

**An investigation of the extent of Representative Council of Learners' (RCLs) involvement in school governance: A case study of two senior secondary schools in the Libode District, Eastern Cape Province.**

**By**

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*Together in Excellence*  
In the Faculty of Education

**University of Fort Hare**

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**March 2007**

## Declaration

I, Cynthia Nomalungelo Makubalo

Hereby declare that:

- a) This dissertation is my original work,
- b) It has not been submitted for degree purposes at any other university,
- c) The information derived from published and unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.



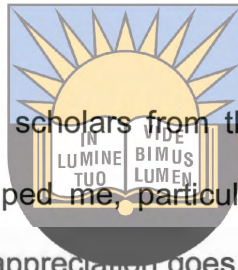
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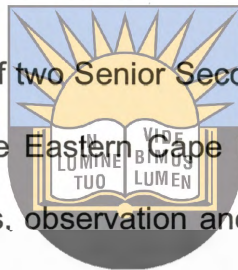


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## Abstract

The study investigates the extent of the effectiveness of Representative Council of Learners' (RCLs) involvement in school governance. South African schools are in a period of transition from the old system, which existed under the apartheid government and the new one being established by the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996. The formulation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) which are composed of parents, educators and learners became necessary to reverse the past educational disparities. The introduction of these SGBs is, therefore, the result of high demand for community participation in the control of schooling and the involvement of legitimate structures in school activities.

The study is a case study of two Senior Secondary Schools in the rural areas of the Libode District in the Eastern Cape Province. In data collection and analysis surveys, interviews, observation and document analysis were used. Three SGB parents, one educator, one principal and two RCLs from each school were surveyed. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to the same participants excluding educators and principals. The two non-RCLs were also interviewed. One SGB meeting was observed. For document analysis, the SGB minute book was perused.

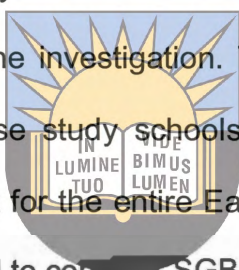


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The study concluded that the manner in which the SGBs, specifically RCLs were introduced, implemented and how it is presently being monitored remains a challenge. This study reflects on challenges faced and frustrations experienced by learners in participating in school governance. The study further sought to find out if learners have confidence in participating.

The findings were followed by recommendations which sought to address the problems discovered after the investigation. This was for the benefit of not only the learners in the case study schools and the SGB structures who needed capacity building but for the entire Eastern Cape Province Education System which was motivated to consider SGB empowerment as a priority.




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## Chapter 1

### Introduction to the study

#### 1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the extent of Representative Council of Learners' (RCL's) involvement in school governance at two Senior Secondary Schools in the Libode Education District of the Eastern Cape Province.

#### 1.2 Background to the study



Learner participation in school governance in South Africa dates back from the apartheid era (Beinart, 1994; Makhubu, 1993). During the apartheid years between 1948 and 1990, the black schooling system in South Africa (SA) was engaged in struggles of learner resistance against the system in favour of democratization of school governance (Ibid). The basis of the struggle was the demand for a democratic education system where all the constituencies, including learners, have the right to have their views heard about matters affecting them. During the apartheid era, school governance and management was the domain of school managers and educators only.

Attempts by learners and parents to turn the above mentioned circumstances around resulted in schools being turned into sites of struggle for the transformation of education (Rich, 1996; Makhubu, 1993). Communities demanded greater consultation and involvement in their school National

Education Policy Institute (1993). The results were the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and then the Parent-Teacher Student-Associations (PTSAs) which were meant to provide the “vehicle through which divisions between young and old, teachers and parents can be overcome” (Sisulu, 1986:18-19).

As a result of the struggles referred to above, when the African National Congress (ANC) led government came into power in 1994, it brought about fundamental changes to all levels of South African life. One of the significant areas in which it made notable changes was in school governance. School governance was transformed by an array of policies and legislations such as the South African Schools Act (SASA). The SASA stipulates that learners, through RCL should be involved in school governance. Furthermore, a code of conduct for learners should be adopted by the school governing bodies (SGBs) to ensure that there is order and discipline in school. However, even though the SASA stipulates learner participation, the reality in schools is in contrary to this. Hence, this study investigates the extent of learner involvement in school governance.



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### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

My observation as an Education Development Officer (EDO) is that little is known about learner involvement in school governance. For instance, I have observed in some schools that RCLs do not participate fully in SGB meetings. In theory,

RCLs should participate in school governance. However, the reality is different. It is not clear whether they are not interested or are intimidated, what is clear though is that they are not fully participating. Furthermore, I observed that learners in schools are not fully involved in activities which impact on them and require their involvement. A classic example is their lack of contribution in the drafting and adoption of SGB constitution. Conversely, according to the SASA, learners should always be included in school governance (SASA 1996, Section 18).

#### **1.4 Purpose and aim of the study**



The overall aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which RCLs participate in school governance.

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The above overall aim could further be broken down in the following sub-aims:

- To investigate the extent to which learners are afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance,
- To explore the extent of learner willingness to participate,
- To study the manner in which learners participate in school governance,
- To discover factors that inhibit learner participation and
- To investigate factors which promote learner participation.

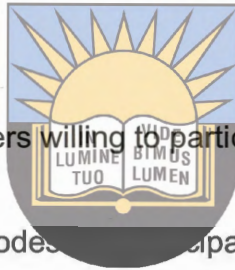
## 1.5 Research questions

The main research question is as follows:

To what extent do learners participate effectively in school governance?

The sub-questions are:

- To what extent are learners afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance?
- To what extent are learners willing to participate?
- What are the learners' modes of participation in school governance?
- What factors inhibit learner participation?
- What factors promote learner participation?



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## 1.6 Significance of the study

This research attempts to promote debate among the stakeholders in education on the capacity of RCLs in school governance. It will generate a wealth of input on the strengths and weaknesses of RCLs in school governance. It will also encourage further research on the subject as, most importantly, Libode education officials will be aware of what is taking place in the schools pertaining to the effective involvement of RCLs in school governance as it is indicated in SASA.

Learners in particular will be offered an opportunity to debate their participation and how it can be improved.

### **1.7 Rationale for the study**

Research on learner participation in school governance has been conducted in urban areas. For instance Nkwinti, (2001) has researched four Senior Secondary Schools in the Grahamstown district. Also Proctor (2001) has researched on discourse analysis of Student Representative Council (SRC) practice in a primary school of Cape Town. Being exposed to these research studies, I identified a gap in this area, which is silent on rural schools. I believe, therefore, that this particular context is worth researching as an attempt to balance urban and rural perspectives. This may not necessary mean that there are vast differences between rural and urban contexts.

In addition to the identified gap, my involvement and engagement as a circuit manager gave me an insight into the problems at face value envisaged in the implementation process of educational policies in Libode district especially those that affect learners.

I my observation of how school governance takes place in the schools that I am responsible for supervising in Libode, there seems to be very little support given to RCLs by the schools. For instance, in most instances, RCLs are not participating as they supposed to do. They do not attend most meetings and

when they do, their participation is very minimal. As a result, learners are not aware of their roles and responsibilities in School Governance issues and do their work as per statute.

For RCLs to be an effective structure of governance, it has to be institutionalized and sustained so that all the three components of the SGB (parents, educators and learners) work in harmony (SASA,1996). SGBs in schools should be elected legitimately because they are policy makers in any school in South Africa. However in my experience as an Education Development Officer (EDO), in most instances the appropriate election procedures for RCLs are not followed. In some schools more than two learners serve in SGB. This is against the statute, normally only two learners should take part in SGB meetings. During elections, in some schools RCLs are regarded only as class leaders or prefects. As a result, their responsibility is relegated to that of monitoring late coming, non-attendance and noise-making in classes during the absence of the educator. They are neglected and are not even informed about matters affecting them.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

This study is based in two schools of Libode District. It focuses on the aspect of effective involvement of learners in school governance. This included exploring , the roles and responsibilities RCLs do, how they do it, as well as how aware are they of their roles and responsibilities. Learner's involvement in school

governance will be measured through validity and reliability of data during data collection and analysis stage.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

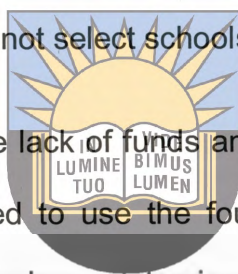
Limitations of this research study were brought about by a number of factors. These included limited funds for carrying out the research. Time was also a constraint. I was a full time employee of the Department of Education when I did my research and therefore could not select schools exceeding two.

I however need to report that the lack of funds and time had no major impact in this research because I intended to use the four research techniques in this research such as, questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and observation. The research techniques that are mentioned above uplifted the quality of this research. However if more funds were available I would have researched four schools as compared to the two that I managed to research.

### **1.10 Definition of terms**

#### **School governance:**

School governance can be defined as a process by which various role players in any organization carry out the rules and the regulations that facilitate effective organization of any institution through co-operation and collaboration by the stakeholders. This enables the role players to minimize conflict among themselves. Governance, therefore, takes the responsibilities and authority of all the stakeholders and guide and direct members of the organization in decision



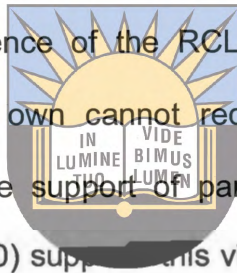
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making (Moate, 1996: 12). School governance focuses, *inter alia*, on how the school governing bodies interfere with each other and communicate with other social structures.

### **RCL:**

In this study the term RCL means a legitimate structure of learners whose role is to look into the needs of the learners in a school. The SASA (No 84 of 1996) makes provision for the existence of the RCLs within the school governing bodies. The schools on their own cannot request the government for any educational reforms without the support of parents, learners and community organizations. Chuenyane (1990) supports this view when pointing that a look at Black South African educational scenes reveals that major demands for educational reforms in the school are coming from parents, learners themselves and community organizations.



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### **Senior Secondary School:**

The National Department of Education describes the SSS as any institution providing education from grade 10-12.

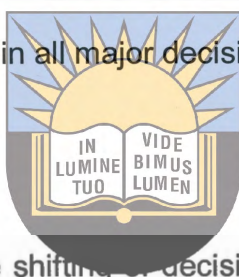
### **RCL Effectiveness:**

This means that the RCL structure has to bring about change in the way that the school is functioning. This is usually in relation to learner's conduct. Effectiveness also means the value-adding function of the RCLs in realizing the objectives of

the school. It further talks to the quality and timeous execution of the expected duties.

### **Learner Participation:**

This refers to the participation of learners as a structure in the management of school. It also means participative democracy. In this scenario learners are expected to participate democratically in SGB Structure. This implies learners having a voice and participating in all major decision forums of the school.



### **Decentralization:**

Decentralization is linked to the shifting of decision-making from higher to lower levels in the system. It rests on the assertion that all the participants of an institution have a right to participate in decision- making (Duku, 2006:11).

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### **Democracy:**

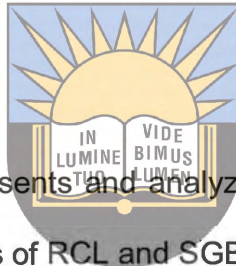
This refers to the ability and power of the RCLs to influence other learners to do what is right as per the school policy and SGB Constitution.

## **1.11 Organization and overview of the study:**

**Chapter one:** This chapter focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and aim, research questions, significance, rationale and delimitation.

**Chapter two:** This is a survey of literature and the beginning of a theoretical framework that focuses on decentralization. Equity and democracy are discussed.

**Chapter three:** This chapter provides a detailed description and justification of the research design and methodology. The mixed methods approach that the study employs is described. As this mixed method is biased towards qualitative method, the ethnographic approaches used, including the interviews, survey and observations are outlined.



**Chapter four:** This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected within the study. This includes the analysis of RCL and SGB perceptions.

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**Chapter five:** This chapter deals with the summary of the findings and recommendations. Moreover, it will conclude that learner involvement in school governance is very important

## Chapter 2

### Literature review

The aim of this chapter is to investigate how national and international literature view stakeholder participation particularly learner participation in school governance. This chapter is structured as follows:

- 2.1 Brief overview on SA school governance scenario,
- 2.2 Understanding the concept of decentralization,
- 2.3 Styles of leadership,
- 2.4 Learner participation and
- 2.5 Summary



### 2.1 Brief overview on SA school governance scenario

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The question of learner involvement in school governance has been a problematic issue for many years in SA (Makhubu, 1993; Chinsamy, 1995). Between 1948 and 1980 (the apartheid years), the 'Black' schooling system was engaged in long and taxing struggles for learner resistance (Ibid). The basis of the struggle was the demand for the development of a democratic education system where learners will have the right to have their views heard, which traditionally was the domain of principals, educators and most recently parents.

