting customer satisfaction in terms of the product of the schooling system (ibid).

The issues presented above appear to summarise the different views as presented by Coombs and Hallack (1987) and Grisay and Mahlck (1989) about the elements that constitute quality of education. What remains unclear though, is how decentralization in education is to influence these factors and thereby contribute to quality education.

Writing about decentralization of education and quality in Chile, Gropello (2000), argues that the transfer of responsibilities in the delivery of education service to sub-

national levels and even more to school level should make it possible to deliver a service of higher quality. Higher quality education is possible if there is a match between supply and demand and also if there is increased accountability of the service providers to the local community (Gropello, 2000). Accountability in this sense, should involve widening the extent to which educational planners would have to be more pragmatic and more operational through working closely with the people responsible for budgets and resource allocation decisions (Hallack, 1989 in Ross and Mahlck, 1990).

Issues of accountability and quality have been raised in the decentralization discourse, because of their presumed link, not only with decentralization, but with democracy as well.

2.8 Decentralization and democracy

Globally, there is much debate and desire for democracy (Fiske, 1996). On the one hand this has contributed to a shift in communities' positions on the extent to which they can participate in school affairs. On the other, experiences have also shown a shift by central government to decentralization (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). This has been done for several reasons, as noted earlier. What is not clear in most of the instances is whether the desire to democratize such institutions as education is deliberate, coincidental or circumstantial. However, there are two factors that could be used to explain this. One could be attributed to changes in public opinion about the role and ability of government and the second is that it would be the spread of democracy

and popular participation, thereby contributing to the shift towards democratization of institutions such as schools (Gaynor, 1998).

In the euphoria for democracy, it is therefore not surprising that decentralization has been linked to democratization (Blair, 1995). This might not be surprising as both terms include participation and involvement. In some way, this has contributed to the overuse of the term democracy in both world politics and education discourse. There has also been debate on whether democracy in national governance automatically transcends into democratization of such institutions as schools (Naidoo, 2002). Another question has been whether it was possible to democratize institutions within an autocratic government system (Lauglo, 1995; Davies, 2002).

The concept democratization tends to be at times bound by issues of culture and practices in the society, as authoritarianism in schools seems to be reproduced from the macro-culture (Davies, 2002). Education has the responsibility of the simultaneous democratization of both itself and society (ibid). There has been a tendency to equate decentralization with democratization. In fact these are concepts that can exist independent of each other. As noted by Crook and Manor (1998) decentralization after all, does not even necessarily imply democracy. Further the outcomes of a decentralization policy will also depend on their combination with important elements, for example, the kind of legitimation and accountability adopted (ibid).

It would appear that trying to use decentralization and education as an agency of democracy has its short-comings, due to a number of factors. Decentralization for instance, is not independent of the social, economic and political structures of a society. In some of the cases, as noted by Crook and Manor (1998) decentralization is a policy forced to carry an unrealistic burden of expectations regarding its ability to transform whole societies dominated by authoritarian of patronage politics. As such, its implementation has been characterized by a number of problems. Among these problems, it would appear democratization did not seem to be the main agenda.

In an attempt to democratize institutions such as schools through decentralization, education functions such as personnel management, financial management, resource management, supervision, curricular issues and school governance in general have also been decentralized (Winkler and Gershberg, 2000). These are viewed as characteristics of a decentralized school system in which decisions are made and implemented at local level (ibid). However, having these in place is not a guarantee for democracy, as much depends on the extent to which those affected make decisions. Haggard (2000) noted that there was a tendency to guard resources and decisions at the centre. This had the effect of defeating the same democracy that decentralization was meant to promote.

This therefore raises interesting issues about participation as a tool to democratize institutions such as schools. Participation is defined as the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation that encourages the individual to

contribute to group goals (Owens, 1995). Participation of parents and communities could also be viewed within the context of achieving educational objectives and improvement of quality of education. Whilst this might hold true, the level and extent of community participation and involvement is not always easy to measure, though studies in participation seem to give credence to the claim that participation benefits both the school and the community (Zvobgo, 1997). Adedeji (1990) concluded that participation accelerates the process of change. Zvobgo (1997) concurs and further argues that it maximizes consensus in decision making, ensures maximum accountability, acceptability of decisions, and thereby facilitates effective implementation of decisions in circumstances of enhanced co-operation. In that regard participation and involvement can be viewed as tenants of democracy. Their promotion is most likely to contribute towards democratic practices.

In adding voice to the concern about the democratization of the schooling system, Brinkerhoff (1998) also notes the benefits of participatory democracy. According to Brinkerhoff (1998) the benefits that can accrue through parental and community participation are many. They include firstly, the ability of participatory democracy to lead to better policy targeting. Secondly, he notes that participation was able to provide a closer fit between the needs and demands of beneficiaries and the design of policy objectives and modalities. Thirdly, participatory democracy had the possible effect of building ownership of policy solutions and better conformity. Lastly, he noted that participation facilitated greater sustainability of policies and that it had an empowering effect.

In that respect, participation can promote democracy. The major area of concern to emerge is how best a heterogeneous grouping such as a school community can be reconciled and thus ensure that the decisions taken at any level are representative enough (Sayed and Carrim, 1998). The schooling system, which is composed of many players that include students, teachers, parents, principals, and other education ministry officials, and policy intentions, may be a mammoth task to reconcile. Another area of concern would be how this could be done without compromising education policy and standards (McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

Contrary to the views expressed above, Dieltiens and Enslin (2002) argue that participatory democracy in education, as articulated by the deliberative democrats, ignores the cost of participation especially where communities have different capacities and unequal resources at their disposal. They challenge the above assumption that participatory democracy is more democratic and therefore more desirable than representative democracy. Further to that, they challenge the notion that participatory democracy leads to improvements in education. Their argument is that education is a "special case" and as such, is an inappropriate sphere in which to try to broaden participatory democracy (Dieltiens and Enslin, 2002).

Dieltiens and Enslin's (2002) view is also shared by Sayed and Carrim (1998), though they advocate for different forms of democracy. For Sayed and Carrim (1998) within the South African context, the school governing bodies were still not representative

enough to be considered democratic. Duku (2006) in a study of parental participation in South Africa, observed that there was unequal participation of the community constituencies. This was so as participation was still influenced by gender and social status, among other factors as noted earlier (ibid).

The major concern is that participatory democracy could lead to major differences in the provision of quality of education because of the varying endowments, natural resources and ability to raise revenue by various sectors of the population (Nziramasanga Commission Report, 1999). On the other hand, there appears to be no mechanism to guarantee equal participation among those in the different committees and school governing bodies. For example, participatory democracy has been observed to increase the participation of individuals such as principals (McGinn and Welsh, 1999; Whitty and Seddon, 1994). Once again, demonstrating the uneven nature of the distribution of power even within the participatory democracy structure. Davies (2002) reviewing school governing bodies and parental participation in South Africa, also noted that principals played a dominant role with parents reticent resulting in low participation. As such, the school governing body structure appears insufficient to democratize schooling (Karlsson, 2002). Another question though, is whether institutions such as schools can be democratized and if so to what extent?

Heystek (2006) observed that School Governing Bodies in South Africa, for example faced a number of limitations in their attempt to enhance parental participation in school governance. One observation was that “the ability of parent governors depends

on their skills, knowledge and experience regarding governance. These abilities are further restricted by literacy levels of the parent governors" (ibid: 478). Heystek (2006) identified at least five issues that characterized school governance in South Africa in the post-apartheid era. These included illiteracy among parents, parents' interference with school work, principals limiting parental participation, apathy on the part of some parents on school matters and perpetuation of inequalities. Such inequalities were based on race, gender and social class as noted earlier. This tended to denote a form of discrimination in a democratic country such as South Africa.

Within the same context, Mncube (2007) made similar observations about School Governing Bodies in South Africa. Mncube notes that whilst the establishment of SGBs was meant to give power to parents in school governance, there are inhibiting factors found in an attempt to exercise such power. These inhibiting factors, according to Mncube (2007) include lack of definition of roles between teaching staff and SGBs, poor communication, lack of training in school governance, lack of confidence and lack of time.

Studies by Heystek (2006), Davies (2002) among others have also shown that holding meetings alone does not ensure parental participation. Karlsson (2002) noted that the ability to perform governance functions and thus participate is contingent on social conditions. Participation levels were determined by "the principal's position of power within the school, their level of education in contrast with other members, first access to information issuing from education authorities" (ibid:327).

Studies by Wyk (2007) have concluded that the attempt to give power to local sites has produced mixed results in South Africa. Such failures have been premised on the failure of the SGB model of school governance to take cognizance of the diversity at the local level. Within the South African context Wyk (2007) identified three models of SGBs. The first model Wyk identifies is the traditional type in which the real power was with the school principals and the role of parents was negligible. The second model he observed and was prevalent in former white schools was one in which the SGBs assumed the role of a board of governors. Such powers had the danger of undermining school authority. The third and last model which came out was in which the SGBs were found to be working in line with the provisions of the legislation and "are crafting new relationships between parents and school managers" (Wyk, 2007: 137).

The above views tend to suggest the limitations of participation and involvement of communities in school activities. There also appears to be the underlining assumption that all people would want to participate and that people will always do so positively (Owens, 1995). However, there is the danger that people may be asked to participate on matters that they have little or no knowledge about. This may be as a result of lack of training in the area, which in itself may lead to frustration and despondency. In a way, this has contributed to a gap between policy intentions and the actual implementation process, a situation which Morris and Scott (2003) describe as "implementation myopia". They explain this gap in terms of the symbolic nature of policy, making the important observation that educational policies and reforms serve a

primarily symbolic purpose. According to them, this tended to show the critical function of policy as that of demonstrating the government's concern to address educational issues rather than to offer solutions.

The contributions by Morris and Scott (2003) say much about the characteristics of policy making and implementation. This is a view also expressed by Gustafsson (2004) who noted that there had been an increase of political symbolism and pseudo policy ingredients, resulting in many policies that are either not intended to be fully implemented or are characterized by unsatisfactory usage of 'available' knowledge regarding pre-conditions for implementation. Decentralization of a symbolic and /or pseudo type is a strategy often used to muddle through the present difficulties (ibid).

Decentralization has also been criticized for a number of reasons. Decentralization in education was expected to address issues of quality and efficiency which would then have effects on educational improvement, administrative efficiency, financial efficiency, meeting political goals and equity needs. Contrary to this view, Haggard (2000) in studies of countries in Latin America, made the following observations about decentralization of education in some of these countries. That there was a continuing tendency to guard resources at the centre; that there was lack of commitment by governments to transfer both the responsibility and the accompanying resources; that there was lack of clarity in the definition of responsibilities across levels of government, and that there were political conflicts over which ministry or agency will oversee the design and implementation of the decentralized process (ibid).

In a similar vein, Saito (2001) identifies some of the major criticisms leveled against decentralization. Concerns have been that decentralization may foster more loyalty to regional identities than national identity (Saito 2001). Secondly, Saito (2001) notes that the autonomy granted to different levels may be abused by those in positions of authority at the expense of the general populace, and therefore negate the whole essence of democracy. This in a way may result in the opposite effect of promoting corruption instead of accountability. The third problem that is associated with the implementation of decentralization as argued by Saito (2001) is the problem of scarce resources which may jeopardize equity within communities.

Democracy has to be viewed in terms of how communities participate in issues that affect their lives, at the same time there is need to consider how they are involved in the decision making process.

Participation has been viewed as a political instrument that has been used to demonstrate the democratization of institutions. To a large extent, that assumption has been based on the ‘collective’ action theory. The collective action theory encompasses a variety of models which have common assumptions and emphases (Pollitt, Birchall and Putman, 1998). From the assumptions, it can be noted that the models place emphasis on rational decision making process. At the same time the collective action theory seems to focus on the decision making process of the individual, which emphasizes the democratization of institutions and society at large.

The concept democratization has been characterized by its own problems. Such problems have included the problem of the indices used to establish the dimensions and levels of democratization. Vanhanen (1990) noted that democratization included two important factors, which are public contestation and the right to participate. Participation in education has to be defined within a given context. For instance, within the South African context, it had to be viewed in terms of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) whose membership comprised parents, teachers, principals and students in the case of high schools (Sayed, 1999). Within the Zimbabwean context, participation could be perceived in the form of the school committees which comprised of the school head, teachers and parents (Chikoko, 2007). The Zimbabwean arrangement does not include students. In the case of South Africa, studies have shown practices that inhibit participation as noted above. Sayed (1999) argued that unqualified commitment to educational decentralization in countries marked by gross disparities in educational opportunities and access did not enhance participation among citizens. These disparities that exist within society raise major concerns in terms of ensuring equal participation in school governance. The idea of participation also raises the issue of collective action.

The “collective” action theory appears to run contrary to Weber’s action theory (Ritzer, 1992). For Weber, action theory was “to focus on individuals and patterns and regularities of action and not on the collectivity” (Ritzer, 1992:126). Weber, though,

further concurs that in some instances it may be necessary to treat collectives as individuals (ibid).

Within the concept of participation is the issue of shared decision making (Musaazi, 1982). In decentralized school governance, much of the decision making process revolves around issues of participation in solving problems and making decisions, which should increase the individual's capacity to contribute to group goals (Owens,1995). In decentralized school governance, decisions in a school are achieved through committees, task forces, study groups and review panels (Bowora and Mpofu, 1995). Such shared decision making is argued to be rational. As such, it has to follow a rational process. Such a process involves diagnosing, defining and determining the sources of the problem, gathering and analyzing the facts relevant to the problem, developing and evaluating alternatives and converting them into action (Stoner and Freeman, 1992).

The rational decision making model as posited by Stoner and Freeman (1992) appears to suggest that all decision makers are rational, despite the problems at stake. It also prescribes a pattern through which the decision making process has to go through. While it might be applicable in as far as individual decision making process, questions have been raised about its application in diverse groups such as school committees and school governing bodies. It tends to portray the decision making process as following a predictable pattern and there is also the assumption that those who take part in the group are operating at the same level. On the other hand participation

should not be a number game, but the extent of power and influence deployed by those who participate.

Apart from the problems associated with the implementation of decentralization as noted earlier, another problem appears to be how to measure decentralization itself (Ndengwa, 2002).

2.9 Measuring decentralization

The measurement of decentralization is very much determined by country to country and sector to sector type of decentralization (Sharma, 2006). The problem of measuring decentralization is that the diversity in degree of decentralization across the world is a fact, and yet there was no consensus in the empirical literature over such issues as to which country is more decentralized (ibid). Sharma further notes that this is exacerbated by a number of factors. Firstly, Sharma notes that the difference emanates from how decentralization is defined, and secondly how it is measured differently in different studies.

Contributing to this problem of measuring decentralization, Sharma (2006) goes further to suggest two approaches that can be used to measure decentralization. The first approach gives more weight to the devolution of tax authority as an instrument of measuring decentralization (ibid). The other gives more weight to the nature of intergovernmental transfer as an instrument impacting on the sub-national behaviour and affecting their autonomy and accountability (Sharma, 2006). Within the same

context, Sharma (2006) notes that when it comes to measuring fiscal decentralization, the share of sub-national expenditures and revenues is considered the best indicator for decentralization. At the same time Sharma (2006) concedes that regulatory and financial instruments are extremely complex and difficult to measure staticistically.

Similarly, Ndengwa (2002) used three indices to measure progress on decentralization. He used these three to reflect the three defining aspects of decentralization. These are the political, administrative and fiscal indices. The political indices involve measuring the level of participation of the locals in governance issues, for example election of office bearers, and administrative indices are those indicators that assist in measuring efficiency and fiscal indices are concerned with measuring economic performance (ibid). Assessing decentralization at this disaggregated level has been viewed as helpful in clarifying the component structures underpinning the different claims to decentralization as well as pointing to the limits of such claims (Ndengwa, 2002). Ndengwa's argument about indices, whilst relevant to our understanding of decentralization, seems to fall in the same predicament as Sharma's. They both tend to use different indices to assess whether a country is decentralized or not, in so doing paying little attention to the actual implementation process of specific policies and regulatory framework that supports decentralization.

In the same vein, it is worth taking note of the indices that Naidoo (2002) made use of to establish the status of education decentralization in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The status of education decentralization can be established by looking at the

environment and context, rationale for decentralization, the form of the decentralization and lastly the outcomes (ibid). Within the Zimbabwean context, it was supposed to be a partnership between government and local communities in education provision, with the aim of recovering costs and increasing financing, through the school committees (Naidoo, 2002).

The next section focuses on theories that could be used to explain different contexts of the decentralization discourse.

2.10 Decentralization within the context of development theories.

Decentralization has been explained in different contexts as noted earlier on. Among the motives for decentralization had been economic, political and administrative objectives (Adamolekun, 1991). All these objectives have much to do with development of one form or another. This study found it necessary to examine decentralization within the context of different development theories. Decentralization has been explained as a vehicle for economic development, social development and at times human development through education and participation in decision making. Ray (1998) notes that development includes high physical quality of life, political rights and material well being of a nation. Peet and Hartiwick (2009) concur with Ray (1998) and go further to explain development as a means of improving people's lives. Development has become a founding belief of modernity to which advances in technology, democracy and social organization come together to improve the world for

all (ibid). If decentralization is to contribute to development it has therefore to be viewed within the context of trying to improve people's lives.

In trying to explain development, Todaro (1989) classifies development into at least three categories. The first category is the traditional economics which focuses on the efficient, least-cost allocation of scarce productive resources to produce goods and services (Todaro, 1989). The second is political economy, which is concerned with how social institutions and institutional processes influence the allocation of scarce productive resources (ibid). The third category is the development economics which has to deal with the "economic, social, political, and institutional mechanisms, both public and private, necessary to bring about rapid and large-scale improvements in levels of living" in the less developed countries (Todaro, 1989:8).

The Wikipedia, free encyclopedia *http://en.wikipedia.org./wiki/* whilst referring to social development theory, notes that it attempts to explain changes in society. Such changes help the society to realize its goals and the provision of resources, technology and infrastructure is necessary to achieve these goals (ibid).

2.10.1 Power and development: A poststructuralist perspective

This study examines Escobar's model of development theory. This was based on poststructural social theories. Poststrusturalism was a movement from the structuralism theories of Marx, Durkheim and Parsons among others that had been used to explain development and change in society (Turner, 1996). Poststructuralism is concerned with

transformation in the social world and focuses on the postmodern society (Ritzer, 1992). There are a number of concerns that poststructuralism raises about society and how it is expected to function. First, is its view on social totality and its focus on differences rather than the search for unity and second, is its focus on the internal structures of the text rather than the actor (ibid). However, it should be noted that even the poststructuralists themselves do not agree on how to explain societal issues, including development.

In explaining his ideas about power Foucault stresses the power of knowledge and language. He argues that rhetoric is some form of power. Such rhetoric can come in the form of policy statements. Foucault notes that some of the institutions that possess power in the form of rhetoric are the state and other government institutions. The state issues rhetoric anytime and rhetoric is found reasonable because the speaker is in power (Answers.com). According to Foucault rhetoric does not question the rationality of the speaker, but what is important is that the speaker has the power to be saying whatever is contained in the speech (ibid). In this regard, the language contained in the two statutory could be viewed as possessing the power contained in such rhetoric as argued by Foucault. Furthermore, this would mean that those who could be able to interpret such rhetoric could be perceived as possessing such power. If we are to take power within this context, the ability to interpret policy becomes a strong power base in social relations.

Escobar, in explaining the development theory appeared to concur with Foucault on the issue of power. It may be necessary to briefly revisit Foucault's discourse on power. In the discourse, Foucault was concerned with "how people govern themselves and others through the production of knowledge" (Ritzer,1992). Foucault was further concerned with techniques and technologies derived from this knowledge and how institutions used these to exert power over people (ibid). Knowledge generates power as it constitutes people as subjects, at the same time governing them with the knowledge (ibid). Furthermore, Foucault argued that the knowledge-power dichotomy would always remain a contested terrain. Foucault further argued that every human interaction involved power (Peet and Harwick, 2009). For Foucault, power is hidden and treacherous, found in truth and discourse, at the same time carried out in bodies, minds, and subjectivities (Allan, 2006). In an attempt to explain power, Foucault focuses on "truth games". As such, Foucault was concerned with "the rules, resources, and the practices that go into making something true for humans" (ibid; 290).

The attempt to link Foucault's theory on power with the study has much to do with how decentralization has been argued to give power to lower levels of governance and communities. This raises questions in terms of whether the centre can let go of some of its powers to the periphery without losing the same power. Granting people power and authority to make decisions at the lower levels might therefore be seen as empowering them. In that respect, does decentralization really grant the periphery power?

Foucault notes that power is everywhere as it comes from everywhere (Blackburn, 1996). Furthermore, Foucault notes that power exists in all social relations, and as such it is dispersed as it is manifested in the modes of surveillance, regulation, or discipline that relate people to surrounding structures (ibid). Once again, this raises the issues of agency and hegemony in the exercise of power, as earlier on noted. Foucault acknowledges the role of hegemony in the exercise of power. Hegemony according to Foucault constitutes common knowledge, which is then used to regulate behaviour within social relations (ibid). If we are to take into consideration the issues raised by Heysteck (2002), Karlsson (2002) and Mncube (2007) about the role of the principals in SGBs in South Africa for example, the principals stand for those with power. On the other hand there appears to be no mechanism to protect the less powerful.

If we are to consider Foucault's arguments about the characteristics of power, the implementation of decentralization in education at school is controlled and limited by how society and individuals within the same society exercise that power. According to Foucault, the practice of power involves three dimensions. These are communication, objectives and power (ibid). These three are viewed to be the main domains in power relationships. The great question is therefore, whether decentralization of education functions to school level is able to result in the shift of relationships in the three domains as envisaged by Foucault. What also remains important is the manner in which Foucault interrogates how our forms of knowledge and reasoning are tied to the exercise of institutional power, and the limits and costs such institutions impose (Harrington, 2005).

Lessons from South Africa and other developing countries have demonstrated different positions about the distribution of power in decentralized arrangements. For example, Karlsson (2002) noted that in South Africa, the Education Act did not provide mechanisms for avoiding and overcoming a re-enactment of the traditional power relations in terms of gender, class and race. In some cases elected representatives have ended up representing state interests rather than the community and in others governing bodies became centres of conflict and contestations (Sayed, 2002). As such, power relations become central to understanding of the practices and processes of school governance (Deem, Brehony and Heath, 1995). On the same note, Davies (2002) observes that the good governance and empowering discourse has been exclusionary in that it has failed to incorporate the periphery, the poor majority, in any meaningful way. The power and influence of the centre remains extraordinarily high (ibid).

In the decentralization discourse, one of the major questions is whether it really grants power to the periphery. Lessons from South Africa for example, appear to indicate the contrary, the power of the SGBs on employment of educators remained limited to recommending educators, but not appointing them (Sayed, 2002).

Sztompka, (1991) comes up with two notions of power, which are domination and hegemony. Both have much to do with the issue of control. In explaining domination, Sztompka (1991) posits that power has to manifest itself at least at two levels. One level is the structure, thus domination and the other level is the agency level, thus

hegemony (ibid). A combination of the two notions of power domination and hegemony gives the agency sources from which power is derived (ibid). However, Sztompka (1991) also notes that there can be an imbalance as a result of domination of some structures over others and at the same time “the hegemony of some agents among others, resulting in a precarious balance at the level of agents” (ibid: 130).

The arguments about power as noted above appear to focus on two central notions. First is the structure and second is the agency. Structure is concerned with the different features of social life which include the social institutions or systems (King, 2005). Whereas, agency is concerned with the social action of the individuals who constitute the social system or institutions, which allows them to choose different courses of action (ibid). Such actions, as noted by King (2005) constitute a culture which then reproduces a social structure. If we were to consider this within the school setup, the school then becomes the social institution or that system that has to instill a particular culture of doing things and on the other hand the committees and the members that constitute these committees constitute the agency. Culture therefore connects the individual with the social structure, without which the random actions of individuals could lead to chaos (ibid). Members have to act within the socially accepted norms. As such, “agents act within a fluid context of structure, marked by group expectations, norms of acceptable practice, sanctions, and relations of power” (King, 2005:222). That may be possible if other members of the agency have the power to sanction the unbecoming behaviour of its members.

Grigsby, (2009) contributing to the debate on how power is exercised starts by trying to define the concept, power. For Grigsby, (2009) power is characterized by how it affects the distribution of resources, our interaction and the pursuance of individual and group interests. In that respect Grigsby, (2009) views power in terms of how it is able to influence decisions in the different areas noted. Furthermore, Grigsby (2009) notes that power can be exercised by force, persuasion, manipulation and exchange.

Another concept that has been attributed to decentralization is its envisaged contributions to development. The major questions have been how decentralization could contribute to such development, more so in education. Its envisaged contributions in terms of improved accountability and efficiency (Lauglo, 1995) could also be viewed as a contribution to development. Similarly, the motives for decentralization had much to do with the desire to contribute not only to economic development, but to social development as well (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). Development as a concept entails a variety of notions. Chief among these is the view that it has to change the world for the better, starting change from the bottom, human emancipation and improvement of conditions (Hartwick and Peet, 2009).

Within the context of development, it is noted that there had been a growing interest in the enhancing of participation (Rahnema, 1990). The question that Rahnema raises though was whether the change agents were really genuine in trying to include locals in the full participation in order to bring about development or it was just another platform for the agency to legitimize the imposition of their educated views on the

community. For Rahnema, participation planned in that manner did not yield its intended goals, as it is the highest bidder in the power game who wins.

Escobar (1995) on the other hand tried to explain development in terms of a development model discourse. The development model entailed focusing on the economic development theory, knowledge and power in planning (ibid). The deployment of development operated through the field of the intervention of power, professionalization of development and the institutionalization of the development (Escobar, 1992).

The different views about power and development raise concerns about how different agencies can exercise such power so as to be seen to be contributing to development. At the same time it raises questions about how individuals such as, school heads, teachers and parents could be deemed to be possessing some power in an arrangement that entails sharing power with such powerful stakeholders as the state as noted earlier. The idea of having the parent members as the majority in the case of school committees in Zimbabwe could have been premised on the understanding that being the majority in the composition of the committees, the parent members would have the powers to influence decisions. Contrary to this perception, Sayed (1999) noted that in the case with South Africa, in SGBs such an arrangement did not ensure participation by all as it still tended to favour the professionals and middle-class parents. Furthermore, Sayed (1999) noted that the distribution of power within the South African context for example, needed to be examined in terms of the balance between citizen participation and state regulations.

This is an argument also supported by Bush and Gamage (2001) who also noted that power within governing bodies varied, and of note was that power was at times typically devolved to school-level governing bodies, yet operational management remained the responsibility of the school head. There is a problem that may arise in relation to trying to demarcate power as noted by Bush and Gamage (2001). It may be difficult at times to draw that line between such responsibilities. There have also been cases were the balance of power has remained in the hands of the state despite the rhetoric to decentralize education. For instance, Osei and Brock (2006) noted that in the case of Ghana students, parents and teachers remained disconnected from the centres of power and as such the balance of power had always been skewed in favour of the state. In such an arrangement the state therefore still influenced decisions at schools. Apart from delegating authority, decentralization has to address values, practices and structures that had been in existence before its introduction (ibid).

This therefore calls for a clear delimitation of powers within the decentralized functions themselves. If such responsibilities are not clearly delimited members within the implementing agency may end up competing for power, resulting in school authorities competing for power with other structures such as local government (Florestal and Cooper, 1997).

In this respect it is important to note how decentralization in education has been able to grant the committees the ability to control their environment and the behaviour of other entities (Greiner and Schein, 1988). Such control is important as power is often expressed either upward or downward. In the case of upward power the subordinates

influence the decisions of the leader and in downward power the superior influences the subordinates (ibid). There are two characteristics about power that appear to feature in an attempt to explain the concept. These are authority and influence. In addition to that, power has much to do with hegemony. Hegemony involves the exercise of the power and the controls involved in the social system (Pottier, Bicker and Sillitoe, 2003). Decentralization has been viewed as an appreciation of knowledge production within communities (ibid). Even that as noted by Pottier et. al, (2003) has its problems as processes of disempowerment cannot be avoided, as the local community and the external agents have different understandings and practices.

For Escobar, development was one of the languages of power, characterized by a geopolitical climate, anticolonial struggles and participatory development (Harwick and Peet, 2009). Escobar suggests that development should be characterized by modernization in which capital formation, education and creation of the relevant institutions became the key elements. All these should contribute to democratic development within societies. Using the theory, Escobar argues that development has much to do with the deployment of power. These are classified into three strategies. Escobar suggests that the first strategy should involve the progressive incorporation of problems and abnormalities (Hartwick and Peet, 2009). Such problems and abnormalities resulted in a "field of the intervention of power" (ibid:224). Escobar's argument was that for any development to take place there should be a clear definition of the problem that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, there should also be an environment that allows for the identification of the hindrances to solving the problem.

These, Escobar referred to as “abnormalities” that had to be attended to and clinically treated (Escobar, 1992).

The argument by Escobar appears to support the systems theory of the policy process. This is reflected in the emphasis that Escobar puts on the need for society to identify the problem and ‘abnormalities’. Similarly, the systems theory of the policy process emphasizes the role of demands (inputs) from the community and public policies (outputs) from the political system (Hanekom, 1987).

The second strategy, according to Escobar’s development theory, is the professionalization of development. The strategy involves the recasting of political problems by experts into neutral “scientific” terms (Escobar, 1992). According to Escobar, this was aimed at building a “field of the control of knowledge”, which was then aimed at creating a regime of truth and norms (ibid), a view that he appears to share with Foucault.

The third strategy as noted by Escobar was the institutionalization of development. Such institutionalization would result in the formation of new centres of power. Such centres or sites of power would direct people towards new behaviours and rationalities (Hartwick and Peet, 2009). Decentralization of education functions could be viewed in the same light. It was supposed to create new centres of power in the school committees, or at least change the locus of power.

Escobar was critical of most social development theories. Such theories included the Marxist theories, among others. The criticism stemmed from their failure to offer people freedom to determine their behaviour. As such, Escobar argues that there was need to focus on the grassroots' ability to modify social relations of production and that capital also required peripheral polymorphy (Hartwick and Peet, 2009). The reference to the need for peripheral polymorph appears to show how much Escobar valued the need for development to pass through the different stages, including the local systems, once again, demonstrating Escobar's concern for the lower levels of society and the inequalities in society.

There has been criticism of the poststructuralism theory, and indeed Escobar's contribution. Such criticism has been from other genres of development theories that support the need to focus on the actor rather than the structure as enunciated by Escobar's theory. Another weakness is the argument by the systems theorists that the intricate relationship of parts cannot be more important than the context of the whole (Ritzer, 1992). Despite, these limitations, the poststructuralism theory was found relevant in that it provided a guide on how small units such as school committees operated and how they handled issues of organizational structures and power.