According to the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1993), the articulation of the demand for increased community participation in the school governance appeared in the context of resistance and struggle. The struggle for

a democratic education system was tied to a potential struggle for a new democratic order. A classic example for this was the Soweto uprising of June 1976 where learners were in the forefront of transforming the education system in South Africa. This symbolized a turning point in learner involvement both in terms of the educational and political activism (Hartshorn, 1992). Also the mid 1980s and beyond saw the South African schooling system governance and management being pushed further into a new crisis. The rise to projection of the People's Education Movement was one of the manifestations of this crisis as the struggle against apartheid education took a new course (Mashamba, 1992).



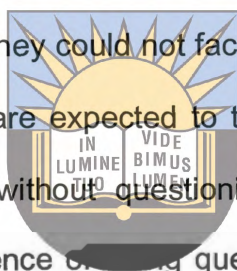
The above mentioned stage gave rise to what SA currently enjoys. Currently, in South Africa school policies give SGBs the maximum degree of freedom for their own determination of principles, policies and practices.

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The composition of SGBs came into existence as per SASA (section 16, 1996). Parents, learners, non-teaching staff, educators and co-opted members composed the SGB. Therefore, SGB members have to help schools to respond to the needs of the school. They also have to work hand in glove with the School Management Team for effective teaching and learning. One of the important stakeholders in this community building project is learners.

There is a wealth of literature in the first world countries which points to learner participation being problematic. For instance, Chinsamy (1995) has pointed out

the difficulties of direct learner involvement in the governance of schools. Examples given by Chinsamy included countries such as England, Canada, Australia, France, New Zealand and United States which, for sometime, experimented with learner participation in school governance. From these examples, Chinsamy asserts that even with these countries, such an idea still remains a challenge. For example, educators in England were not supportive of learner involvement in school governance not because they doubted the resulting good governance, but because they could not face the change in their traditional position. Traditionally, learners are expected to take instructions from teachers who are the authority figures without questioning. Some educators found it difficult to cope with the experience of being questioned by learners, having to justify school policies in their presence (Ibid).



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Apart from that, in some contexts even here in Libode, there seemed to be contradiction in terms regarding the question of governance policy that fosters obligatory learner participation and learner involvement. In addition, there seemed to be an element of weakness in the structuring of the SGB whereby learners do not participate on an equal basis with other stakeholders in decisions affecting their schools. Learners seemed to merely give semblance of authority while real power remained securely anchored with principals, educators and parents. As SA introduced stakeholder participation in school governance and as has been referred to earlier, it used decentralization as an instrument to

promote stakeholder participation. The next section will explore further the concept of decentralization.

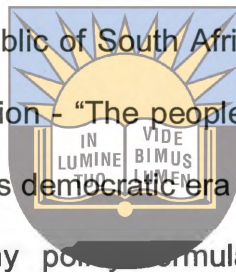
## 2.2 Decentralization

Educational decentralization is when the system seeks greater geographical decentralization of state authority, through the transfer to regional and local officials of more authority to take the initiative for new activity, to budget, recruit and deploy staff (Lauglo, 1995). This typically entails giving those offices increased autonomy both in terms of recruiting, evaluating and promoting personnel, as well as in terms of allocating and reallocating budgets (Gershberg and Winkler, 2003). However, the centre retains overall control (Dyer & Rose 2005). For schools, decentralization means being more accountable to bureaucratic superiors who are closer to them in proximity (Lauglo, 1994). This may imply more responsive and speedier decisions at the level of the school. In the case of South Africa, all provinces established lower level structures known as districts and/or regions, for purposes of administration (Duku, 2006).

The notion of decentralization shows that the government of South Africa has a turn around strategy in the education system that seeks to improve the imbalances of the past. Decentralization seeks to bring about change in our schools whereby learners have a voice and ownership of their schools.

Decentralization is, therefore, a tool that distributes rights and responsibilities among stakeholders in the education system to enhance efficiency. It helps the development of education to respond to the constitutional imperatives of the country to "... lay foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people ..." (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:1).

The State president of the Republic of South Africa in his speeches often refers to the Freedom Charter's assertion - "The people shall govern". The application of this statement is evident in this democratic era as people are usually invited to make recommendations to any policy formulation so that the challenges encountered are discussed and addressed.



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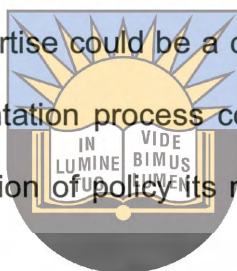
Usually, there is a challenge when the policies are to be implemented.. In some instances people on the ground do not and cannot manage the change as expected in any organization. Sayed & Soudien (2005) supports this view, believing that the South African government has developed a complex policy framework which has been motivated by the principles of inclusion, equality and redress, whose implementation in most instances works in contrary with the intended objectives. In the context of decentralization as (Ibid) shows, its implementation can be complicated and complex influenced by political and social atmosphere of the communities Lauglo (1995)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> in Duku (2006)



For decentralization to be effective, human resources with expertise to deliver the desired goals have to be available. Denzin (1978) explains in detail the implications of decentralization that it requires more personnel at the district and school level. To have effective teaching in schools enough staff should be employed to work at the districts and schools. Decentralization therefore, needs the involvement of more people and has cost implications for the education system. Although the imbalances of the past need to be addressed the employment of people with expertise could be a challenge that could cripple the system. Delays in the implementation process could be expected especially in the co-ordination and consolidation of policy its monitoring and uniformity in all the provinces of South Africa.



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From 1994 the devolution of power was introduced with the coming to power of the new democratic government. However, South Africa began a massive transformation process, geared towards equality of opportunities for all students regardless of race (Smith, 1997:126). Sayed (2002)<sup>2</sup> states that educational decentralization does not always extend participation to all and it makes use of representative democracy. Therefore, election of structures should take place. The formulation of school governance structure that aimed at enabling schools to provide effective and efficient education helped because SGBs were given authority to have functional schools. Transparency that was hardly practiced at schools before 1994 was encouraged (Smith, & Foster, 2002:3).

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<sup>2</sup> in Duku (2006)

Furthermore, prior to 1994 power was centralized only to the principal. Calitz *et al*, (2002:86) notes that this has now changed as SGBs have discretionary functions such as to:

- Appoint educators and non-educators in addition to the official post establishment of the school (section 20(4-5),
- Deal with rules for religious ceremonies at the school and
- Implementing a parental decision on school fees (section 39(3).

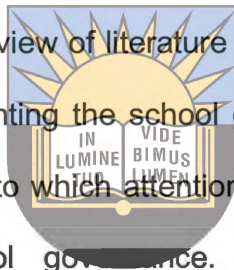
Among the values and principles that decentralization is ideally aimed to promote is participation. The next section will explore in-depth the concept participation.



### 2.2.1 Participation

Schaeffer (1992) explains that research shows, education institutions are not only an implementer of national policies but also a part of policy-making, planning and management in its own site. This argument is based on the emphasis that an innovation process must begin at school level, where SGBs have to be actively involved in the initial stages of policy formation. School governing bodies provide a structure of accountability for their local school as they know the school, its strengths and weaknesses. Brannen (1993) states that, educational policy for each school should appear from the SGB structure. For the learners to participate in school governance they should be involved from the development of their school's mission and vision right through all other issues affecting the effective running of the school.

Schaeffer (1992) provides a good overview of the importance of involving initial stages of policy formation, thus highlighting the need for democratic participation at the outset of policy formulation. The Department of Education (2004) reveals that in schools, student participation in decision-making lead to improved school policies and practices. The participation in decision-making should be practiced in all institutions as per statute so that policies are implemented. It is, therefore, very important for SGBs to know their roles and functions so as to function effectively as governors. This review of literature attempts to identify possibilities for and constraints on implementing the school governing body policy in South Africa and to identify the areas to which attention must be given in transforming learner participation in school governance. As the full participation of stakeholders was introduced in school governance it used shared decision making as a tool. The following section will explore more the concept of shared decision.



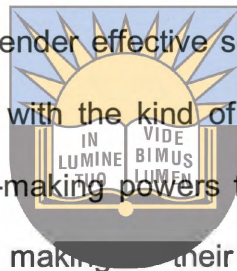
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### **2.2.2 Shared Decision Making**

Cloete (1998) states that policy should be reformulated repeatedly on the basis of experience, changing circumstances and needs because policy like other components of any organization is not stationary. However, the School Governing Bodies represent the legally constituted executive power of the school community, "they make decisions on behalf of the school and see to it that the school is administrated properly" Department of Education (1997). The end result

is that these SGBs are in the best position to establish the school needs and problems that face their communities (ibid).

For SGBs to be able to effectively execute their duties, requires intensive training especially for the previously disadvantaged communities who are faced by a huge challenge of illiteracy. The training needed to carry SGB functions is very critical, especially given the 1995 white paper on SGBs which states that they should reflect their capacity to render effective service. It is obligatory therefore that these SGBs are equipped with the kind of information that would enable them to exercise their decision-making powers fully. RCLs in particular should not be left behind in decision making in their schools because they legally constitute part of decision-making body in school. They should have a say in whatever decisions that are taken. Sayed (2005) believes that SGBs are given responsibilities by the government to take decisions in school governance such as developing a school language policy.



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The stakeholders should ensure the implementation of school governance policies, concept of decentralization, participation and shared decision making as indicated above. This seem to be a problem in some cases due to styles of leadership that educators and parents exercise. The next section will explore further the styles of leadership.

## 2.3 Styles of Leadership

For the success of any organization good leadership styles are used. The school principals must provide leadership that is drawn from one or different styles of leadership. They should follow any leadership style that is relevant to the needs and context of the school. The following are the different styles of leadership:

### 2.3.1 Autocratic Leadership

### 2.3.2 Laissez-Faire

### 2.3.3 Democratic Leadership

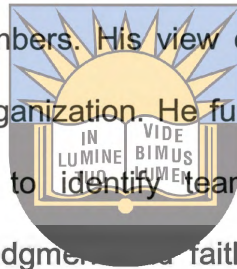


### 2.3.1 Autocratic Leadership Style

According to Nathan (1996) autocracy is rightly displayed through telling, instructing and decoding. The interlocutor's duty is to comply. The interlocutor's scope is limited to what the leader is telling them to do. These leaders believe in the right of superiors to dominate the behavior and thinking of subordinates and not to allow anyone to take an initiative. In this study, learner involvement in decision-making is expected. Therefore, autocratic leaders must change their leadership styles. Authoritarian leaders are low on consulting, delegating and team building. Nuku (2006) concurs with Nathan (1996) that the goal of an authoritarian leader is to give instructions to the subordinates and being personal in his or her praise and criticism. Furthermore, his/her leadership style is a one way communication pattern. The leader takes the decision alone. The communication is from the top to the bottom and group involvement is restricted.

The leader is a rigid ruler with a military style of discipline. The goal of an authoritarian leader is to give instructions to the subordinates (Ibid).

Nathan (1996) contends that communication skills make one to have the ability to share information clearly because at all times the team needs full information. Therefore, communication between the leader and the subordinates on decisions taken is very important in any organization. The delegation of power encourages talent or expertise in team members. His view could be put in practice by all leaders for the benefit of the organization. He further states that a good leader should have analytical ability to identify team needs and characteristics. Delegation requires courage, judgment and faith in others. The disadvantage with autocratic leadership is that the team will not have confidence because they are unable to demonstrate their capability to undertake difficult tasks and display a sense of personal growth.



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The subordinates need respect, love and recognition by their leaders. Therefore, “managers should take actions that will make it possible for individuals to make their best contributions to group objectives,” (Wehrich, & Koontz, 1993:5). They further suggest that managers should establish an environment for effective group endeavor serving the mutual interests of subordinates and the leader. Since an autocratic leader does not communicate openly and interact with the subordinates, they often lack skills for proper administration and human resource

management. If a manager has no ability to work with people the organization is bound to collapse.

Autocracy is a style that does not fully favour healthy and happy organizations. RCLs participation in some schools is minimal because the school principals and the SGBs are autocratic. Be that as it may the full participation of RCLs in school governance is expected.

### 2.3.2 Laissez-Faire

This is a leadership style in which the leaders abdicate their leadership roles, allowing subordinates more or less to run themselves. Laissez-Faire would not work well in a school situation but could be successful where independent working is required. The leader's role is very limited with educators not feeling the authority and presence of the principal. At the school there are no rules that are made and educators are free to work independently and group decisions are based on their convenience (Musaazi, 1982). A Laissez-Faire leader considers the human aspects (happiness and wellbeing) at school and what must be done is less important. Under this leadership style educators at school are granted complete freedom to decide what they are going to do. Each educator volunteers to do something for the school whenever he/she feels inspired to do so (Musaazi, 1982). This leadership style has a negative effect on effective teaching and learning and renders school chaotic.