This study focuses on how a specific policy, decentralization of education functions was implemented in the six selected schools in Zimbabwe, with specific emphasis on how diverse groups such as school committees would come together to make decisions on school issues. These would deal with the three strategies that Escobar

raises, which “entailed intersection fields of power, knowledge and practice” (Hartwick and Peet, 2009:224). It would also explain the actions of the different actors that were involved in the implementation process in terms of the power dynamics involved. It could also be used to explain any contradictions that could arise between the members of such a structure as a school, in relation to policy and central authority. Decentralization is meant to change both the structure and culture of conducting business in society, in this case, in education. The relevance of Escobar’s theory is in that as a development theory it attempts to explain how such change can be achieved. Its relevance is also found in its concern with how people attempt to govern themselves, a key factor in the decentralization praxis. Furthermore, this study saw schools and school committees falling into Escobar’s third strategy, the institutionalization of development, that had to bind people to certain behaviours and rationalities (Escobar, 1992), as noted earlier.

In trying to explain power Lukes (1974) comes up with three dimensions of power. Lukes (1974) classifies power into one dimensional power, two dimensional power and three dimensional power. Within the one dimensional concept, power is viewed as decision making, is exercised in formal institutions and is measured by the outcome of decisions (ibid).Lukes (1974) further notes that two dimensional power is exercised through decision making and agenda setting, institutions and informal influences involving influence, authority, persuasion, and direct force. Three dimensional power is influenced by our values, norms and ideology, and social interaction (ibid). It would

interesting to interrogate into which category would power exercised in the school would fit.

Foucault and Escobar focused on power and development. Whilst these are important to the study, they fell short in explaining social action and practice within social groups. Group relations cannot only be explained in terms of power. As such, I found it necessary to examine social interaction in decentralized structures within the context of Bourdieu's theory of social practice.

2.11 Bourdieu's theory of social practice

Bourdieu (1977) attempted to explain social action in terms of a theory of social practice by focusing on the relationship between agency and structure. For Bourdieu (1977) social action could be explained in terms of *habitus, field* and *capital*. To function in the relationship the agent has to internalize roles in a *field* (ibid). These internalised relationships and habitual expectations and relationships form the *habitus (*Bourdieu, 1990). This becomes part of the socialization process in a field, which then allows the agent to perform various roles. The theory therefore focuses on both the structure and the agency and places emphasis on reconciling structure and agency (ibid). The concepts of habitus, field and capital are explained in detail below.

2.11.1 Habitus

There is need to examine the concepts habitus, field and capital so as to relate them to the study. Bourdieu uses the concept habitus to challenge some conceptions of

agency and structure (Crossley, 2005). Of note is the argument that how we act, perceive things and feel is influenced by the past experiences, which is part of the habitus (ibid). In essence, this would mean that what we are today and what we do is very much controlled by our past experiences. Considering that in most cases social groups may not share the same experiences, how then are they expected to act in a common way? In this regard, Bourdieu points out that habitus not only enables us to organize our own behaviour, but appreciate the behaviour of others as well (Allan, 2006). Bourdieu viewed habitus in terms of how it could be used to address issues of objectivism, subjectivism and disposition (Bourdieu, 1977).

The agent is expected to develop dispositions in relation to the encountered objective conditions, so as to inculcate objective social structures into the subjective, mental experience of agents (ibid). The habitus is therefore the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation which is necessary in order for those products of collective history, and the objective structures to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions (ibid). As a result, the organisms are lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, which place them in the same material conditions of existence (ibid).

This study deals with different players in the implementation of education functions at the six schools. These include school heads, senior teachers, parent governors and education officer. In examining how the school committees work, the concept of *habitus* was found relevant in many respects. Habitus has a bearing on how we act and secondly, it reconciles structure and agency and thirdly, since according to

Bourdieu our habitus defines the way we act, it would be of interest to see how the different stakeholders played their part in relation to issues of school governance *inter alia* participation and decision making.

2.11.2 Field

Bourdieu uses the concept of *field* to analyze social action (Allan, 2006). Field is a structured social space with its own rules, schemes of domination and legitimate opinions delineating parameters (Bourdieu, 1990). On the field, the positions can be filled by individuals, groups or organizations and it is the relationships between these positions that set the parameters of a field (Allan, 2006). "These relationships are sites of active practices; thus the parameters of a field are always at stake within the field itself" (ibid: 182). If we are to use Bourdieu's analogy of field and game we have to take cognizance of the fact that there is a collective responsibility among players of the same team, at the same time each field is characterized by conflicts and struggles for power (Farnell, 2000). Bourdieu (1990) cites some of the main fields in modern societies as the arts, education, politics, law and economy. For Bourdieu, it is not the rules of the game that determine action on the field but rather the 'feel of the game' steered by habitual competence and know-how (Crossley, 2005).

In trying to find answers to the question on how the provisions of the statutory instruments which stipulate that SDCs and SDAs should manage schools are being implemented, it is necessary that I interrogate the actions of the different players in relation to their habitus and the field of education governance. School heads, teachers, parents and education officers have their experiences, how then are they to play their

roles in the committees and the decentralized arrangement? In cases where the other actors might lose power and influence, how then are they to handle the change? Another problem is that parents are coming to participate in a field of education that has its professionals and experts. Such questions pose for a close relationship between habitus and field if a diverse group such as the committees is to work together and have all members participate meaningfully. The practices of the dialect are performed through habitus (Allan, 2006). Bourdieu sees the relationship between habitus and field as a two-fold. First, the field exists only insofar as social agents possess the dispositions and set of perceptual schemata that are necessary to constitute that field and imbue it with meaning, secondly, by participating in the field, agents incorporate into their habitus the proper know-how that will allow them to constitute the field (Bourdieu, 1977). As such, the relationship between habitus and field is that, habitus manifests the structures of the field, whereas field mediates between habitus and practice (ibid).

2.11.3 Capital

Capital can be classified as economic capital, symbolic capital, social capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992; Crossley, 2005). Economic capital refers to the agent's income, wealth and monetary value of the goods they possess and is generated in the economic field (Crossley, 2005). One of the distinguishing characteristics of economic capital is that it is quantifiable. This is a major difference from the other forms of capital. Bourdieu places emphasis on the other forms of capital. For Bourdieu, "social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing *a* durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of

mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Bourdieu and Loïc, 1992: 119). There are at least two forms of social capital, the first being reference to social networks which are treated structurally and from the point of view of the network and the second conceptualizes networks as resources from the individual point of their members (Crossley, 2005). Another form of capital is symbolic capital. This is capital that has much to do with status or recognition (ibid). For Bourdieu symbolic capital has to do with prestige, honour, attention, and as such is a crucial source of power (Bourdieu. and Loïc, 1992). On cultural capital, Bourdieu suggests that it may assume one of three forms (Crossley, 2005). It could be in the form of literature, books or paintings that an individual might own, thus assuming an 'objectified' form, it can assume an 'institutionalized' form in the form of educational qualifications and lastly it could assume an 'embodied' form as an individual might possess the culturally valued competences (ibid).

2.12 The relevance of Bourdieu's theory of social practice to the study

Whilst it can be noted that Bourdieu's theory has been used to explain "social reproduction and production of inequality through education rather than educational change" (Sui-chu, 2009:1), it is also important as it could be used to explain a reform such as decentralization in education. It can assist in explaining behaviours and actions within the hierarchical structures in the school committees and between schools themselves. Within this context, this study raises the question about how school committees were implementing the decentralization of education functions in the six schools. This is important as field and habitus influence practices and choices we make (Bourdieu, 1991).

Bourdieu's description of the social world helps to understand social behaviours not only in the social world but sub-fields such as schools. For Bourdieu (1991) the social world is comprised of fields and sub-fields as noted earlier, and he views the role of the individual as that of asserting themselves to these. How the individuals and groups assert themselves is determined by habitus, capital and field as noted and explained above (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu (1984) further explains using a formula that attempts to show the close link between habitus, capital, field and practice, as shown below;

[(Habitus) (Capital)] Field = Practice

What appears to emerge from the formula is that whilst formulae are a common phenomenon in the pure sciences, their use to explain social practice are a welcome development that appears to deepen our attempt to explain social action. As such, they provide a befitting guide in the social sciences that entail the study of behaviour and interations within individuals and groups. For instance, Bourdieu (1977) notes that habitus is able to shape practice according to the field and capital. In the case of the study, the school becomes the field with different players who include the students, teachers, school heads and parents. What is worth noting is that a school as "a field is hierarchically structured; [and] those in higher positions are at times resistant to change" (Sui-chu, 2009:3). This may therefore necessity the change of rules of the game in the field of education in order for decentralization and parental participation to bring about desired improvements in education quality (bid).

Furthermore, Bourdieu's theory of social practice also influenced the development of the questionnaire in a number of ways. For instance, the interview schedule raised questions that tried to provide answers to how SDCs and SDAs functioned in the schools, thus dealing with issues of social practice. It was used to interrogate what could be considered as the optimal environment in schools. These are explained by Bourdieu's theory in terms of *habitas, field* and *capital* as noted earlier.

Bourdieu's theory of social practice has been criticized for a number of reasons. One of the criticisms was its focus on the dichotomous relationship between the agency and structure, which others argue to be a pseudo-problem (Parsons, 1978). Despite that, the theory helped this study to understand and explain social action and practice in such diverse groups as school committees.

2.13 Conclusion

The chapter has covered the conceptual framework of the concept assessment.

Different models of assessment were discussed. There have been different approaches to the definition and understanding of the term assessment. Some scholars, as emerged in this literature review, view assessment as an instrument of quality assurance, while others see it as something for accountability. There have been various attempts to approach assessment in terms of test performance, cost-benefit ratio, and treat it as a separate entity from evaluation. Others still, attempt to conceptualize it in terms of its functions and purpose. Despite the divergent views expressed about assessment as a concept, there appears to be some consensus that

it is a process that goes through different stages. These involve information gathering and interpretation for one to draw conclusions. Also emerging from the reviews is that assessment deals with the use of different tools to measure performance. Inherent in the arguments has been the issues of whether to assess quantitatively or qualitatively, and which forms of assessment and at what stage of the course or programme. Hence, the review significantly addressed three different approaches such as the objective-oriented approaches, management-oriented approaches, and expertise-oriented approaches. These approaches have been found appealing in terms of providing justifications on which to base the assessment. As such, the review helped to enhance our understanding of the theory and practice of assessment.

The last part of the chapter addressed the conceptual and theoretical framework of decentralization. These had much to do with the problems related to the different implementation strategies and the discourse surrounding their use. The chapter also reviewed literature on the role of decentralization in education and the debate on the link between decentralization, democracy, participation accountability, quality and decision making. To place the study in its proper perspective and context, the chapter concluded with a discussion of theories of power, development and social practice. These included Foucault and Escobar's theories since decentralization is at times viewed as both a development strategy and an empowering strategy as well. Lastly, the chapter discussed Bourdieu's theory of social practice in an attempt to analyze behaviour in social groupings such as school committees.

The following chapter explores the research methodology and the research philosophy guiding the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on research methodology and the design used. The chapter also focuses on the discussion of relevant research philosophies. The study is placed within the interpretivist paradigm and adopts a case study as the appropriate research design. The research population, research instruments used, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis utilized are presented and explained. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the issues of trustworthiness, and research ethics pertaining to the study.

3.1 Methodology

The term methodology has assumed varied meanings in education and research discourse. In some research cases, the term methodology has been confused with the term method. O'Leary (2004) shows the distinction between the two. O'Leary (2004) defines the term methodology as the framework associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumptions that one uses to conduct research, such as scientific method, ethnography and action research. According to Lazar (2004), methodology refers to the fundamental or regulative principles which underlie any discipline, such as conception of its subject matter and how that subject matter can be investigated.

A number of key features are foregrounded as we attempt to conceptualize the term. Chief among these is that methodology guides the assumption of the research process and also acts as a guide on how to conduct research on a particular area. Silverman (2005) contributes to attempting to explain methodology. According to Silverman (2005), methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data collection, forms of data analysis, planning and executing a research study. For Silverman (2005), research methodology provides us with the general approach on how to study a topic. Silverman goes on to give two methodologies commonly used in research. These are the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

3.1.1 Qualitative research methodology

This study adopts the qualitative research methodology, which differs from quantitative research in many respects. Qualitative research methodology encompasses different approaches or paradigms. Among these is the interpretivist paradigm which is adopted in this study. Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004) observe that qualitative research is premised on a number of assumptions. They note that in order for us to understand social reality, there is need to study the meanings and contexts that are created in social interaction. Another assumption, as noted by Flick et. al. (2004), is that qualitative research relies on the use of subjective meanings, and as such, reality is created interactively and becomes meaningful subjectively. This was found relevant to this study as it sought to assess the implementation of such phenomenon as the decentralization of education functions in schools, which involved interpretation of practices and actions of the committee members.

Similarly, Key (1997) identifies characteristics that qualitative research has to be identified with. Qualitative research methodology is characterized by the need to understand people's interpretations, the nature of reality which changes with people's perceptions and their values (ibid). Key (1997) further notes that qualitative research focuses on the complete picture of the problem, its use of natural conditions during investigations and focuses on the need to gain 'real' and 'deep' data. Such characteristics of the qualitative research methodology, were found relevant to the study as it concentrated on small units, but used different methods to gain real and deep data on the work of different school committees at the six selected primary schools.

There seems to be some propensity to compare qualitative research methodology with quantitative research methodology. This has become acceptable to some extent, as it is done with the pretext that it enhances our understanding of research methodologies. Walliman (2006), for example, informs us that unlike the quantitative methodology, qualitative research methodology relies more on language and interpretation of meaning, so its data collection methods tend to involve close human involvement. Walliman (2006) further notes that it also involves a creative process of theory development, rather than testing. This well supports the basic assumption of the interpretivist paradigm. Apart from the debate between qualitative research and quantitative research focusing on how best the two approaches can be used concurrently in the same research, thus mixed methods approach, there have been

efforts to modify some of the research methods that have been predominantly associated with quantitative research to suit the qualitative paradigm. For instance, Langley (2004) used open-ended questionnaires in qualitative research and referred to these as ‘questerviews’. Similarly, Adamson, Gooberman-Hill, Woolhead, Donvan (2004) note that ‘questerviews’ can be used in qualitative research as well designed and validated questionnaires can produce data of immense value to research. Adamson et. al. (2004) further note that the technique of ‘questerviews’ is a tangible and pragmatic way of doing qualitative research. The ability of qualitative research to make use of multiple methods of data collection as noted above was found relevant for this study.

Qualitative methodology often involves intensive study of single settings or number of people (Seale 2004). Dooley (1984) also notes that when research is based on qualitative methodology, it makes use of non-quantitative observations which are made in the field and analyzed in a non-statistical way. Furthermore, qualitative methodology involves the researcher interacting, observing and interpreting meanings from the cases being studied. It also involves the researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing them in terms of measurements and amounts. In trying to find answers to the main research question which is: How are provisions of Education Statutory Instruments 87 0f 1992 and 70 of 1993 which stipulate that SDCs and SDAs should manage schools, being implemented in schools? it was necessary to study single settings such as schools and selected members of the SDCs and SDAs.

Qualitative methodology can be used to study different problems. Its use, is therefore, determined by the problem being studied. The Wikipedia, Free Encyclopedia *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative research* supports the use of qualitative research in such areas as policy research and evaluation research where understanding, why and how certain outcomes were achieved is as important as establishing what those outcomes were. Qualitative research methodology therefore has characteristics that allow for and assist in the study of phenomena. This study involved the assessment of the implementation of a specific policy namely decentralization of education functions. Furthermore, it sought to find out 'how' and 'why' things were in these schools, which questions as noted above can best be answered in qualitative research.

In their support for the use of the qualitative methodology, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) identify characteristics of qualitative research that are quite pertinent to research. For Maykut and Morehouse (1994) qualitative research is characterized by its exploratory and descriptive focus on the study of phenomena especially where people are participants. Secondly, they note that it is an emergent design, as important leads are identified in the early phases of data analysis and pursued by asking new questions, and observing new situations (ibid). Thirdly, they also focus on its use of purposive sampling and the collection of data in its natural setting. Furthermore, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) remind us of its emphasis on 'human-as-instrument' in research, in addition to using qualitative methods of data collection.

It would appear that Maykut and Morehouse (1994) cover most salient issues about the qualitative research methodology especially when they stress that qualitative methodology is exploratory, and allows for the observation of new situations, and is inductive. They further note the descriptive nature of the qualitative methodology, hence, its use and reliance on words and language, instead of numbers and measurements.

As noted above, the characteristics of qualitative research methodology are found in the purpose the research intends to serve, how it perceives reality, its values, its focus, orientation, the subjective nature of the data, the use of the human as the instrument and how it makes use of naturalistic conditions to collect data, including how results are interpreted.

Qualitative research methodology is also emphasized by Merriam (1988). For Merriam (1988), qualitative research methodology focuses on quality rather than quantity. Merriam also notes that qualitative research methodology has its philosophical roots in phenomenology and symbolic interaction. Like Key (1997), Merriam (1988) posits that the main goals of investigation in qualitative research methodology are understanding, description, discovery and hypothesis generating. Merriam (1988) further notes that the other factors that distinguish qualitative methodology from other methodologies are its setting which is often natural and familiar, a sample which is non-random and theoretical, and the researcher is treated as the primary instrument of data collection. This data, according to Merriam (1988), is collected through the use of interviews and

observations and the mode of analysis is inductive. In that respect Merriam (1988) and Key (1997) concur with Seale (2004), Maykut and Morehouse (1994), Walliman (2006) among others about the characteristics of qualitative research methodology and how to go about applying it in researches such as the present study.

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) make interesting observations about the qualitative research methodology. They credit qualitative research methodology with the flexibility that makes it possible for it to be used across different disciplines. For Denzin and Lincoln (2008), in qualitative research methodology one can use a variety of methods that include semiotics, narratives, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis. This can be done through the use of approaches, methods and techniques of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, ethnography, interviewing, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research, and participant observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

Another observation by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) is that qualitative research is multimethod in focus. They concur with Flick et. al. (2004) that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings. It allows for the description of routine and problematic moments and meanings in people's lives in different ways (Denzin and Lincoln 1994) which is, at times, missed by other methodologies. The use of unstructured face-to-face interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis enabled me to come up with different data on the same themes, thus providing different perspectives from which to assess the implementation of

decentralization of functions in the selected schools in the Chegutu Education District of Zimbabwe.

Qualitative research methodology also caters for the study of attitudes and experiences. For example, Berg (1998) argues that qualitative research methodology is viewed as best suited for obtaining data on attitudes, perceptions, meanings and the description of social reality. This position is supported by Patton (1990) who further informs us that, as a research methodology, it produces a wealth of detailed information about a smaller number of cases that is transferable. Patton (1990) further notes that, its other advantages, as a research methodology, lie in the methods it uses for research. In that respect, Patton concurs with such scholars as Denzin and Lincoln (1994). According to Patton (1990), it allows for the use of a variety of methods. Such a practice is important in research as it provides for the checking and verification of information. It also allows for the divergent viewing of phenomenon. Adding to the debate on the methodology, Willis (2007) and Thomas (2003) posit that the qualitative methodology makes use of traditional research methods such as ethnographic research, case studies, histography, and experience narratives. This provides a varied choice in terms of methods to employ.

Similarly, Dooley (1994) also identifies a number of advantages that are worth considering when choosing the qualitative research methodology. Dooley (1994) notes that with qualitative research the observer minimally disrupts the setting and group being studied, and that the qualitative observer is able to look, listen, and follow with

the social currents of the setting. As such, the qualitative observer is able to acquire perceptions from different points of view (ibid).

The point that Dooley (1994) raises is that, in the qualitative research methodology, the researcher observes things as they are, without interfering with their natural setting. It allows for the use of different approaches about the same issue being considered, thus allowing for an understanding of observations without bias (ibid).

Thomas (2003), whilst concurring with such scholars as Dooley (1994) and Willis (2007), develops this argument further. For Thomas (2003), the qualitative methodology depicts uniqueness in every organization and event. Such uniqueness in the study of the school committees and how they performed their functions was found enriching to the study. Some scholars have noted that qualitative methodology tends to rely on the inquirer as the instrument (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006).The reliance on the researcher as the instrument has been criticized as a weakness of the qualitative research methodology. However, Guba and Lincoln (1981) view this differently. They point out that what appears as a weakness is, in fact, offset by the flexibility, insight, and the ability to build knowledge that is the peculiar province of the human instrument (ibid). According to them, the use of the inquirer as the instrument can actually be an advantage to the research because the human mind can be much clearer of what it wants to measure, despite changing circumstances.

As noted above the qualitative approach was found relevant to this study in a number of ways. Firstly, this study is based on assessment of the implementation of the policy of decentralization. Such an assessment of policy can be done qualitatively. The study sought to seek the views, experiences, attitudes and perceptions of respondents on different aspects of the decentralized functions. Such factors can be better measured qualitatively because of the ability of the qualitative research methodology to allow the researcher to study things in their natural settings (Flick et. al, 2004). This involved me visiting the respondents at their work places, at the six selected schools. Thirdly, the ontology that guides qualitative research was found quite relevant to this study. In that respect, the study is guided by the ontology that acknowledges the multiplicity of reality and that holds the view that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions concerned with their existence (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Remenyi et. al, 1998).

Furthermore, the qualitative research methodology's ability to make use of the case study (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) was found to be relevant to this study.

In addition to the points raised above about qualitative research, the ability of the methodology to use a variety of methods was also important in this study. This was found to be an advantage to this study as it was able to use face-to-face interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. These in the final analysis provided for methodological triangulation to the study, thus providing a cross-section of ideas on different issues and at times the same issues.

The use of the qualitative methodology was able to depict the uniqueness within each organization, (Thomas, 2003). The uniqueness within each school and School Development Committee and School Development Association was found to be enriching to the study. Despite the points noted above, qualitative research has its limitations.

3.1.2 Limitations of the qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research methodology has, however, been criticized for lacking in generalizability of findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2005), whilst acknowledging that qualitative methodologies seek subjective understanding of social reality, also highlight its lack of generalizable prediction. Their argument is based on the assumption that the purpose of research is to give rise to generalizations. This is an argument often postulated by positivists. According to Terre Blanche et. al. (2006), generalizability relates to the extent to which the interpretive account can be applied to other contexts than the one being researched. Terre Blanche et. al. (2006), further argue that, because of the contextual nature of the qualitative research methodology, there are usually strong limits on generalizability of findings.

The issue of generalizability appears to be the emphasis within quantitative research methodologies as noted earlier. However, in qualitative research, transferability is emphasized. Transferability refers to the ability of the account to provide answers to other contexts, and it helps in the understanding of the context of the meanings (Terre Blanche et. al, 2006; Willis, 2007). Nevertheless, the argument about lack of generalizability is countered by the position that, whilst qualitative methodology

reduces generalizability in that it concentrates on smaller units and individual cases, the wealth of information produced can be of relevance to other cases and theory (Patton, 1990). Nonetheless, despite this argument, the methodology suffers from the fact that principles drawn from one case can be applied to other cases with considerable risk of error (Thomas, 2003).

The other weaknesses are related to the problem of sampling. Such sampling relied much more on the researcher than any set standard in sampling. I used the non-probability sampling procedures. Such sampling procedures typically involved my judgment to achieve a particular purpose (Robson, 2002). As a result I noted that my experience as a teacher for close to twenty five years assisted in the qualitative assessment of events. At the same time, the university support system on developing and building capacity for researchers in the area of research methodology also came in handy in this study.

I was also left with a considerable amount of data to manage. The need to formulate themes and patterns of what the respondents were saying was a daunting task for me. This thus required a rigorous immersion in the data. To address this problem, I had to devote time on the analysis which took approximately six months.

3.2 The role of the researcher

Yet other limitations are those relating to the role of the researcher. In qualitative research, the role of the researcher appears to be central. This stands out right from the choice of problem, the sampling procedures, and the choice of what to interpret.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) seem to acknowledge that the inquirer is used as the instrument, and changes resulting from fatigue, shifts in knowledge, cooptation, as well as variations resulting from differences in training skill and experience among different 'instruments', easily occur. It therefore should be noted that such variations may have a negative effect on the research findings. They may also introduce the problem of researcher bias.

To minimize the influence of bias in the study, I had to deal with and manage "the cultural self" (Scheper-Hughes, 1992 in Denzin and Lincoln 2008) by being reflexive about the research and by working out the communication between myself and the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). I had to maintain neutrality in a number of ways. First, it was important that I maintained neutrality in the selection of both sites and respondents. Secondly, neutrality had to be maintained by observing research ethics which are explained later in the chapter. The questions for the face-to-face interviews had to undergo rigorous checking by both the supervisor and myself before being used in the study. Thirdly, the piloting of questions also helped in improving the quality of data sourced.

Qualitative research is further criticized for using non-probability sampling procedures. Non-probability sampling refers to any kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by the statistical principle of randomness (Terre Blanche et. al, 2006).These, among others, include purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling (Robson, 2002; Bless and Higson- Smith, 1995). The criticism therefore, is that much depends on the researcher, who is most likely to be influenced

by some selection biases. To minimize bias in sampling, I had to select schools on the basis of the type of schools found in Zimbabwe, thus government schools, church related schools and those owned by local authorities.

As noted earlier, I had the responsibility to ensure that the problems that militated against the use of the qualitative methodology were minimized. This was done through the use of not only different research methods as alluded to, but by maintaining a social distance with the respondents that would allow them to freely volunteer information.

3.3 The interpretivist paradigm

This study is placed in the interpretivist paradigm. Guba (1990) defines a paradigm as the net that contains the researcher's epistemology, ontological and methodological premises, which has a basic set of beliefs that guide action. The term is also described by Denzin and Lincoln (2008) as encompassing ethics, epistemology, ontology, and methodology. However, according to Lincoln and Guba (2000), whatever paradigm a researcher chooses, there are basic issues that the researcher has to deal with. For Guba and Lincoln (2008) each paradigm has to take a position on axiology, accommodation and commensurability, control, foundation of truth, validity, voice, reflexivity and postmodern representation.

This study is thus guided by the interpretivist paradigm. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2006), explain that interpretivism is an epistemology that advocates the necessity of

the researcher understanding differences between humans in their role as social actors. It emphasizes the issue of conducting research among people as people rather than objects. Schwandt (2000) notes that the interpretivist paradigm deals with meanings and that for a researcher to understand a particular social action, he/she has to understand the meanings that constitute the action. There are differences as to how actions are interpreted and presented thereby underpinning the differences in the philosophies of the interpretivist philosophy itself (ibid).

What stands out is that interpretivism stresses the role of the actors and the researcher is, therefore, viewed as someone studying to derive meaning from these actors. Terre Blanche, et. al. (2006) note that the interpretivist paradigm is about understanding in context. According to them, the idea of understanding of human phenomena within a given context is what the interpretivist paradigm is about. In this respect, Terre Blanche et. al. (2006) credit the paradigm for having contributed to the development of methodologies that contribute to our understanding of human phenomena. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), argue that through interpretivism, knowledge is constructed, not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of the people's intentions, beliefs, values, and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding. According to Henning et. al. (2004), interpretivist knowledge is dispersed and distributed. Hence, the researcher has to look at different places and at different things to understand events. They further argue that within the interpretive paradigm, the mental processes of interpretation help us to understand phenomenon and the meanings attached to it. They also note that interpretivism acknowledges that

observation is fallible and has error and that all theory is revisable. The important role of the researcher is, therefore, not only to read actions and meanings, but to interpret them as well, so as to attach meaning to the actions, words and observed phenomenon (Henning et. al, 2004).

On a similar note, Saunders et. al. (2006) posit that in the interpretivist epistemology, the role of the researcher becomes paramount as the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance with the social world of the research subjects, and try to understand their world from their point of view. The position of the interpretivist is based on a number of assumptions, which are important in guiding and determining the research outcome. Interpretivists assume that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation. Hence, there is no objective knowledge independent of thinking, reasoning humans, and interpretivism is therefore based on the belief in the social construction of reality (Gephart, 1999; Schwadt, 2000). It would appear that the major element that distinguishes the interpretivist paradigm from the positivist paradigm, or any other paradigm, is how reality is viewed. Furthermore, another of its distinguishing factors is its emphasis on interpreting actions and meanings as the term appears to imply.

Gephart (1999) further notes that some of the major distinguishing characteristics of the interpretivist paradigm are its assumptions, key focus, key theories in the paradigm, its goals, nature of knowledge or theory, criteria for assessing research, unit of analysis, research methods and types of analysis. According to Gephart (1999), the assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm are that research is based on the

intersubjective world which science can represent with the concepts of actors, and that it should be based on the social construction of reality. In terms of focus, the interpretivist paradigm focuses on meanings and the patterns that are derived from the meanings. It is from these patterns that a qualitative researcher is able to interpret words and meanings to arrive at conclusions. Based on this focus, the goal of the interpretivist paradigm is to describe meanings, understand members, definition of the situation, and examine how objective realities are produced (Gephart, 1999). Furthermore, Gephart (1999) points out that the interpretivist paradigm concentrates on the abstract description of the meanings and members, as well as the definition of the situation which is produced in a natural context.

Terre Blanche et. al. (2006) also identify the salient points about the interpretivist paradigm. For them, the interpretivist paradigm deals with the understanding of different factors at play. They point out that in the interpretivist paradigm, the understanding of the communicative intentions and the understanding of the knowledge of the socio-historical and linguistic context are important. These, according to them, enable us to understand, not only the author, but the context in which the meanings are derived.

Guba and Lincoln (1994), writing about the interpretivist paradigm, took note of the criteria the paradigm uses for assessing research. On that note, they pointed out that assessment in the interpretivist paradigm was based on trustworthiness and authenticity. They also noted that the interpretivist methodology made use of

ethnography, participant observation, interviews, conversational analysis, and grounded theory development.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000), posit that genres of the interpretivist paradigm share a number of common features. These include the fact that the genres view human action as meaningful, they demonstrate an ethical commitment in the form of respect for and trustworthiness to the real world (ibid). Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note that the genres of the interpretivist paradigm from an epistemological point of view, share the neo-Kantian desire to emphasize the contribution of human subjectivity to knowledge.

The interpretivist paradigm seems to highlight the issue of subjectivity. Subjectivity is central to how we arrive at what constitutes that reality. This reality, according to Henning et. al. (2004), can be created through the use of a variety of data and different sources which enable the interpretive researcher to make use of different viewpoints to construct the world through different processes of observation. On the interpretation of reality, interpretivism acknowledges the multiplicity of this reality.

The interpretivist paradigm was found relevant to this study in a number of ways. It adequately supports the qualitative methodology. The study was concerned with the study of phenomenon, thus the implementation of decentralization in the six selected schools as noted earlier. This involved listening, seeing and recording how participants saw things and how they did things (Maynard 1989 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) in

relation to the decentralization of education functions at their schools. Furthermore, the study involved the interpretations of these social interactions and meanings (Saunders et.al, 2006). The choice of the interpretivist paradigm was found relevant in that the link between qualitative methodology and interpretivism as a paradigm is at times inseparable. For instance, McLaren and Kincheloe in Denzin and Lincoln (2008) note the centrality of interpretation in qualitative research, which involves articulation, making sense of what has been observed to seek understanding. The idea of an interpretative repertoire in the study helped to clarify those language related resources available that had to be used in the different settings (Kovalainen and Eriksson, 2008).

Furthermore, its use of different research methods allowed me to use different techniques to gather data for different research questions. For instance, to interpret how decisions were made by committees and parents, apart from the face-to-face interviews, the use of non-participant observation in the study provided an opportunity for me to interpret the decision making process and the power dynamics in the committees at the schools.

3.4 Research Design

Bless and Higson- Smith (1995), define research design as a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts. They further identify a number of research designs. These include the true experimental design, quasi-experimental research design, survey design, explanatory design and the case study. Yin (2003) posits that a research design is the logic that links the data to be collected

and the conclusions to be drawn from the study's initial questions. Major differences in the research designs appear to lie in the sampling procedures, the data collection instruments they use, and the methods of gathering and analyzing data.

3.4 .1 Case study design

The assessment of the implementation of decentralization of education functions in the six selected schools was conducted through the use of the case study design. The justifications for the use of the case study in the research are quite wide and varied and are at times contained in the definition of the case study research design itself. The use of a case study research design, allowed me to study specific cases such as the individuals, groups or such organizations as schools (Yin, 2003). Merriam (1988) offers a definition of a case study that is much more encompassing and appears to provide us with the justification for using it in such studies as the present one. A case study involves an examination of specific phenomena, such as a programme, an event, a person, a process, an institution or a social group (ibid). Merriam (1988) further notes that a case study offers more than an examination, as it is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) in their description of a research design, view it as a plan and a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation. Therefore, there appears to be a general consensus as to what constitutes a research design and how the case study suits that description.

A case study was deemed appropriate to this study. It is descriptive in nature, and provides rich information about individuals or particular situations (Blanche et. al, 2006). According to Yin (2003), in case studies, the following characteristics and components stand out:

- a study's questions,
- its propositions, if any,
- its units of analysis,
- the logic linking the data to the propositions, and
- the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Yin's description provides justification for the use of a case study design. He stresses that case studies help to find answers to specific questions. His emphasis on concentrating on specific units of analysis is quite relevant. Accordingly, a case study is able to provide for this. Yin (2003) further points out that, as a research design, a case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena. A case study is useful when one wants to know 'how' or 'why' a programme had worked (ibid).

Terre Blanche et. al. (2006), observe that there are a number of advantages for using a case study research design. They observe that a case study research design allows ideas and hypotheses to emerge from careful and detailed observation. Secondly, they concur with Yin (2003), that concentrating on small units is manageable even with limited resources. Thirdly, this contributes to the generation of many grand theories as

it also allows for the use of different methods to collect data (ibid). These methods include the use of documents, artifacts, interviews and observations.

Similarly, Willis (2007) further observes that a case study research design allows one to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting. It is holistic and supports the idea that much of what we know about human behaviour is best understood as lived experiences in the social context (ibid). Unlike experimental research, a case study can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goals. The idea of the authentic setting is often ignored by other methods (Willis, 2007).

As noted earlier, the case study design was found relevant in that it contains characteristics of qualitative research methodology. For instance, as noted by Stake (2000:435) “case studies have become the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry”. Stake (2000) further notes that in the use of the case study design, the researcher has to identify the case to be studied, which may include the study of an incident, phenomenon or a population of cases. Furthermore, Stake (2000) raises a point worth noting about case study design. A case study is not only about the case to be studied, but the product of that inquiry as well (ibid). In the present study, the school development committees and school development associations became the cases to be studied. The process and product of inquiry in the study involved finding answers to “how” and “why” things were. To find answers to these questions I made use of the different techniques of the case study design. These

included the interviews, observations, and analysis of documents as noted earlier. These are explained in detail in the following sections of the chapter.

In the same vein, the use of the case study was also influenced not only by the phenomenon to be studied, but by other factors such as the sample and the sampling procedures. The case study enabled the researcher to concentrate on the uniqueness of each case which provided valuable data through the description of experiences on the implementation of decentralization of education functions by the different stakeholders in the schooling system. The school heads, the senior teachers, the parent governors and education officer were studied as the units of analysis in the cases.

It was also important to take note of some of the limitations of the case study. This was necessary in order to provide for the control of any such effects to the study. In this regard, I took note of Terre Blanche et. al.'s (2006) observation that case studies tend to compromise the validity of information. Secondly, that causal links are difficult to test in a case study. Thirdly, that generalizations cannot be made from single cases. Another problem noted by Willis (2007), which was worth considering in the study, was the lack of control posed by case studies. Within the same context, Yin (2003) raises the same concerns about the limitations of the case study design, but further points out that a case study does not represent a sample, and its aim is to expand and generalize theories and not to enumerate frequencies. To improve on some of the concerns and limitations raised above, it was necessary to pilot test some of the instruments, such as

the interview schedules. Furthermore, the main concern of the study was not to generalize findings, but to gain an understanding of how decentralization of education functions was being implemented at each of the selected six schools. The selection of the six schools and the different stakeholders in the study provided for such understanding of the cases studied.

3.5 The Population and Sample

There have been cases of confusion at times in the use of the terms population and sample (Willis, 2007). Robson (2002) refers to population as all the cases to be studied. Walliman (2006), whilst concurring with Robson (2002) on the use of the term population further describes it as a collective term used to describe the total quantity of things or cases of the type which is the subject of your study. Within this context of the study, the population became the School Development Committees and School Development Associations in the one hundred and ten primary schools in Chegutu Education District of Mashonaland West, in Zimbabwe. In reality it may not be possible to study all the cases that need to be studied so as to draw conclusions. From the population a sample had to be selected. A sample refers to a set of elements selected in a way from a population, which in practice can be a collection of elements from sampling units drawn from a sampling frame (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). I had to come up with two samples. The first involved me sampling the research sites, and the second was the sampling of respondents.

3.5.1 Sampling research sites

The research sites in the study were the six primary schools in the district of Chegutu. Schools in Zimbabwe fall mostly into three categories. These are schools owned by churches (church-related schools), local authorities (council schools) and by government (government schools). To ensure that these categories were represented in the sample, the study purposively selected six primary schools in the district. These were selected on the basis of two church-related primary schools, two local authority schools and two government primary schools. In addition to choosing sites on the basis of categories of schools commonly found in Zimbabwe, the selection of sites was also based on accessibility of the sites to me. The schools were accessible to me in terms of proximity considering the limited funding.

3.5.2 Sampling the respondents

Once at the sites I had to further purposively sample the respondents. These had to be specifically members of the school development committees and school development associations. The total number of committee members ranged between eight and ten in each of the six selected primary schools. At each school, I had to focus on those members who were also members of the finance sub-committee as well. This resulted in me focusing on the school head, two senior teachers, and two parent governors for each of the six schools. In addition to that, one district education officer was selected on the basis of being in charge of the six schools in the study. In the end, the total sample in the study comprised six school heads, twelve senior teachers, twelve parent

governors and one district education officer, thus bringing the total number of the sample to thirty-one respondents.

In using purposive sampling in both cases above, I took note of the points made by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) about purposive sampling. They noted that in purposive sampling, the researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs (ibid). It therefore involved the researcher not only selecting the sites, but making decisions about which people, setting, events, behaviours, and social process to observe (Blanche et. al, 2006), in relation to their relevance to the study.

3.6 Data collection instruments

As pointed out earlier, I was granted permission (See Appendix, F) to carry out the research by the Mashonaland West Provincial Director of Education, the Chegutu District education officer and the school heads of participating schools. I provided a detailed explanation of the purpose and contents of the research, before the participants were asked to sign consent forms. (See appendix D). Data was then collected using the three different methods, namely the in-depth face-to-face interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. The process of collecting data started in December 2008 and culminated in August 2009.

3.6.1 Interview

As noted above one of the key methods of gathering data in qualitative research is the interview (Terre Blanche et. al, 2006). An interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions, providing the respondent with the opportunity to comment on widely defined issues (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995). Interviews can take a number of forms. They can be in the form of structured interviews, group interviews, and unstructured interviews (Fontana and Frey, 2000). In classifying interviews as above, Fontana and Frey (2000) seemed to concentrate on how the interview questions are structured much more than the interaction that goes on in the interview process. In trying to explain interviews and how they can be used in qualitative research, Miller and Glassner (2004) in Silverman, 2004) note that interviews are special forms of asking people to talk about their experiences, they are therefore a special form of conversation. Interviews are interactional and vary from structured to free-flowing informational exchanges (Holstein and Gubrium in Silverman, 2004). Similarly, interviews can be face-to-face focus group interview, in-depth individual face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and online interviews (Cresswell, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

I chose semi-structured face-to-face interviews. This involved interviewing the respondents individually. These were found to be quite natural in the study as they allowed for the expression and exploration of ideas by the respondents on the implementation of decentralization of education functions and problems that they had encountered in executing their duties as members of the School Development

Committees and School Development Associations. At the same time, the face-to-face interview allowed for further probing in cases that were not clear. Such probing allowed me to seek clarification on any issues raised by the respondents that might not have been clear.

In applying the face-to-face interview in the study, I took note of advantages associated with this type of interview. These included the advantage that interviews were able to pervade and produce contemporary cultural experiences and knowledge of authentic personal, private selves (Silverman, 2004). They also offered social encounters where speakers were able to collaborate in producing retrospective accounts of their past actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts (Seale, 2004). Furthermore, face-to-face interviews were able to allow for the modifying of the line of inquiry and also allowed me to follow up interesting responses and investigate underlining motives (ibid). In addition, face-to-face interviews allowed me to read beyond the words as he was able to interpret the stress and analysis contained in non-verbal actions which added meaning to the said words (Robson, 2000).

The respondents, namely the education officer, school heads, senior teachers and parent members of the committees gave detailed accounts of their perceptions about parental participation and involvement in financial management, school development and maintenance, resource provision and curricular issues in their responses. By so doing, they were able to demonstrate some of the major characteristics and advantages of employing qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews.

The interviews were conducted based on an interview schedule as alluded to above. As the main research instrument, the interview schedule covered all the research questions raised in chapter 1. (See appendix A). These questions were open-ended, allowing respondents to comment on wide issues. They allowed for the expression of views and feelings in the area of implementation of decentralization of education functions, at the same time enabling the study to produce contemporary knowledge (Silverman, 2004) about the situation in the schools. The interview also provided social encounters where respondents were able to collaborate accounts of their past actions, feelings and thoughts (Seale, 2004), about issues involved in the implementation of decentralization of education functions at their respective schools. Furthermore, the interviewer and interviewee were able to modify their line of thought as they engaged in further probing of issues that arose during the process of interviewing, a point noted by Robson (2000) about interviews.

This, in itself, made one interview unique from the other, contributing to making the interview process an exciting experience. At the same time, tape-recording the interviews assisted with cross-checking for details. The taping was also complimented by the writing of the responses. For the purpose of observing research ethics the tape recorder was only used in cases where the respondent had consented and was comfortable with its use. (See Appendix D). There were four cases in which the respondents did not feel comfortable with the use of tape recorders. In all the cases

these involved parent members of the committees. Thus, their responses had to be hand written only.

On the other hand, as noted earlier on, parent governors tended to be restricted in their responses when it came to such issues as management, monitoring and supervision, and curricular. This might have been due to lack of familiarity, which then contributed to limited articulation of issues, which as noted by Yin (2003) is one of the shortcomings of face-to-face interviews. This was common in cases where they were asked to give dates and figures. In addition to that, as noted by Yin (2003), I turned to face-to-face interviews recognizing that these had to deal with the problem of emotions, opinions, and moods which change over time, especially in the context of economic and political conditions that were prevailing in Zimbabwe at the time of the study. Furthermore, the face-to-face interviews were found to be time consuming on the part of both the interviewer and that of the interviewee.

3.6.2 Pilot study

Terre Blanche et. al. (2006) define pilot studies as preliminary studies on small samples that help to identify potential problems with the research instruments. In this regard, it helps with fine tuning the research instruments. To conduct the pilot study, I visited one primary school in the same district. This constituted 8.4 percent of the sample that was to later take part in the actual study. The school pilot studied did not take part in the main study. The pilot study made use of interview schedules that were to be used in the in-depth face-to-face interviews in the main study.

The study sample comprised one school head, two senior teachers and two parent governors. I visited the school in November, 2008, having secured permission from the provincial education director, district education officer and the head of the school. I explained the purpose of the study. I also took the opportunity to arrange dates, time and venue for face-to face interviews within the school premises.

The piloting of the interview schedules was conducted to test the extent to which the respondents were free to discuss the issues raised in the study. It was also necessary to test how acceptable the audio-tapes would be to the respondents and approximate the time taken on each interview. Questions posed sought to find answers to the five research questions raised in chapter one. The responses were later transcribed and translated into English in cases where the Shona language had been used. What further emerged was that some of the interviews took more than an hour, a phenomenon that I observed to be tiring to the respondents. Hence, interview schedules for the main study were modified accordingly. Furthermore, I became aware of the limitations translation tended to pose.

3.6.3 Observation: Non-participant observation

Creswell (2003) refers to an observation as a data collection procedure that involves the researcher taking fieldnotes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site. Creswell (2003) further notes that the researcher is able to record activities at the site. The qualitative observer had to choose roles between being a participant observer or a non-participant observer (ibid).

On a similar note, Corbin and Strauss (2008) contend that observations have much to offer to the qualitative researcher as “it is not unusual for persons to say they are doing one thing but in reality they are doing something else” (p29). In that respect, observation provided an opportunity to establish more details about an event or phenomenon such as the practices on decision making at the selected primary schools. They further note that the importance of observation as a research method also lies in how it puts the researcher where the action is, so that he/she can see what is going on.

Flick (2006) notes that observation should go through several phases. These include the selection of a setting and defining what is to be documented in the observation (ibid). Flick (2006) further notes the need to train the observer so as to standardize such focuses and the need to identify descriptive observations that provide an initial, general presentation of the field. Lastly, Flick (2006) notes that there should be focused observation that concentrates on aspects that are relevant to the research question, in addition to selective observations that are intended to purposively grasp central aspects.

I found it necessary to take into consideration Flick’s advice on using the observation method in the study. As noted above, this involved visiting the research sites which were in this case, the six primary schools in the study, designing observation guides and assessment schedules, and at the same time relating the observations to some of the research questions raised in chapter one. In that respect, the observation and

assessment guides were developed to find answers to two research questions. These were:

- How are decisions on school governance issues arrived at in relation to the statutory instruments?
- What are the challenges faced by SDCs and SDAs in carrying out their roles in the selected schools?

To observe such behaviours and actions on decision making, the study adopted and made use of non-participant observation. Answers.com: *http://wiki.answers.com/* refers to non-participant observation as direct observation where data is collected by observing behaviour without interacting with the participants or taking part in the action. In this study, that entailed observing meetings, resources and lessons at schools.

The main instruments were the observation and assessment guides as noted above. The observation guide was for the observation of SDC and SDA meetings. The other was a classroom assessment guide, which focused on observing teaching and learning resources in the six primary schools. (See Appendix C for both). Assessment of resources was meant to assist with finding answers to the research question: What are the challenges faced by SDCs and SDAs in carrying out their roles in the selected schools? Observation of meetings was meant to assist with finding answers to the research question: How are decisions on school governance issues arrived at in relation to the statutory instruments? The first one involved me attending meetings, identifying the main issues discussed, and members who played major roles, as well as how decisions were arrived at. The process involved marking an X each time a

member spoke during a meeting, to arrive at figures of who spoke the most. This allowed me to assess the different roles the members played in meetings. Whilst it was ideal for me to attend meetings at all the six selected primary schools, I however managed to attend three as the other schools did not have any scheduled meetings during the time of the study, neither could such meetings be arranged specifically for the study.

The first meeting I attended was a SDC meeting at Tsuro primary school. The meeting was attended by eight committee members and it was chaired by the vice-chairperson. The main item for discussion was a report back by the school head and chairperson on a meeting that they had had with the district education officer. The same process was observed at Hove and Shiri primary schools. At Shiri primary school, I attended a parents' meeting. The meeting was chaired by the SDC chairperson. He gave a report back on their meeting with the district education officer.

Attending such meetings enabled me to study how some decisions were made. As noted by Terre Blanche et.al. (2006), and supported by Robson (2002), observation allowed the researcher to watch what people did and listened to what they said, thereby enabling him to study the phenomenon in a naturalistic way. This was enriching to me, as I was able to note the context within which an opinion was expressed and the emotions associated with the different issues raised. In that respect, through non-participant observation I was able to get extra information on how decisions were made in both committee meetings and parents' meetings. This was

made possible by observing actions and processes which enabled me to get closer to the action, a practice that supported the interpretive approach which emphasizes studying phenomena in a naturalistic way (Terre Blanche et. al, 2006).

I found observing people to be time consuming. Admittedly, not everything done or said was necessarily related to the purpose of my visit. The observation of people in their natural settings also raises the issue of research ethics. To handle the ethics issue I had to announce the visit, presence and the purpose. In all cases I was introduced to the meeting by the school head and/or chairperson and the purpose of the visit was clearly explained.

To complete my observation thrust, I decided to also observe one senior teacher teaching at each of the six schools, for the purpose of assessing inputs within the classroom, and the school in general. The researcher found this necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the two statutory instruments, 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 state that it was the responsibility of the SDC and SDA to provide resources to promote learning. The assessment of such resources would provide an assessment of how the SDCs and SDAs were performing in this regard. Secondly, the availability of resources at institutions such as schools could be used as indices for measuring quality and education standards. As noted earlier, such observation would assist with finding answers to the question on how the committees had played their roles in providing resources at their schools.

A classroom assessment schedule was used to assess the different inputs (See Appendix C). The items assessed included buildings, furniture, textbooks, exercise books, chalkboard, library, computers and other such related resources. These I described in terms of the ratio of pupils to the identified resources where possible or as non-existent. This assisted me with securing valuable data on inputs at the schools, which again would assist with finding answers to the question as noted earlier: How have the SDCs and SDAs played their roles in school development at their schools? It should be noted that in terms of the statutory instruments, provision of referred resources was one of the roles and functions of the committees (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992).

3.6.4 Document analysis

Among the data collection methods used in qualitative research is document analysis (Creswell, 2003). Document analysis is a process that involves reading and interpreting such items as letters, agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings and other written reports of events, formal studies of the same site under study, and newspaper clippings (Yin, 2003). Apart from explaining document analysis in terms of the type of documents that can be used in document analysis, Yin (2003) goes a step further to remind us that documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic. In support of the points raised by Yin (2003) about document analysis, Bryman (2004) places emphasis on its use in qualitative research, and the considerable interpretive skill

required to ascertain the meanings of the materials used. In this regard, Bryman (2004) further notes that documents for analysis in any study should be those materials that

can be read, have not been produced for the purpose of the study, are preserved so that they can be available for analysis and lastly they should have relevance to the concerns of the researcher.

In the study, the main documents I collected included minutes of SDC and SDA committee meetings, as well as those of parents' meetings. Minutes of five meetings for each of the six schools were collected, photo-copied and coded according to the schools. These expanded over a period of five years preceding the study. This was deliberately done so as to be able to establish a pattern and trend, at the same time providing an opportunity for me to compare practices by different committees. The process involved the researcher reading through the minutes, establishing patterns and identifying with themes. From these records, I was able to establish what decisions were taken at these meetings, who attended and how often. The use of documents such as minutes enabled me to gain insight into how certain decisions were made. It also offered me an opportunity to relate and cross-check some of the responses given in the interviews. By so doing the use of document analysis in the study assisted in trying to find answers to the research question: How were decisions on school governance arrived at in relation to the statutory instruments?

From the exercise, I observed that some of the issues in the minutes lacked continuity. For example, it could not be ascertained whether a project discussed in one meeting was implemented, since sometimes the minutes did not make any reference to it. The researcher had therefore, to contend with consulting additional records that may have

been written for other purposes, other than that particular meeting. The other problem was that some of the minutes were recorded as though they were after thoughts, with no clear resolutions. There were times in which the recording of these appeared to have been by the school head, reflecting what his [her] biases were, and little participation by the meeting's membership. In a way, these reflected what Terre Blanche et. al. (2006) and O' Leary (2004) contend about document analysis, that it has weaknesses which include:

- the problem of accessibility and demand for high data management, and analytical skills.
- the problems of purpose, as documents are written for purposes other than research, and some specific audience other than those of the case being done.
- the study has to deal with the bias of the author and researcher.

The need to consult different records, which were written for purposes other than the study, as noted above was taxing. Furthermore, managing unrelated data and having to contend with the biases of the writer were daunting. As such, the use of document analysis was limited to that of complimenting the main research method, the face-to-face interview and at the same time, confined to one research question as noted above.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Arguments against the qualitative research methodology in general and the interpretivist paradigm in particular, have been their lack of validity.

Contributions by Schwandt (1997) appear to challenge the role of validity in its current form, as the interpretivist paradigm can offer practical wisdom that can help find practical solutions to social problems. Similarly, Terre Blanche et. al. (2006) point out the problems that confront qualitative researchers. They note that:

- qualitative researchers find it impossible to identify and rule out specific validity threats before doing the research;
- social constructionists reject the idea that research findings can be accurate reflections of reality, and as a result, qualitative researchers advocate for credibility.

I took note of the points raised above. To enhance the credibility of the study, a pilot study was used to improve on the constructs and clarity of questions. This involved using different research methods on the same participants including non-participant observation and in-depth face-to-face interviews. Some questions that tended to be unclear and resulted in repetition of answers were eliminated. The pilot study helped to refine data collection plans, with respect to both the content and the procedures that had to be followed (Yin, 2003).

Transferability was achieved by producing detailed and rich descriptions of contexts (Terre Blanche et. al, 2006).The use of the different data collection methods such as the in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis referred to earlier, was also meant to cater for the trustworthiness of the data collected. For Yin (2003), Patton (1990), and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), trustworthiness is

catered for by the provision of an honest presentation and analysis of the data collected through the different methods.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

I had an obligation to the participants, who included the research community and society at large. Hence, I had to follow research ethics and guidelines. According to Grimm and Woniak (1990), ethical guidelines are important as they refer to those standards of conduct agreed upon by researchers, and for outlining the behavioural standards that practitioners should follow. I was aware of these obligations, and I made every effort to observe the research ethics. As pointed out earlier, before conducting the research, permission was sought from the Ministry of Education, both Provincial and District offices, and school heads, to access the six selected primary schools in Chegutu Education District of Zimbabwe. (See Appendix F). Consent was also sought from the respondents. (See Appendix D). I explained the purpose of the research both verbally and on the consent form which was signed by the respondents. This was intended for the respondents to make informed decisions on whether or not to participate. Cohen et. al. (2000), refer to informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely influence their decisions. The respondents were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality as no real names of persons or schools were used in the research. The study used codes instead of the real names of the participants. This was done to protect their identity. For the six purposively selected schools, pseudonyms such as Tsuro, Hove, and Njiva etc. had to be used.

I was also aware of and observed the basic principles of research that included the right to privacy, avoiding harm to participants, objectivity, integrity and honesty in reporting procedures, and honesty in reporting results (Grimm and Wozniak 1990; Cohen et. al, 2000). In addition to the above, I had to observe research and professional ethics as required by the University of Fort Hare's rules and regulations of 2008. These relate to research and professional ethics. I had to ensure that the identity of the respondents was protected throughout the study and thereafter.

3.9 Data Analysis

The data collected through the use of face-to-face interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis was qualitatively analyzed. For interview data, the analysis began by transcribing data according to the category of respondents and research questions. There were four categories comprising of school heads, senior teachers, education officer and parent governors. This enabled the study to favour a qualitative assessment of the implementation of decentralization of education functions in the six selected primary schools. Furthermore, the data collected was grouped according to the method used to collect it. For instance, data collected through the use of face-to-face interviews was recorded and transcribed according to the themes that emerged from the research questions and the responses to the questions. The same applied to the data from non-participant observation and document analysis. In doing the analysis of data qualitatively, I was guided by the following steps as suggested by Terre Blanche et. al. (2006) which are as follows:

- familiarization and immersion;

- inducing themes;
- coding;
- elaboration; and
- interpretation and checking.

Furthermore, in the analysis, I had to compare data from the different sources so as to fit it into the appropriate categories. As such, the study made use of open coding (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). For example, the responses of the school heads in the face-to-face interviews were coded as H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6.Whilst those of the senior teachers were coded as ST1, ST2…up to ST12. Similarly, those for the parent governors were coded as P1, P2, P3…up to P12.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter encapsulated the methodology used in the study. It focused on the research philosophy and the main paradigms guiding the study. The study's adopted research paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm was discussed in detail. The choice of the case study research design and the ensuing research methods enabled me to approach the assessment of the implementation of decentralization of education functions at the six schools from different perspectives. The chapter further discussed the research instruments used in the study, research population and sample. It concluded with the discussion of the issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations and how they were addressed in the study, and a brief on data analysis.

The following chapter presents and analyses data collected through the different methods.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, data collected through the use of in-depth face-to-face interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis is presented and analyzed. The presentation of the data is based on themes that were derived from the main research question and its sub-questions. These are:

- How are SDCs and SDAs established in non-Government and Government primary schools?
- How are decisions on school governance issues arrived at in the selected primary schools?
- How do the different stakeholders of the schooling system view their roles in school governance?
- What are the challenges faced by the SDCs and SDAs in carrying out their roles in the selected primary schools?

The presentation is divided into sections: section one deals with the biographical data of the respondents. Section two deals with how statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 had affected parental participation and involvement in schools development. Section two further deals with issues on decisions in school governance, school management, interpretation of roles in the schooling system and general experiences of SDCs/SDAs.

Analysis involved the process of breaking data down into smaller units that revealed their characteristic elements and structure, and going beyond describing events so as to interpret, understand and explain linkages (Gray, 2004).

4.1 The schools' profiles

Table 1: Summary of schools' profiles

Name of School	Category	Location	School head	Senior Teachers	Parent Governors
Tsuro	Church school	Urban	H1	ST9,ST3	P8, P1
Shiri	Local Council	Urban	H2	ST4,ST2,	P7, P3
Mbizi	Government	Urban	H3	ST10, ST6	P5, P11
Nzou	Church school	Urban	H4	ST7,ST8	P9, P10
Hove	Local Council	Urban	H5	ST5, ST1.	P2, P4.
Njiva	Government	Urban	H6	ST11,ST12	P6, P12

The table above gives a summary of the profiles of the six primary schools visited by the researcher. It provides the pseudo name of the school, the category of the school, its location and the codes used for the respondents from each of the schools.

4.2 The respondents' profiles

Since the study aimed at assessing the implementation of the decentralization of education functions in the six selected primary schools in the district of Chegutu, data

was collected from thirty one respondents in the same district, as indicated in the tables below. These comprised six primary school heads, twelve senior teachers, twelve parent governors, and one district education officer as discussed under sampling in Chapter 3. The study collected personal data of the respondents through the use of the in-depth face-to-face interviews. The biographical data of the respondents is presented first before the actual responses to the questions related to the research questions as noted in the introduction of this chapter.

4.2.1Biographical data of respondents

Biographical data covers respondents' characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, academic and professional qualifications and work experiences. These are presented in tabular form as shown below.

Table 2: Respondents by gender (N=31)

Respondents	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female	Total
School Heads	4	2	6	67	33	100
Senior Teachers	3	9	12	25	75	100
Parent Governors	8	4	12	67	33	100
Education Officer [E.O]	1	0	1	100	0	100

The table above shows the gender and composition of the respondents who took part in the study. The table shows a gender imbalance in positions of headship at the six selected primary schools. Out of the six school heads, four (67 %t) were male and only two (33 %) were female. However, as the table shows, among the senior teachers, the imbalance was in favour of females. Nine (75 %) were female and three (25 %) were male. The table also shows that there were more male parent governors than female. These were eight (67 %) males and four (33 %) females. Only one male education officer took part in the study.

The biographical characteristic of gender was found relevant to the study. First, it is often argued that our attitudes, opinions and values are often times influenced by gender (Turner, 1996). These attributes to a large extent influence how we interpret events. The sample therefore cuts across gender, thus representing the different opinions found in schools.

Table 3: Respondents by age (N=31)

Age in Years	Males	Female	Percentage
36-40	4	3	22.5
41-45	4	2	19.0
46-50	4	3	22.5
51-55	3	5	26.0
Over 55	1	2	10.0
Total	16	15	100

The above table gives a summary of the ages of all the respondents who took part in the study. It was not necessary to categorize the ages according to the groups of

respondents, but to get an overview of all the respondents' ages, as the study was dealing with experiences that stretched over a period of years. Seven respondents were in the 36-40 years age group. This was 22.5 % of the total respondents, comprised of four males and three females. The table further shows those in the 41-45 age group constituted 19 % of the total. The last group, constituting 22.5 %, was in the 46-50 years age category. However, the highest number of respondents was in the 51-55 age group. This was made up of three males and five females, constituting 26 % of the total respondents. In the over fifty- five age group, there were only three respondents, comprising one male and two females. This constituted ten percent of the respondents.

The characteristic of age was found to be a key factor in the study as it has a bearing on the way people perceive phenomena. This was so as the study focused on the implementation of a policy that had been in force since the enactment of the statutory instruments in 1992. Their involvement in the school activities for a number of years directly or indirectly could have a bearing when narrating and comparing experiences of the implementation of the decentralization of the education functions at the schools.

Table 4: Marital status of respondents. (N=31)

Marital Status	Male	Female	Total Percentage
Married	16	11	87
Widowed	0	3	10
Divorced	0	1	3
Total	16	15	100

Table 4 summarizes the marital status of all the respondents in the sample. It shows that most of the respondents in the sample were married. This constituted eighty seven percent of the respondents in the study that comprised sixteen males and eleven females. The table furthers shows that three female respondents were widowed and one female respondent divorced. This constituted ten percent and three percent of the sample respectively.

Coleman (2004) and Dorsey (1996) noted that marital status very much determined how we perceive our experiences in different areas that included our views about sexism, roles in society, promotion and education. In that respect, the respondents as shown above represented different status found in schools and society.

Table 5: Academic and professional qualifications of respondents. (N=31)

Qualifications	Males	Females	% Male	% Female	Totals
O' Level	2	4	6	13	19
A' Level	0	0	0	0	0
C.E	1	3	3	10	13
Dip.Ed	1	3	3	10	13
Degree	7	2	23	6	29
Others	5	3	16	10	26
Total	16	15	51	49	100

Table 5 above shows the academic qualifications of the respondents. Whilst there were no stipulated academic qualifications for one to be elected into the SDC or SDA, the study assumed that there was some level of academic qualification required for one to be able to read and interpret policy and regulations. The table shows that two (6 %) males and four (13 %) females of the respondents had O' level. This constituted 19 percent of the total sample. On the other hand, the table shows that there was no

respondent that held A' level as the highest academic qualification. The table further shows that one (3 %) male and three (10 %) female respondents held a Certificate in Education (C.E), constituting thirteen percent of the sample. A similar number and percentage of the respondents had a Diploma in Education (Dip.Ed). The highest number of respondents was those with a degree qualification. This group comprised seven (23 %) males and two (6 %) females, constituting twenty nine percent of the sample. The table also shows that five (16 %) males and three (10 %) females had other qualifications. These included certificates and diplomas in human resources, management, business administration and secretarial studies. Once again, the sample comprised of respondents who had varied qualifications. These assisted in their understanding and interpretation of the questions.