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The principals and SGBs should avoid totally using this style, but should rather pick up some areas that are important, like that of human aspects but these must not be used strictly in laissez-faire attitude. To manage a given situation, they should be blended with other aspects from other different leadership styles. Again this leadership style is not conducive for promoting full participation among SGBs particularly learners in school governance because the principal in this situation has a vague role. He or she does not care about taking the lead. The principal is virtually not there as his role is not clear thus s/he cannot promote participation amongst SGBs in school governance



### 2.3.3 Democratic Leadership

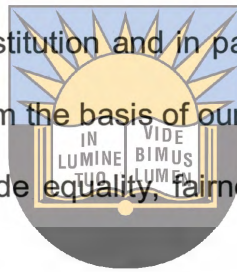
Politically, democracy is the right of everyone in an organization, to vote on matters that affect them and to be treated equally. Democratic societies, such as South Africa emphasize the principle that all people are equal before the law. Equality means that all individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities and may not be discriminated against because of their race, religion, ethnic group, age, gender or sexual orientation. However, the concept of democracy is wide and vague and needs to be clarified because democracy tends to be taken to be a form of political organization and an arrangement for the government than it is viewed as a way of life.

Many people of different convictions believe in democracy. For example, fascists, communist, conservatives and liberals believe in it. Ranney (1993:99) states that



democracy seems to be a kind of conceptual Gladstone bag which can be made to accommodate almost any collection of facts we may wish to carry about in it. Hence Berger (1994) warns that the term “democracy” is not easy to define as it has many faces and people define it in accordance with their own views and ideology rather than to measure their ideologies against some fixed criterion (ibid).

Reading the South African Constitution and in particular its preamble, one finds all the basic principles which form the basis of our democracy and inform the rest of the Constitution. These include equality, fairness, justice, freedom and open democracy.



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In education, democracy is a word much used by educational leaders, yet it is rarely defined beyond general statement (Glickman, 2003:277). Glickman, defines democratic pedagogy as:

one that aims for freedom of expression, pursuit of truth in the marketplace of ideas, individual and group choices, student activity, participation, associative learning, application, demonstration, and contribution of learning to immediate and larger communities. Such pedagogical effort is undertaken in the context of equality for all, consideration of individual liberty and group freedom, and respect for authority and responsibility of the teacher to set conditions for development learning (Glickman, 2003:282).

The above extract implicitly reminds us that learners at school should be given a degree of choice, both as individuals and as a group, but within the parameters provided for by all stakeholders in the school. In secondary schools, the main stakeholders for purposes of democratic governance comprise of parents, teachers, students and representatives of the broader community served by the school. It is believed that effective learner involvement is part of a broader strategy to help and resolve some major educational challenges, such as learners having no voice in matters pertaining to them in school governance. Furthermore, there is some strong argument from the literature to support this claim.



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Democracy requires a set of principles, broadly accepted by everyone and enshrined in a Constitution and includes principles such as respect. Media coverage in SA and elsewhere shows lack of respect on the part of learners towards their teachers and vice versa (Joubert, & Prinsloo, 2001). All this breakdown of respect is in most instances attributed to the perception and use of the word democracy. Joubert & Prinsloo, (2001) point out that a disturbing phenomenon in South African society is the use of the concept of democracy to justify disruption, rebellion, strikes, boycotts and intimidation. Such actions do not take into consideration the basic human rights of individuals, although they are entrenched in the Constitution (ibid).

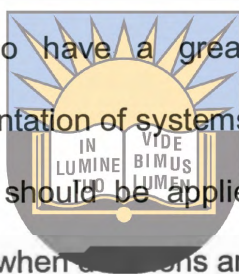
One of the challenges that one may allude to is the fact that, the principle of democracy itself is not explained in the Constitution. This is despite the fact that democracy is an illusive concept that means different things to different people. For the purpose of this study, democracy would be taken to imply man to man discussion and collective decision-making. In this context, the enlargement of representative structures is important so that no individual or interest group feels alienated. Therefore, all the SGB members should participate in decision making in their respective schools. This promotes transparency, accountability and responsibility of all school stakeholders, including learners.



Coming to the ideas of democratic leadership style, Daft & Marcie (1998) believe that a democratic leader, delegates authority to others, encourages participation and relies on his expertise to manage subordinates. Delegation is an empowering and enabling process aimed at optimizing the potential of subordinates by assigning authority to act so that they deal with matters effectively (Technikon S.A, 2002:37). Delegation, therefore, is very advantageous in a democratic style of leadership. Nathan (1996) pointed out that, a leader should negotiate what is delegated, never impose it and necessary resources and guidance should be provided so that support and encouragement is given. Wiehchich & Kootz (1993) assert that a democratic leader consults with subordinates on actions and decisions and encourages participation with them. This type of leader does not take action without the support of the subordinates. Such a leader is more likely to be supportive of subordinates and be supported

by them. This should be like that, in all organizations because everybody should take part in decision making, including schools.

Mullins (1999) believes that a democratic style focuses power on the group as a whole. He further argues that under such whole there is a greater interaction within the group. As such democratic managers are high on consulting, involving and accepting. Under such circumstances leadership functions are more likely to be shared with members who have a greater say in decision making, determination of policy, implementation of systems and procedures. Therefore, in school governance democracy should be applied so that learners and other stakeholders are not left behind when decisions are taken.



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In the light of the above discussion, democratic leadership style seems to be more ideal when it is compared with autocracy in an organization. There are more advantages when an individual is using a democratic leadership style in an organization. For example, the opportunities for the professional development of team members are provided through consultation and involvement of them all. On a similar note, Blasé *et al* (1995) advocate that to practice democratic leadership one has to let the people develop their fullest so that their interpersonal skills are built.

On the same note, participants are made to believe that a manager should allow people to develop and a decision-making should be a collective responsibility.

When subordinates are given freedom or responsibility, they become creative and dedicated to find activities for a given organization, come up with probable solutions to a problem and they develop a sense of ownership. They also become able to conduct research and collect data that makes them to be able to determine their staff development needs. In the current educational environment in South Africa access to development for all is a necessity. It is against this background that capacity building of RCLs in school governance should be viewed. Capacity building and development would help the SGB especially those that are in the rural areas.



A democratic leader should listen to people, allow them time to talk and tolerate different views. It should also support debates and discussions and accept failure (Blasé *et al*, 1995). Democracy, therefore, when it is used in an organization is better than autocracy because managers have complete trust and confidence in their subordinates in all matters. This implies that managers get ideas and opinions from subordinates and use them constructively. Wiehrich & Kootz (1993) believe that managers who apply this concept in their operations have the greatest success as leaders and are very productive.

Taking the principle of reaping what one has sown into consideration, one can safely believe that democratic leaders would produce learners with sound leadership skills. It is very important to accommodate all the stakeholders within an organization.

Scholars such as Lambert (1998) relate democratic leadership to Practice-Based Inquiry (PBI). PBI is a condition where people work together sharing knowledge and examining data to find answers and to pose new questions. As a group the team reflects on what they have planned, discuss their findings, analyze, plan and act together. Within PBI reflective practice leads to innovation (Ibid). Reflection, therefore, enables participants to consider how things are done and to seek alternative ways for the sake of improving practice.

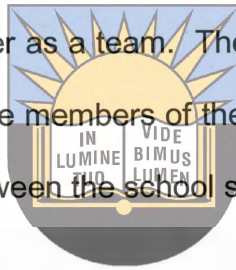


Team members often reflect through coaching, dialogue and networking. Successful managers are very good at networking and many organizations succeed as a result of networking. This is one of the advantages of democratic style because everybody is brought on board by the management. Another advantage as Lambert (1998) puts is that of mentoring the team in small groups so that everyone is accommodated.

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Enquiring about the problem, researching possible solutions, implementing the proposed plan and recommendations are some of the elements that lead to success. Democracy, therefore, minimizes conflicts between staff and management and encourages people to be creative. Therefore, a vision for the organization should be shared so that people could be committed to it, as it reflects their own personal commitment.

Additionally, Lambert (1998) asserts that “people with a strong sense of personal direction can join together to create a powerful synergy towards what they truly want”. This may be the case even in the education field where all stakeholders, including learners could craft a way forward to their teaching and learning. Democracy, therefore, is a tool that can bring improvement in institutions due to the principle of working as a team. At schools, therefore, principals should practice teamwork. No organization could be productive and have good service if people are not working together as a team. The school management teams at schools should ensure that all the members of the SGBs are involved in decision making to minimize conflicts between the school staff and learners in particular.



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South Africa's principle of *Batho Pele* guides people towards the implementation of democracy in organizations through putting people first. In the Department of Education, the employees should provide excellent service towards the customers at all times. Furthermore, the principle of humanity as espoused in IMBEWU (1999) highlights that discipline in a democratic country cannot be based on fear and physical punishment. Discipline at school should not be the sole responsibility of the educator and principal because of their positions even learners can maintain it at all times. The rights and responsibilities of individuals must be clarified and discussed with regard to their significance in groups and organizations where all have the same rights. Therefore, all citizens have to learn how to discipline themselves from within. Democracy is shown as a tool to make people to be aware of some certain elements in life such as transformation that

begins with an individual. This implies that all leaders must model the behavior they expect from their subordinates because it is in every one of us to be wise. Everyone has a purpose in life and all are unique. Both leaders and followers, therefore, must be change agents that possess the spirit that conceives and nurtures dreams and ideas for transforming organizations. Therefore, learners are also unique and should get the right they deserve with regards to involvement in decision making.



Democratic leadership focuses on the creation of shared visions, professional satisfaction, and modeling of appropriate behaviors and organizational vitality (Technikon SA, 2002). A change process in organizations is incessantly going on thus continual negotiations, discussions and compromises are always going on. These democratic strategies demonstrate the growth, maturity and unity of organizational members. Therefore, democracy promotes growth and unity in all organizations. If the members of any organization are united they will achieve their goals. A democratic environment is a safe environment for team members to enhance the ability to develop and build their commitment and confidence. Even learners at school have delegated powers, for instance, to maintain discipline at school. Therefore, if learners are deprived of participation in school matters, the school management will have a heavy workload which could have been lessened had the learners been given a chance to exercise their responsibilities. However learners have the ability to do their work because RCLs

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are mature enough to handle their delegated roles. Given the chance by the SGBs the schools could grow if the learners are involved.

Democracy is a challenge for every leader. Some people abuse it, believing that there are no limitations in democracy although the limitations are available even in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This helps the leaders to use democracy guided by the Constitution. As this section has discussed intensively the leadership styles that might cause challenges in school governance structures particularly learner participation needs attention in the SGB structure. The next section will explore in-depth the concept of learner participation and SGB.



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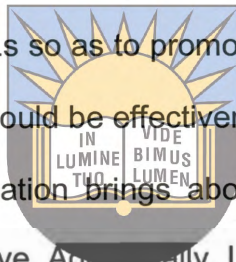
### **2.4 Learner Participation**

Chuenyane (1990) believes that RCLs also have a role to play in school governance, although there is a problem that is caused by authorities who are not in favour of involving learners in school governance. Chuenyane further argues that, in most instances learners' plea for real presentation on school decision-making boards is not been acceded to. The result has more often than not been unrest, class boycotts and protests. RCLs involvement in school governance is therefore necessary.

Learners should participate fully in SGB meetings so that they are able to give feedback to the learners. I also concur with Chuenyane that learner participation

is necessary in school governance through their involvement in SGB, especially because it is enforced by the statute. If learners are participating fully in school governance, strikes will be minimal. Berger (1994) states that to deprive RCLs privilege to be involved in school governance is caused by the undemocratic system of administration.

School management system should be democratic in order to ensure the decentralization of power to RCLs so as to promote trust, transparency, harmony and teamwork and the spin-off would be effectiveness of teaching and learning. It is believed that learner participation brings about democratic management of school which is a policy imperative. Additionally, I have the same view as Berger, that learners should not be deprived a privilege to be involved in school governance because it is their right to be involved.



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Even though literature does not doubt the benefit of learner participation in school governance, there is also evidence that some adults in some communities have not yet accepted learners as partners. Research by Duku (2006) shows that African adults of six Eastern Cape communities do not appreciate learner participation as they claim that culture does not permit it. Democracy encourages decentralization of power as that promotes effective teaching and learning in our schools. Modes of teaching and learning in South Africa has changed since 1994, all learners are treated alike (SASA, 1996). Despite benefits of learner participation in SGBs that have been discussed, there are also some challenges.

The following section will explore further the challenges faced by learners in SGBs.

#### 2.4.1 Challenges faced by learners

Learners in school governance are faced with many challenges. Firstly, they are not accepted as part of the governing structure. Culture probably has contributed to this challenge. In the African culture children respect adults, in so much that they are not used to debating issues with their parents until they are also adults. Secondly, Rich (2002) asserts that in cases where learners are involved, RCLs have limited agenda that seldom addresses broader responsibilities of their role. Their involvement is in most instances limited to minor matters like fundraising and in others they are treated as observers. Rich further argues that, learners are often marginalized to the point where they are commonly identified with the responsibilities of just organizing social activities and volunteer for less important tasks. He does not deny the fact that at times such involvement is coupled with responsibilities that are important but then argues that certainly they are not the core reason for having learners in school governance.