Academic and professional qualifications were deemed important attributes in the study for a number of reasons. The ability to eloquently express ideas about a phenomenon, it is argued, is also influenced by the socialization process which an individual goes through, of which education is one of them (Ritzer, 1992). Lastly, the study was involved in the assessment of participation and involvement in different education functions, including curricular issues and an understanding of these required some level of academic and professional qualification.

Table 6: Work Experience of Respondents. (N=19)

Years in service	E.O	School Heads	Senior Teachers	Total Percentage
11-15			1	5
16-20		1	3	21
21-25		4	6	52

26-30	1	1	0	11
Above 30	0	0	2	11
Total	1	6	12	100

Table 6 shows the work experiences of school heads, senior teachers and the education officer. Work experience of the parent governors was deliberately left out, since parent governors worked mostly in areas that were different from that of education. Therefore, I considered these as not relevant to the study. The sample consisted of school heads and senior teachers who had served for a very long time in the teaching service. This was important in that it offered an opportunity for me to compare practices over a period of years. The table also shows that one (5 %) senior teacher was in the 11-15 years range in the service. Further, the table shows that 52 % of the senior teachers and school heads' teaching experience fell in the 21-25 years range, the second highest, 21 % in the 16-20 years range. The only education officer in the study, and one school head fell in the 26-30 years service range. Only two (11 %) of the senior teachers were in the teaching service for more than 30 years. No respondents had less than ten years teaching experience.

The study was a qualitative study that relied on interpretation of the respondents' experiences. Work experience was found relevant to the study as it enabled the respondents to compare events as regards the implementation of the decentralization education functions over a period since the enactment of the statutory instruments. For instance, the education officer was quite mature, and judging by the years he had spent in the teaching service, he was very experienced. The study therefore, did not only benefit from his experiences as education officer but from the years that he had

also spent at different levels of the education spectrum. Silverman (2004) and Seale (2004) for example, remind us of the importance of experience in qualitative research in order to be able to give detailed narrations of events.

Issues related to the establishment of SDCs and SDAs, decisions on school governance, roles of stakeholders and the challenges faced by the committees in performing their roles are discussed next.

4.3 Establishment of SDCs and SDAs

To assess the implementation of the statutory instruments referred to above, five questions were framed from the above sub-heading. A number of sub-themes emerged which included the following:

4.3.1 Composition of the school committees

School heads indicated that the parent members in the SDC and SDA ranged from 5 to 7 members. For instance, school heads H3 and H5 pointed out that there were five parent members in the SDC at their schools. At the same time school heads H2 and H4 noted that they had six parent members in the committees. School heads H1 and H6 indicated that they had seven parent members in the committees.

A similar trend was noted in the responses by senior teachers to the same question. For example, senior teachers ST4, ST6 and ST10 said that they had five parent members in the committees, whilst senior teachers ST1, ST2, ST7 and ST8 indicated that they had six parent members. Senior teachers ST3, ST5 and ST9 expressed that

they had seven parent members in their committees. The responses by the senior teachers as noted earlier appeared to support the responses to the same question by school heads.

Parent governors also indicated a similar number of parent members in the committees. For example, parent governors P1, P2 and P5 gave the parent membership at five, whilst parent governors P4, P6, P10 and P12 pointed out that there were six parent members in their committees. Parent governors P3, P7, P8 and P11 noted that they had seven parent members in the committees.

The responses by school heads, senior teachers and parent governors were in agreement in terms of the number of parent members who constituted the committees. Although the actual numbers varied from school to school, the minimum number was five and the maximum was seven. If we add the three school representatives, namely the school head and the two senior teachers, it can be deduced that the approximate total membership to the SDCs and SDAs ranged from 8 to 10. This was the case in all three categories of schools. This therefore, demonstrated that parent members were in the majority in the SDCs and SDAs at the schools.

The presence of the parent members in the majority at all schools in the sample also tended to demonstrate implementation of both statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993. These state that the SDCs and SDAs shall be made up of a minimum of five members elected by parents and these shall constitute the majority (Government

of Zimbabwe, 1992). Such a majority would be pertinent in decision making and in cases where such members had influence, power and authority.

4.3. 2 Term of office for SDCs and SDAs

The second major interview question under the sub-theme sought to establish when the committees were elected into office. The response to the question is presented in tabular form as shown below.

Table 7: Year Committees were elected into office. (N=30)

Respondents	Year 2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %	Freq. %
School heads	1 16.7	0 0	1 16.7	3 50	1 16.7	6 100
Senior teachers	2 16.7	0 0	2 16.7	6 50	2 16.7	12 100
Parent governors	3 25	0 0	2 16.7	4 33.3	3 25	12 100
Total	6	0	5	13	6	30 100

Conducting of elections for the committee was one variable the researcher viewed as an aspect that could be used to assess compliance with the statutory instruments and implementation at the same time. On that note, the table above shows that one (16.7 percent) school head noted that the SDC was elected in 2005.The same number indicated that it was elected in 2007 and 2009. Three of the school heads said that the committees were elected in 2008. This constituted fifty percent of the sample of school heads. Of these, two were local council schools and one was a government school.

On the same note, two (16.7 percent) senior teachers noted that committees at their schools were elected in 2005, another two (16.7 percent) pointed out that they were elected in 2007. At the same time, six (50 percent) of the senior teachers noted that committees at their schools were elected in 2008 and another two (16.7 percent) said that they were elected in 2009.

The table further shows that three (25 percent) of the parent governors said that the committees at their schools were elected in the year 2005. Another two (16.7 percent) indicated that the committees were elected in 2007. Four (33.3 percent) of the parent governors indicated that the committees were elected in 2008 and another three (25 percent) noted that they were elected in 2009.

The responses by school heads, senior teachers and parent governors appear to converge in terms of the spread of the years the committees were elected into office. Their responses, as noted above are in agreement that the SDCs and SDAs at the six schools were elected into office in the years 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Their responses appear to suggest that some of the provisions of the statutory instruments were not being adhered to. That in itself tended to suggest selective implementation of the statutory instruments in that regard. For example, as noted above, at one school, Mbizi primary, a government school, they had not had elections for about four years. This was a phenomenon that was confirmed by the school head H3, senior teachers ST6 and ST10 and parent governors P5 and P6 at the same school. For instance, school head H3 reported:

> The School Development Association in office now was elected in 2005. At times people do not attend meetings to elect new leaders and this has resulted in some members continuing in office for much longer than the expected period.

As noted above, two (100 percent) of the parent governors at the same school also agreed that they had been in office for more than three years. For instance, parent governors P5 and P11 concurred with the responses by the school heads and the senior teachers. Parent governor P11, for example had this to say about their stay in office.

> We have been in office for more than three years. In fact this is our fourth year in office. We were elected into office in 2005.

Apart from this, some of the responses indicated as shown in table 6 that the committees at some of the schools were elected into office in 2007. This was the case at Nzou primary school. This was the position stated by the school head H4 and supported by senior teachers ST7 and ST8, and parent governors, P9 and P10 at the same school.

Such practices as indicated by the above responses appeared to further suggest lack of implementation of some of the provisions of the statutory instruments meant to facilitate the implementation of decentralization of education functions to school level in that regard. For example, statutory instrument 70 of 1993 section 18 (1) clearly stipulates that: an annual general meeting of an association shall be held not later than the 30th day of April in each year for the purpose of electing members of the executive in terms of section11 of the regulations (Government of Zimbabwe, 1993). The same

stipulations are stated in statutory instruments 87 of 1992, which sets the cutoff date for elections as not later than 28 February. Furthermore, as noted in the same statutory instruments, a committee can only serve three terms in office, of one year each.

4.3. 3 Contributions by committees

The respondents were asked to indicate some of the major work done by the committees at their schools. From these responses a number of points for discussion emerged. These included construction work, maintenance work, repairs, purchase of furniture and textbooks among others, and are summarized in the table below.

Table 8: Major work done by committees: (N=30)

Respondents	Work done				
	Construction Freq. %	Maintenance & Repairs Freq. %	Furniture Freq. %	Textbooks Freq. %	Total Freq %
School heads	2 33.3	3 50	1 16.7	0 0	6 100

Senior Teachers	3	25	6	50	3	25	0	0	12	100
Parent governors	3	25	5	41.6	2	16.7	2	16.7	12	100
Total	8	26.7	14	46.6	6	20	2	6.7	30	100

Table 8 above, shows that two (33.3 %) of the school heads indicated that the SDCs and SDAs had done construction work. This included construction of classrooms and such related facilities. Another three (50 %) of the school heads pointed out that the committees had done maintenance and repair work at the schools. Such work included painting school walls, glazing windows, repairing boreholes and security fences. Only one (16.7 %) school head indicated that the committee had supplied furniture to the school and no school head indicated the purchase and supply of textbooks as a major function performed by the committees.

Table 8 further shows that three (25 %) of the senior teachers pointed out that the major work done by the committees was construction work, whilst six (50 %) of the senior teachers noted that the committees had done maintenance and repair work at the schools. This included glazing windows, painting school blocks and other renovations as earlier noted with school heads. At the same time three (25 %) of the senior teachers said that the committees had supplied furniture, and none indicated the supply of textbooks as major work done by the committees.

The responses by parent governors were similar to those of the school heads and senior teachers. For instance, three (25 %) of the parent governors concurred that the SDCs and SDAs were involved in construction work at their schools. Five (41.6 %) of

them indicated that the committees had done maintenance and repair work at the schools, whilst two (16.7 %) noted the supply of furniture as major work done by the committees. Only two (16.7 %) said that the committees had supplied textbooks at their schools.

The above responses appeared to suggest similar patterns in the work of the SDCs and SDAs at the schools. Furthermore, there appeared to emerge a perception that contributions could be best judged in terms of tangible developments such as building projects, maintenance and repair work. As such, there appeared to be emphasis on development work, as noted in the responses above. Such a focus could be to the detriment of equally important functions such as meeting the pedagogical needs of the learners. It also appeared as though such a perception could have been derived from the term ‘development’ used to describe the committees.

In comparison with the school heads’ responses, the responses by senior teachers and parent governors shared similarities in many respects, as already alluded to. The responses tended to demonstrate a propensity for infrastructural development. For instance, there was no school head and senior teacher who indicated that the committee had done much in the supply of textbooks, and only 16.7 percent of the parent governors had referred to the purchase of textbooks as one of their major achievements as a committee. This was indicated by Parent governors P6 and P12 who coincidentally were from the same school, Njiva primary school.

The responses tended to demonstrate implementation of decentralized functions more in infrastructural development and less in learning and teaching materials or they simply did not regard it as a major area of achievement. In that regard school heads for example H5 had this to say about the work of the committee at Hove primary school:

> The School Development Committee has contributed to the construction of a classroom block. This has been the major development project for the past three years. They have managed to complete the construction of this block despite the hard times we are going through. Unfortunately for us we have only one source of revenue, the parents and the focus on the construction project meant that we could not embark on any other development projects.

In that regard the concentration on infrastructural development appeared to be in line with the requirements of Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992 section 4 (a) which states that one of the major functions is assisting in the operation and development of the school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). This is further supported by Statutory Instrument 70 of 1993 section 5 (a) which stipulates that every school development association shall exercise functions in order to promote, improve and encourage the development and maintenance of the school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1993). Furthermore, the response above suggests how some Responsible Authorities such as churches and the government were no longer playing the roles of providing resources and supporting learning in the schools.

Within the same context, the education officer further noted that the SDCs and SDAs were also working hard to provide accommodation for teachers, especially in the rural areas. He also noted that their involvement had taken the form of construction of classroom blocks by parents in both Government and non-Government schools. Accordingly, all had much to do with infrastructural development at schools. That

appeared to confirm similar views held by school heads, senior teachers and parent governors on the same matter. The education officer had this to say:

> Parents participate through the SDCs and SDAs. They participate actively in school development issues in the district. They have taken seriously for example, the issue of teacher incentives apart from infrastructural development. They build teachers' houses especially in rural areas. They work hard through the different community structures to make sure that schools have safe and clean water. They have even gone to the extent of sinking boreholes at the schools. They also construct classroom blocks, maintain and repair facilities at the schools with no financial support from the government and responsible authorities. This can be very daunting for most of our committees and schools that are in poor communities.

Apart from confirming the sentiments expressed by school heads, senior teachers and parent governors, the responses by the education officer also highlighted the problems faced by the committees in their attempts to provide for the education of their children in the different schools. The education officer also highlighted another dimension of the parents' involvement in the payment of allowances to teachers as a form of incentive to supplement their meagre salaries.

4.3. 4 Fundraising

Having taken note of the different functions that the committees performed at the school, I sought to establish if the committees engaged in fundraising activities to finance these programmes. The interviewees were asked to identify the different fundraising activities that they considered to be most beneficial to the school. A number of fundraising activities emerged. These are presented in the table below.

Table 9: The most beneficial fundraising activities by committees. (N= 30)

Fundraising	Interviewees

Activity			
	School heads %	Senior teachers %	Parent governors %
Tuck-shop	33.3	41.7	41.7
Civic day	50	50	41.7
Others (Garden sales, fashion show, fun days)	16.7	8.3	16.6
Total	100	100	100

The table above shows that 33.3 % of the school heads pointed out that the tuck-shop was the most beneficial fundraising activity at their school, whilst 50 % indicated that civic day was the most beneficial fundraising activity at their schools, and only 16.7 % school head chose others. Others, in this case, denoted such activities as garden sales, fashion shows, and fun days.

In a similar vein, 41.7 % of the senior teachers chose tuck-shop as the most beneficial fundraising activity organized by the committees at their schools. 50 % of the senior teachers indicated civic day as the most beneficial fundraising activity. Only 8.3 % pointed out other forms of fundraising as essential at their schools. The responses were very similar to those of the parent governors. 41.7 % pointed out that the tuck-shop was the most beneficial fundraising activity at their schools. Another 41.7 percent of the parent governors noted that civic day was the most beneficial, whilst 16.6 % noted that they had a garden project.

I noted that the respondents rated the level of benefit to the
school differently. It was not uncommon to have respondents from the same school coming up with different fund-raising projects that they rated as

the most beneficial to their schools. It also emerged that one school could be engaged in different fundraising activities. Whilst the civic day appeared to be the most common fundraising activity at the schools, Mbizi primary school had a tuck-shop which was considered by the school head, H3 as the most beneficial fundraising activity at the school. He measured benefit in monetary terms and also stipulated the amount they were able to raise per year. This was supported by senior teacher, ST6 from the same school.

Similarly, at Hove primary school, the school head H5 indicated that their major fundraising project was the garden project run by the SDC. She further indicated that the garden project had raised the highest amount when compared with other fundraising activities. Senior teachers ST1 and ST5, and parent governor P4 from the same school concurred with their school head. However, parent governor P2 from the same school pointed out that the civic day was the most beneficial fund raising activity at the school. What was important to note though, was that the committees were engaged in various fundraising activities to improve school finances. They tended to demonstrate the extent to which parents through the committees had accepted their role of raising funds for their school programmes.

The involvement of SDCs and SDAs in the various fundraising activities as indicated above tended to suggest implementation of policy that decentralized school governance. For instance, statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 both describe the functions of the SDC and SDA. These among others include fundraising

functions for the development of the school and promoting of the teaching and learning environment, and welfare of both pupils and teachers.

4.3. 5 Rating participation and involvement

Fundraising is one area in which the SDCs and SDAs participated. It was necessary to find out how different members of the committees rated parental participation and involvement in school activities. School heads for example, used different terms to describe parental participation and involvement at their schools. The school head, H1 said the following when it came to rating parental participation and involvement in school development activities:

> The SDC is well involved in school activities. They participate in meetings. The SDC is now being involved in the direct running of the school. E…h, as an example, they decide on what should be charged as fees and levies in meetings; they are involved in managing and monitoring finance in the school; they organize and attend major functions as prize giving. In addition to that they now employ staff. There are a number of areas that we can use to judge participation and involvement. First, we can look at how parents attend such important functions as consultation days. Secondly, we look at how parents contribute in terms of payment of fees and levies. Thirdly, we also consider how they support development projects and the decisions they make concerning these projects.

As noted earlier, it emerged from the responses of the school heads that the variables that could be used to assess participation and involvement of parents differed from respondent to respondent and context. However, what emerged from the responses was that participation could be assessed in terms of how the parents contributed to infrastructural development, payment of fees and levies, decisions made at meetings, and attendance of meetings and school functions.

In response to the same question senior teachers provided answers that were similar to those of the school heads in many respects. For example six (50 %) rated parental participation and involvement as high, as they supported school programmes. Two (16.7 %) of the senior teachers described parental participation and involvement as satisfactory. However, four (33.3 %) of the senior teachers expressed views that were different from those of the rest of the senior teacher group and school heads. These noted that some parents did not support their efforts as a school. On further probing, among the senior teachers who described parental participation and involvement as high, it emerged that they were rating participation and involvement in terms of meeting attendance and other school functions that contribute to school pedagogical improvement. For instance, senior teacher respondent ST5 had this to say:

> Parents participate well. Had it not been the effort of the SDC and parents here we could not have been able to construct this classroom block. Most pupils have exercise book. I can attribute this to parents' involvement in the education of their children. Attendance of functions by parents is fairly good. I can rate it 80 percent. So parents participate well.

There are a number of possible explanations for the variance in views as expressed above. For example, for the 33.3 % of the senior teachers who indicated that they were not satisfied with the participation and involvement of parents, the possibility was that as classroom practitioners, they were not only referring to school governance issues, but other areas of learning. For instance, failure by parents to buy their children school necessities such as exercise books and such related material was most likely to influence their perception of parental participation. On the other hand, attendance of such important functions as consultation days was also important. For example, senior teacher ST7 of Nzou primary school noted:

> Some parents do not support their children's learning. For instance, in a class of forty, I have about ten pupils who do not have exercise books for Mathematics and they do not write during Mathematics lessons. Some parents rarely participate in school activities. For instance, they do not come for school visits and meetings. They have a negative attitude towards the teachers and the school.

The above responses by senior teacher ST7 appeared to agree with the sentiments expressed by senior teacher ST8 from the same school, who had this to say about parental participation and involvement in school activities:

> There is lack of interest in school issues. At times you have problems with a pupil and you end up inviting the parent or guardian to the school to discuss the problem, in most of the cases the parent does not come.

The responses by the parent governors had a lot in common with those of the senior teachers. They expressed mixed views about parental participation and involvement at their schools. For example, three (25 %) of the parent governors described parental participation and involvement as low. When asked to explain what they meant some of the parent governors had this to say:

> P3: Some parents have a negative attitude towards the education of their children. Some people are used to getting things for free and I blame this donor syndrome that has developed in some parents. They do not want to participate in the development of the school thinking that there is a donor out there who should do things for them. We cannot blame the economic conditions for everything. Some parents do not attend simple things like consultation days where they have to discuss the performance of their children.

Another four (33.3 %) described parental participation and involvement in school activities as negative, not cooperative and facing difficulties. When the responses that described participation and involvement of parents as low and negative are put together, this constitutes seven (58.3 %) of the parent governors. In that regard, their

views about participation and involvement differed with those of the school heads, but tended to agree with 33.3 % of the senior teachers. On the other hand, five (41.7 %) of the parent governors described parental participation as improved, high, satisfactory, slightly improved and good respectively.

4.4 Decision making on school governance issues

There was need to determine how decisions on school governance issues were arrived at, at each school. I found that to be important to the study, as implementation of decentralization could be assessed by how parents were allowed to participate in decisions. Of major interest, was how the members of the committees performed their roles in various school activities. Under this sub-heading, I formulated four questions that guided the interview. From these a number of sub-themes emerged.

4.4. 1 Power dynamics within committees in the decision making process

Half (50 %) of the school heads indicated that the chairperson called for meetings. However, one (16.7 %) of the school heads responded that both the school head and the chairperson called for meetings. Another two (33.3 %) indicated that the school head called for meetings.

Similarly, senior teachers expressed the same sentiments as those of the school heads. The responses show that four (33.3 %) of the senior teachers interviewed indicated that the chairperson of the SDC or SDA called for parents' meetings. Three

(25 %) indicated that they could not be very specific as to who exactly called for such meetings. They therefore indicated that it was either the SDC or SDA that called for such meetings. However, four (33.3 %) indicated that the school head called for parents' meetings. One (8.3 %) noted that it was either the school head or chairperson. This, therefore, demonstrated a number of issues about the role of the school head in school governance, especially in relation to the SDC and SDA. Firstly, there appeared to be no limit nor distinction between the school head's role as a school administrator, and that of the school head as a member in the SDC or SDA. Secondly, some school heads appeared to take on other members' duties and responsibilities in the committees.

The majority of parent governors (41.7 %) reported that it was the school head who called for meetings. Another four (33.3 %) indicated that they were not very sure who exactly in the committees called for such meetings. As such, they indicated that it was either the SDC or SDA which called for such meetings. Such responses may be due to the fact that parents were not key components of the day-to-day activities at the schools. This also appeared to suggest limited understanding of the statutory instruments that regulated their operations. Only three (25 %) of the parent governors indicated that it was, in fact, the chairperson who called for such meetings. Once again, this suggests a toss between the school head, chairperson and SDC or SDA as to who was responsible for calling such meetings at the schools.

The responses by the different interviewees indicate a shared responsibility between the school head and the chairperson of the SDC and SDA on who called for parents' meetings. It would appear that on their own admission, some of the school heads did the chairperson's work. Such responses, mixed as they were, appeared to suggest that school heads at Tsuro, Njiva, Nzou and Mbizi primary schools at times played the chairperson's roles in the committees. It was not clear as to why that appeared to be the case in these schools. Two of the four schools were government schools, whilst another two were church schools. All these schools had male school heads. Their behaviour tended to reflect more on their leadership styles than the status of the school.

When it came to decisions on the agenda of the meetings, all six school heads interviewees indicated that SDCs and SDAs decided on agendas for the meetings. Upon further inquiry, all school heads indicated that as SDCs and SDAs, they discussed issues and took positions before meetings with the parents. On decision making in the SDC/SDA meetings, the school heads indicated that decisions were taken mostly by consensus. However, all six (100 %) of the school heads indicated that at parents' meetings, important decisions were arrived at by voting. According to them, that was necessary on issues that involved amounts of fees and levies to be charged per pupil at each of the schools.

It also emerged from the minutes that decisions in the meetings were arrived at through voting. Different members were recorded expressing their views about

particular issues under discussion. However, there was also a pattern in the minutes that tended to suggest that the school head influenced the proceedings and outcomes of meetings. This was as a result of constant reference to the school head to explain issues that could have otherwise been explained by the chairperson. Once again, it demonstrates a practice that was observed in some of the meetings I attended.

The responses by school heads indicating involvement of SDCs and SDAs in deciding on the agenda, tended to suggest a collective responsibility on decision making at schools. For example, school head H1 explained as follows:

> It is difficult to say exactly. I would say the SDC as a whole has a say on the meetings' agenda. We sit down as a committee, discuss issues and come up with the agenda of any parents' meeting. In most of the cases we take a position as a committee before meeting the parents.

On the same issue, nine (75 %) of the senior teachers indicated that the SDC or SDA decided on the agenda. At the same time two (16.7 %) said that the school head and chairperson decided on the agenda. Only one (8.3 %) indicated that the school head decided on the agenda.

By and large, responses by the senior teachers shared some similarities with those of the school heads. In both cases, as noted above, 75 % of the senior teachers and 100 % of the school heads highlighted the role played by the committees in decision making on meetings' agenda. Whilst this might be the case, I also noted that there were cases where school heads had decided on school meetings agendas, as noted by 8.3 % of the senior teacher respondents. This was further supported by 16.7 % of

senior teachers who could not make a clear distinction between the chairperson and the school head's decision on meetings' agenda. In that regard, the responses of the senior teachers did not support the views of the school heads who had indicated in all cases that it was the committees that decided the agenda.

On the same note, five (41.7 %) parent governors indicated that it was the school head who made decisions on such matters. Another five (41.7 %) indicated that the agenda was either decided by the SDC or SDA as a whole. Only two (16.7 %) indicated that it was the chairperson who decided on the agenda of the meetings. The spread of the responses as noted above appeared to suggest that the parent governors were at times not part of some of the decisions.

It was also necessary to establish how decisions were arrived at in such meetings. The school heads were unanimous in their response to the questions as they indicated that decisions were made in meetings through voting, but upon probing explained their responses which then qualified the voting as they had previously stated. H2 had this to say:

> Much depends on the issue at stake. There are cases where people have to refer to policy documents and statutory instruments to arrive at a correct position, especially where there are differences. It's like people end up saying; what do regulations say on the matter? Otherwise for issues like fees and levies those in the meetings vote.

The response above contains a number of issues regarding parents' voting. They were mostly asked to vote on issues pertaining to fees and levies, which appears to suggest that parents had little say on matters that concerned policy. All respondents noted that

decisions in meetings were arrived at through voting. This was further explained by senior teacher interviewee ST1 who pointed out that:

> If they are issues to do with the charging of levies, Ministry regulation is that parents have to take a vote. In fact it requires that the parents propose three different figures and the one voted for by the majority should be adopted. So yes, I can safely say that such decisions are arrived at by voting.

The response above appears to support the responses by H2 among others on how parents through the SDCs and SDAs were able to determine fees and levies to be charged.

Further interviews also seem to indicate lack of involvement in decisions of parents and the committees on policy and curricular issues. In view of this, responses by ST7 tended to demonstrate lack of decision in some of the stated areas above as she pointed out that:

> They have little control over policy issues, and therefore cannot make decisions on that, except to seek clarification from the school head or in some cases the education officer.

Whilst acknowledging the role of parents in determining fees and levies, the responses appear also to demonstrate the limitedness of the decisions that the parents and the committees had to make. Whilst it might be true that parents and other members of the school committees determined levies and related matters through voting, observations of meetings at Tsuro, Hove and Shiri primary schools appeared to suggest how school heads influenced the proceedings and the voting patterns. For example, at a meeting

at Tsuro primary school, the school head spoke the most. He spoke eight times during the meeting. This constituted 40 % of the total contributions in the meeting. He was followed by senior teachers, whose combined contribution was five, constituting 25 % of the total. Parent governors' contributions had a total of four, thus constituting 20 % of the total. Lastly, contributions by other members in the meeting constituted 15 %. These included other members of the committee who were not specifically covered by the study and others such as the school bursar who was present in this case. Lastly, the observations at Tsuro primary school suggested that even in meetings, the contribution by parent governors was the minimum.

Another SDC meeting I observed was at Hove primary school. This was a meeting for SDC members only. There were eight members in the meeting. The main items on the agenda of the meeting were a financial report and a report back on a meeting held between school heads and the chairpersons of the SDC, and the Ministry of Education officials. In the absence of the chairperson of the SDC, the chairperson of the building committee was asked to chair the meeting by the school head. It emerged from the financial report that most of the parents had not paid fees and levies. The report back, like in the meeting at Tsuro primary school centred on the Ministry of Education's position on sending children home for non-payment and teacher incentives. It emerged from the meeting that there were some problems between the SDC's position and that of the Ministry of Education. The SDC members agreed to engage a debt collector. Such a practice was in line with the provisions of the statutory instruments. This was after the school head had explained the policy and expressed the view that all along

they had been breaking the law by sending children away. She therefore could not continue to do the same as she would be charged, once again, demonstrating the role of the school head in determining policy implementation at school level.

Like at Tsuro primary school, most decisions were taken by consensus. In the meeting it emerged that the school head tended to dominate the proceedings as the rest of the members often referred to her for explanations. Of the twenty contributions recorded by the researcher, the school head spoke on seven occasions. This constituted 35 % of the total contributions. This was followed by a combined contribution by parent governors of five (25 %). Senior teachers contributed 20 %, the same as others. Others, referred to members of the SDC or school who were present in the meeting. As noted at Tsuro primary school, the school head at Hove primary school made the most contributions.

Whilst I noted that the school head had to explain policy, I was of the opinion that much depended on her personal viewpoint rather than what the policy said. For instance, on the issues of sending away pupils the positions taken by parents tended to depend on the school head's stance as regards the policy. This tended to influence the decisions taken.

The third meeting I attended was a parents' meeting at Shiri primary school. The meeting had been called by the SDC. The chairperson of SDC chaired the meeting. The secretary of the SDC presented a financial report which showed that out of the 940

children at the school, only 250 had paid fees and levies. About 70 parents and guardians attended the meeting. This was considered a low turnout in view of the number of pupils at the school. Like in the SDC meetings attended by the researcher at Tsuro and Hove primary schools, the main item on the agenda at Shiri primary school was on how to handle non-paying parents. The issue was discussed after the chairperson had given a report of the meeting they had with the Ministry of Education officials. She informed the parents that, according to the Ministry of Education policy it was illegal to send children away from school for non-payment of fees and levies. Parents gave their views about the matter. The school head informed the meeting that she would not want to be involved in legal matters that would cost her job. Once again, this demonstrated the extent to which school heads influenced implementation of rules and regulations. At the end, parents voted to engage debt collectors, once again, demonstrating the parents' involvement in issues that concern fees and levies and their reliance on the school head to interpret policy.

The school head and others (parents) spoke the most during the meeting. "Others" in this case denoted the parents who were in the meeting, but were not members of the SDC.. The school head's contribution was 30 % of the total, the same number for the parents. This was so because the school head had to respond to queries and questions raised by parents. Contributions by parent governors were 25 % of the total. Senior teachers were the least contributors with 15 %.

The contributions appeared to demonstrate a trend noted at both Tsuro and Hove primary schools about the role and influence of the school head in meetings. As noted earlier, it would appear that parents tended to vote on the basis of the school head's explanation and interpretation of issues. In that respect, the school head's domination of proceedings tended to influence voting patterns. As such, parents voted to engage a debt collector. In all the cases the school heads tended to yield much power and influence demonstrating how power can be exercised by individuals even within the committee structures. Such influence as yielded by school heads may explain why parents ended up voting for fees and levies that they failed to pay.

However, it was important to note that the position referred to above on sending pupils away had always been the Ministry of Education policy since the enactment of the legal framework that established the SDCs and SDAs as noted earlier. It was therefore, difficult to understand why it had become a bone of contention at the time of the study. Two possible explanations to this emerged. The first was that it was possible that the SDCs and SDAs were flouting the rules and regulations in this regard over the years. Secondly, the Ministry of Education was not monitoring the activities of the SDCs and SDAs in the same regard. From indications and deliberations in the meeting, the SDC at Tsuro primary school were sending pupils away for non-payment of school fees and levies, which according to the Ministry of Education, was illegal. Despite the policy of the Ministry of Education, the SDC members agreed to continue sending children away as they felt it was the fastest way to compel parents to pay. This was after the school head had indicated that sending children away was the fastest way to make parents

pay. He had also given other members the assurance that he did not fear much for his position. This appeared therefore, to be a deliberate violation of the regulations referred to earlier on, once again, demonstrating the power and influence of the school head in decisions taken at school level by the committees.

At the same time, by so doing, the committees were in gross violation of the affected children's right to education as contained in the principal Education Act of 1987. The Act recognizes the right of children to education regardless of the parents and guardians' circumstances. For instance, section 4 (1) stipulates that: Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any enactment, but subject to the provisions of this Act, every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987:207). Furthermore, 4 (2) of the same Act stipulates that: No child in Zimbabwe shall be refused admission to any school on the grounds of race, tribe, colour, religion, creed, place of origin, political opinion or the social status of his parents (ibid: 208). The decision taken at the meeting at Tsuro primary school not only violated the provisions of the statutory instruments, but the principal Education Act of 1987. Such decisions raised a number of questions about the committees' understanding of the laws governing educational administration and governance in Zimbabwe.

In relation to the decision making process, I also collected minutes of the last five meetings of the committees from each of the six schools as noted earlier. A close analysis of some of the minutes at Shiri primary school for example, indicated that the

major issues that were discussed in parents' meetings were finance, such functions as prize giving days, and development projects in the schools. It was noted that at Shiri primary school, one of the issues once discussed was the need to have afternoon lessons at the school. At the same school, one SDC meeting had discussed a letter written by parents pertaining to the conduct of one grade seven teacher. The main concern, according to the parents, was that the teacher was not performing his duties and he often came to school drunk. It was being alleged in the letter that the teacher was often absent from school. This was one example of how parents through the SDCs and SDAs would bring their concerns to the attention of the school heads. However, what emerged from the pattern of discussion appeared to demonstrate the limited powers of the SDC in dealing with such personnel as teachers in schools. Much of the concern was about the action the school head had taken regarding such behaviour. It would appear that the SDC had no mandate over the teaching staff at their schools. This again, demonstrates the power and authority of the school head over school matters.

It also emerged from the minutes that parents made decisions on school fees and levies. For example, according to the minutes at Shiri primary school, after the presentation of the budget proposal by the SDC, the parents had to propose three possible figures. It emerged from the minutes that the parents in most of the cases voted for the lowest figure of the proposed three. Some of the minutes recorded disagreements between members of the SDC at the school. This therefore, appeared

to support some of the concerns about conflict raised by H2, H4 and education officer in the interviews.

Some of the minutes at Tsuro, Hove, Mbizi, Njiva, and Nzou primary schools reflected a similar pattern of issues discussed in most of these meetings. For example, at Tsuro primary school most general meetings were on proposal of fees and levies and the election of new committees. In most of the cases the meetings dealt with the issue of finance and development projects. There was very little information on pedagogical and curricular issues. There were three possibilities to explain such an omission. The first possibility was that SDCs and SDAs considered the pedagogical area as none of their business, as supported by 83.3 % of the parent governors in their response to the interviews. A second possibility to explain the omission would be based on the lack of capacity on the SDCs and SDAs to monitor pedagogical activities, as the majority of the parent governors had indicated in the face-to-face interview responses that they had not been trained in school governance. Thirdly, it could be based on the perception that they did not have jurisdiction over such matters a view expressed by the education officer in the interview, as a result, the school head controlled what could be discussed in terms of pedagogy. As such, curricular issues were rarely discussed in most of these meetings. If ever they were discussed they were presented more as complaints from parents rather than strategies to improve educational performance, as a result they were rarely on the agenda. At the same time, as noted earlier in the interview responses by senior teachers and parent governors, the school heads at times determined the agenda, their omission could therefore be deliberate.

4.4.2 Roles played by committee members during meetings

There was also need to establish the role of the different members of the committee in parents' meetings. This was considered necessary as it would enable me to find out whether parents had any influence on the proceedings of the meetings. At the same time, it was meant to establish how parents could influence events during meetings. The interview responses show that the school heads had different opinions and views about their roles in the meetings. Some of the school heads had this to say: These included " explaining policy issues", "advising", "observing" and "explaining administrative issues" as noted by H1, H3, H4 and H5 respectively

Considering that the above responses were made by school heads, they tended to portray how they perceived their roles not only in the meetings, but the committees as a whole. Such an interpretation of roles was most likely to have an effect on how the school heads interacted with the rest of the members in the committees. As noted above, some school heads perceived their role as that of adviser (H2), whilst others viewed theirs as that of observer and Ministry of Education representative (H4, H5, H6) and that of protector and implementer of government policy at school level (H1, H3). In these ways the school heads perceived their roles as affecting how they related to the rest of the membership of the SDCs and SDAs.

Senior teachers were also asked to describe their roles in the meetings. For instance, three (25 %) of the senior teacher interviewees perceived their role as that of explaining government policy. For example, ST1 described his role as that of assisting

the school head. Yet others, ST3 and ST6 viewed their role as that of presenting problems faced by the school, while at the same time representing their departments. ST9 viewed her role as that of acting in the absence of the school head. ST4 and ST12 indicated that they did not have much a role to play, except observing.

These responses did not differ much from those of school heads. The role of the senior teachers as perceived by five (41.7 %) was that of explaining policy and regulations and another two (16.7 %) saw their role as that of assisting the school head and acting in his [her] absence. However, three (25 %) of the senior teachers said that they did not do much except observing proceedings during meetings, whilst another two (16.7 %) indicated that they presented problems faced by their departments. From the responses above, one may conclude that senior teachers did not have clearly defined roles. In some cases, there was not much of a difference between the senior teachers' purported roles and those of the school heads. It would appear that like school heads, senior teachers placed emphasis on explaining policy issues and assisting the school head, as senior teacher interviewees ST5 from Hove primary school and ST9 from Tsuro primary school explained:

> ST5: I have to explain policy issues, especially if the school head is not present or when asked to explain by the committee or school head.
> ST9: I have to act in the absence of the school head. This involves doing all the work that has to be done by the school head. This involves referring to statutory instruments and policy documents where there is need for clarification.

Clearly, as noted above, seven (58.4 %) of the senior teachers did not seem to be very clear on their responsibilities in the meetings and the committee. This in a way

appeared to suggest a duplication of roles with the school heads in some of the instances, whilst in others the senior teachers did not seem to play any role.

When asked to explain their roles in the meetings, parent governors had varied responses. Four (33.3 %) indicated that they did not have clear roles. On the other hand three (25 %) pointed out that they performed roles delegated to them by the committee, and at times acted as chairpersons in the absence of the chairperson. Another three (25 %) indicated that their role was that of chairing and explaining issues during meetings. Two (16.7 %) of the parent governors indicated that their role was to give support to the committee and assist where possible.

The responses by senior teachers and parent governors appeared to suggest lack of definition of the roles for the rest of the members of the committees. Such an arrangement appeared to suggest that despite being the majority in the committees, parent governors did not have much of a role to play in the meetings.

4.4.3 School heads and the committees

School heads were further asked to describe how they had involved other SDC and SDA members in specific areas of school governance. These areas included fees and levies, school policy, plan of action for the year, development projects, school maintenance, school purchases, managing finances, sports, employment of staff and supervision of staff. Similarly, the committee members were asked to describe how they were involved in the different areas identified. This was meant to provide a

platform for a comparison between the responses of the school heads and the views of senior teachers and parent governors.

The six school heads were asked to respond to each of the ten areas noted above. Regarding school fees and levies all the six school heads indicated that they to a large extent involved the SDCs and SDAs. When it came to formulating school policy, only two (33.3 %) school heads indicated that they involved them when they felt it was necessary to do so, another two (33.3 %) indicated that they rarely involved the SDCs and SDAs in the area and a similar number never involved them. When asked to explain what they meant by rarely involved committees, the two (33.3 %) school heads noted that they did so once in a while, especially if it was a policy issue that involved parents. On planning the course of action, for example what development programmes to be undertaken by the school over a given period, three (50 %) school heads pointed out that always involved SDCs and SDAs in the area, one (16.7 %) school head noted that he involved them when he felt it was necessary and another two (33.3 %) rarely involved the committees. According to H1 and H5 much depended on what they intended to do as a school, as some of the work might not require the involvement of the SDC, especially when it was purely academic.

On school development projects all six school heads noted that they mainly involved the committees. Similarly, on maintenance work at schools, the school heads always involved the committees. When it came to making purchases for the school, four (66.7 %) of the school heads noted that they always involved the committees, whilst two (33.3 %) noted that they involved them whenever they felt it was necessary. For instance, H4 and H6 pointed out that in some instances it was only necessary to consult the chairperson of the committee rather than the committee as a whole. On managing finances, two (33.3 %) of the school heads noted that they largely involved

the SDCs and SDAs, and four (66.7 %) indicated that they involved them when they felt it was necessary. All six school heads said that they nominally involved the committees in the sporting activities at their schools. According to H3 and H5 sporting activities were part of the curricular of which SDCs and SDAs had no say. However, two (33.3 %) of the school heads noted that they involved the committees when they felt it was necessary, and one (16.7 %) school head noted that she rarely involved the committees in this area, while three (50 %) of the school heads pointed out that they never involved the committees in sports. For those who indicated limited involvement, it was mainly confined to having one of the parent members accompanying pupils on sporting trips, as noted by H3.

The responses further show that three (50 %) of the school heads largely involved the SDC and SDA in the hiring and firing of staff. Another three (50 %) indicated that they involved them when they felt it was necessary. On their own admission, this was confined to non-academic staff only, otherwise the committees had no say in the hiring of teachers. On supervision of the staff, all the school heads noted that they never involved the SDC or the SDA.

On the same note, all twelve senior teachers pointed out that they were very much involved in determining levies and fees of members. On determining school policy, five (41.7 %) said that they were very much involved, whilst three (25 %) noted that they were involved at the discretion of the school head and four (33.3 %) were rarely involved. When it came to plan of action for the school, five (41.7 %) indicated that they

were very much involved in the area, four (33.3 %) noted that they participated at the discretion of the school head, two (16.7 %) rarely participated and only one (8.3 %) never participated in the area. On development projects, seven (58.7 percent) of the senior teachers were very much involved in decisions in the area and five (41.7 %) of them were involved at the discretion of the school head.

On maintenance and preservation of property, all twelve senior teachers indicated that they were very much involved in terms of determining which facilities to be maintained. When it came to decisions on finances, five (41.7%) senior teachers noted that were very much involved in making decisions in the area, four (33.3 %) of them were involved at the discretion of the school head and three (25 %) were rarely involved. When it came to areas as sports and co-curricular activities, all twelve senior teachers noted that they were very much involved in making decisions in this area. The responses further show that on employment of staff at school level, three (25 %) of the senior teachers said that they were very much involved in making decisions, another three (25 %) said that they were involved at the discretion of the school head, four (33.3 %) noted that they were rarely involved and two (16.7 %) were never involved in making decisions in the area. On supervision, all the senior teachers noted that they were very much involved in making decisions in this area.

When it came to parent governors, all twelve noted that they were involved in determining levies and fees to be charged at schools. Regarding planning for the year, six (50 %) of the parent governors noted that they were very much involved in making

decisions in the area, three (25 %) indicated that they were involved at the school head's discretion, and another three (25 %) were rarely involved. On making decisions on development projects at schools all the parent governors noted that they were involved. Similarly, all of them indicated that they were involved in decisions on school maintenance.

Responses further showed that four (33.3 %) of the parent governors were involved in making decisions on school requisites and purchases, five (41.7 %) were involved at school head's discretion, whilst two (16.7 %) were rarely involved and one (8.3 %) was never involved in the first place. On managing of school finances, five (41.7 %) parent governors pointed out that they were largely involved in making decisions in this area, four (33.3 %) noted that they were consulted at the school head's discretion and three of the parent governors indicated that they were rarely involved in making decisions in the area. When it came to sports, three (25 %) of the parent governors said that they were involved at the discretion of the school head, two indicated that they were rarely involved and seven (58.3 %) were never involved in the area. On employment of staff, four (33.3 %) indicated that they were very much involved in making decisions in the area, one (8.3 %) noted that involvement was at the discretion of the school head, three (25 %) were rarely involved and four (41.7 %) were never involved at all. In the area of supervision of staff all twelve parent governors indicated that they were not involved in making decisions on the supervision of staff at school level. This was also the case with school policy.

The responses further suggested that the school heads and the SDCs and SDAs had accepted their responsibilities in several areas of their functions. These functions included construction and maintenance of school buildings, provision of equipment, determination and collection of development levy to meet maintenance costs (Conyers, 2003). That appeared to suggest implementation of these functions, whilst at the same time demonstrating limited involvement in others. A close look at the areas listed above further shows that these areas were closely linked to the functions of the SDCs and SDAs as prescribed in statutory instruments 87 0f 1992 and 70 of 1993. These included making decisions on the development of the school, its maintenance and preservation, organization of secular and non-academic activities, engaging or hiring of staff, undertaking the construction of new buildings and determining fees and levies (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992).

According to the above responses by school heads, senior teachers and parent governors' involvement in decision making in some areas was very much determined by the school heads. Furthermore, the statutory instrument did not state the extent of involvement of the committees in the different areas, thereby leaving the school heads with the power to determine the extent of such involvement. Responses appear to suggest that areas of high involvement of committee by school heads were fees and levies and managing of school finances. On the other hand, responses appear to suggest that areas of least involvement were school policy and supervision and management of staff. What also stands out in the responses is that there were several areas that the committees were involved at the discretion of the school heads.

4.5 Stakeholders Roles in School Governance

The study also examined how the committees handled issues of finance, personnel management, school development, and curricular. This was considered important, as noted by Lauglo (1995) and Fiske (1996) regarding implementation of decentralization in education. They argued that for us to assess decentralization in education there was need to consider how the lower levels were involved in finances, management, budgeting, recruiting, deploying staff and making decisions on distribution of resources and curricular matters. It was also necessary to find out how the respondents viewed not only their roles, but those of other stakeholders such as the Responsible Authorities and the Ministry of Education. A number of sub-themes emerged from the interview responses.

4.5.1 Finance sub-committees.

All the interviewees indicated that they had finance sub-committees at their schools. Statutory Instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 and 1993 both regulate the existence and functions of the finance sub-committee under the supervision of either the SDC or SDA. Among other functions, the finance sub-committees had to collect revenue, authorize expenditure concerned with curriculum and co-curricular activities, approve payments, purchase school requisites, and invest money that is not required for immediate use (Chivore 1995).

By virtue of their positions in the committees these were also members of the finance sub-committees (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). As such, the study sought to find

out how they were involved in the following areas: revenue collection; expenditure authorization; withdrawals; purchases; approving payments; investing money and banking. In their responses to the question all the school heads from the six schools were unanimous in that they were very much involved in the different areas except investing of money. When asked to explain their level of involvement some of the school heads had this to say:

> H1: The bursar receives and receipts money every working day. The bursar is employed by the SDC to do this work. I have to do the checking and balancing of receipts at the end of the day... I have to supervise the bursar, ensure that the money is safely kept and also take it for banking or delegate someone to do the banking… No expenditure can be incurred without authorization from the finance sub-committee. This is the same for withdrawals and approval of payments. We have not made an attempt to invest money in the money markets… We are struggling to survive financially.
>
> H2: It is part of my job description to do all these things. Even without the committee I still have to do all those things. The existence of the finance sub-committee has made my work lighter. We have not done anything on investing money.

The responses appeared to give a guide as to how the finance sub-committees were functioning. At the same time as noted by school head interviewee H1 above, the finance sub-committees had to be involved in authorization of expenditure and withdrawals made at the schools. However, school head interviewee H2 tended to suggest a flimsy picture about the role of the finance sub-committees as she stressed that even without the committees she still had to perform those functions, as they were part of her job description. Once again, this demonstrates a thin line between the roles of the school head as a member of the committee and responsibilities as an employee of the Ministry of Education.

On the same note, senior teachers were asked to describe their involvement in the different functions of the finance sub-committee. They described their involvement differently. They came up with such terms as very much involved, limited involvement, rarely involved and at times never involved, once again demonstrating the limitations of assessing phenomenon qualitatively. For example, four (33.3 %) of the senior teachers said that they were involved in the collection of revenue in some instance, five (41.7 %) were rarely involved and three (25 %) were never involved. When it came to banking, four (33.3 %) of the senior teachers pointed out that they were involved in some instance, six (50 %) were rarely involved, and two (16.7 percent) were never involved. On a related function, that of making cash withdrawals for school use, three (25 %) said that they were involved to a limited extent, five (41.7 %) were rarely involved and four (33.3 %) were never involved in making withdrawals. On authorization of expenditure, two (16.7 %) of the senior teachers indicated that they were very much involved, three (25 %) were involved to a limited extent, four (33.3 %) were rarely involved and another three (25 %) were never involved. On purchase of school requisites, only two (16.7 %) of the senior teachers indicated that they were very much involved, four (33.3 %) said that their involvement was limited to specific areas, another four (33.3 %) were rarely involved, and two (16.7 %) were never involved. On approving of payments at the school, three (25 %) of the senior teachers pointed out that they were very much involved, five (41.7 percent) were involved to a limited extent, two (16.7 %) were rarely involved and another two (16.7 %) noted that they were never

involved at all. Lastly, all the senior teachers pointed out that they were never involved in investing money for future use.

As noted earlier, senior teachers were supposed to be part of the finance sub-committee and thereby participate in the different functions of the sub-committee. The responses by some of them appear to suggest a contrast with the position of the school heads who all indicated their active involvement in all the areas. For example, whilst all school heads indicated high involvement in the areas, senior teacher ST3 of Tsuro primary school noted limited involvement and had this to say:

> Once in a while I check the bursar's records. This is the same for banking and authorization of expenditure at the school. At one time we are consulted and the other time we are not, and things are done quietly at times. The people who are actively involved in the area are the school head and the chairperson. My involvement in making withdrawals and purchases is very limited… I cannot be leaving my class to do some of these things... Approval of payments is done each time we have finance committee meetings... No, I am not involved in investing money.

The response contains a number of issues about how some senior teachers viewed their involvement in the different functions of the finance sub-committees. The response above suggests that there were other areas that would be difficult to involve senior teachers as they had classes they had to take charge of. Leaving their classes to attend to some of the functions would academically disadvantage these classes. At the same finance sub-committee meetings offered an opportunity for committee members to seek clarification on some payments.

Responses by all parent governors indicated that they were not involved in the collection of revenue at schools. The same case applied to banking. On making withdrawals, five (41.7 %) indicated that they were rarely involved, and seven (58.3 %) were never involved in making cash withdrawals for school use. On authorization of school expenditure only three (25 %) of the parent governors said that they were largely involved, two (16.7 %) said that their involvement was limited, whilst three (25 %) were rarely involved, and four (33.3 %) were never involved.

The responses by the parent governors above appeared to agree with the views expressed by senior teachers who also showed lack of involvement in major functions of the finance sub-committee in a number of areas. These areas as noted above included collection of revenue, banking, withdrawals, authorization of expenditure, purchase of school requisites, and approval of payments at schools. Furthermore, the responses by the senior teachers and parent governors appeared to suggest that the level of involvement was determined more by individuals such as school heads, rather than regulations. For instance, school heads pointed out that they were highly involved in all the areas, except investment of money. Such involvement by one group could only suggest lack of consultation of other members of the committees in some instances. Furthermore, I noted that some of the respondents appeared to apportion blame on their lack of involvement in some of the functions of the finance sub-committee to the school heads. For instance P6 had this to say:

> There are areas that I could say that personally I have not been involved, areas like collection of revenue, banking, withdrawals,

> making school purchases and investing money. Most of these things are done by the school head. We cannot force ourselves into some of these areas, the onus is on the school head to invite us. As for purchases, my involvement has been limited to building material as I am well versed in the area. As for approval of payments, at times we do not meet as a finance committee and lack of meetings at times limits our involvement in the area.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by P9 who noted that although they worked as a committee, it was difficult to involve every member in the functions of the finance sub-committee. For P9 certain responsibilities had to be done by the school head as the person in charge of the school. As such, P9 noted that he was not involved in the following areas; collection of money at the school, banking, withdrawals and making investment plans.

What appeared to surface was that like senior teachers, there were areas that the parent governors had not been involved. Coincidently, as noted above some of them might have taken it as a given that these were not their areas of jurisdiction, but that of the school head. As such, this tended to suggest lack of knowledge on the part of some senior teachers and parent governors as to how the finance sub-committees should be functioning in the schools. For instance, the finance sub-committee should ensure that proper accounts and other records are kept, and that any payment had to be vouched by the same sub-committee (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). Limited or lack of involvement of some of the members in some areas tended to suggest a compromise on transparency and accountability in the selected schools.

As a follow up to the functions noted above, I was interested in establishing how often the finance sub-committee met to make decisions and exercise these functions. H1.

H2, H3 and H6 pointed out that the finance sub-committee at their schools met only once a month. H4 and H5 pointed out that they met only when it was necessary for them to do so.

On the same note eight (66.7 %) of the senior teachers indicated that the finance sub-committees at their schools met once a month. Three (25 %) of the senior teachers pointed out that they met when they felt it was necessary to do so, and one (8.3 %) said that they met once in a term.

When it came to parent governors, their responses were very similar to those of school heads and senior teachers. For instance, P5 from Mbizi primary school concurred with P11 from the same school that the finance sub-committee met once in a month. Their responses appeared to support those of the school head H3, and senior teacher respondents ST6 and ST10 from the same school who also noted that they met once a month. This in a way appeared to demonstrate compliance with the statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993, which stipulate that the finance sub-committee has to meet once a month to make decisions and deliberate on expenditure. However, P12 from Njiva primary school pointed out that it met once a term, a claim that appeared to support the responses by senior teacher respondents ST11, ST12 from the same school. At the same time parent governor respondents P2, P3 and P4 said that they rarely met, whilst P1, P7, P8 and P9 pointed out that they met when they felt that it was necessary to do so.

What tended to emerge was that the meetings of the finance sub-committees were intermittent. In extreme cases as noted above, the sub-committees met only once in a term. The responses to the question appeared to support the views expressed in the previous question on involvement in functions of the finance sub-committee. Considering that decisions on finance and operations of the school had to be taken almost on a daily basis, irregular meetings were most likely to compromise accountability at schools.

4.5.2 Recruitment and employment of staff

Apart from the functions of the finance sub-committee listed above, one of the major functions of the SDCs and SDAs was the employment and management of staff.

As regards recruitment and employment of staff, all school heads said that the committees employed non-academic staff only. These included bursars, clerks, grounds persons and security guards. These were the same areas of employment that were also identified by the senior teachers and parent governors. They were all in agreement that SDCs and SDAs at their schools did not employ academic staff such as teachers.

On the SDCs' and SDAs' involvement in recruiting staff, the education officer expressed similar views to those of the other interviewees. He noted that SDCs and SDAs had tried to fill the gap left by the Ministry of Education by employing ancillary

staff, but with little success. The major problem with SDCs and SDAs as noted by the education officer was lack of finance. For example, he noted:

> In some schools, yes they recruit and employ staff including teachers, but that is common in private schools where some staff members are employed to augment the existing staff. The Government of late has not been able to employ or pay ancillary staff.SDCs and SDAs have tried to fill in the gap with little success because of financial constraints.

The responses above suggest that there was neither a SDC nor SDA that employed teaching staff at the six schools, despite supporting regulations. This tended to demonstrate a gap between the intentions of the statutory instruments and practice. From further probing, it emerged that the committees lacked the capacity to employ such staff as teachers, due to a limited resource base. This was evident from the responses by ST2, ST6, and ST9 who noted that lack of financial resources was the limiting factor. They reported the following about the situation at their schools as regards the employment of staff:

> ST2: Yes, it employs the security guard. The responsible authority, the council employs the rest of the ancillary staff. Teachers are public servants; they are employed by the Ministry of Education. The SDC does not have the resources to employ additional teachers. All the workers here are supervised by the school head.

> ST9: There are two workers that are employed by the SDC, the clerk and grounds man. Supervision is done by the school head. We are a church-related school and as the responsible authority the church does not assist financially. Parents have to meet all the costs of employing these workers. The SDC has no money to employ teachers. The school head supervises all staff.

Similar sentiments were expressed by ST6 of Mbizi primary school who noted that the SDA employed the bookkeeper, bursar and clerks. He also noted that although the law

allowed the SDA to employ additional teachers they had not been able to do that because of lack of financial resources.

The responses appeared to confirm a number of things about the capacity of the committees to employ teachers. First, it emerged that even if the committees desired to employ additional teachers, they did not have the financial capacity as noted earlier. Secondly, it would appear to suggest that the economic conditions prevailing in the country at the time of the study made such practice untenable as the performance of the economy has a bearing on the ability of communities to sustain themselves. These had influenced the extent to which parents and communities were limited in terms of their contributions to the well being of the schools. The responses might be a reminder to the dangers of leaving the responsibility of financing education to local communities, as the economic situation of the community would have a direct bearing on education provision.

4.5.3 Supervision and management of staff

All six school heads indicated that matters pertaining to the supervision and management of staff were left to them. The SDC and SDA did not have a part to play in that regard. This was a position that was also confirmed by the senior teacher and parent governor interviews. They all felt that the supervision and management of staff at school level was the responsibility of the school head, not the committee.

The responses appeared to suggest lack of reform in the management and supervision of staff, despite the existence of committees at schools. Once again this demonstrates how the establishment of the committees had changed the structure of school governance, without necessarily changing the culture of governance in schools.

4.5.4 School development projects

On school development projects H2, H3 and H4 indicated that such decisions were made by either the SDC or SDA at their schools. However, H1 and H6 pointed out that such decisions were made by the school head and chairperson. Only H5 said that the school head and the finance sub-committee made such decisions on school development projects.

Although responses indicated that the SDCs and SDAs made decisions on school development projects at schools, there were also suggestions that school heads made such decisions on their own in other cases. This was noted in the responses of three (50 %) of the school heads. That was the sum total of the school head interviewees who highlighted the role of the school head as that of a decision maker in the area of school development projects and those who noted that the school head performed the role in collaboration with the chairperson.

With regards to senior teachers, nine (75 %) of them said that they felt that decisions on school development projects were made by either the SDC or SDA. At the same time, three (25 %) said that such decisions were made by the school head. These were

the same number of parent governors who indicated that the decisions were made by the committees and school heads respectively.

The responses by the senior teachers and parent governors appeared to substantiate earlier responses by the school heads which noted that school heads still played major roles in determining school development projects at these schools.

4.5.5 Curricular Issues

There was need to examine the involvement of the committees in such important areas as curricular. All six school heads indicated that SDCs and SDAs were not involved in curricular matters. Clearly, according to them, this was an area left to professionals such as school heads, teachers, education officers and other officials within the echelons of the education structure of the Ministry of Education. This was a point that was also stressed by senior teacher and parent governor interviewees.

The education officer also noted that parents were not involved in curricular matters. They only had to provide the resources for teaching and learning and the rest was for professionals such as teachers, school heads and education officers. Otherwise, as the education officer pointed out, SDCs and SDAs did not have the authority to take decisions on curricular matters, but could suggest the introduction of a new sporting activity or subject through the school head. The education officer spoke of how the committees derived their power from the Education Act as amended in 1991, and the statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 which supported the amendments. The education officer had this to say:

> Their [SDCs and SDAs] authority to exercise those different functions is derived from the Education Act as amended, 1991 and the statutory instruments enacted to support the act. These are statutory instruments 87 of 1992 which applies to non-Government schools, and statutory instrument 70 of 1993 for Government schools… As for decisions on curricular matters the SDCs and SDAs do not have the authority, but they can suggest introduction of a new sporting activity or subject through the school head.

Despite the attempt to decentralize education functions in schools, the responses by the education officer appear to indicate policy centralization. The response suggests limited powers of the committees in that regard. For instance, as noted above, the committees did not have authority on curricular matters. This therefore appears to confirm the views expressed by the school heads, senior teachers and parent governors on the same matter. Curricular issues therefore remained the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. However, an examination of the statutory instruments appears to suggest that committee had to play a role in curricular matters. Whist there is some degree of ambivalence as to the extent of involvement, SDCs and SDAs had to assist in the organization and administration of secular and non-academic activities of the school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1993). Furthermore, they had to promote and advance the intellectual welfare of pupils at the school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992).

4.5.6 The Responsible Authorities' roles

As noted earlier, schools in Zimbabwe come under at least two categories. These are non-government schools and government schools. Non-government schools are owned either by rural and urban councils or churches, whilst government schools have the government as the owner and responsible authority.

Responses by H1 of Tsuro primary school indicated that the church did not play any role in the management of the school. He further noted that the ancillary staff at the school was all employed by the SDC. At another church owned school, Nzou primary school, the scenario was almost the same as noted by H4. However, at Shiri and Hove primary schools the council only employed one non-teaching staff member. This was the arrangement at the two government schools, Mbizi and Njiva as noted by H3 and H6 respectively. Apart from this, the responsible authorities did not play any major role in the management of their schools. These are views that were also expressed by the senior teachers and parent governors. The limited role played by responsible authorities was also noted by the education officer who expressed the view that SDCs and SDAs were now the sole providers of resources and facilities at schools. He noted that they were doing this with no assistance from responsible authorities and government. For instance, school head H5 had this to say about the role of the responsible authority:

> We are a council school … as our responsible authority, the council has not been contributing anything towards the development of the school. The same can also be said about the government. We no longer get the grant-in-aid that we used to get to support the schools.

The views expressed by H5 above were also supported by ST11 and ST12 who noted that responsible authorities were not playing an active role in the sustenance of quality education in schools. They had left everything to the SDA who as a result end up overburdened. They also noted that the withdrawal of services by such stakeholders as the responsible authorities and government had left the committees alone in trying to

provide resources at the schools. As a result, there was a serious shortage of resources.

I made at least two observations about the limited role played by responsible authorities in school governance. Firstly, it was noted that rural and urban councils did not fall under the Ministry of Education, but the Ministry of Local Government (Fiske, 1996). It becomes difficult to explain how the Ministry of Education would exercise power and control over councils that were not under its area of jurisdiction. The second observation was that the statutory instruments did not define the role of the responsible authorities in the decentralized arrangement.

4.6 Challenges faced by SDCs and SDAs

In addition to how the roles of the different stakeholders influenced implementation of the decentralization of education functions, I found it necessary to examine the problems the SDCs and SDAs had encountered in performing their roles. A number of sub-themes emerged and are discussed below.

4.6.1 Challenges and the role of the Ministry of Education

A number of interview respondents pointed out that the major problems they encountered had much to do with the shortage of resources at the schools and the role of the Ministry of Education which according to them worked against their aspirations as committees and parents. Some of the interview respondents had this to say about their experiences at their schools:

> H1: The major problem is lack of resources. Another problem is that there are some decisions that are taken by the Ministry of Education for political expedience. For example, coming up with a policy that children should not be sent back home if parents fail to pay the levies, and disapproving fees that they deem too high for parents has worked against improving standards..They adopt policies that do not sustain standards. The textbook situation here is pathetic.
>
> H5: Late approval of fees and levies has affected our work as a committee. In addition to that, parents delay on payment of levies and that affects our development plans.
>
> H6: There is no support from government. The government decentralized functions with no finance to support the process. The school does not have enough textbooks.

On the same note H4 concurred with the above sentiments. He further noted that the problems were three pronged. The first problem was associated with the committee itself. He noted that the committee had limited powers. In relation to the problem, he noted that parents had problems paying the agreed levies and the committee was not doing much to make them pay. The second problem noted by H4 was that the Ministry of Education was not very clear about the role of the committee. Thirdly H4 noted that the responsible authority, the church, was not playing any role in the running of the school. The statutory instruments did appear to define their role in school governance.