Chinsamy (1995) believes that learners do not participate on equal basis with other stakeholders in decisions affecting them in their schools. For example, in South Africa it is unconstitutional to deny learners a voice in matters pertaining to them and to refuse them to be involved in governance of the school. Likewise

according to Fraser<sup>3</sup> the alienation of learners from such an important decision making body makes them frustrated and this could have a negative impact on education.

RCLs are a link between the school and the learners, because their function is to minimize communication breakdown among learners, staff and the administrators (Chuenyane, 1990). There is evidence from research that violence and ill-discipline in schools are caused by the fact that "Learners are not given the civil rights ordinarily guaranteed to adults or children of their own age out of school (Berger, 1994). Literature indicates many challenges that are faced by learners. Literature is very consistent in showing that learner representatives are marginalized at schools and are being disempowered by the decisions taken for them without them. Furthermore learners expressed dissatisfaction with being left out of the decisions concerning fees (Department of National Education, 2004). Learners should not be only involved in minor matters as this is against the law. RCLs go between the entire learners' body, thus they are clear about the concerns of the students so they should be allowed to participate in school governance.

Learner involvement in school governance was long overdue because the apartheid regime prohibited the students from forming RCLs. The implications of the changes brought by decentralization have to be managed. There are a

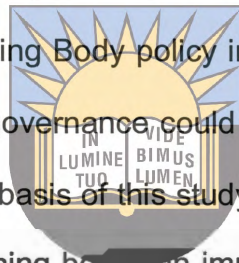
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<sup>3</sup> In Makhubu (1993)

number of implications for learner involvement when learners begin to air their views. Smith & Foster (2002) aver that learners will be empowered through the acquisition of leadership skills through their involvement. Moreover, learners' self esteem will be boosted.

## 2.5 Summary

The literature review reveals new policies accompanied by clear implementation strategies of the School Governing Body policy in South Africa. Decentralization gave guidance on how school governance could be implemented in our schools and its principles are used as a basis of this study. It is clear that there are major challenges facing school governing bodies in implementing this policy. A review of the literature shows the argument that learner participation is one of the vehicles through which democratic values and principles can be developed. However, nationally and internationally learner participation is still faced with challenges such as the calling for meaningful learner involvement school governance and this is also true of the United States of America. For instance, in many USA schools, learners' involvement just amounts to tokenism, decorations or as merely a stamp of approval (Fletcher, 2003). In my experience in Libode Education District, learners' involvement in SGB matters is not taken very serious by the adults. However, it is very important to involve learners in decision making although they are minors but their voice also counts in school governance team. Literature makes it clear that learners can create chaos if they are not part of



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decision making. There is a need for learners to be involved in schools to promote effective teaching and learning.



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## Chapter 3

### Research methodology and design

#### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to look at the research methodology and research design selected for this study. It includes sampling, the instruments used, negotiation of entry, data analysis, validity and reliability. The epistemological foundations of the study are also explained.

#### 3.2 Epistemological foundations of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the extent of effective involvement of RCL in school governance through case studies of two schools in Libode in the Eastern Cape Province. This will be studied through the lenses of social constructionist theory and the interpretive approach.

##### 3.2.1 Social Constructivism

This study is based on social constructivism paradigm. Jorgensen and Phillips, (2002)<sup>4</sup> described social constructionist as an umbrella term for a range of theories about culture and society. Social constructivism constructs truth, experiences and meaning in relation to how that one interacts with one's social world. Constructivism, therefore, depends on subjects as they construct their meaning and how people perceive it. In this study, constructivism will help us understand how learners, parents and educators construct and understand

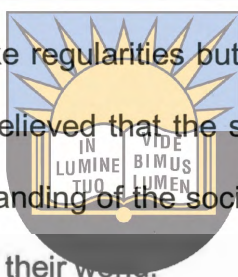
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<sup>4</sup> in Duku (2006)

learner participation in school governance. The next section will look at the lenses that this study will use, that is interpretive paradigm

### 3.2.1.2 Interpretive Paradigm

Williams & May<sup>5</sup> note that the world is interpreted through the classification schemes of the mind. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) concur with Gray in believing that the methods of the natural sciences are not appropriate because the social world is not governed by law-like regularities but is mediated through meaning and human agency. It is also believed that the social researcher is concerned with explorers and their understanding of the social world using the participant's construction & understanding of their world.



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In this study interpretive data is looked at in terms of human behavior based on the participants that construct and understand it. It is against this background that this study used the interpretive approach which is contradictory to perceived limitations associated with positivism - the tradition most commonly associated with statistical social enquiry (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). I, therefore, believe that interpretive paradigm is more appropriate and effective to use in this study because it seeks an actual reality in a specific situation. Interpretive approach allows the focus of researcher to be on understanding what is happening in a given context (Carson, *et al*, 2001).

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in Gray (2004)



As the above section indicates, interpretive research helps researchers to gain an in depth understanding of a situation. Hence, qualitative research methods are relevant as they are suitable for addressing questions of how and why things are the way they are .

### 3.3 Research paradigm

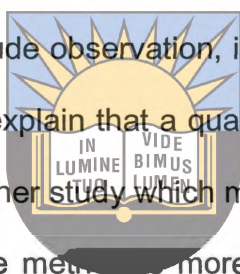
#### 3.3.1 Qualitative Research Methods

On the basis of the two approaches that I have alluded to above, that is social constructivism and interpretive paradigm, this study mainly follows a qualitative research path.



Mwanje (2002) explains that qualitative method focuses on the analysis of information so as to generate qualitative explanations of a social phenomenon. The techniques used to achieve this goal depend on how the information is generated. Mwanje further explains that, qualitative method is better suited to description, whether dealing with meanings or patterns of behavior, as it tends to rely on a detailed and complex description of events or people. Such a 'thick description' is necessary in order to convey the complexity of events of the situation and to provide the reader with enough detail to conclude for themselves whether the researcher's interpretations of the phenomenon are relevant and justifiable for the circumstances (ibid).

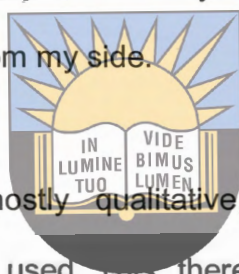
The above view is also shared by Blanche et al, (2006). They concur that as qualitative researchers collect data in the form of written or spoken language, researchers are able to dig the data. They further explain that observations are recorded in the researcher's language and the data is analyzed by identifying and categorizing themes. Qualitative methods assist to carry investigation where other methods such as quantitative methods fail. It also investigates situations where little is known about the subject of the investigation. Qualitative strategies of data collection include observation, interviews and questionnaires. Gray (2004) & Brannen (1993) explain that a qualitative researcher begins with defining general concepts in his/her study which may change their definitions as research progresses. Qualitative methods are more appropriate in this research since this study is concerned with individual and group behavior patterns between people especially on how they do things or do not accommodate each other because of stereotypes. This study therefore, seeks to organise data into recognizable categories and patterns.



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Likewise Haralambos and Holborn (1995) state that qualitative method helps a researcher to gain a true reflection of the way of life, of people's experiences attitudes and beliefs. This method assisted me in collecting data that was useful in getting an in-depth understanding of the involvement of RCLs in school governance. However, qualitative method has its own limitations. For instance, it is believed that qualitative method follows no strict rules; researchers are cautioned that the research is not allowed to be mindlessly inventive (McMillan,

and Schumacher 2001). Qualitative research should be done artfully, but it also demands a great amount of methodological knowledge and intellectual competence (Ibid). One of the major weaknesses of qualitative methodology is the question of accurate representation. A researcher should restrain his or her biases. To obtain accurate results the researcher should acknowledge his or her limitations and make allowances for them. Hence, I sought to achieve a considerable measure of objectivity in this study by allowing the respondents to talk with minimum interruption from my side.



Even though my study is mostly qualitative, questionnaires which are quantitative in nature were also used. This, therefore, gave my study a quali-quantitative research approach. As the literature indicates, a qualitative researcher can use mixed methods (Tashakkori, and Teddie 2003). It is against this background that this study used quali-quantitative research methods (Ibid).

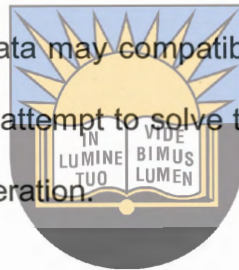
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### 3.3.2. Quali – quanti research method

Tashakkori and Teddie (2003) explain that mixed methods are the explicit use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study. Brannen (1993) concurs with Tashakkori and Teddie that qualitative research is efficient at getting to the structural features of social life, while quantitative studies are stronger in terms of processual aspects. It was, therefore, appropriate for me to bring together these strengths in a single study. As such most methodological commentaries seem to agree that two distinct paradigms can co-exist, in one

study (ibid). These methods depend on a theoretical framework of the stated problem and have remarkable differences. In this study, qualitative methods used included observations, interviews and document analysis. On the other hand quantitative methods used were questionnaires.

Wise, *et al* (1967) state that the choice of a method of research is determined by the nature of research. To justify the use of both methods, Leedy (1993) avers that qualitative and quantitative data may compatibly live in the same home and the objective of the research is to attempt to solve the basic problem for research not to any exclusive method of operation.



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Brannen (1993) suggests that qualitative research facilitates research by helping the researcher with the choice of subjects for a qualitative investigation. Furthermore, quantitative research can be used to plug the gaps in a qualitative study because the researcher cannot be in more than one place at a time (ibid).

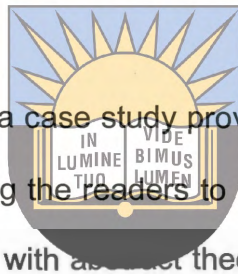
In this study, quantitative method was used in the form of statistics thus statistical type of data analysis was employed. Biographical data for RCLs and SGB was asked from the respondents such as their gender, age group, grade, educational qualification and the component of SGBs. To determine the correct answers throughout the questionnaire categories and codes were also used.

### 3.4 Research Design

As has been indicated earlier in this chapter, the study is a case study. A case study, therefore, is an in-depth investigation into a specific and relatively small area of interest (Imende and Myangwa, 1996). Since this study is interpretive, the most appropriate research design for the information needed is the case study. Gummesson (2000) believes that descriptive case study is an attempt to describe, for example, what happens when a new product is developed and labeled on the market. Mwingi (2000) describes a case study as a method that allows the individuality of each case to come out as a persuasive voice. Furthermore, Cohen & Manion (1985:120) explains that case study methods afford opportunity to observe the “characteristics of individuals units” within their natural habitat. One of the main objectives of this study is to understand how learners commit their participation in school governance in the selected schools. Cohen *et al* (2000) believe that a case study can be defined by participants' roles and functions in a case. Therefore, it is important in this study is to use a case study approach so that the participants portray and speak for themselves 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation (Ibid).

Learner participation in South Africa is a relatively new phenomenon. Hence, the use of the case study approach in this research seeing that it is frequently used when there is a new phenomenon about which not much known. It is also used for very rare events in which few subjects can be found. Here, in South Africa, for example, the idea of transforming the schools into communities where

everyone has a voice “is a recent phenomenon because our democracy rights are new” (Democracy Watch, 1997:2). Jaeger (1998) expressed the same view and believes that a case study portrays an educational problem in all its personal and social complexity. Brink (1996) states that a case study will provide significant amount of descriptive information and will also provide some explanatory information about ‘why’, as well as ‘what’ hence the appropriateness of the interpretive qualitative case study paradigm.



Cohen *et al* (2000) believe that a case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations enabling the readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. With regard to the buttressed the fact that a case study can be defined by participants' roles and functions in the case. As a researcher I agree with Jaeger (a case study portrays an educational problem in all its personal and social complexity) so as to fulfill the expectations of this study. My case in this study was the extent of RCLs involvement in school governance. Therefore, participants' roles and functions in the case helped me. The problems that obstructed effective learner involvement were identified in the case study.

This study was conducted in two rural senior secondary schools of Libode District. These schools were selected so as to check the extent of participation of RCLs in school governance.

The following were the objectives that came from the broader aim of this research.

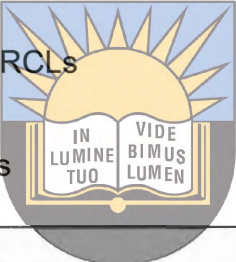
- To investigate the extent to which learners are afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance,
- To explore the extent of learner willingness to participate,
- To study the manner in which learners participate in school governance,
- To discover factors that inhibit learner participation and
- To investigate factors that promote learner participation.



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The table below summarizes the approach taken in the study

Technique \ Method	Target	Purpose
Survey	Parents participating in SGB meetings. A total of 6 parents are surveyed.  Four learners (2 RCLs)	To identify their attitudes on issues of RCL participation in school governance.