From the responses above, it would appear that a number of factors had contributed to the problems that the committees were experiencing in their attempts to provide the best education at their schools. Apart from the lack of resources, a problem earlier on alluded to, there were problems associated with the limited powers of the committees in the areas of determining fees as noted by H5 above. There were also problems of

political expedience as noted by H1, which resulted in the Ministry of Education making decisions based on popularist rhetoric which in the end compromised education standards. Furthermore there were problems associated with the committees and parents themselves through what H4 referred to as lack of commitment on their part. Furthermore, it was noted that these problems compromised education standards at the schools. Standards in this case could refer to a number of factors. These could include the availability of resources that support teaching and learning. On the other hand, standards could also be used to refer to the learning outcomes themselves. However, H1 tended to demonstrate lack of appreciation of laws that govern the operations of schools in Zimbabwe when he blames the Ministry of Education for political expedience on the issue of sending away of pupils for non-payment of fees and levies.

In addition to the problems highlighted above some of the senior teachers noted that lack of capacity of the SDCs and SDAs was a major variable in trying to ameliorate the problems. In that regard some of the senior teachers had this to say:

> ST5: The Ministry seems to take away the same powers they intend to give to the SDCs.This is as a result of the Ministry relying on the school head, yet he is part of the committee, and also they centralize decision making e.g. approval or disapproval of levies. There is lack of supervision of the work of the committee. Approval of fees and levies can be decentralized to district level to reduce delays.
>
> ST7: We have financial problems and shortage of resources. The situation has worsened since the Ministry stopped disbursing per capita grant to schools. We cannot buy stationery and textbooks.

> ST8: There is lack of support from parents, and there is lack of capacity on the part of the SDC and the Ministry is not doing much to improve the situation. There is poor communication between the Ministry of Education and the SDC as a result, the Ministry was not even supervising the work of the committees.
> .

Whilst the senior teachers were in agreement with the interview responses of the school heads, senior teachers ST12, ST11 and ST7 added another dimension to the problem. They attributed the problem to lack of a clear definition of roles between the Ministry of Education, Responsible Authorities and the committees. According to them all the other stakeholders had abandoned their roles in school governance and support to the schools, and had left everything to the committees.

On a similar note, the role of the school head also came into question, as it was also viewed as contributing to the problems of power and authority of the school committees at the schools. For example, ST5 and ST8 noted that there was the problem of communication between the committees and the Ministry of Education. Their view was that the Ministry of Education tended to communicate with the school head at the detriment of the committees. In addition, they noted the problem of continued centralization of decision making powers on fees and levies, and lack of supervision of the work of the committees.

Apart from the problems highlighted above, it emerged from the responses that there appeared to be lack of communication between the SDC and SDA on one hand and the Ministry of Education on the other. This position was mostly expressed by a

number of parent governors. For instance, P1, P2, P4 and P6 noted that there was no direct communication between the committees and the Ministry of Education. The problem of lack of communication was also raised by some of the senior teachers as noted above. According to them, the Ministry of Education did not communicate with them on school governance issues, instead they did so through the school head in the form of circulars as pointed out earlier. On the same matter, some of the responses by parent governors were as follows:

> P1: We have problems with the Ministry of Education. They seem to go against the wishes of parents. There is poor communication between the committee. They communicate to us through the school head. There are also delays on approving fees… Some parents delay in paying and this affects our development plans.
> P3: We do not have much support from the Ministry of Education. I do not see why our proposals have to go for approval. On the other hand, our position as parents in the committee is not very clear.
> P5: We work well with the Ministry of Education. They have come up with policies to help improve the quality and standard of education in our schools. The problem is that we cannot implement programmes because we do not have resources.
> P7: Our major problem is to do with resources. The decision to put every responsibility under the SDC was unfair. Where are the resources that go with such responsibilities?
> P8: I have a problem with the role of the school head in the committee. At times you wonder whether he is one of us or he is there to supervise the committee. This has contributed to conflict within the committee.
> P9: As a committee our powers are limited. At times we cannot make decisions on matters that affect our children. We have to be involved in coming up with school policy on different issues.

Like the school heads and senior teachers, the parent governors also noted the problem of resources. However, others such as P7 and P9 noted that their powers were very limited. In addition, P8 of Tsuro primary school blamed some of the

problems on the role of the school head in the committee which at times contributed to conflict within the committees. However, the views expressed by P5 when it came to problems they had encountered ran contrary to some of the views expressed by some school heads about the role of the Ministry of Education. In fact, P5 praised the Ministry of Education for the role it played in producing policies that helped to improve the education standards and quality of education. Furthermore, P5 acknowledged the role the Ministry of Education had played in protecting the rights of children. He was referring to such policies that made it illegal to send children home for non-payment of fees and levies. These regulations as stated earlier protect the child's right to education despite the social and economic circumstance of the parent or guardian. P5 appeared to be well informed about laws that protected children's rights in this regard. It was difficult to identify any characteristics that made him peculiar from most of the respondents. However, I can only speculate that his experience as parent governor and an interest in policy issues might have contributed to developing that understanding.

As a follow up to the above question, interviewees were asked to identify areas they would want improved between schools, parents and the Ministry of Education. School head H1 pointed out that political interference was negatively affecting standards at schools. His argument was that while the Ministry of Education did not directly interfere with private schools, there was always some fine print which made them insecure, even though, as a cluster, these schools were doing well. H2 further pointed out that some of the problems included conflict between the school head and some members

of the SDC. This in itself tended to retard development at her school as members could not agree on which projects to prioritize and what fees and levies to propose to parents. H3 attributed the problems they were facing to the country's economic conditions. He noted that the school had been vandalized of late, and the government as the responsible authority did not do much to protect the school. This view was also expressed by school head H6 who pointed out that there was no support from the government and it would appear that the government had decentralized functions with no finance to support the whole process of decentralization.

On the contrary, parent governor P6 pointed out that, as parents, and stakeholders, they saw the Ministry of Education as doing its best. According to them the Ministry introduced policies that facilitated significant levels of stakeholder participation. This was further collaborated by senior teacher ST2, who noted that the Ministry of Education policies further prohibited the sending away of children who had not paid fees and levies. This helped learning and teaching, and did not retard development. In essence, this supported a similar view expressed by parent interviewee P5.

All of them raised what they said were problems they had with school heads in SDC and SDA operations. Five (41.7 %) of the parent governors indicated that the school head tended to ignore them and at times just announced things to them. Further to that, P12 indicated that the school head tended to communicate more with the chairperson and made decisions without consulting the rest of the members at the

school. He cited for example, the recruitment of the school bursar which was done without consulting the rest of the SDC members.

The responses appeared to indicate that two (16.7 %) parent governors appreciated the role of the Ministry of Education in terms of producing policies that attempted to involve them in school governance, at the same time formulating a policy that protected children. On the contrary, school heads saw some of the action of the Ministry of Education as interference that retarded development at schools. The responses would appear to suggest problems of communication between school heads and parents. At the same time, the different levels of appreciation of the role of other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education were seen as potential sources of conflict among committee members.

On the role of the Ministry of Education in the activities of the SDAs and SDCs, the education officer had this to say:

> The Ministry has to approve or disapprove, fees and levies, development projects and the building plans…The Ministry also monitors the activities of the SDCs and SDAs.Their activities are also monitored through reports by school heads and/or by school visits we make, which unfortunately are few and far between. We try to enforce Ministry regulations by asking the SDCs and SDAs to comply because the Ministry is the paymaster. Political influence made some SDCs and SDAs believe that they own the schools and the head and staff are their employees. As E.O I normally do not attend SDC and SDA meetings except where there are issues that need clarification.

The response by the education officer above highlighted a number of roles that the Ministry of Education had to play with regards to the activities of the SDCs and SDAs.

These roles included that of monitoring, approving development projects and fees, and enforcing of Ministry of Education regulations. On further probing on how the Ministry of Education did the monitoring, the education officer as noted above indicated that they had school visits and also relied on the reports of the school head. On his own admission, the school visits were few and far between. The role of the school head as a Ministry of Education representative appeared to confirm how some of the school heads described their roles in the committees. Whilst the education officer appeared to be clear as to the role played by the Ministry of Education, there were a number of limiting factors that emerged from the responses. Furthermore, there was no evidence to suggest that the school visits referred to had much to with the monitoring and supervision of the activities of the SDCs and SDAs, but were rather the routine class visits in which they observed teachers teaching. Moreover, the education officer did not attend SDC and SDA meetings in his capacity as a Ministry of Education representative, which raised questions about the monitoring role of the ministry in the operations of the committees.

The responses by the education officer tended to reflect how, despite the existence of the SDCs and SDAs, the Ministry of Education continued to deal directly with the school head on school governance matters, as noted earlier. This in a way appeared to suggest the limited nature of the powers of the SDCs and SDAs.

Senior teachers expressed mixed feelings about areas they would want improved and the role of the Ministry of Education. Four (33.3 %) of the senior teachers pointed out

that poor communication between the Ministry and the schools was working against development at schools. They noted that it took time for the Ministry to approve fees and levies. In addition, it took time for the Ministry to approve building plans. They also noted that there was no direct communication between the SDCs and SDAs, a situation that they said was tantamount to not recognizing their existence. Another four (33.3 %) pointed out that there was lack of supervision of the work of the SDCs and SDA. As such, school head continued to work as in the past. Another four (33.3 %) expressed the same sentiments as expressed by parent governors about the policies the Ministry had produced that supported parental participation.

The respondents shared different problems that affected their operations as SDCs and SDAs at schools. These ranged from concerns about the role of the Ministry of Education as articulated by school heads, to the roles played by school heads as noted by some senior teachers and parent governors. There was agreement that the committees were experiencing problems. It would appear as noted earlier, that the views of the interviewees were split. What stands out though was that the SDCs and SDAs had problems with running the schools, owing to limited resources. One cluster of the interviewees expressed the view that some of the problems had much to do with lack of communication between school heads and committee members. Secondly, communication appeared to be lacking between the Ministry of Education and the rest of the members of the committees. Thirdly, the responses appeared to suggest the limited powers the committees had to enforce cooperation amongst themselves and parents.

Whilst acknowledging the positive contributions of the statutory instruments on parental participation and involvement in school development, the education officer also noted a number of problems. Among these were: conflict between members in the SDC/SDA and the school; financial management irregularities; political interference; flouting of policy; slow approval of fees; poor academic performance; ownership of schools and projects; and general lack of resources. In relation to these problems the education officer had this to say:

> There have been problems of role conflict. These have been between the SDC/SDA members themselves. In one case it was the parents accusing the school head of embezzling school funds and in others it was parents versus the committee as a whole… There have also been problems of SDCs and SDAs exceeding their limits. We had a case in 2005 in which some SDCs and SDAs increased levies without approval from the Ministry of Education. This resulted in some school heads being charged of misconduct… The school head is like a chief executive of a company he/she is responsible for whatever happens at the school.

The education officer further noted that to address some of the problems they had in some cases called committees and parents to discuss some of the issues. For instance, he pointed out that in cases that involved allegations of misuse of school funds, the Ministry of Education had set up investigation teams and those found on the wrong side of the law had been punished. He also confirmed that there had been cases of financial management irregularities in schools. He noted that such irregularities involved cases of cheques that had been signed in advance without authorization from the finance sub-committee. It was a development that he attributed to lack of proper accounting procedures, especially in cases where the committees cannot employ a qualified bursar.

There are a number of issues that emerged from the above response by the education officer. First and foremost the education officer noted the problem caused by the conflicting roles of the school head in the committees. Secondly, the education officer further explained the problems of conflict between school heads and committees, and parents against committees. Thirdly, he highlighted problems associated with lack of adherence to regulations, which resulted in school heads being charged with misconduct. In that respect, the responses appear to agree with the problems expressed by some of the senior teachers and parent governors who noted that the Ministry of Education tended to deal with the school head directly on matters that concerned the committees as noted earlier. Furthermore, the response noted that the Ministry of Education had to take corrective action in cases where allegations were raised against the school head. For instance, he noted that they had held meetings with school heads and committees to iron out any differences. On allegations of financial mismanagement, they had set up investigations and those found on the wrong side of the law were punished.

As the education officer noted above, one of the major problems within the SDCs and SDAs in the district was conflict between committee members and school administration on one hand, and between parents and school heads on the other. He noted that in some cases parents and committee members came to the district offices to seek redress on issues involving them and school heads. According to him, there was a tendency to blame school heads for lack of development at their schools. In extreme cases, he noted that parents and committee members had advocated for the transfer of their school heads.

There were also problems with financial management at school level. He pointed out that in some of their school visits they had observed that there was lack of proper accounting procedures. Another problem was that the implementation of statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 as regards the functions of the finance sub-committee were not being properly adhered to. For instance, he noted that there were cases of bank withdrawals being made without the knowledge of the other members of the committee. In other cases, the school head would have a number of cheques co-signed in advance by one of the committee members. The response by the education officer in this regard appeared to support similar views by senior teachers and parent governors which suggested their lack of involvement in some of the major functions of the finance sub-committees. At the same time the responses tended to highlight the punitive nature of the statutory instruments, as they were used to charge school heads who had charged fees and levies without approval.

Another problem highlighted by the education officer in the interview was that of political interference in the activities of the SDCs and SDAs at schools. For instance, the education officer noted that politicians, especially local councilors were interfering with the operations of the schools. These are sentiments that were also expressed by H1. Considering the political climate that existed in Zimbabwe at the time of the study, this may not be surprising. It was a climate of political competition and influence, characterized by the desire to outdo each other between the major political parties in the country, as noted by the education officer in the interview. That according to the education officer had negatively affected the operations of the SDCs and SDAs, with some councilors allegedly encouraging parents not to pay the agreed levies and fees.

Other political structures at local level, as noted by the education officer created the impression among SDCs and SDAs that the committees owned the schools, school heads and teachers. As such, they were their employees.

There also appeared to be the problem of ownership not only of the schools, but the teachers that constitute the schools. The education officer noted that some SDCs and SDAs were not quite aware of their limits in exercising their functions. As a result of them assuming major roles in the development of their schools they had taken it to mean that they now owned the schools.

Ownership is a pertinent issue not only in the school governance discourse, but the decentralization discourse as a whole. Whilst the committees had to play major roles in school development and related areas there is nothing to suggest that these responsibilities entailed transfer of ownership.

The other problems that they experienced with the SDCs and SDAs were late approval of fees and levies proposed by parents. The delay, as noted in the responses by school heads had affected development projects at schools. He noted that the district education office could not do much in this regard, as approval was done at the provincial education office. Once again, this demonstrates that the Ministry of Education had not decentralized such powers and authority to district education offices within the ministry in that regard.

4.6.2 Capacity building: Training on school governance

In view of some of the anticipated problems raised above, the study sought to establish if committee had received training in school governance. Furthermore, I was

of the assumption that some of the problems highlighted above might have had much to do with lack of training of some of the committee members. The responses of the school heads, senior teachers and parent governors are tabulated below.

Table 10: Response on training in school governance (N=30)

Interviewees	No training	Little training	Yes	Total
	%	%	%	%
School heads	0	83	17	100
Senior teachers	58	25	17	100
Parent governors	58	17	25	100

Responses in table 13 indicate that 83 % of the school heads had received some form of training in school governance. These were mostly one day workshops conducted for school administrators, such as school heads. Workshops were held occasionally. For instance, one school head, H2, indicated that she had last attended such a workshop in 1994. Only 17 % of the school heads indicated that they had received training in school governance. The responses show that all the school heads had training of one form or another. According to them they found the training, in addition to being intermittent, lacking in adequacy in terms of depth. This was noted by school heads H2, H3 and H5 who pointed out that the training workshops at times tended to be more of circular announcement platforms rather than skills development programmes on school governance.

The same question was asked to senior teachers. Seven (58 %) indicated that they had not had any form of training in school governance. However, three (25 %) of them indicated that they had had little training and only two (17 %) said that they had training. The responses of the senior teachers were quite in contrast with those of the school heads. Such responses tended to indicate that the training arrangement offered by the Ministry of Education was in favour of one cluster, the school heads whilst neglecting other stakeholders. The responses by 58 % of the senior teachers appeared to support the sentiments by some of the school heads who in their responses to the same question had noted that whilst the school heads received some form of training in school governance, the same could not be said about the other members in the committees. For instance, H1 had this to say:

> Not all members have received training in school governance. It is normally the school heads and the chairpersons who are invited to the District Education office soon after a new committee is elected into office. Even that practice has stopped now. I last attended a training workshop in 2005.It was for two days.

The response above suggests that as noted earlier, the workshops on school governance were irregular. For instance, the respondent above last attended such a workshop in 2005. Furthermore the response noted that such workshops did not include all the other members of the committees.

This was also in agreement with 58 percent interview responses of the parent governors. Some of the parent governors had this to say about training in school governance:

> P1: I have not attended any training workshop.
> P2: I attended a one day workshop with the school head.

> P3: I have attended one workshop for the three years I have been in the committee. It was a one day workshop organized by the Ministry of Education.
> P4: I have not attended any workshop. Usually the few workshops we have on school governance are for school heads and in some cases the chairperson.
> P5: Yes, I have attended one workshop. It was a one day workshop. It was mainly on financial management.
> P6: No, not at all. We get some induction from the school head so I cannot call that training.
> P11: Only once. It was a one day workshop for school heads and chairpersons.

A number of parent governors also indicated that they had not received any training. They relied on the induction they received from the school heads. These were sentiments that were expressed by P7, P8, P9, P10 and P12.

Seven (58 %) of the parent governors pointed out that they had not attended any training workshop on school governance. Two (17 %) of the parent governors indicated that they had attended one workshops, whilst three (25 %) said that they had received training in school governance.

With regards to training of SDC and SDA members in school governance, the education officer pointed out that they were supposed to be trained by the Ministry of Education. However, because of the problems of resources and personnel the ministry was facing, there had been very little training. He noted that whenever workshops were organized they targeted school heads. The school heads would in turn induct other members on school governance. Furthermore, he pointed out that the changing nature and expiry term of office made it a tedious task to arrange such training. As a result,

some of the SDC and SDA members did not receive any training, once again, confirming the positions of the school heads, senior teachers and parent governors in the interviews. Such a response tended to suggest that terms of office for the committees were rather too short for the ministry to make meaningful contributions in terms of capacity building.

As noted above, training programmes by the Ministry of Education tended to target school heads. Comparatively, all school heads had some training through workshops, whilst 58 % of both senior teachers and parent governors did not receive any form of training. Such an imbalance raises a number of doubts as to how such a diverse group would work together, without any training on their responsibilities. The training programmes as noted above appear to demonstrate the cascading model of training. The Ministry of Education appeared to focus on the school heads who would then impart school governance skills and knowledge to the committee members. The training arrangement was most likely to be affected by the limitations of the cascading model. These among others, include the observation that the intended goals might be lost by the time they reach the last group and that those tasked to do the work tended to be selective on what to focus on (McDevitt, 1998).

4.6.3 Lack of reference to Education Statutory Instruments

The initial response by the school heads as to whether they referred to Education Statutory Instruments that established committees was in the affirmative. However, this was further qualified by comments such as when selecting SDC members and opening

of school accounts (H1). That was further substantiated by H2, H3 and H5 who pointed out that they sometimes referred to the provisions especially when the new members were elected into office. That was a position that was also supported by H4. On the same note, four (33.3 %) senior teachers said that they referred to the statutory instruments when they felt it was necessary, whilst five (41.7 %) indicated that they rarely referred to them and another three (25 %) indicated that they referred to the instruments only when they were areas of confusion.

When it came to parent governors the case was different. Only two (16.7 %) noted that they referred to the instruments on rare occasions and ten (83.3 %) parent governors noted that they had not referred to the provisions of the statutory instruments that guided the operations and functions of the SDCs and SDAs. In comparison, the responses tended to indicate that school heads referred to the statutes most, followed by senior teachers and parent governors were the least category to refer to the statutory instruments. This was understandable, considering the reliance of other members on the school head for interpretation of policy as noted earlier. On the other hand, this might demonstrate disinterest on the part of the parent members on policy documents with the legal jargon they are forced to contend with, as noted by P7 and P9. Such practices were most likely to impact on their understanding of the roles they had to play in school governance.

The suggestions from the responses indicate that whilst school heads pointed out that they referred to the statutory instruments, they did that on specific occasions or events,

such events as electing new office bearers and opening school accounts. That would therefore mean that once the event was over, there would be no reference to the provisions of the statutory instruments. Such selective reference as noted above could also contribute to selective application of the regulations, which in itself would create a gap between intention and practice, as noted earlier.

4.6.4 Resources and facilities at schools

The items that were assessed included classroom appearance, furniture, textbooks, exercise books, chalkboard, library and computers. As noted earlier, it was the responsibility of the SDCs and SDAs to provide for these resources. The assessment could assist in the systematic generation of information which could then give us relevant feedback (Yoshino, 2001). I had to describe and comment on the condition of the items and resources.

The first class visit was at Tsuro primary school. At this school I visited the class of one of the senior teachers who had participated in the interviews. This was a grade 2 class. This classroom was characterized by lack of learning and teaching aids on display. Also, the ceiling had marks and signs that the roof probably leaked during the rainy season. As for furniture, four pupils were sharing a bench, instead of three. In a class of fifty pupils, there were twenty Mathematics and twenty English textbooks. This meant that pupils had to share a book in the ratio of one text book to three pupils. All the pupils in the class had the required exercise books. Other materials such as chalkboards were available.

However, some resources were non-existent. For example, there were no computers for both the teacher and the pupils. The class did not have a library corner, nor did Tsuro primary school have a library. For the specific reading lesson on the day of the visit, only the teacher had an English reader for the lesson. Pupils had to rely on the words on the cards, which were prepared by the teacher. Upon inquiry on why there was only one book for the lesson, it emerged that the book was considered essential for teaching reading at that level and the school did not have the books nor had it placed an order due to financial constraints. The teacher had acquired the book through her own initiative as she noted that the other set of books were not quite relevant for the teaching of reading at that level.

I noted parents' effort in providing their children with such provisions as exercise books, as all pupils had the required exercise books. Providing for such resources as exercise books was the direct responsibility of every parent or guardian, unlike the other resources which were a collective responsibility of the SDCs and SDAs.

The observation gave me insight into how the committees were working in their effort to develop the school and provide resources. From this observation it emerged that whilst the interviewees had indicated that the SDCs and SDAs had contributed much in the infrastructural development at schools, even within that context, the committees were struggling. That was supported by lack of maintenance of the classroom visited. Furthermore, the lack of learning and teaching materials such as textbooks tended to

demonstrate the limitedness of the committees' involvement in trying to fill the gap left by the state. That is, the responsibility of maintaining and developing school facilities, purchasing of equipment, books and any teaching materials (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006) appeared to be a daunting task for the committees. This might suggest that the committees were facing a number of problems in their attempt to implement the policy of decentralizing education functions at their schools, resulting in their failure to provide such basic education needs as textbooks, libraries and computers.

The scenario at Shiri primary school was similar to that at Tsuro primary school. For instance, the inside of the classroom needed repainting. However, when it came to items such as furniture, textbooks and exercise books, the situation was better than at Tsuro. The textbook ratio was two pupils per book in the Mathematics lesson that the researcher observed. The senior teacher attributed this to the effort of the responsible authority, not the SDC. As for the other teaching and learning materials, there were not many learning charts displayed on the walls. The senior teacher attributed this to lack of resources in the school. The chalkboard had been recently resurfaced. Like at Tsuro primary school, the grade five class visited at Shiri primary school did not have a library and computers for neither pupils nor the teachers. There was no provision at the school to assist pupils in becoming computer literate. Once again, this demonstrates the limitations of the SDCs and SDAs in trying to provide quality education as enunciated in the aims and goals of decentralization in education (Naidoo, 2002: Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983).

The classroom visited at Njiva was described as in a good condition, and was well maintained. In terms of pupils to textbook ratio, the situation at Njiva primary school was a worst case scenario. For example, during a Mathematics lesson at the school, in a grade one class the ratio of pupils to textbooks was five pupils to a textbook. The situation was so glaring that the teacher had stopped pupils from using the textbooks. Pupils were now relying on the written work on the board instead of referring to the textbook. The class did not have a library. Facilities such as computers were non-existent.

The classroom observation at Njiva primary school showed that the committees were doing well in maintaining the classroom as noted above, as this was observed to be in good condition as already alluded to. Again, this appeared to support the views expressed on the participation and involvement of committees in maintaining schools. On the other hand, it suggested limited progress in pedagogical issues, which tended to support lack of involvement in curricular issues by committees as noted earlier.

At Mbizi primary school, the classroom was described as in good condition. As for the furniture, the pupils were three per bench and others had chairs. When it came to exercise books, all the pupils had exercise books, except for three pupils whose books were full and were not writing. The textbook ratio was three pupils to one textbook in the English lesson observed. Mbizi primary school had a computer laboratory and a

computer teacher. The computers were said to have been sourced by the SDA at the school. However, like all the other schools, it did not have a library.

I noted the effort of the SDA to provide resources at the school. Out of all the six schools Mbizi primary school was the only one with a computer laboratory. As noted above, the classroom condition, furniture and textbook situation were much better than at the other schools.

At Hove primary school, I observed a grade three class. It was observed that the classroom was well maintained. Pupils had chairs and those who used benches were sharing three pupils per bench. As for textbooks, in the Environmental Science lesson observed, it was only the class teacher who had a textbook. Such resources as chalkboards were available. However, like in the other schools Hove primary had neither a library nor computers.

It was observed that at Nzou primary school the general condition of the classroom needed attention. This included the walls that needed repainting. Furniture was not sufficient for the pupils. Some groups were crowded, with some of them sitting in fours on benches that should accommodate three. The pupils had exercise books and were writing. Only two of the forty five pupils in the class did not have exercise books for the particular lesson observed. This was a grade four English language lesson. The chalkboard was also in good condition. There were no libraries and computers at the school.

What emerged from the observation was that all the classes visited had serious shortages of textbooks, reading and teaching material. Despite these problems, SDCs and SDAs at these schools were engaged in maintenance and infrastructural development. For example, at Tsuro primary school, there was a painting project in operation at the time of the study but there was no project in place to improve the textbook situation in the school. It would also appear from the visit that important facilities such as libraries and computers were not receiving priority in the schools, giving credence to the issue of prioritization raised in the interviews by ST2 and others. It emerged that only one of the six primary schools had a computer laboratory for pupils, and none had a library. On the other hand, I noted that resources that were directly provided by parents tended to fair better than those that had to be provided by SDCs and SDAs. These included the purchase of exercise books which was not the direct responsibility of the committees, but of the parents or guardians.

Furthermore, there were no major differences in terms of provision of resources at the different categories of schools. The lack of requisite resources seemed to have affected education quality and standards in all the six primary schools.

4.6.4.1 Education quality and standards: Academic performance

Academic performance in all the schools was found to be quite a challenge.

School heads, senior teachers and parent governors gave similar views about the performance of their grade seven classes in the last five years. In response to the question, school heads and senior teachers were able to give the percentage pass

rates, whilst some of the parent governors could not remember the exact percentage pass rates. This was explained by the fact that some of them were not in the committee during the years referred to and secondly that they rarely scrutinized the results as a committee. The school heads interviewees noted that the percentage pass rates at their schools were very low. In this regard H1 had this to say:

> Our pass rates have been 30 percent; 33percent; 39 percent,44 percent and 50 percent respectively. Although the pass rate is still very low what is important is that we are moving in the right direction; we are improving.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by school head H2 who pointed out that:

> Our pass rate has not been good. For example, in 2003 it was 25 percent, 2004 it was 22 percent, 2005 there was a slight improvement we managed a pass rate of 35 percent, 2006 it was 30 percent and in 2007 it was 32 percent. As you can see the pass rate has been around the thirties for a period. We would like to move into the forties until we are above the district average which ranges between 53 and 56 percent.

The percentage pass rates as given by school heads in the interviews above appear to suggest low pass rates in the schools. However, one of the school heads, H5 from Hove primary school noted that they had a 62 % pass rate in one of the years. H1 gave the percentage pass rates as 30 %, 33 %, 39 %, 44 % and 50 %. These were for the years 2003, 2004, 2005 2006, and 2007 respectively. H2 pointed out that their pass rate had been around 30 % over the same period. H3 noted that the pass rate was in the thirties as well.

The views expressed by the school heads were corroborated by the senior teachers. ST1, for example, went beyond giving the percentage pass rates, as she blamed poor academic performance on the attitude of teachers. She pointed out that their pass rate

was in fact below 30 % in one case. She also attributed this poor performance to lack of teaching and learning resources at their school. ST2 indicated that the pass rates at their school were 30 %, 35 %, 40 %, 33 % and 40 % for the same years referred to above. She further pointed out that the way the committee prioritized matters contributed to this. For instance, she could not understand why they could embark on a costly painting project yet pupils did not have books. All senior teachers concurred that their schools had not done well academically. They appeared to differ on the reasons for the poor performance as noted above. What featured most as one of the contributing factors was lack of resources and poor prioritization.

On a similar note, some parent governors also noted the same percentages as given by the school heads and senior teachers. Some of the parent governors had this to say:

> P5: Our performance is poor. We have schools like …… which is scoring over 90 percent. Yet here we are getting 30 percent, 40 percent and rarely over 50 percent. I think our teachers are to blame as well. They are not doing much to improve the pass rate, but as parents we cannot do much it is an area for the Ministry of Education to monitor.
> P7: Our past rate has been low. At one time it was reported as 33 percent. However, there have been improvements as we have also registered around 50 percent in the last two years.
> P9: In 2003 it was around 30 percent, in 2004 it was 40 percent, and in 2005 in improved to around 60 percent and in the last two years it was in the 40s if I remember well.

All parent governors noted that the grade seven pass rates at their schools were low. P11 and P12 for example, among other things attributed the problem to lack of

resources such as textbooks, reading materials, and libraries. Furthermore, they noted that at times they got their priorities wrong, as committees tended to focus on issues that did not improve teaching and learning.

The responses by the parent governors also demonstrate the low percentage pass rates as articulated by the school head and senior teachers. For instance, P1 and P8 from Tsuro primary school concurred with the school head that their pass rate ranged between 30 % and 50 % in the years referred to. They all described the situation as low performance, when compared to other schools in the district. The problem as noted by P11 and P12 among others had much to do with their lack of involvement in academic matters on one hand, and lack of inputs on the other. Secondly, as noted by P5, some of the problems had much to do with the teachers and lack of monitoring and supervision by the Ministry of Education. These were problems that affected the actual processes of teaching and learning, thus what goes on in the 'black box' of teaching and learning.

The education officer also noted that despite the efforts of the SDCs and SDAs, academic performance in the district was still very poor. According to him, that was due to lack of teaching and learning resources such as basic textbooks at schools. To this effect, the education officer had this to say:

> Some of the problems that are affecting standards in schools have much to do with the Ministry of Education itself. Some decisions are still centralized despite the effort to decentralize functions. For example, approval of fees is done at provincial level with the authority from the secretary. This has contributed to the late approval of fees and delays in the implementation of school programmes. Such a function could be delegated to the district level to expedite the process of approving fees. Another problem is that academic

> performance is still very low. We have schools in the district scoring zero percent pass rates. Last year (2008) we had ten schools that had such a low pass rate.

The responses by the education officer as noted above appeared to indicate that in a way, the existence of the SDCs and SDAs had created an impression that the parents, through the committee, now had a role to play in the activities at their schools. At least some interest appeared to have been created. That on its own appeared to be a positive development in school governance. However, some of the problems appeared to be more of symptoms than the problems themselves.

There are a number of factors that have a bearing on education performance and quality. These among others include provision of resources, the caliber of teachers and students, and the learning environment as a whole. In that regard, the provision of resources, processes and activities and the extent to which schools meet educational objectives have a bearing on such outcomes as examination performance (Coombs and Hallak, 1987).

4.7 Conclusion

Data appears to reveal the complex nature of implementing programmes such as decentralization of education functions. One has to deal not only with the complexities in the implementation process, but problems posed by the policy documents and their interpretation as well. Whilst it could be noted that on paper the policy on decentralization appears to have sound intentions, there are many variables that have contributed to making absolute decentralization almost impossible. These include the issues of power, authority, influence and resources. Such issues make one wonder if in

the first place decentralization is the right forum to attempt to address key issues such as democracy, accountability, quality, standards and efficiency among others. How individuals and institutions exercised their power tended to define the nature of decentralization and its implementation. This has tended to show fissures in the implementation of decentralization which contributed to centralized decentralization or in some cases decentralized centralization.

On the other hand, a situation where individuals ended up exercising domination and hegemony tended not to promote the objectives of decentralization. At the same time we have to deal with our social practices as they have a bearing on how we perform our defined roles. As such, what is equally important in our attempt to implement policy is the role of the implementing agency in determining policy outcome. As such, data presented and analyzed appears to authenticate my thesis that: Decentralization of education functions through the "*committee model*" is just another case of "*policy symbolism*" that has compromised education quality and standards.

The following chapter focuses on discussion of findings. The discussion is guided by the conceptual and theoretical framework surrounding the decentralization discourse

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses data in relation to the relevant literature to the study, which sought to assess the implementation of decentralization of education functions in the six selected primary schools. A number of observations could be made from the data collected through the different methods above. It could be noted that the assessment of the implementation of decentralization was conducted qualitatively with constant reference to the objectives and aims of decentralization in general and as specifically stated in the different sections of the statutory instruments referred to. In that respect, the assessment was to some extent guided by the goal-oriented approach to assessment as enunciated by Tyler and others. The CIPP model of assessment, on the other hand guided the study in terms of the need to examine the different stages of the implementation process in terms of the context of each of the schools, the inputs and resources at the schools, processes of making decisions, and the outputs in relation to academic performance. This was an approach that also assisted in determining the quality and education standards at the schools, a practice that has very much in common with the education production model as presented in Chapter 2. From this assessment, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The study was able to identify the role of statutory instruments in the implementation of such policy as

decentralization. Secondly, there emerged the problems that characterize participation and involvement of other stakeholders in school governance. Thirdly, there was the complex nature of decision making and the roles played by different stakeholders in the education system. Fourthly, it raised the issue of resources and the different roles played by stakeholders in a decentralized system. Lastly, empirical evidence indicates to the problems of power within the committees, and the Ministry of Education itself which could be best explained by Foucault, Escobar and Bourdieu's theories in one respect or another as noted in Chapter 2.

5.1 The role of statutory instruments in the implementation of policy

The results show that the statutory instruments as the regulatory framework guiding the operations of the SDCs and SDAs fell short in clearly defining roles of the other member in the committees. These members included senior teachers and parent governors. As a result such members were not very clear about their roles. This is a problem also noted by Gunn (1978) in Parsons (1995) who pointed out that implementation of policy or programme was difficult, because at times there was lack of understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved. In moving towards agreed objectives it should be possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant (ibid). An attempt to explain the roles of the committees and that of the school head tended to weaken the powers of the committees. For instance, Education Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992 describes the role of the committee as that of *"assisting*" in the operation and development of the school (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). In the same vein, whilst

the same statutory instrument describes the role of the finance sub-committee in the administration of funds, it gives the responsibility of ensuring that books of accounts are kept in order to the school head.

Dunsire (1990) in Parsons (1995) advances a 'rationalist model' to explain implementation failure. According to Dunsire (1990), there are two possible explanations to implementation failure. One was that the policy objectives might not have been met due to such factors as use of a wrong strategy, wrong instruments and poor operationalization. Secondly, Dunsire (1990) notes that each member should have a well defined function which contributes to advanced routinisation of performance if implementation is to be successful.

Both Gunn (1978) and Dunsire (1990) in Parsons (1995) were advocating for the use of the law and a chain of command to guarantee successful implementation of policy. They also concur on the need for the legal instruments to clearly define roles of agencies.

Another variable forwarded to explain the implementation process is the ability of the policy decision or statute to structure implementation (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989). In a number of cases, there appeared to be no clear distinction between the administrative responsibilities of the school head and the expected role in school governance as a member of the committees. In relation to this, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) note that statutes should be able to provide precise and clearly ranked

instructions to implementing officials which should then contribute to consistence with the directives by implementing agencies and target groups. Data also revealed how the different variables influenced the implementation process. These had to do not only with the way the statutory instruments were structured, but the implementing agencies, and the extent of change involved as noted by Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989).

The definition of the roles of the committees in the statutory instruments as 'development' committees indicates that this had given the different committees the impetus to focus on infrastructure. This was found to manifest itself in how the different members defined their contributions to the schools. They perceived their contributions as committees in terms of fundraising, construction, repair and maintenance work they did at the schools, thus infrastructural development. Parsons (1995) also pointed out that the mode of implementation of any programme did not matter much, it is the varying bands of discretion exercised by agencies which resulted in differences in interpretation and application of the policy. The way the committees conceptualized the term development appeared to have a bearing on what they tended to focus on. In defining educational policy, such lack of clarity is at times deliberate. The findings appear to support Zvobgo's (1997) observation that, government has tended to use de-emphasis, a situation of withholding of certain important facts in order to avoid public criticism of its policy. This had contributed to lack of rationality in educational policy formulation and implementation (ibid). Lack of rationality had resulted in governments and policy-makers in the end believing their own misrepresentation, which may result

in the implementation of policies that attempt to mean what they were never meant to mean in the first place (Hanekom, 1987).

On a similar note, one of the common criticisms of decentralization has been that, the assignment of policy responsibilities at times lacked clarity (Haggard, 2000). This has contributed to duplication of effort, and services of low quality in one hand and an increase in disparities among regions and communities on the other (ibid).

As regards to how the statutory instruments had contributed to parental participation and involvement in school development in Government and non-Government schools data revealed a number of factors. All the schools had SDCs and SDAs in which the parent members were in the majority. Whilst that was a welcome development in the process of enhancing parental participation and involvement in school governance, it did not guarantee full participation of all stakeholders in the affairs of the school. Data also revealed that some of the committees were not adhering to the requirements that stipulated that elections of the committee members should be conducted annually. This was demonstrated by 16.7 percent of both school heads and senior teachers, and 25 percent of the parent members in the interview that noted that they had last had elections in 2005. This demonstrated lack of compliance to the statutory instruments in this regard.

The above appeared to indicate the importance of at least two variables in the implementation process. These include the statutes and the nonstatutory variables (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989). Whilst the statutes should be able structure

implementation by stating clear and consistent objectives among other things, nonstatutory variables such as attitude and resources of the constituency groups, support from sovereigns and commitment and leadership skills of the implementing officials play a major role in determining implementation success (ibid). Furthermore, what appeared to emerge were the different meanings and interpretations of roles by the different stakeholders. In some cases these roles appeared to run contrary to the same spirit of decentralizing education functions as noted earlier. In all cases school heads appeared to possess power in the form of rhetoric as they were able to read and interpret the statutory instruments in the manner they deemed fit. The same could not be said about the parent governors.

5.2 Decision making, participation and involvement

Lack of participation by some key members of the committees was found to be working against the policy of decentralization of the education functions. In describing decision making within a decentralized system, Muta (2000) explains that in order for public schools to gain the trust of the parents and the community, the schools had to be accessible to them and at the same time the principals had to make important decisions with community participation. Bullock and Thomas (1997) also perceived participation and involvement of parents in decisions about school organization and development, as indicators of the implementation of decentralization in education. This is a factor also expressed by Cailods (1991) who noted that participation in governance by different levels of the schooling system allowed for the democratization of the decision-making process. In the different decentralized functions, the study found that

such powers were not evenly distributed. For instance, in financial management, despite the existence of finance sub-committees in the schools, there were instances when the school heads made decisions on their own, without consulting the rest of the members or some of the members. This was noted in some of the responses by the senior teachers and parent governors which indicated involvement in some of the areas at the discretion of the school head and in some cases no involvement at all.

The data shows that the school heads remained the centre of the decision making process in the schools. Within this context, the school heads still played a predominant role in school governance in the committees in determining issues to be discussed in meetings, development projects embarked upon at schools and to a large extent whom they involved in decisions. The data further suggested that sharing of power and responsibilities remained controlled by the school head at the schools.

This can be explained in a number of ways. We can consider the centrality of social practice in explaining such issues as decision making in school governance (Deem, et. al, 1995). Secondly, it can be explained in terms of how our attempt to democratize institutions has been exclusionary, due to the uneven field in the participation framework (Davies, 2002). In that respect, there appears to be a new kind of exclusion within the decentralization process. The politics of exclusion has moved away from the known and pronounced factors such as race and gender among others, to an abstract form inherent in our socialization, experience, thus *habitus* and *symbolic power* (Bourdieu, 1990).

Participation in decision making is viewed as one of the indicators of empowering communities through decentralization. It has been argued that participation can build ownership of policy solutions, and has the potential to operationalize and reinforce features of democratic governance such as accountability, transparency and responsiveness (Brinkerhoff, 1998). Bastiani (1993) in Coleman and Earley (2005) notes that for participation to be collective it should encompass a number of components. These include sharing of power, responsibility and ownership, mutuality and dialogue, shared aims and goals, and commitment to joint action, in which parents, pupils and professionals work together to achieve the goals (ibid).

Similarly, this view is expressed by Phillips (2005) in Crozier and Reay (2005) who notes that enhanced participation by parents contributes to making educational practice more responsive to local needs at the same time enabling less powerful groups to influence decisions.

The rational model for decision making involved the definition of the problem, its analysis, development of alternative solutions, deciding on the best solutions and converting the decisions into effective actions (Drucker in Owens, 1991). In practice, as noted in the meetings, there was a gap between theory and practice. Furthermore, Owens (1991) pointed out that the use of participative decision making has two major benefits among others. Participative decision making, like in decentralized school governance, helps in arriving at better decisions and secondly, it enhances the growth

and development of the organization's participants (ibid). At the same time it is viewed as contributing to goal attainment.

Furthermore, there was lack of distinction between the school head's role as an administrator and the role as a member of the committee. This was indicated by the responses by some of the school heads when it came to describing their roles in the committees and supported by the education officer who noted that they relied on the school head for monitoring of committee activities. This was a problem that was attributed not only to the leadership styles of the school heads, but also the way the statutes defined the role of the school head. This was noted especially in the management of school finances. This at times tended to compromise accountability in schools.

As noted above, participation of the stakeholders was found to be in favour of the school head in all cases, and senior teachers and school heads when it came to curricular matters. Phillips (2005) in Crozier and Reay (2005) for example, observes that in essence participation has contributed to inequalities in that those who participate are always a skewed sub-set of these entitled to participate. They further note that participation could be skewed by social class in addition to such variables as gender and race. These are findings that lend credence to observations by Duku (2006) and Sayed (2002) in their studies of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa who noted that even within communities, roles and election to positions were still determined by gender and social class

among other factors. As Caillods (1991) observes, parents tended to hesitate to participate or even became disinterested in the absence of genuine power sharing as a result of the existing division of power at school level. This resulted in pseudo-participation in the decision making process, which legitimates decisions taken by those who have the power (ibid).

Whilst parents and committee members voted in meetings to make decisions there was a tendency among the school heads to dominate the meetings. Data from observations of meetings showed that school heads in all cases spoke the most. In that respect, they tended to influence proceedings and the outcomes. These observations tended to lend credence to fears by Conyers (2003) that there had been cases where head teachers had abused their powers, especially on decisions that had to do with money. As such, the results show that the decision making process was still skewed in favour of the professionals such as school heads. The dominating roles played by the school heads in this respect, were found to be consistent with similar observations by Whitty and Seddon (1994), Davies (2002), Dieltiens and Enslin (2002) and Vincent (1996) who found out that school governing bodies as vehicles for participatory democracy tended to increase the participation of individuals such as school heads as there was no mechanism in place to make sure that those who participate do so on an equal footing. They also observed that even in cases where there were systems for formal representation for parents in place, there were difficulties of representing such a diverse group as parents. As such, the risk of representatives being marginalized was

very high. The possibility of individuals abusing their power was high considering the lack of monitoring of the activities of the committees by the Ministry of Education.

This can also be explained in relation to Bourdieu's theory of social practice. For instance, habitus influences the way we act, as such, it had an effect on how professionals viewed parental participation in curricular matters. Similarly, because of limited experience in the field of education parents accepted their exclusion, in some cases. In most of the cases, because of their habitus parents did not view it as exclusion. They perceived some areas as the preserve of professionals such as school heads and teachers. This appeared to be common on issues such as recruitment of staff, curricular issues and determining school policy. The failure by stakeholders, such as senior teachers and parents to participate in some of the key education functions could also be explained in terms of Bourdieu's analysis of society. When the different members came to school committees, they came with different definitions and expectations of their roles. Whilst guided by the legal instruments, that did not count for much in some instances. They tended to play their roles more on the basis of their *habitus*. This may explain why in some instances some school heads acted in their personal interests much more than what was stated in the statutory instruments. Similarly, the influence of parents in curricular matters was limited by the nature of the education governance *field* in which professionals tended to possess different forms of *capital*, and therefore *power*. Foucault's theory on power is also relevant. Knowledge in the field of education constituted power. It tended to give professionals such as teachers and school heads an unfair advantage over parent governors on a number of

issues in the school governance matrix. Such power had resulted in the domination of the hegemony of some agents by others (Sztompka, 1991). It is this hegemony that appeared to regulate behaviour within the committees, as noted by Foucault when explaining behaviour within social relations. Even within the context of senior teachers, whilst it might be assumed that they are no *strangers* in the field of education, some senior teachers viewed management tasks as the prerogative of the school head which should not interfere with their teaching.

In that respect, two issues appear to emerge within the context of Bourdieu's theory of social practice. One is that parental participation within the schools lacked in meaning and the statutory instruments did not seem to help in this regard. This is an observation also noted by Sui-chu (2009) in the study of parental involvement in Asian schools. For Sui-chu (2009:4) as a result of this, participation was "shaped by both individual and group beliefs and collective actions of groups". Collective actions appeared to be prevalent in areas such as decisions on school fees and levies. Secondly, participation and involvement tended to differ from area to area, for example, participation of committees in financial management could be different from other areas such as determining fees and levies, school curricular, recruitment and employment of staff among other areas. In addition, the level of participation also differed from school to school. As such, the school heads' habitus of school governance determined parental participation and yet in others "parents capital" appeared to play a determining factor as noted by Sui-chu (2009) For instance, the SDA at Mbizi primary school was able to source computers for pupils which no other committee was able to do.

Participation was at times determined by the economic capital of the parents. This may be used to explain why in the first place the schools lacked some of the basic resources despite the effort by the parents and committees. On the other hand, it is also important to take note of the economic crisis that prevailed in Zimbabwe at the time of the study. There was a high unemployment rate. There were problems related to low salaries and wages which resulted in some strikes in the public sector. All these appeared to have a bearing on the parents' contribution in the form of economic capital. Once again, highlighting the dangers of relying on communities for the financing education in a developing country such as Zimbabwe.

However, it would appear as though the other forms of capital did not help much when it came to the roles of parents in the committees. In the collective, parents were expected to possess not only economic capital, but other forms of capital. These included symbolic capital, social capital and cultural capital. There are at least two possible explanations to the failure by parents to influence events through these forms of capital. One could be their exclusion from other areas of school governance by design and omission on the part of school heads. The second explanation could be that such capital could not have been relevant in a field they are regarded as strangers.

This raises the question on the extent to which different stakeholders, including parents can participate in school governance in a decentralized system in education. Again, this appeared to support the observations made by Vincent (1996) who observed that '

space' did not exist for groups of non-professionals to participate in the running of state institutions, even where there are systems for formal representation for parents in place. He also took note of the difficulties of representing such a sprawling, diverse group as 'parents' and the risk of representatives and groups being marginalized by local officers, teachers, school heads and politicians (ibid).

Naidoo (2002) notes that participation as espoused in education decentralization was very much determined by the political reforms taking place in the particular country. He further notes that in the case of Ghana for example, it was aimed at transferring educational costs to sub-national unit, and at times strengthening policy control at the national level at the guise of decentralization as was the case in Zimbabwe (Naidoo, 2002). It further raises the question of whose participation and accountability the policy-makers had in mind in the first place (Naidoo, 2002).

The above views about how school heads exercised power within SDCs and SDAs tended to suggest the traditional model as enunciated by Wyk (2007) in the study of SGBs in South Africa in which some SGBs rubber stamped the principals' decisions. This can be explained in two ways. Firstly, there appeared to be no capacity building on the part of members in the committees, parent governors in particular. Secondly, parents appeared to have accepted school heads 'as all knowing' in the field of education.

5.3 Financial Management, Personnel Management, School Development and Curricular

Financial management: Whilst all the six schools had finance sub-committees, 33.3 % of the senior teachers and parent members were involved at the school head's discretion. Despite the existence of finance sub-committees the management of finances in the schools remained a contentious issue, as cases of embezzlement and abuse of school funds were still prevalent as noted by the education officer. Whilst all school heads indicated that they were involved in all areas of financial management, some senior teachers and parent members were not involved in such areas as collection of revenue, banking, authorization of expenditure, budgeting and cash withdrawals. There were also possibilities of collusions between some school heads and chairpersons on matters concerning finance as suggested by the education officer in the interview.

One of the characteristics of a decentralized school system is how local levels are involved in the management of finance, resources and personnel among other responsibilities (Brinkerhoff, 1998). However, in a school system it might be difficult to involve parents who are usually not part of the day to day activities of the school. The idea of involving communities in the management of school finance was also based on the expectations that local control and accountability would improve efficiency (Winkler and Gershberg, 2000). However, there are at least two schools of thought on decisions on issues such as curriculum, personnel and finance (Dye, 1987). One school of

thought is that such areas should be the special province of professional educators, whilst another school of thought is that parents have a legitimate right to control decisions made in these areas (ibid).

Management of personnel: The SDAs and SDCs employed only non-teaching staff. The management of all staff at schools was the prerogative of the school head. At the same time the employment of the teaching staff was done by the Ministry of Education with no involvement of the committees. Whilst regulations allowed the committees to employ additional teachers, all of them lacked the resource capacity to do that. As such, there has not been meaningful decentralization in practice. This appeared to be in contrast with the position by Chivore (1995), and that expounded by statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993. For instance, statutory instrument 87 of 1992 section 5 stipulates that in the exercise of its functions, a school development committee shall have power, to employ or hire staff to serve the needs of the school, on such terms and conditions as the committee may fix with the approval of the Minister (Government of Zimbabwe, 1992). This is further stated as one of the major functions of the SDA. For instance, statutory instrument 70 of 1993 section 6 stipulates that in the exercise of their functions, an association shall engage or hire, in consultation with the school head and with the approval of the secretary, such additional suitably qualified teachers who have not attained the age of seventy years (Government of Zimbabwe, 1993).

School development: The committees focused on school development projects, but economic conditions had impacted negatively on the SDCs and SDAs' ability to implement such projects at schools. The findings tended to lend support to Karlsson (2002) in reference to decentralization in South African schools, who observed that decentralization in education would promote inequality between schools as school income and school development would be determined by the economy of parental incomes. This Karlsson attributed to the income disparities and different levels of unemployment in communities (ibid). In that regard, the findings also confirm observations by Osei and Brock (2006) in the study of decentralization in Ghana who pointed out that it was not only political instability that impeded the smooth implementation of decentralization in education but economic instability as well.

Such findings appeared to suggest that there was the possibility of having public schools defined in terms of the economic status of the parents and the community that surrounded them. This in a way further suggested that poor parents would end up sharing little in their poverty. That would turn schools into centres that reflected the social classes that existed in the society instead of providers of education services to the nation regardless of where the school was situated. Within this context, the study revealed lack of basic facilities and resources in the schools. For instance, the observations indicated that none of the six schools had a library, and only Mbizi primary school had computers.

There are a number of factors that could be used to explain the situation in the schools. Given the socio-economic context of the country at the time of this study, parents' inability to provide resources at the schools could not be viewed as deliberate. The unemployment rate which ranged between 70 % and 95 % as noted earlier could be used to explain the parents' failure to provide resources at the schools. It is a given that the majority were not working as suggested by the employment rates above. In cases where there was no money within the families education provision would come second to such basic needs as food, and as such education tended to suffer. Secondly, the Zimbabwean government could not access lines of credit and therefore had to do business on cash basis as a result of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act passed by the United States government in 2001 as noted earlier. This appears to explain why at the end, the government of Zimbabwe was not able to pay the capita grant to schools, to finance education and to pay teachers reasonable salaries. It was a period of high inflation and money printing which was not related to economic production in the country.

Curricular issues: The committees did not have much say in curricular issues. This was an area that was left for professionals such as teachers and the Ministry of Education. Once again, this lends credence to observations by Chivore (1995) who noted that curriculum has remained centralized in Zimbabwe despite the effort to decentralize education functions. Curriculum was tightly controlled by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), as such school heads, teachers and parents were not meaningfully involved in curriculum design and planning (ibid). He further noted that

even professionals such as school heads and teachers only became involved at the implementation stage. The scenario appeared to be even worse for parents as they were not involved at both the design and implementation stage of the curriculum. Such exclusion appeared to be based on the model of pedagogic professionalism. The pedagogic professionalism model is based on the assumption that autonomy allows professionals such as teachers to have the capacity to select what is appropriate for teaching and that outsiders should not interfere with their work (Lauglo, 1995). Such a model appears to run contrary to motives of decentralization.

There are a number of possible explanations as to why the state still controlled curricular issues. This could be one way of demonstrating the state's desire to exercise control, and influence what goes on at school level despite the attempt to decentralize authority. The desire to control curricular issues tended to centre on educational ideologies which are focused on trying to implement activities that are socially acceptable (Zvobgo, 1997). On the other hand, the unwillingness of the centre to relinquish some of its powers on such issues as the curricular had much to do with the desire to exercise political control for the sake of power (Fiske, 1996).

Participation in curricular issues as noted by Gropello (2000) would create an environment that would make higher quality possible as it would provide a match between supply and demand. This would provide increased accountability of the schools to the parents and local community (ibid). Such participation should entail involvement in the design and implementation of the curricular (Gropello, 2000). Policy

centralization as pointed out by Dieltiens and Motimele (2003) tends to undermine the democratic participation of parents in education.

In relation to curricular issues, all six primary schools were performing poorly academically, judging by the pass rates of the grade seven classes over a period of five years. All schools lacked the basic resources such as textbooks. Furthermore, all the minutes of meetings analyzed demonstrated that academic issues were not on meetings' agenda of the SDCs and SDAs. Lack of focus on these matters by the SDCs and SDAs was contributing to this poor performance at the schools. Lastly, data revealed that the SDAs and SDCs were playing the same roles in their schools and were experiencing the same problems in terms of resources and lack of support from government and responsible authorities. The findings appear to confirm the observations by Coombs and Hallak (1987) that in our attempt to measure quality of education there was need to examine the inputs, processes, products and outcomes as there was a positive correlation between these stages. They noted that, a weakness in the inputs for example, was most likely to have an effect on the outputs. In this respect, lack of resources appeared to be contributing to low performance as noted by the interviewees. This supported the position that inputs had a positive correlation with outcomes as noted in the production function model (Coombs and Hallak, 1987) and educational productivity model (Rogers and Ruchlin, 1971).

In addition, it lent credence to Stufflebeam's argument that when conducting an assessment it was necessary that we looked at the Context, Inputs, Process and

Product (CIPP), which gave rise to the CIPP model of assessment as alluded to in Chapter 2. Furthermore, it should be noted that the provision of teaching and learning resources was one of the major functions of the SDCs and SDAs. Such responses appeared to suggest that SDCs and SDAs were not doing well in the areas that directly impacted on the provision of academic services to children.

5.4 Roles played by stakeholders

Data revealed that school heads played major roles in all school governance issues, whereas some senior teachers and some parent members demonstrated limited roles and at times did not play any roles in some areas such as management of personnel and finance, and decision making in school development projects. This demonstrated exclusion of some members of the committees in key issues.

The Ministry of Education had stopped playing its role of monitoring and supervising schools, due to a number of factors that included lack of resources, as noted by the education officer. As such, they relied on the school head's reports. Whilst the assessment noted that the decentralization of education was in the form of delegation and management strategy as observed by Fiske (1996), there were elements of *decentralization by default* as demonstrated by the practice of supplementing teachers' salaries in the form of incentives, as noted in the interview with the education officer and meetings observed. Such findings appeared to support the argument in the Education Encyclopedia:*http://www.answer.co/topic/decentralization-and-education* which noted that the implementation of education decentralization reforms had been affected in some countries by the problems of internal conflict, weak public

bureaucracies, or very weak government finances contributing to a de facto decentralization of education. However, the idea of parents topping up teachers' salaries as noted above appeared to have been forced on them by the failure of government to pay reasonable salaries to teachers. It should be noted that prior to the study, Zimbabwe had experienced a crippling strike by teachers which had gone on for close to a year. This was as a result of low salaries from government among other problems. In order to fill in the gap parents had to supplement teachers' salaries as a way of retaining them, as noted by the education officer. In a way, the payment of allowances to teachers by parents through the SDCs and SDAs tended to indicate decentralization of functions by default. As noted by Blair (1995), that suggested a transfer of responsibilities by de facto than de jure due to central government's failure to meet some of its functions.

5.5 Challenges in the implementation of decentralization of education functions

Results show that committee members lacked training on school governance and this limited their involvement in some areas. Data from interviews with senior teachers, parent members, school heads and the education officer showed that there was a discrepancy and inconsistency in the training of members of the SDC and SDA. Lack of training and capacity building in the members of the SDCs and SDAs left them vulnerable and susceptible to being undermined. The school heads remained powerful because they had both the symbolic capital and cultural capital in terms of qualification and competences, as such, minimized the capacity of other members to contribute, thus lending credence to Bourdieu's theory of social practice. On the other hand,

parents' limited experiences in the *field* of education tended not only to limit their involvement, but instead made them accept their lack of involvement as normal.

The findings on limited training for committee members appear to confirm the limitations of the cascading model used to train other members of the committees. This was noted in how the Ministry of Education focused on training school heads who were then expected to train other committee members at their schools. The cascade model of training is a process of providing the competence required to ensure institutionalization of organizational change (Jacobs and Russ-Eft, 2001) It involves the flow of information for one group to another until it reaches the final destination (ibid). Some of its limitations include its lack of mechanism to ensure that ideas filter down as originally intended, consequently, its one-way transmission lacked built-in mechanism for review to provide feedback to the original planners (McDevitt, 1998).

The findings appeared to support observations by Chikoko (2007) in Zimbabwe that even the Better Schools Programme in Zimbabwe (BSPZ) which was meant to build capacity among communities through the cluster system failed to develop management competencies in school heads, teachers and parents. As a result this affected the implementation of the decentralization of education functions at schools.

5.5.1 Centralized decentralization

Data revealed that the schools in the study did not have enough resources to support learning in the schools. It is clear that the economic conditions had an effect on the

ability of the committees to contribute to the provision of resources at the schools. This lent credence to Dieltiens and Enslin's (2002) fear that decentralization of education functions to local communities would result in creating a class structure in schools, where schools would end up being classified in terms of the economic conditions of the parents. In that respect, such organizations as schools would end up being defined in terms of the economic conditions of the parents. Within this context, data revealed that the parents through the committees had become the sole providers of resources for the schools. The responsible authorities and the government had abandoned their responsibilities of providing for the schools. There is no evidence to suggest that any category of schools was better resourced than the other categories. That seemed to support Haggard's (2000) findings, from studies of educational decentralization in Latin America countries. Haggard (2000) observed that there was always willingness to transfer responsibilities rather than resources to support such decentralization of authority. This is a position that also gives credence to observations by Fiske (1996) on lack of commitment by government to transfer resources and power. Such practices by central government had contributed to failure of implementation of decentralization in education.

In all cases the schools lacked the basic resources like textbooks, computers and libraries. In terms of financial resources the parents played a key role through the SDCs and SDAs in determining the fees and levies to be charged. All the interview respondents were in agreement that fee proposals were made by parents in parents' meetings. The parents had to take a vote on the figures. Within the same context, the

committees had the legal mandate to collect the fees and levies through courts in the event of failure to pay, as observed at a meeting at Hove primary school. In the meeting, parents agreed to engage summons to collect fees and levies from non-paying parents and guardians.

However, the powers of the committees in determining fees and levies were limited. This was as a result of the need to seek approval from the Ministry of Education. Such a practice demonstrated *centralized* decentralization. Furthermore, the responses pointing to lack of resources indicate to the observation by McGinn and Welsh (1999) that decisions about categories and amounts of resources had prompted a push for decentralization from above. This has resulted in national governments searching for funds from other sources such as parents and communities, but at the same time lacking in will to let go of the real powers (ibid). The need to seek approval from the Ministry of Education on fees and levies as noted earlier was a position stated in the statutory instruments and referred to by the school heads, senior teachers, parent governors and education officer in the interviews. Such powers of the Ministry of Education to approve or disapprove fees and levies often caused delays in the implementation of agreed programmes. Despite that, the parents remained the integral part in determining fees and levies. Such parental sovereignty at times left the schools with insufficient income, as parents at times agreed on low levies. This is a trend that tended to support Bush and Heystek (2003) in their study of school governance in South Africa, who noted that parental sovereignty on fees and levies left the school governing bodies with insufficient income to run schools. They noted that this left the

school governing bodies caught in between government policy and parent power (ibid). Whilst it was observed that parents through the committees had sovereignty to determine fees and levies it was difficult to explain why the same parents failed to pay the fees and levies they would have suggested.

Data also revealed that the committees only employed ancillary staff, though the statutory instruments gave them authority to employ additional teachers where they felt there was need. Similarly, the management and supervision of staff was left to school heads and the Ministry of Education district officials. Such practices defeated the same motives for decentralization of functions in the first place.

Despite the problems of finance and other resources noted in all the schools, the SDCs and SDAs had scored some successes in their attempt to provide resources at their schools. A case in point was at Mbizi primary school where they were able to purchase computers and the school had computer lessons for all the pupils. Another notable contribution was at Hove primary school where the SDC was running a successful garden project and had completed construction of a new classroom block. At Tsuro primary school there was a painting project at the time of the study. Mbizi primary school is a government primary school, and therefore had a SDA. The school was headed by a male school head. Hove primary school is a council school and it was female headed. Tsuro primary school is a church related school and was headed by a male. There was little to suggest that gender played any part in the ability of the school heads to source cooperation from the SDCs and SDAs. Furthermore, the contributions

by the different committees and parents did not appear to differ in terms of whether it was a government school or non-government school.