	<p>2 Principals</p> <p>2 Educators – SGB members</p>	
<p>Semi – Structured Interviews</p>	<p>6 SGB members</p> <p>2 Non RCLs</p> <p>2 RCLs</p> 	<p>To obtain responses of issues contested around learner participation in SGB meetings.</p>
<p>Observations</p>	<p>1 SGB meeting</p>	<p>To identify and record modes of participation of learners.</p>
<p>Document analysis</p>	<p>SGB minute book</p>	<p>To identify learners' participation when SGBs take decisions.</p>

### 3.5 Research subjects and sites

The research study focused on two senior secondary schools in the Eastern Cape Province at Libode District in the former Transkei. I have categorized these schools as deep rural as they have the characteristics<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>6</sup> This characterization is unofficial, but have developed it out of working with these communities for more than five years.



- Characterized by poverty and high levels of unemployment,
- High levels of illiteracy,
- Lack basic services such running water and electricity,
- Travel distances to access shops and government services

Two schools were selected on the basis of learner participation, one being inactive and the other one being active in school governance.



To obtain some insight into the aspects of educational change and school governance in particular, I interviewed the stakeholders of the selected two case study schools. These included principals, school governing body members, that is, chairperson, treasurer and secretary, principal, RCL members, non-RCL members and an educator. All the above mentioned respondents were interviewed irrespective of gender except in RCLs where gender was considered. I ensured that both sexes in RCLs formed part of the Research Subjects because South Africa is a democratic country and equity should be practiced. As a result when participation was sought I made my intentions very clear to the principal when negotiating entry.

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### **3.6 Phases of data collection**

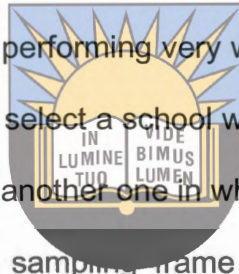
Data collection was done between November 2005 and November 2006, in two phases:

- 3.6.1 Pilot Phase

- 3.6.2 Main Data collection Phase

### 3.6.1 Pilot phase

In November 2005, I embarked on a pilot study of the nine Senior Secondary schools of the Libode district at the Port St Johns cluster. The aim of this process was to select the schools to be used in the investigation of this study. In this instance I was looking for a school whose RCL was performing well and the school whose RCL was not performing very well in school governance. The criterion used was, therefore, to select a school where RCL participation in SGB meetings was very inactive and another one in which the RCL was participating. Jaeger (1998) believes that a sampling frame is very important because it defines the operational population of a survey and defines reality. Pseudo names were used for each school to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The reason was to ensure that the respondents were comfortable in discussing issues for the purpose of the study.

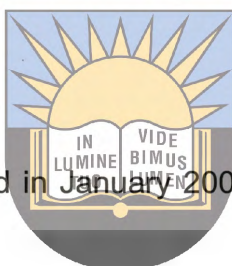


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The pilot study took two weeks before the December school holidays in 2005. Questionnaire for all the nine Senior Secondary Schools were distributed to the principals of schools to be brought back by 07 December 2005. Pilot study was done to reduce errors when the main data was collected. This was done in light of Jaeger's (1998 ) suggestion that a researcher should look at the strengths and weaknesses in a study. I also piloted to check whether this study is researchable. The other reason for the pilot study was to look at the geographic

factors. Port St Johns cluster was chosen because of its proximity to my workplace as I also work there.

During the pilot phase, surveys were conducted with a set of questions about RCLs such as whether the school had RCL as well the levels of learner participation. In the pilot study 80% of the respondents revealed that RCLs were not active in SGB activities. Therefore, it helped me in the selection of sampling for data collection.



After the pilot study was analyzed in January 2006, the pilot research findings were as follows:

- At Kuyasa Senior Secondary School the findings showed that RCLs were not functional and very in active in SGB meetings.
- At Zakhele Senior Secondary School the findings showed that the learners in SGB meetings were active and functional.

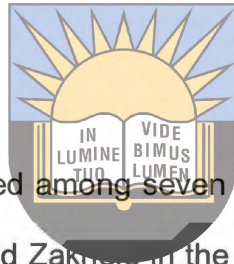
The selection of the two schools was based on these findings.

The instrument that was used for the pilot study was improved during the main data collection phase. This was based on the responses from the schools that formed part of the pilot study. It became clear that some of the questions asked during the pilot phase were too general.

### 3.6.2 Main data collection

Data was collected from July to November 2006 in both schools. The data was collected in the following order:

- Questionnaires
- Document analysis
- Interviews
- Observation



#### 3.6.2.1 Questionnaires

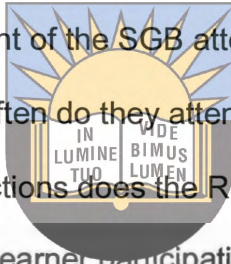
Questionnaires were administrated among seven respondents, in the two case study schools namely Kuyasa and Zakhele in the Libode district. A survey was conducted in July 2006 in both schools. Two days were used for each school. This was a strenuous exercise because most of the respondents were unable to read and write and, therefore, I had to read questions for surveys and write the answers myself. This exercise started from 09h00 – 15h00. There were 23 questions asked from RCLs and they were as follows:

- Biographical data
- How do learners get to participate in RCL?
- In your understanding, what kind of learners normally participate in your RCL?
- What are the functions of RCL in your school?
- Do RCL members attend SGB meetings?
- What is most frustrating about serving in the SGB?

- What do you think can be done to improve the situation mentioned above?

To ensure gender balance, at both schools two RCLs were surveyed and a boy and a girl were chosen. There were 25 survey questions for SGB members and the same format as that of RCLs was used:

- What is the average age of learners participating in SGB?
- Does the learner component of the SGB attend SGB meetings?
- If the answer is yes, how often do they attend meetings?
- Which SGB roles and functions does the RCL participate in?
- What frustrates you about learner participation?
- What do you think should be done to improve the situation referred to above?



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The research questions that the questionnaires were trying to answer were as follows:

- To what extent are learners afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance?
- To what extent are learners willing to participate?
- What are the learners' mode of participation in school governance?
- What factors inhibit learner participation?

- Which factors promote learner participation?

### 3.2.2.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis was done in September 2006 during the school holidays because the SGB minute books were available. It was also very convenient for me to peruse them when the schools were closed. I had plenty of time to read all the SGB minutes for both schools. I looked for the agenda, attendance register, learner contributions during SGB meetings and also the policy making and implementations strategies. The quality of the minutes was very good. All the important issues were neatly written with isiXhosa, their home language. The hand writing used was very legible and the items under discussion were clearly indicated.



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The research questions that the document analysis was trying to respond to were as follows:

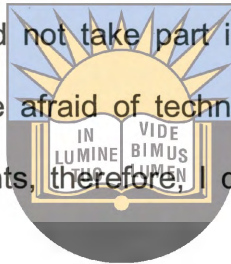
- To what extent are learners afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance?
- To what extent are learners willing to participate?
- What is the learners' mode of participation in school governance?

### 3.6.2.3 Interviews

The in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out between August and September 2006 among RCLs. The population included those learners who

participated in the survey. The two non -RCLs and educators from both schools were also interviewed. Only two parents interviewed were not part of the survey.

I recorded all the data that was provided in the interview schedule. Instruments such as the tape recorder were not used. When I requested permission from the respondents to make use of the tape recorder, it was not granted. Some respondents told me, they would not take part in my study if it was used. At Kuyasa the SGB members were afraid of technological instruments. I did not want to intimidate my respondents, therefore, I decided not to tape record the interviews.



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Both English and isiXhosa languages were used during interviews. These languages were both used because some of the respondents had a little knowledge of English and they were more comfortable and free in discussing issues in their mother tongue. Probing questions were also used. The interview questions were semi structured and focused on roles of learners in school governance, problems encountered by learners in policy making. Eight questions were asked from all participants. These kinds of questions were useful as they allowed the interviewees some freedom to raise issues that affected them especially the learners. They stated that they felt threatened to raise issues in front of parents.

The research questions that the interviews were responding to are the following:

- To what extent are learners afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance?
- To what extent are learners willing to participate?
- What is the learners' mode of participation in school governance?
- What factors inhibit learner participation?
- Which factors promote learner participation?



#### 3.6.2.4 Observation

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The purpose of the observation was to get information on how the SGB took decisions in its meetings. One SGB meeting was observed at each school. Both meetings were held in November 2006 at the respective schools. At Zakhele Senior Secondary School there was no learner representation in the SGB meeting although there were many issues that were discussed pertaining to the welfare of the learners. At Zakhele Senior Secondary School the SGB reported that learners were writing examinations. This implied that learners were always included because all class representatives formed part of the SGB in that school. At the time of these observations not all classes were writing examinations.



At Kuyasa Senior Secondary School only one learner attended the SGB meeting instead of two learners as per statute. The learner that attended the meeting was a grade 10 learner and he was a newly appointed SGB member. The chairperson of the meeting asked learners to contribute in matters pertaining to them. That was a problem because the learners seemed not to be free to participate in the presence of the elders.

The research questions that the observations sought to answer are the following:



- To what extent are learners afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance?
- To what extent are learners willing to participate?
- What is the learners' mode of participation in school governance?
- What factors inhibit learner participation?
- Which factors promote learner participation?

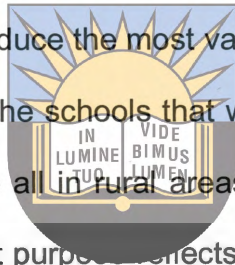
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### **3.7 Sampling of schools and selection criteria**

#### **3.7.1 The selection of schools**

This case study used a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of research aims. Therefore, it is based on the researcher's judgment and the

purpose of the study. Blanche *et al* (2006) assert that purposive sampling is used to obtain a representative sample by including typical groups in the sample. This sampling was more convenient and economical and it allowed me to handpick the sample, based on knowledge of the area and phenomena of study (Jankowicz, 2000). The term 'purposive sampling' is applied to those situations where the researcher already knew something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. For example, the two schools I worked with were the schools that were likely to provide me with best information and which were all in rural areas. They were selected with a specific purpose in mind and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation.



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The selection criteria were then as follows:

- Public Senior Secondary Schools
- Same socio economic factors
- Accessibility
- Learner Representative Council
- Learner active participation and learner inactive participation in school governance.

### **3.7.2 The selection of respondents**

At Zakhele Senior Secondary School all RCLs from various classes form part of the SGB. Only two learners, one girl and one boy from grade 10 – 12 were

selected. The non-RCLs were selected on voluntary basis from grade 10 and 11 from both genders. At Kuyasa Senior Secondary School two RCLs that formed part of the SGB were selected and the non-RCLs were selected on voluntary basis.

One educator who served in the SGB was selected to form part of the study. All the SGB members who formed the executive committee were selected that is:

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer



Within each school, questionnaires and in-depth interviews were conducted with two RCLs and two non RCLs. In addition to that, three parents, one educator and the principals of the sampled schools were selected by the researcher.

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### **3.8 Research Techniques used**

Research techniques used during field work were as follows:

- 3.8.1 Questionnaires
- 3.8.2 Document analysis
- 3.8.3 Interviews
- 3.8.4 Observations

### 3.8.1 Questionnaire

Gall *et al* (1996) describe a questionnaire as a document that asks the same questions to all individuals in the sample. It consists of open-ended and closed-ended questions and statements. A closed question is where the subjects are forced to choose from predetermined responses. An open ended question is where respondents give any responses they want to give (Mc Millan and Schumacker, 1993). In closed questions, respondents are offered a set of answers and asked to choose the one that most closely represents their views (Frankfort-Nachmias, & Nachmias, 1996) particularly the closed-ended items in a questionnaire include, but not limited to the following:

- Completion of sentences or fill-in items
- Multiple choice questions or statements
- Ranking alternatives

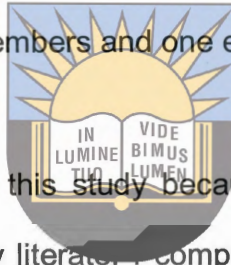
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The open-ended questions give the respondents opportunity to elaborate on the issues in question. Therefore, the answers that are given in the questions are determined by the nature of the questions and the respondent's reactions. In the study both closed and open-ended questions were used although the closed ones seemed to dominate.

Jaeger (1998) cautions that, a questionnaire should be short and questions asked should address one or more of the research questions. In this study the questionnaire construction addressed the following research questions:

- What are the factors affecting learners involvement in school governance?
- What is the nature of learner participation in school governance?
- What are the factors that promote meaningful learner participation?

I distributed questionnaires to all selected schools on scheduled dates. The questionnaires were distributed to the two principals of the selected schools, six school governing body members that is, chairperson, treasurer and secretary of the selected schools, two RCL members and one educator.



I administered questionnaires in this study because some of the respondents under study were not adequately literate. I completed the questionnaire for the respondent and this helped me to even dig more information from the respondents.

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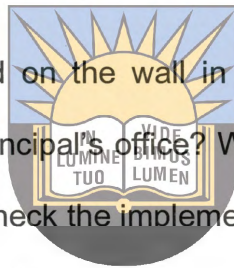
### 3.8.2 Document Analysis

In this study document analysis addressed the following research questions:

- What is the nature of learner participation in school governance?
- What are the factors affecting learners' involvement in school governance?
- What are the factors that promote meaningful learner participation?

For document analysis, official documents such as SGB minutes, school programmes, code of conduct as well as vision and mission statements were perused. The official documents were in good condition. The SGB minute books for both schools were neatly covered. The minutes were clean and written in a pure isiXhosa language. The other documents checked at the school during observation of the SGB meeting were the code of conduct, vision and mission statement.

All the documents were hanged on the wall in the principal's office. [Which documents are these? Which principal's office? What is the significance of this in your study?] I was unable to check the implementation processes of the code of conduct and the proposition of the vision.



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### 3.8.2.1 SGB minutes

The main aim of looking at the minutes was to know how resolutions are taken concerning the role of learners in the formulation of the policies and their contribution when the resolutions are taken. Also the minutes were analyzed to learn about learners areas of interest, discussion of their needs and how they raise them. In this research I was interested on how their views were taken by the parents and educators alike. The attendance of learners in SGB meetings was also checked, as well as punctuality at the meetings.

### 3.8.3 Interviews

As a method of research, an interview is usually considered very flexible. Using semi-structured interviews helped a great deal as this study is aiming at probing answers from the respondents on the roles of RCLs in school governance. When conducting interviews I was mindful of some methodological concerns, including the need to set boundaries and find focus to ensure that the process is credible, appropriate, consistent, confirmable and neutral (Tuckman, 1994). The credibility, consistency and appropriateness were achieved in this study, as the respondents were asked the same questions as per plan.



Appendix 5 is an interview schedule containing questions that enabled me to conduct a sequenced and planned interview.

The interviewees responded to the following research questions:

- What is the nature of learner participation in school governance?
- What are the factors affecting learner involvement in school governance?
- What are the factors that promote meaningful learner participation?

### 3.8.4 Observation

Observational data is attractive as it affords the researcher an opportunity to gather “live” data from “live” situation (Cohen *et al*, 2000). I observed the SGB meeting because it enabled me to understand the content of programmes as they are. Systematic direct observation was used in this study to observe the proceedings of the SGB meetings.

I visited the selected schools having given prior notice. I also checked and observed among the school governance tools the following documents.

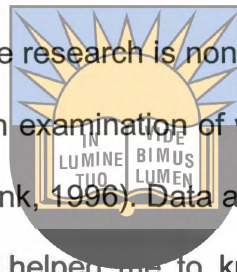
- SGB minute book
- Attendance registers
- Agenda of the meetings

### 3.9 Approaches to data analysis

The analysis of data in qualitative research is non-numerical, usually in the form of written words as it involves an examination of words rather than numbers as is done in qualitative studies (Brink, 1996). Data analysis was done concurrently with data collection because it helped me to know which data needs to be collected and also know whether to explore a particular issue in depth or to stop further collection because it was enough. Combined data collection and data analysis allowed me to be more organized.

The study employed content analysis which involves identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data. This is a procedure for categorizing behavioral or verbal data with the intension of classifying, summarizing and tabulating. It involves classifying and coding data.

A qualitative approach was used. The inputs of all respondents were analyzed. All the respondents' answers were considered as valid and correct. The greater the number of people who gave the same kind of understanding enhanced the



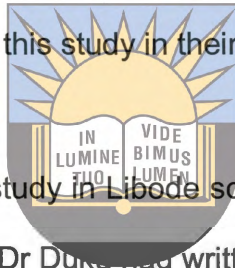
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validity and reliability of the information. It is, therefore, important that the analysis and the subsequent interpretation are done.

### 3.10 Gaining access

As a Circuit Manager at Libode District office I had knowledge of all the Senior Secondary Schools. Although the schools who took part in this study do not belong in my circuit, I was known by the staff. It was therefore, not difficult for me to negotiate entry to conduct this study in their schools.



The permission to conduct this study in Libode schools was requested from the District Director. My Supervisor, Dr Duku had written me an introductory letter to the District Director and to the school. This letter contained all the information about the topic under investigation.

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On my first visit at the selected schools I used a letter from Dr Duku to negotiate entry. Consent forms for participating parents to sign were made available. After a long discussion the parents expressed reluctance to sign the consent forms. They told me that they were not in the court of law. However, I was unable to carry on with the procedure and I trusted the verbal consent gained. I assured them about confidentiality in whatever they contributed in this research.

At Zakhele Senior Secondary School when I discussed about Master's research and being a Circuit Manager, that created a lot of confusion. Some were saying,

*"Masimvumele umntu ka rhulumente enze into yakhe mhlawumbi sakude sakhelwe isikolo* (Let us allow the government official to do her thing perhaps we will eventually have a school built for us)." This meant that in that scenario I had to explain as a Departmental official the channels they can follow if they needed government to build them a new school. That was a very difficult situation because the respondents saw me as a government official not a researcher. After explaining what the research was about, they seemed to understand and I was allowed to carry on with the research.



### **3.11 Reliability and validity**

Of importance in any study are the issues and principles of reliability and validity. With these principles in mind, I ensured that the measurement process did not generate evidence that was self-contradictory because of internal inconsistencies. Gall *et al* (1996) explain that questionnaires must meet the same standards of validity and reliability that apply to other data collecting measures in educational research.

#### **3.11.1 Reliability**

The reliability of a measuring instrument is a degree of consistency which measures whatever it is measuring (Ary *et al*, 1990). Tuckman (1994) explains that reliability means that the test is consistent. If a ruler is used to measure two objects of identical dimensions it is expected that same results can be obtained each time the ruler is used. Therefore, reliability refers to the measuring

instrument consistently yielding the same results each time it is administered. To ensure reliability I asked the same set of questions to all participants in the study. Consistency in the study was followed.

### 3.11.2 Validity

Validity refers to the extent that the instrument measures what it claims to measure (Best, 1977). Additionally, Ary *et al* (1990) note that validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument measures what one thinks it is measuring. Validity is always specific to the particular purpose for which the instrument is being used. This, therefore, implies that an instrument that is valid in one context and for one purpose may not be valid in a different situation and for a different purpose.

Validity assures the researcher about the correctness of the direction that one is taking. It means that if the test instrument that is being used has not been validated the results as well will be invalid. In this study the instruments used to collect data will be validated to ensure valid results to the highest possible level. Babbie and Monton (2001) concur with Ary *et al* (1996), that validity refers to the extent to which a measurement provides data that relates to commonly accepted meaning of a particular concept. In this study, validation of data was ensured through the use of the same questions for the respondents.

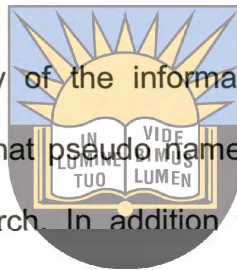
Furthermore, in order to ascertain validity and reliability of data in this study, triangulation was used.

Triangulation is a process of data collection, which involves looking at an object from more than one perspective to provide researchers with additional information on the study object. Mwanje (2001) & Denzin (1978) further explain that triangulation is a mechanism, which focuses on several methodological strategies to link aspects of different perspectives on a study phenomenon. Triangulation does not prove that the researcher has got it right, but it gives confidence that the meaning of the data has some consistency across methods and that the findings are not closely tied up with a particular method to collect data (Denzin,1978). As ~~Strategy, several methods~~ are used to gather information and allow for the cross checking of facts. Using triangulation in this study provided me with additional information during data collection. Also the case study approach that this study used also helped me to gain insights into the phenomena as it permits an in-depth research of meanings and reasons.

### **3.12 Statement of ethics**

It is ethical to inform potential participants of the research and to obtain their agreement for their participation. Hussey and Hussey (1998) aver that participants should not be obliged to participate in any research study. I had to make sure that participants did not regard me as someone in authority. I discussed with them the meaning of research and what my research was all

about. The fact that I was perceived as a departmental official, posed some challenges on the research process. Other respondents, feared being subjected to inspection thus developed a negative attitude. However, I overcame that fear by sending a consent form to all the schools. The aims of the research were also clearly stated which is to investigate the extent to which RCLs participate in school governance. I hoped that they would look at me more as a researcher than an authority figure. I also avoided deceiving the participants.



I guaranteed the confidentiality of the information given to me during the research and I also promised that pseudo names will not reflect the name of individual schools under research. In addition to that the names of all the respondents in this research were not used. I asked permission from the District Director at Libode District. ~~When the permission was granted~~, in a written form by the District Director, I wrote a letter to the principals of the two selected schools discussing my research and asking for their consent.

### **3.13 Summary**

Data was collected using multiple methods and tools such as questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and observation. These research tools were selected on the basis of their suitability for the desired goal which is to gain an understanding of the extent of involvement of RCLs in school governance. Even though there were minor challenges experienced at that time, rich data was collected. The following chapter presents the analysis of data.

## Chapter 4

### Data presentation and findings

#### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present data on specific facts pertaining to the participation of learners in school governance at Zakhele Senior Secondary School and Kuyasa Senior Secondary School in Libode district in the Eastern Cape. As has been indicated in earlier chapters, these are pseudo names.

The data to be presented in this chapter came from a survey conducted with the RCLs, parents and educators. Inclusive interviews of the same sample with non RCLs were as follows:



- Document analysis
- Observation of one SGB meetings.
- Below are the central research questions to which all these data collection instruments were trying to respond

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- To what extent are learners afforded an opportunity to participate in school governance?
- To what extent are learners willing to participate?
- What is the learners' mode of participation in school governance?
- What factors inhibit learner participation?
- Which factors promote learner participation?

As such these instruments sought to establish the extent to which capacity building for governing body members was done. They also explored whether systems and strategies for support, especially for learners were in place.

This chapter is presented as follows:

- Section A: Respondents Profile
- Section B: Perceptions of RCL and SGBs about their participation
- Section C: Learner experience in participating in school governance

#### 4.1.1 Respondents Profile

A number of variables such as age, gender, and education qualifications were identified.



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##### 4.1.1.1 RCL Profiles

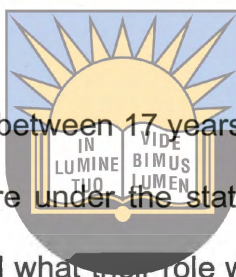
**Table 1: Two learners per school**

SCHOOL NAMES	SEX		AGE GROUP		GRADE		TOTAL
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
KUYASA	1	1	16-17	ABOVE	12	12	2
SSS				17			
ZAKHELE	1	1	ABOVE	ABOVE	12	11	2
SSS			17	17			
TOTAL	2	2					4

The above observation revealed the following trends:

### **(a) Age Variable**

This was used to determine the age of RCLs that participated in school governance. Data indicated the age of learners that were participating in school governance in both schools. As it came up learner ages ranged between 16 and 18 years of age.



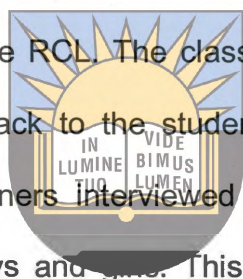
The age group of RCLs ranged between 17 years and above. This illustrated that all the learners interviewed were under the statutory age (18). The learners in survey were able to explain well what their role was in the school governance of their respective schools. As I interviewed them, I could not doubt their ability and age to qualify as members of the school governing body. During the discussions, they were listening attentively. SASA Section 23(2) (1996: 24) stipulates that, elected members of the school governing bodies of a public school comprises of learners who are in the eighth-grade or high grade. The senior secondary schools have learners from the tenth grade to the twelfth grade. The age group of learners was linked to skills. Learners of this age are able to participate in school government SASA (1996).

### **(b) Gender Variable**

South African equity policy seems to be implemented in both schools. In school governance, the membership of RCLs was composed of both boys and girls. For



instance, in Zakhele a boy and a girl form part of the study. Both genders and ages for the learners shown in table 1 were acceptable as shown in SASA for RCL representation in the school governing body. The learner's ages were acceptable because senior secondary schools start from grades 10-12 according to SASA (1996). Again learners below 18 years do not form part of the legal obligation/contract within the school. In both schools learners' age was above 17 years. The number of learners that form RCL was also acceptable so that all the classes were represented in the RCL. The class representation in RCL is also important because reporting back to the students was very easy. At Kuyasa Senior Secondary School learners interviewed in the survey were grade 12 learners and comprised of boys and girls. This indicates that in both schools there was no domination of males over females and vice versa. Gender is very important because in the South African constitution it is stated clearly that equity should be observed. Hence, it is important to note that males and females were represented.



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### **(c) Grade variable**

The grades for learners were checked for continuity. Ideally the variety of grades of learners that participated in school governance should balance so as to be able to sustain the learners' commitments and responsibilities when grade 12 learners leave the school. I discovered that learner's representation was from grade 10 to 12.