5.6 Conclusion

Participation and involvement of the lower levels in school governance issues can be viewed as promoting the democratization of institutions such as schools. At the same time, participation of the periphery is intended to promote the bottom-up approach to school governance in decentralization. However, findings suggest that there was no absolute decentralization in the six schools. It could be noted that the enactment of the two statutory had legitimized parents' direct participation and involvement in school governance issues. It could also be noted that the statutory instruments had played a pivotal role in mobilizing parents to contribute directly to the development of their schools through the committees. In practice, the balance of power and the distribution of the same power among stakeholders tended to work against the spirit of both democracy and decentralization. There are a number of factors that could be used to explain this. The first could be the dichotomous situation that at times exists between policy intentions and practice. It is argued that policy makers are at times not very clear on their intentions. Such intentions are at times determined by the implementing agency. The second possible explanation could be found in how individuals and agency exercise power, thus how they deal with issues of domination, hegemony and resources. This has been used to explain theories of power and why the centre at times fails to let go the same power it is supposedly granting to the periphery. The third explanation could be attributed to how individuals perceived their roles and the role of

others in society, which could be explained in terms of *habitus, field* and *capital* as noted by Bourdieu in the theory of social practice. On the other hand, the issue of power relations remains central in our effort to understand school governance (Deem, et.al, 1995).

Such social practices tended to explain why in some cases committee members and parents were not only limited in their participation in some areas, but at times limited their own participation and contributions. Once again, resulting in lack of accountability and efficiency which are key components in the decentralization discourse.

The next chapter summarizes the study and draws conclusions from the assessment of the implementation of the decentralization of education functions in the schools. Furthermore, I propose recommendations that could be of benefit to policy makers.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed data in relation to the relevant literature. In this chapter, the researcher gives a summary of the major findings, in order to draw a conclusion from them. Accordingly, recommendations are made against the findings.

6.1 Summary and Conclusion

6.1.1 The study which was concerned with the assessment of the implementation of decentralization of education functions at primary schools in Chegutu Education district of Zimbabwe drew a number of conclusions. As noted earlier, Zimbabwe like most developing countries, embarked on decentralization of its education system. Decentralization of education was therefore envisaged to improve participation and involvement of parents and communities in school governance and thereby promote participatory democracy, transparency and accountability (Winkler, 2005; Lauglo, 1995). In this case, this was to be done through committees such as the SDC and SDA. I was guided by the assumptions, as noted in chapter 1 that:

- the implementation of decentralization of education functions, as stipulated in the statutes, has encountered problems that have negatively affected education service delivery.

- SDCs and SDAs should support and assist the schools to achieve the optimal environment.
- schools are generally not performing well hence there must be something wrong with the policy., decentralization of the functions, hence the assessment.

With the above assumptions in mind, the thesis' argument was that the decentralization of education functions through the "committee model" is just another case of "policy symbolism" that has compromised education quality and standards.

The study reviewed literature in areas of assessment and decentralization. No single theory could be used to explain implementation problems, but all the theories discussed in chapter 2 helped in explaining the different variables and power dynamics associated with the implementation of decentralization. For instance, Tyler's objective-oriented model of assessment assisted the study with the need to examine the practice of decentralization in relation to its motives. Apart from the theories of assessment, theories of implementation of such policies as decentralization have also been explored. The top-down approach to policy implementation was seen to be a contradiction to the idea of decentralization. In that respect, examining the role of "*street-level bureaucrats*" was found appropriate in studying the different actors in the implementation process. The need to treat decentralization as a development strategy resulted in the study considering Escobar's development theory. Escobar notes that in development, three key factors should be present: field of the intervention of power; the

professionalization of the development; and the institutionalization of the development (Escobar, 1992).The theory was found applicable in terms of how the formation of committees had tried to institutionalize power so as to charge behaviours and practices. Contrary to this view, there appeared to be no change of behaviour in the school heads despite the establishment of the committees and the legislation. As no single theory could be used to explain the different facets involved with decentralization, the study also examined Bourdie's theory of social practice. Bourdie's theory of social practice was used to explain behaviour and practices within social institutions such as the committees.

The study used the qualitative methodology, guided by the interpretivist paradigm. A case study of six primary schools was used, focusing on a study sample of thirty members of either the SDC or SDA and an education officer. To collect data, the study used three different methods. These included in-depth face-to-face interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. The use of different methods gave the researcher wide coverage and understanding of the implementation process and factors which influenced different areas that had been decentralized. At the same time, it allowed for validation and triangulation of data. The areas examined included decision making, financial management, school development, personnel management and curricular matters. All these enabled the researcher to draw conclusions which are listed below.

6.1.2. It will be noted that implementation of decentralization of education functions as required by statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 had encountered problems that had negatively impacted on education delivery. It will further be noted that implementation of decentralization of education functions had not progressed accordingly due to a number of factors that included lack of training and monitoring of stakeholders by the Ministry of Education. The noted implementation problems had contributed to a decline in quality of educational provision at schools, resulting mostly from lack of or limited participation and lack of involvement of key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, the Responsible Authorities and the Ministry of Education in core areas.

6.1.3 The study revealed that school heads seemed a hindrance to meaningful participation and involvement of parents and communities in school governance. Apart from that problem, the role played by the Ministry of Education did not promote decentralization of power and authority to SDCs and SDAs as originally intended. The study noted that there was high participation and involvement of parents, SDCs and SDAs in infrastructural development. This correspondingly denoted high decentralization in the same area. In financial management, participation of stakeholders such as senior teachers and parent governors could be described as moderate as they participated in some aspects and did not participate in others, while the participation of school heads was high. This demonstrated that even within the context of the statutory instruments, the limited powers and authority granted to SDCs and SDAs were at times curtailed by school heads.

6.1.4 It will also be noted that the areas of management and curricular remained highly centralized as SDCs and SDAs could not make decisions on policy issues. Control by the Ministry of Education tended to work against the same spirit of decentralization.

6.1.5 The manner in which statutory instruments were crafted tended to be silent on some key issues on the extent to which SDCs and SDAs could be involved, and where they did, they tended to be shrouded in ambiguity and lack of specificity. These were weaknesses that could be taken advantage of by the Ministry of Education or whoever was in authority. For instance, the statutory instruments described the SDCs and SDAs as bodies corporate that could sue or be sued, but the Ministry of Education did not deal with them directly, they instead dealt with the school head. In that regard the statutory instruments meant to facilitate implementation of decentralization of education functions was found wanting in many regards. As noted by Forestal and Cooper (1997) decentralization legislation should have three basic features. Such legislation should be comprehensive enough to clearly define the rights and obligations of the respective entities involved, secondly, it should be flexible enough to allow for efficient implementation and thirdly, it should be realistic, primarily in taking into account implementation constraints (ibid). The fact that in cases where regulations were violated the school head would be taken to court instead of the committees, tended to suggest a latent lack of recognition of the SDCs and SDAs on matters of concern.

6.1.6 It will further be noted that SDCs and SDAs concentrated on infrastructural development, at the expense of pedagogical issues. As an illustration, the researcher observed that all schools were engaged in one form or another of infrastructural development at schools at the time of the study, yet all schools lacked the basic resources such as textbooks. It will therefore be noted that, whilst parents were struggling to raise finances, prioritization also played a major role. There was lack of prioritization when it came to resources that directly impacted on academic performance. This had contributed to low pass rates at the schools as noted by school heads, senior teachers and parent governors in the interviews. Within the same context, decentralization had overburdened SDCs and SDAs and parents as they had to finance all projects at schools, without any support from government and responsible authorities.

6.1.7 The statutory instruments had positively impacted on parental participation and involvement of parents in school development in both Government and non-Government primary schools in areas of infrastructural development. This participation and involvement had generated an element of “ownership” among stakeholders, especially parents. They saw the projects that were being undertaken in schools as their own. However, parents were struggling to implement the agreed upon projects in the schools because of limited resources.

6.1.8 Decisions on school governance were arrived at by consensus in SDC and SDA meetings. On the other hand decisions in parents’ meetings were arrived at by voting.

It emerged that the issues that involved voting mainly concerned the charging of fees and levies in the schools. Parents did not have power to vote on matters of policy, except on fees and levies. As a result they had no input on school policy and education policy.

6. 1.9 The study also noted that in the different functions identified in the study, SDCs, SDAs and parents participated at different levels. These areas included financial and personnel management, school development and curricular issues. The participation levels of the same were very much determined by the willingness of the school head to accept change on one hand and at times limited power granted by the statutory instruments. In all this, selective application of the statutory instruments tended to play a major role.

6.1.10 The study also concluded that in interpreting their roles the different stake holders made attempts to follow stipulations of the statutory instruments. The school heads viewed their role as that of representing the Ministry of Education at school level. This tended to bring conflict among members in some cases. The responses by the education officer also indicated that he viewed the position of the school head in the same manner. In the same vein, parent governors perceived their role as that of representing parents' interests to ensure transparency and accountability. The education officer on the other hand viewed his role as that of representing the Ministry of Education at district level. The researcher therefore concluded that the different perceptions by the different stakeholders, at times, became sources of conflict in the

schooling system. It was found to be a very demanding task to attempt to reconcile the different views held by the different stakeholders. These were different players with different education backgrounds and philosophies about how children should be educated. Such differing views, in cases where they were not well managed, tended to result in conflict between members. This did not contribute to efficiency and accountability which are some of the arguments for decentralizing education (Lauglo, 1995). This appeared to raise the problem of accountability. As such, this appeared to support an observation by Winkler (2005) that it was difficult to establish accountability in public education as it was not clear in the first place, as to who was accountable to whom, unlike private education which operated like a business.

6.1.11 The study revealed that there were no differences in experiences between SDCs in non-Government primary schools and SDAs in Government schools. It was difficult to pin point any factors that justified the existence of two separate legal instruments that had similar contents. Otherwise their major difference was that they classified the committees, one as a SDC and the other as SDA. When it came to duties and functions the committees and the associations performed the same. For instance, SDCs and SDAs were both involved in school projects such as construction and maintenance. They also had to do fundraising activities for their schools and for fees and levies, they had to seek approval from the Ministry of Education. Members of the committees also performed similar roles and functions.

6.1.12 Decentralization within the context of the committees lacked in meaning and excluded other stakeholders such as parents and responsible authorities resulting in

lack of absolute decentralization. The committees remained powerless despite the effort to decentralize through them. Economic conditions in Zimbabwe tended to limit “parents capital” and thus parents’ contribution to development in schools, demonstrating a positive correlation between socio-economic conditions and the ability of parents to contribute. Power tended to determine the positions taken and how they were implemented at school level, and the parents in the committees lacked in both notions of power; hegemony and domination. The economic and political realities in Zimbabwe have affected education service delivery. The exercise of power in all the school fitted well into Lukes’ (1974) the three dimensions of power, much depended on the issues at stake.

6.1.13 Finally, the study further revealed that the assumptions on which it was premised remained valid. The study revealed that indeed, the implementation of decentralization of education functions was shrouded in problems that had impacted negatively on the implementation process as a whole. The study found out that the implementation of decentralization of education functions in the schools had negatively affected education service delivery in the schools. The findings of the study appeared to confirm the assumption that the implementation of the decentralization in the schools had not progressed accordingly due to a number of factors. It was also safe to conclude that one of these factors was lack of training and monitoring of the Ministry of Education. Another of the problems perceived as contributing to oversight problems could be lack of clear definition and distinction been administrative responsibilities and school governance issues for the school head. The failure of the SDCs and SDAs to

address such salient issues as the provision of teaching and learning materials, lack of facilities such as libraries, computers and textbooks had affected the education standards in the schools. For instance, out of the six primary schools in the sample, only one school had a computer laboratory and pupils had computer lessons. Another example of how education standards could be compromised was that in all the six primary schools, there was no school that had a library and all lacked the basic subject textbooks. Furthermore, the pass rate at the schools was very low. These and other problems tended to support the assumption that the implementation of decentralization of education functions in schools had not progressed well. It had not achieved the desired outcomes. These may also be the effects of the brain drain noted earlier.

Decentralization of education functions was envisaged to improve the standards of education and the quality of education. It was believed, this would come about as a result of a match between supply and demand, increased productivity and accountability of the service providers to the local community (Gropello, 2000). Instead, implementation problems appeared to have contributed to the decline of quality of educational provisions at schools. That is, if we were to measure quality in education in terms of performance and outcome, the availability of relevant resources and the ability of a school to remain relevant to modern demands in technology and teaching. Such assessment of quality and standards is congruent with the need to examine subsystems which comprise educational inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes as in the model of production function by Coombs and Hallak (1987) discussed in chapter 2.

Some of the problems appeared to emanate from the provisions of the statutory instruments themselves. For instance, they portray the position of the school head as above all other members in the SDC and SDA. Despite that, the committees are also said to operate as “bodies corporate” that could be sued or that could sue. There appeared to be a contradiction in practice, because the head of the SDC and SDA should be the chairperson not the school head. And yet when it came to violation of the statutory instruments, measures tended to be taken against the school head instead of the committee as a whole. This tended to compel school heads to act in a manner that could protect their positions, as a result, at times undermining the position of either the SDC or SDA. As such, there was no distinction between the roles of the school head as a member of the committee and that of the school head as an employee of the Ministry of Education. The problem was that as observed by Prinsloo (2006) in the case of school governing bodies in South Africa, the principals had two separate functions, firstly as a member of the school governing bodies and secondly, as an employee of the Department of Education.

It could also be concluded that there appeared to be a gap between practice and intentions. The statutes were enacted to facilitate parental participation and involvement in school governance, but within the same statutes were stipulations that limited parents’ power and authority on school governance issues. It may therefore be concluded that apart from the “implementation myopia” (Morris and Scott 2003), the statutes themselves appeared to be disempowering the other stakeholders, especially

parents. In reaching some of the conclusions, the researcher took note of Gustafsson (2004)'s observation that there was an increase of political symbolism and pseudo policy ingredients that resulted in many policies that were either not intended to be fully implemented or were used to try to mean what they did not mean.

The conclusions further support the argument that the statutory instruments in their present form, had not assisted in enhancing meaningful participation and involvement in school governance by parents. They in fact appear to have hindered the same. They appear therefore to be another sign of political symbolism that often characterize policy making and policy implementation in modern day politics in fields such as education (Jansen, 2002). Based on these findings, I can safely conclude that not much had changed in terms of the power and authority of the school head and the Ministry of Education, thus pointing to *centralized* decentralization in the six schools. This has resulted in the opposite effect of compromising quality of education, instead of improving it. This was due to lack of a mechanism to monitor the important stakeholders as school heads and lack of will power by the Ministry of Education to relinquish some of their powers. I was of the opinion that much of the continued control was more for political expedience than concern for educational standards. Furthermore, the diminishing role of the responsible authorities had overburdened the committees, as noted earlier. At the same time, I found it safe to conclude that the statutory instruments as tools to facilitate implementation of a policy such as decentralization in education did not guarantee successful implementation. As such, decentralization of education functions through "*the committee model"* is just another

case of "*policy symbolism*" that has compromised education quality and standards. Decentralization of education functions had not achieved its economic, administrative and political objectives in the six schools.

6.2 Recommendations

The findings of this research study led me to propose the following recommendations:

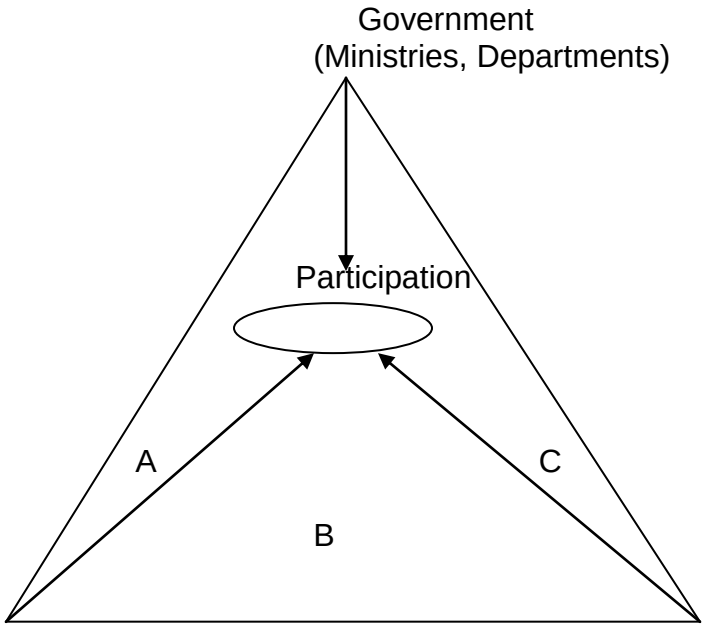
6.2.1 Participation and involvement of parents in school governance should be improved. The powers of the SDCs and SDAs should be increased beyond what they were at the time of the study. These powers should include the authority to recruit and employ such staff as teachers. This in a way could make the teachers not only answerable to the Ministry of Education, but the SDCs and SDAs as well. Through proper training and capacity building the SDCs and SDAs should be allowed to interview teachers before they are posted to their schools. This therefore would make them answerable to the committees and communities that they served.

6.2.2 If there was to be proper decentralization of education functions in schools, the role of the Responsible Authority should be clearly defined. The Responsible Authorities are the owners of the schools, but the findings revealed that most of them were not active stakeholders. In fact, decentralization of education functions to school committee saw them relinquishing their authority and responsibilities. It was observed that this had overburdened parents and the SDCs and SDAs. The researcher proposes a movement from the "committee model'' to a "tripartite model" of implementation of the decentralization of education functions in which the roles of the three basic

stakeholders are clearly defined in the participation matrix. I use the illustration below to explain the model.

6.2.2.1 My contribution to new knowledge

Fig.3 The "tripartite model" of decentralized education functions



Responsible Authorities (Churches, Councils, Government etc)

School (Parents, school heads, teachers, students)

Source: My own initiative

The model proposes a tripartite arrangement in which the three major stakeholders participate on an *unequa*l footing in order to provide services to the school. In that regard, there should be school boards that comprise all three stakeholders. The

government should not only decentralize responsibilities, but should participate in contributing resources for the development of all schools in addition to providing education policy. There is need to create education departments within local authorities. As illustrated above, participation is at the centre of all three. Areas A and C represent the government's responsibility to the local authorities and schools in terms of providing resources, education policy and monitoring. B represents how the local authorities and the school complement each other in meeting education goals at local level. As such, the government has the biggest responsibility to provide for the education of its citizens, thus A+C. Responsible authorities and schools have to share in B. The findings present the problems of ownership of schools and facilities. About seventy five percent of the schools in Zimbabwe are owned by local authorities, which are rural and urban councils (Fiske, 1996). As such, any meaningful decentralization in education, cannot afford to avoid the local authorities. Ownership has legal implications in terms of responsibility for maintenance and repair and issues of reliability if facilities are substandard (Florestal and Cooper, 1997).

Such changes entail an overhaul of the present decentralization structure in education. Whilst the problems associated with the Ministry of Education avoiding the Rural and District councils in the late 1980s could have been valid then, this might not the case now. For instance, one argument was that the Rural and District councils lacked in human resources when it came to supervising schools. Such a problem could be alleviated by creating departments of education within the local councils themselves. These could be staffed by trained personnel from the Ministry of Education. In essence, education should not be treated as an independent entity from politics. In that

regard decentralization in education as illustrated in the model above demands devolution of authority to provincial and district levels.

6.2.3 There should be a clear distinction between the roles of the school head as an administrator in the school and his [her] role as a member of the SDCs and SDAs. There appeared to be a conflict of roles, which in some cases resulted in portraying the school head as the overseer and supervisor of the SDCs and SDAs.

6.2.4 The study did not find any justifiable reason for having two separate statutory instruments, with one for Government schools and the other one for non-Government schools, and yet in reality they ended up performing the same functions. It is within this context that it is recommended that there be one legal framework for all the schools in Zimbabwe. The classification of schools as Government and non-Government did not appear to serve much of a purpose in this regard.

6.2.5 SDCs and SDAs in their present form seemed to lack the capacity and the resources to run schools. It was observed that there was no support from the government and the parents ended up making high sacrifices for the education of their children. In that respect, the economic conditions of the parents affected standards in the schools. For example, the 1987 Education Act No.5, section 4(i) stipulated that “every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education” (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987; 207). This shows that education was declared a fundamental right. This therefore, meant that the Government of Zimbabwe had a social and legal

responsibility to provide for the education of its citizens. It is therefore, recommended that the Government of Zimbabwe should provide not only the teachers, but the resources and facilities that make quality education provision a reality, rather than a mirage.

6.2.6 The role of the Ministry of Education in school governance should be revisited, because in its present form, it had contributed to the slowing down of development in schools. This was as a result of late approval of fees and levies. Alternatively, if there is need for approval, they should similarly decentralize such powers and authorities to the Ministry of Education officials at district level. Secondly, the study recommends that there should be a limit as to what amounts or percentage increases needed approval from the Ministry of Education.

6.2.7 There was need for the SDCs and SDAs as bodies corporate to be accountable to the Ministry of Education in their entirety, instead of the Ministry of Education dealing with the school head on matters of school governance that involved all members. This was also necessary in cases where the Ministry of Education felt that the rules and regulations of the legal framework had been violated.

6.2.8 There was little or no monitoring of the activities of the SDCs and SDAs by the Ministry of Education. Within the same context, the Ministry of Education should improve on capacity building for the SDCs and SDAs. It is further recommended that

communication between parent governors and the Ministry of Education should be improved.

6.2.9 The legislation, especially the two statutory instruments referred to in the study, are in dire need of revision. The interpretation of the regulations tended to be a disadvantage to most parent governors. As a result, they tended to rely on the school head for the interpretation of the statutes or completely ignored them. In this respect the language used tended to be too legal for laypersons to understand, resulting in parent members and senior teachers in some cases showing disinterest in the rules and regulations guiding the implementation process. It is recommended that the statutory instruments be translated to local languages that the parents and community can easily understand and interpret.

6.2.10 SDCs and SDAs have to be empowered. They should have the power and authority to monitor and supervise teachers. In order to do this, the Ministry of Education should help with development of skills in the area. In order for them to do this, it may be necessary to extend the terms office of office bearers from one year to most probably three years. This could provide for continuity and ensure that those trained had time to contribute to the development of their schools in various capacities.

6.2.11 As the custodians of education standards in schools, the Ministry of Education should restore the grant system to schools. These should be specifically for the purchase of textbooks and other related teaching and learning materials. There was

need for a shared responsibility approach between the SDCs and SDAs, Ministry of Education and the Responsible Authorities. Otherwise decentralization of education functions in the form envisaged by the statutory instruments was defective, overburdening parents and granting them “symbolic” and “pseudo” power in school governance.

6.3 Suggestions for further study

In view of the findings noted above, I propose suggestions for further study in the same area of implementation of decentralization in education.

6.3.1Further research is necessary to establish why the Ministry of Education, in trying to decentralize education functions had avoided rural and urban councils, the owners of most schools in Zimbabwe (Fiske, 1996). Decentralization in its totality should include other structures of government, not only schools.

6.3.2 Further study is also necessary to establish why in the first instance the Ministry of Education appeared not to be willing to relinquish some of its decision making powers in such areas as finance and recruitment of teachers.

6.3.3 A study on how parents can be involved in recruitment and management, and curricular issues may be necessary.

6.3.4 Finally, the study adopted the qualitative methodology, and made use of the case study design, which like any other approaches had their own limitations. Taking into cognizance the importance of the issues of the need to improve the democratization process of different institutions such as schools, I deem it necessary that further study be undertaken using a different methodology and focusing on a wider population such as parents and teachers, to investigate the role of school heads, councilors and communities in school governance and decentralization in education

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL HEADS, SENIOR TEACHERS AND PARENT GOVERNORS.

Section A: Personal Characteristics

Sex:

Age:

Marital Status:

Highest Academic Qualification:

Highest Professional Qualification:

Years of Experience in present position:

Section B: Interview Questions

Impact of statutory instruments 87 0f 1992 and 70 of 1993 on parental participation and involvement in schools.

1.1 How many parent members are there in your SDC/SDA?

When was the committee elected into office?

What work has the committee done since it was elected?

Has the committee done any fundraising activities and which of these have been most beneficial to the school?

1.5 How would you rate the committee's and parental participation and involvement in school activities?

Decision making on school governance issues.

2.1Who called for parents' meeting?

2.2 Who decided the meetings' agenda?

Who made decisions in the meetings on school issues?

What role did different members play in the meetings?

The handling of financial and personnel management, school development, and curricular issues by SDCs and SDAs.

Do you have a financial sub-committee?

To what extent are involved in the following areas as a member of the finance sub-committee: revenue collection; expenditure authorization; withdrawals; purchases; approving payments; investing money and banking.

How often does the finance sub-committee meet?

Does the SDC/SDA employ and manage staff?

Who decides on the development programmes undertaken at the school?

Is the SDC/SDA involved in curricular issues at your school?

Interpretation of roles by different layers of the schooling system.

Are you involved in financial management, decision making, personnel management and curricular issues?

To what extent are you involved in each of the areas?

The experiences of the SDCs and SDAs in carrying out development activities in Government and non-Government primary schools.

What major problems have you encountered in trying to provide the best education in schools?

What areas would you want improved between schools and the Ministry of Education?
Did you receive any training in school governance as a member of the SDC/SDA?
Do you refer to the statutory instruments that established the SDAs and SDCs?
What has been your greatest achievement as a committee?
What has been the percentage pass rate of your grade 7 classes over the last 5 years?
Is there any difference in parents' participation and involvement in school governance matters now than before 1992?

Thank you.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATION OFFICER
SECTION A: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
Sex:
Age:
Marital Status:
Highest Academic Qualifications:
Highest Professional Qualifications:
Professional Status:
Years of Experience in present position:
SECTION B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Impact of statutory instruments 87 of 1992 and 70 of 1993 on parental participation and involvement in schools.
Do SDCs and SDAs participate in school development in the district?
Are schools complying with statutory instruments that established SDCs and SDAs in Zimbabwe?

Have you had any problems with the activities of the SDCs and SDAs in the district?
Handling of Issues of financial and personnel management, school development and curricular.
Do SDCs and SDAs have the authority to charge levies, recruit staff, engage in school development activities and curricular matters?
Interpretation of roles by different layers of the schooling system.
To what extent is the Ministry of Education involved in the activities of the SDCs and SDAs?
3.2 Do SDC and SDA members receive any training in school governance?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION GUIDE AND CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

A. OBSERVATION GUIDE
1.0 Decisions on school governance issues
1.1 Who chairs the meetings?
1.2 Who plays a leading role?
1.3How are issues of finance handled in the meetings?
1.4What is the role of the school head in the parents' meetings?
1.5 What determines decision making?
1.6 Are there any representatives from the Ministry of Education in the meeting?
1.7 Do these activities comply with the requirements of Education Statutory instruments 87 of 1987 and 70 1992?
1.8 What roles do members of the SDC/SDA play in the meetings?

B. CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

school	Item	Comments
	Classroom	
	Furniture	
	Textbooks	
	Ex. books	
	Chalkboard	
	Library	
	Computers	

Thank you.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Principal Researcher: Wellington Samkange
Research Title: An Assessment of the implementation of the Decentralization of Education functions at primary schools in Chegutu Education District of Zimbabwe: A Case study.
Purpose
The purpose of the study is to assess the implementation of the decentralization of education functions at primary schools in Chegutu Education District of Zimbabwe. The study seeks to assess how things are in schools in relation to the statutory instruments that decentralized education functions in Zimbabwe. This in a way helps to establish the state of schools, and the level of parental participation in school governance. It is also hoped that the data collected will assist policy makers and planners with coming up with not only sound policies, but a mechanism to monitor implementation as well.
Procedures
Data will be collected through the use of face-to-face interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis. Face-to-face interviews will be audio-tape recorded with the consent of the participants. The collected data will be qualitatively analyzed based on the themes derived from the research questions and the patterns that emerge from the data.

Duration
The face-to-face interviews are to last approximately 40 minutes. However, the duration of the observations will depend on the activity being observed. The same also applies to the time taken analyzing documents in schools.

Possible Risks
The researcher does not envisage any risks to the participants. However, should the participants feel that providing answers to some questions can put them at risk of any kind, they are free not to answer such questions or to withdraw from participating in the study.

Possible Benefits and Compensation
The research study does not provide for direct individual benefits. However, satisfaction can be derived from the fact that by participating in the study, the participants have contributed to knowledge in the area that affects them as teachers, parents and school heads. Such knowledge base widens understanding of issues that affect education in general and school governance in particular.

Contacts

In the event that you have issues and questions that are related to the study you are free to contact: Wellington Samkange on 0027731841913 or 00263773231755; OR Professor M. Matshazi on 0027764126830 OR Dr. N. Duku on 0027722600656.

Confidentiality

The study maintains and respects the right of the participants to confidentiality and privacy. The information provided will be used for academic purposes. In this regard, the results of the research may be published, and presented in conferences and meetings. In all cases anonymity of the participants will be maintained, except in cases where the law demands disclosure. The research information can be made available to the University Of Fort Hare Faculty Of Education, the Higher Degrees Research Committee at the same university and any other person appointed by them.

Voluntary Participation

I have read and understood this consent form. I understand the purpose of the study. The envisaged risks and the benefits have been clearly explained to me, and I do understand that there are no direct benefits to me and that should I feel that I am at risk I am free to withdraw. I also understand that I freely participate and I am free to withdraw my participation without any penalty.

Signature of Participant:
Date:
Signature of investigator:
Date:

Thank you.

APPENDIX E

APPLICATION LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A STUDY IN SCHOOLS.

University of Fort Hare
Private Bag X1314
Alice 5700
Republic of South Africa
8 June 2008.

The Provincial Education Director
Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture
Mashonaland West Province
P. O Box 328
Chinhoyi
Dear Sir

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY IN SCHOOLS IN CHEGUTU EDUCATION DISTRICT ON THE TOPIC: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION FUNCTIONS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHEGUTU EDUCATION DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY.

I write to seek permission to conduct a research study in primary schools in Chegutu Education District. I am a student studying for a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education at the above mentioned university. I intend to carry out research on the above stated topic.

Thank you.

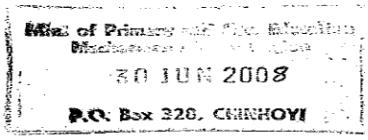
Yours faithfully,

Wellington Samkange.

APPENDIX F

LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY

Ministry of Education Sport and Culture
Mashonaland West Province
P.O.Box 328
Chinhoyi



16 April 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN SOME SCHOOLS IN MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE

Your application letter dated....8 JUNE 2008.....for authority to carry out a research/survey in some schools in Mashonaland West Province refers.

Be pleased to know that the Provincial Education Director has granted you permission to carry out your research on these conditions;

a] that the learning and teaching programmes would not be interrupted in any way.

b] that you avail the Provincial Education Director Mashonaland West a copy of your research findings for the benefit of the Province

c] that the permission or authority may be withdrawn at any time by this Office or a higher Office should need be.

We wish you success in your research and studies.

By this letter all Heads of schools you wish to visit are kindly requested to give you any assistance in your work.

EDUCATIONAL OFFICER PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES.
For **PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR**
MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE.