#### 4.1.1.2 SGB Profiles

**Table 2: SGB Profiles**

SCHOOL NAMES	SEX	AGE GROUP	EDUCATION QUALIFICATION	SGB COMPONENT
KUYASA SSS	1. M	41 - 50years	University Degree	<b>Educator</b>
	2. M	Under 40years	University Degree	<b>Principal</b>
	3. F	41 - 50years	Matric Certificate	<b>Non teaching staff</b>
	4. F	41 - 50years	Primary school education	<b>Parent</b>
	5. M	41 - 50years	Secondary school education	<b>Parent</b>
ZAKHELE SSS	1. F	Under 40years	Primary school education	<b>Parent</b>
	2. M	Under 40years	Matric Certificate	<b>Parent</b>
	3. F	41 - 50years	College Diploma	<b>Educator</b>
	4. F	41 - 50years	University Degree	<b>Principal</b>
	5. M	61 - 70years	Primary school education	<b>Parent</b>

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Table 2 illustrates that five members of the SGB participated in this study in each school. These are educator, principal and learners. This table also illustrates the overall educational qualifications and age group of the SGB members (parents and educators) from the two schools that participated in this study. A principal and an educator in each school serving in the SGB also formed part of the survey. The following section will explain further SGB profiles on terms of age, education qualification and gender.



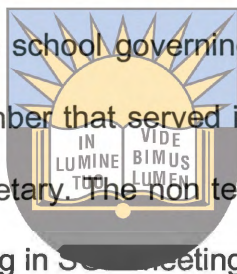
#### **(a) Age of the participants (SGB)**

When I looked at face value the SGB profile I noticed that there were relatively young people who could be regarded as full of good ideas and progression in terms of attitude, constructiveness and transparency. This implies that they could allow learners to have a voice in school governance. Mwamwenda (1995) contends that learners in Senior Secondary School are mostly adolescence, thus people on the threshold of adulthood; they need adults who could exercise some degree of patience. However, as it turned out, some of these adults hold old fashioned stereo-types that learner's views are not accepted.

The table shows that the participants (over ninety percent of the SGBs ) were over forty years) and at face value capable of giving guidance to learners, so that they can face any challenges and display taking good decisions during SGB

meetings. Furthermore, all the parent component members were able to read and write in especially Xhosa and have little understanding of English. They also reported that they understand the statutes, although they are in need of support, this is due to the fact that many of these individuals have had long service in SGB.

At Kuyasa SSS, the non-teaching staff member was an old lady that served in the SGB as the secretary of the school governing body, whilst at Zakhele SSS there was no teaching staff member that served in the SGB. The department of education did not employ a secretary. The non-teaching staff member explained that learners were not contributing in SGB meetings.



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**(b) Education Qualifications of the SGB participants**

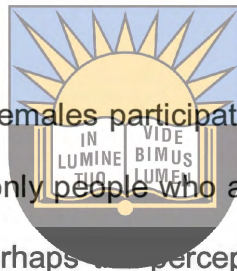
The study revealed that both principals and one educator from Kuyasa have University degrees, whilst one educator from Zakhele Senior Secondary School has a college diploma. This implies that principals and educators in this study were well educated and, therefore, could be thought of as being capable of managing effectively. One of the implications is that such leaders are likely to possess ideas of good democratic leaders. The assumption that I am making here is that managers who are graduates are more likely to manage effectively and sensitive to democratic principles and values. Literature reveals that, a democratic leader, “delegates authority to others, encourages participation, and

relies on expert and referent power to manage subordinates” (Draft and Marcie, 1998:24).

On the other hand it was important to note that 60% of the parents surveyed reported they have primary education qualification. Despite their education qualifications they participated well in SGB meetings. This may indicate that education qualification was not regarded as a determining factor in participation.

### **(c) Gender of the participants**

In this study, more males than females participate in governance. It seems as if males are still regarded as the only people who are good leaders when they are elected in leading positions. Perhaps the perception is that men in SGB bring dignity or they are wiser than women hence, in both schools SGB chairpersons were males. Duku (2006) asserts that overwhelming evidence is that, the SGB were structured in a gendered form with men dominating positions of authority. She goes on to say that masculinity discourses such as men “brought dignity” to SGB and “are wiser” than women were evident in the ways in which these were structured in both urban and rural areas. This section illustrates the profiles of both RCLs and SGB members who participated in the study were mixed in terms of age, education qualification and gender. This may be regarded as the strength as they are more likely to possess beliefs, experiences and attitudes that are different, thus the different perspectives will strengthen the position of the SGB.



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## Section A

### 4.2 Perception of learner participation in school governance

This section outlines the perceptions that RCL, parents and educators have an on learner participation.

This section is subdivided as follows:

- Qualities that influence learner participation in school governance
- The role of learners in school governance



#### 4.2.1 Qualities that influence learner participation

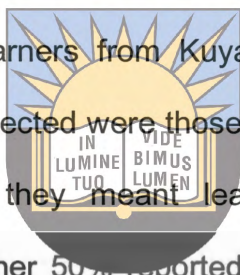
In both schools learners reported that the learners who participated in RCL got elected. This implies that procedures of the SASA were being followed. Besides the legal framework that was followed when electing RCLs, certain qualities were set to influence electorate in their choice of candidates. The following illustrates qualities that electorates were looking for in members of the RCL.

**Table 3: Qualities that influence learner election into RCL**

School Names	Qualities %		Total %
	Leadership	Performance	

Khuyasa S.S.S.	50	50	100
Zakhele S.S.S.	75	25	100

In the above table 50% of learners from Kuyasa Senior Secondary School reported that learners who got elected were those with good leadership qualities. By good qualities they said they meant learners who are tolerant and accommodative to others. Another 50% reported that learners who got elected were with high academic performance. Whilst at Zakhele Senior Secondary School 25% of learner participants reported that learners with good leadership qualities got elected. The 25% of learner participants reported that learners who got elected are those with good academic performance.



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#### 4.3 School Governing Body's perspective

The governing body at Kuyasa Senior Secondary School and Zakhele Senior Secondary School who took part in this study was made up of five members.

- One educator (SGB component)
- The principal
- Three SGB parent component

The breakdown of the governing body at Kuyasa Senior Secondary School was as follows:

- The chairperson was a parent
- The additional member was a parent
- The secretary was a clerk employed at the school (non teaching staff)
- The breakdown of the governing body at Zakhele Senior Secondary School was as follows:

- The chairperson was a parent
- The treasurer was a parent
- The secretary was also a parent



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In both schools these portfolios constitute the executive committee and the principal being the ex officio member. I have noted that 75% of members who took part in the survey have been re-elected from the previous governing body.

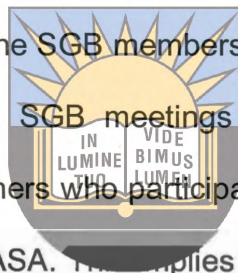
In both schools the participants reported that all the stakeholders are included in the composition of SGB that is, principal, educators, parents and learners. This implied that the policy of the department of education is implemented. Therefore, I can conclude that factors that promote meaningful learners participation are met.

All the participants from Zakhele Senior Secondary School indicated that more than two learners participate in the SGB. The presentation in SGB is only two



RCL members for the senior secondary school with 630 pupils (Department of Education, 1997). At Kuyasa Senior Secondary School all the participants revealed that, two learners participated. I can conclude that further investigation on this regard to be done because I felt that more than two learners should form part of the SGB. This could help learners to disseminate information to other learners very easily.

I further observed that, 50% of the SGB members indicated that the average age of learners that participated in SGB meetings are between 16 – 17 years. Therefore, I concluded that learners who participated in SGB are mature enough to be part of the SGB as per SASA. This implies that learners can come up with good ideas that pertain to their needs.



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The SGB members reported that learners that are serving in the SGB were elected. This is an indication that learners finish their term in office. They also reported that serving RCL members were never fired, lost or request to be released.

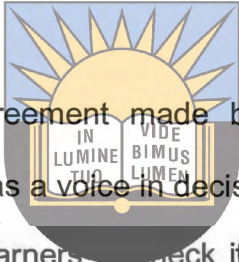
In concluding this section, two factors seem to be most fundamental for one to be elected as a member of RCL. Leadership skills are innate in an individual, they are not hidden to those who look for them and learners with outstanding performance are also likely to perform well when they are members of the

governing structure. So, leadership skills and academic performance are the key features necessary to be elected as a member of RCL.

#### **4. 4 The role of learners in school governance**

The role of learners in school governance is to contribute in decision making and policy making and implementation.

##### **4.4.1 Decision making**



Decisions are a collective agreement made by all the stakeholders in an organization, where everyone has a voice in decision making (Sayed, 2005). The questions were presented to learners to check if they attended SGB meetings, which form the decision-making platforms. 100% of RCLs indicated that they were given opportunities to attend the meetings. Learners indicated that they were not given time to speak freely in SGB meetings. In most cases they felt intimidated to discuss with adults. The extent of their attendance of meetings was analysed through the attendance register. I noticed that learners do not attend SGB meetings. This was shown by the SGB minutes where the learners' credentials in SGB meetings were minimal. Also the learners' contribution in these minutes was not stated in the minutes. They only reported to have contributed only on the sport programs that had been done that is, two past and three on-coming matches.

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RCL members were further asked how they were invited to the SGB meetings. In their responses at Kuyasa Senior Secondary School 75% learners indicated that they were invited verbally a day before the meeting. While at Zakhele Senior Secondary School, 75% of the interviewed learners indicated that no letters were sent to them, but were invited verbally.

When RCL members were asked about who determines the SGB agenda, 50% learners indicated that the SGB chairperson determines the agenda whilst the other 50% indicated that the principal determines the agenda. Even though the agenda was mostly determined by the principal and SGB, learners highlighted that they were given the opportunity to suggest items for the agenda. This implies that they were to a certain degree involved in the governance of the school. This indicated that they normally suggested items for tabling in the agenda such as:

- Fundraising
- Sport activities
- Policy making

50% of the participants reported that the issue that they normally suggest in the agenda was that of sport. They indicated that for the incoming and outgoing matches, they were allowed to have an input.

25% of the participants reported that the issue that they normally suggest in the agenda was that of fundraising. Learners co-ordinated fundraising activities. For

example, they reported that they played a key role in farewells, concerts and ruffles that were organized for fundraising purposes.

25% learner indicated that the issue of security was among the issues they usually suggest. This implies that learners also have a big role in the smooth running of school governance in their school.

The other 50% highlighted the issue of fees. Learners complained about the high amount paid by learners for school fees and that they were not part of the decision-making in this regard. Even the SGB minutes analyzed were silent on learner participation on finance related activities and fees in particular. According to Makhubu (1993) the registration of learners deprived of such an important decision makes them frustrated and this could have a negative impact on education. It is, therefore, very important to give learners the chance to have a voice in matters pertaining to their involvement in school governance.

25% also reported that admissions and review of results were other issues under discussion. Learners in both schools were involved when the examination results were analyzed. Additionally the issues of discipline and sport were also mentioned. Learners reported that they helped the educators on issues related to school discipline and monitoring late coming of the learners. At Zakhele Senior Secondary School RCLs reported that the school gate was always closed at eight o'clock for late comers. The interviewed parents stated that one of the

issues they clashed with RCL members on was the implementation of the closing of gate for the late comers. The closing of the gate seemed not to be accepted by learners. Hence SGB had to convince them to control late coming. The involvement of the learners in discharging this responsibility helped to get them more punctual.

Again at Zakhele Senior Secondary School learners were invited in all the SGB meetings concerning learners' needs. For example, in the minutes it showed that physical resources such as computers and school furniture were discussed as well as sport and examinations.



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### **4.4.2 Policy Implementation** *Together in Excellence*

Learner involvement in school governance at Kuyasa Senior Secondary School was not considered as important by most of SGB members. There was no indication in the minutes that learners had given any contribution in SGB meetings. One deduced that they were deprived of participation by other stakeholders due to adult attitude towards their participation. Berger (1994) states that to deprive learners involvement in school is caused by the undemocratic system of administration. Therefore, the school governance should be democratic to ensure that learners are involved in school matters.

Learners' involvement in SGB meetings was very minimal. Learner's names only appeared thrice in the minute book as from September 2002 to September 2006.

This indicated that learner's involvement in SGB meetings was not taken as being serious. Learners in SGB meetings have limited voice, suggestions and discussions in SGB meetings. Rich (2002) reveals that learners' involvement in SGB meetings is usually limited to minor matters like fundraising. In some meetings in which they are allowed to come they are treated just as observers.

## Section B

### 4.5 Learner experience in participating in school governance

The following section is the in-depth exploration of the challenges experienced by learners who served in the RCLs of the two selected Senior Secondary Schools.

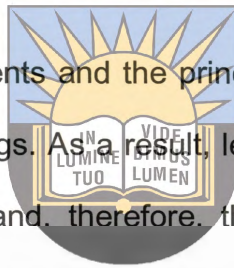
The learners form part of the school governance because RCLs are in place in both schools. The learners showed interest in governance issues although they seemed to be faced with many challenges which included training needs in their roles and responsibilities. Some learners even reported that training could help learners boost their confidence in governance participation.

This they reported could change the status quo which was as follows:

- Learners 1 & 2 from Zakhele reported that decisions were taken without their involvement in SGB meetings
- Learners 3 & 4 from Kuyasa Senior Secondary School reported that they were not aware of their roles and responsibilities in SGB meetings.

Besides the above mentioned frustrations raised, learners also expressed dissatisfaction in relation to the person who has most influence in deliberations

during SGB meetings. 50% alluded that they were not satisfied with the fact that parents were the most influential in meetings. The other 50% of learners indicated that the principal has the most influence in discussions at the meetings and gives direction in most decisions. Learners were dissatisfied by the principals giving direction because the principals dominated the proceedings of the meetings. In addition one has indicated that the principal is the one who spoke most because he / she always mention payment of fees.



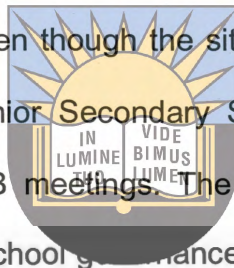
As it is indicated above the parents and the principal were the people who had the most influence at the meetings. As a result, learners were scared to discuss in the presence of the adults and, therefore, their involvement was minimal.

When learners were asked if they ever raised any issues considered to be controversial, the response ~~was that they never do so~~. 100% learners said they have never learnt to speak to their parents and educators and have never asked argumentative questions in SGB meetings. As a result, the degree of learner ability to debate issues was not very clear.

The school governing bodies at Zakhele Senior Secondary School were interviewed. Each member was interviewed the same way as those at Kuyasa Senior Secondary School. 100% of parents highlighted that learners have problems around policy issues such as abuse by educators in their classes and the issue of their involvement in SGB meetings.

#### 4.5.1 Confidence in participation

100% learners from Kuyasa Senior Secondary School explained that they were less confident when speaking at meetings. They said this was because they feared saying wrong things in-front of the elders. This showed that learners' participation in SGB meetings was not effective. This is explained by Duku. (2006) who points out that, parents particularly African rural parents do not want to debate or argue with the learners. As a result there is usually tension between learners and the SGB (Ibid). Even though the situation was not so clear, 100% participants from Zwelakhe Senior Secondary School alluded that they were confident in contributing in SGB meetings. The assumption, therefore, is that learners participate well in the school governance. This was despite the fact that SGB minutes were silent on their participation in meetings.



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Even though learners seemed not to participate as they would have wanted to, signs of democratic values and principles seemed to have developed. For instance, 75% of the learners who participated in this study reported that learners reported back to their constituencies decisions of the SGB through class representatives. RCLs also felt appreciated by other learners because they gave them information. 25% of the participants stated that no report back was given to the student body and as a result they do not see any difference in the student body and also do not feel appreciated by them. This may imply that learner's participation in SGB meetings has no impact to some students in the school.



#### 4.5.2 Frustration experienced by learners in their participation

The RCL members interviewed indicated enthusiasm about their participation, as they regarded their voice as important. However, they also raised what they regarded as frustrating aspects about their participation.

These included:

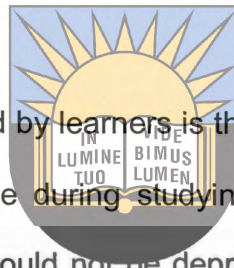
- Study time
- Being silenced

##### (a) Study time

One of the frustrations expressed by learners is the time scheduled for meetings. The meetings usually take place during studying and teaching times. This is rather a dilemma as learners should not be deprived their constitutional right to tuition. An alternative arrangement should be in place, so that they do not miss teaching periods. For instance, SGB meetings could be scheduled for break time and/or Saturday afternoons.

##### (b) Being silenced

At Kuyasa Senior Secondary School learners raised that some of the decisions taken in SGB meetings are imposed on them. Decisions are taken without them, especially those that involve finances. As a result some learners felt that they were not fully involved but were partly involved. They even stated that the parents and educators decide the agenda of SGB meetings. This situation buttresses Chinsmy's (1995) assertion that learners do not participate on equal basis with other stakeholders on decisions affecting them in their schools.



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Learners involved in school governance were frustrated due to lack of workshops around school governance. Their intimidation by the presence of elders in meetings as well as their fear of disagreement with the adults is a deep-rooted problem as it is also a cultural issue. I, therefore, think that learners should be trained on school governance and leadership issues so that they may be effective in their roles in school governance whilst holding on to their cultures.



Due to the issue of fear to debate issues with elders, 50% of SGB (parent component) revealed that learners in SGB meetings always agree with what the older members of the SGB wish for them without any discussions. To them it was a sign of trust shown to them by learners. On the other hand the educator at Kuyasa had a strong feeling that learners are not sure of their duties hence the need for workshops on school governance and leadership issues.

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#### **4.6 Summary**

Data collected on the extent of learner involvement in school governance revealed a number of challenges in the area of learner participation. For instance, in the two case study schools learners were not fully involved in decision making, policy making and policy implementation.

Analysis of these challenges raised a number of issues that still need to be addressed like:

- Training learners on their roles and responsibilities
- Training parents on learner participation

- Training educators on learner participation
- Encouraging learners to take part in decision-making
- Encouraging democratic values at home

The following chapter will specify the conclusions and recommendations for this study.



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## Chapter 5

### 5.1 Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter outlines the summary of the study, recommendations and the possible future research direction. As the challenges of learner participation have been identified and debated in depth in the previous chapters, possible solutions to such challenges will be highlighted in this chapter. I need to indicate that data and findings identified by this study cannot be generalized as only two case study schools were used and cannot be said to represent a fair population of the schools in the Eastern Cape.



From the findings, it became almost clear that South Africa, as it moved from the apartheid to post-apartheid system, is still faced with challenges of bridging the gap between policy intentions and policy implementation. For instance, in the context of this study, although decentralization is aimed at bringing services closer to people, there are still many issues and inadequacies regarding school governance that still exist in the education system. These include:

- Lack of learner support and guidance about how to be effective in school governance.
- Gap between policy-making and implementation.
- Participation problems faced by learners.
- Frustrations experienced in participation.

## **5.2 Summary of findings**

### **5.2.1 Lack of support and guidance**

It was pleasing to note that even though the respondents identified challenges, they hoped that these would improve if learners could receive training and capacity building on the roles and responsibilities of SGBs in school governance. It is recommended that further research could be useful to study the extent to which such workshops would turn things around in as far as effective learner participation is concerned.



Among the central role players with regard to learner capacity building could be the District Office. As they are closer to schools, they should take an active role in the support of the schools. As per their mandate, the roles of the district officials include co-ordination and monitoring of the functionality of the schools. This includes monitoring policy making and implementation.

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### **5.2.2 Encouraging Team – building**

The SGB cluster and circuit structures should be in place to encourage the surrounding schools to work in groups. SGB members should also share information whenever they experience problems.

### **5.3 Gap between policy-making and implementation.**

One of the contribution this study gives in the field of school governance is revealing through empirical findings the gap that exist between policy making and implementation. In this instance this is due to socialization as well as issues of the levels of preparedness of the communities to embrace the democratic principles and values.

#### **5.3.1 Policy formulation and design**

When the gap on policy intentions and implementation exists, that is an indication that something went wrong from the beginning of the policy process. It has been noted in this study that the policy design and formulation was lacking input from all the stakeholders. Therefore, policy making and implementation stages are reached when the members of the structure formulate alternative policies to address a problem.

Maharaj (2005) explains that the policy alternatives depend on what took place during the agenda setting phase. He explains that the problem should be recognized and accepted by the organisation. Furthermore all policies are about choices which involve compromises and trade-offs that may help to bring about some kind of balance between extreme positions and conflicts (ibid). To overcome conflicts that were caused by the non-participation in policy making, in this study it is recommended that policy guidelines on school governance should be re-visited by the SGB with the help of the District Officials.

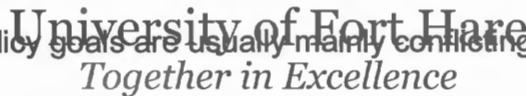


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Literature reveals that successful policy-making means a thorough examination of the means by which results are achieved (Maharaj, 2005). And as such implementation is the means by which the identified goals during policy making are achieved. Policy implementation, therefore, is more than just a managerial or administrative activity and as such policy should be seen as a process that is not static, but that evolves.

#### 5.3.1.1 Implementation as Evolution

Maharaj (2005) regard implementation as being shaped by the original policy-making from which it originated. The policy that is adopted consists of a variety of goals and ideas. Policy goals are usually mainly conflicting and vague (Ibid).



It is not easy to anticipate all the problems and obstacles that are discovered as implementation proceeds. Likewise in this study, some problems faced by learners in policy making and implementation were not anticipated. In this study, the following questions could address implementation:

- Which statute objectives are to be implemented in school governance?
- In what order?
- In what proportion of available resources?

Implementation is a critical juncture at which policy is endowed with essentials that were not and could not be provided for in its formulation,

including doctrines to explain and defend it and to attract and maintain the support that establishes it in a logical niche in a densely occupied policy space (Ibid).

Policies develop as they move across implementation and new circumstances are encountered. Policies can be changed deliberately during the implementation stage. As such implementation in most instances is influenced by many factors that include the political climate and direction of the moment Maharaj (2005).



#### 5.3.1.2 Implementation as politics

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Ingram and Mann (1980)<sup>7</sup> ~~Ever that implementations~~ ~~Together in Excellence~~ are conducted through accommodation and bargaining pettiness, give-and-take, winning and losing. They further state that the policy to be implemented is a point of departure for bargaining among implementers. It is believed that what materializes is determined by local conditions which are unique to each implementation context, which shape the eventual outcome. The importance of goals and plans are minimized by the implementation – as – politics perspective. Persisting conflict over goals and the means of attaining them inspires this outcome as does the presence of many loosely connected participants and/or generally unstable environment.

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<sup>7</sup> In Maharaj (2005)



Literature reveals that a supportive political environment which produced a policy withers and vanishes during implementation stage Maharaj (2005). In some instance the public becomes inactive when the rough edges of implementation are exposed. It is, therefore, recommended that policy producers should avail themselves to support the implementation process to ensure that policies are implemented as per plan.



Maharaj (2005) states that, "Researchers are in general agreement that implementation is extremely difficult to describe and classify because so many factors influence it and thereby cloud understanding". Furthermore, Brewer and de Leon (1983)<sup>8</sup> have identified six factors that have a bearing on policy implementation. They are:

- a) Source of the policy
- b) Clarity of the policy
- c) Support for the policy
- d) Complexity of administration
- e) Incentives for implementation
- f) Resource allocation

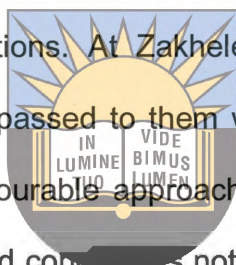
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<sup>8</sup> In Maharaj (2005)

It is, therefore, recommended that all the policies should be implemented using the above factors. This will help all the schools to close the gaps around the implementation of policies. The following section will provide summary of the problems faced by learners participating in SGB.

#### **5.4 Summary of Problems faced by learners**

The study found out that policy-making and implementation is not done in schools as per SASA expectations. At Zakhele Secondary School, learners complained of policies that are passed to them without their contribution. They also complained of the less favourable approaches that the school uses when effecting punishment. This is not what SASA envisaged, as this document is the vehicle through which democracy is promoted in school. SASA seeks to promote learner involvement in all activities.



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Another area that needs attention is that of elder attitudes towards learner participation. There is a need to change mindsets amongst the parents and educators. We could achieve this through empowerment programmes in school governance as well as in civic organisations.

This study further explained that learners were less confident when speaking in meetings. It is also recommended that parents should learn to debate with the learners and become change agents. Another major concern from learners from both case study schools was the unfavourable timing of SGB meetings.

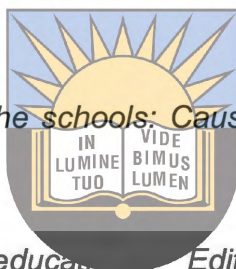
Therefore, to accommodate learners in SGB meetings, meetings should be planned so that they do not clash with other school activities such as tests and examinations. And this could be achieved if and when learners are involved both in policy making and policy implementation.



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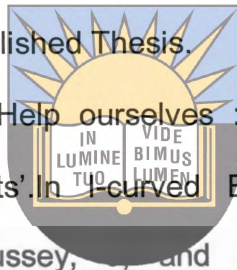
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## Appendix 1: Consent Form

I, Cynthia Nomalungelo Makubalo a Master of Education student at the University of Fort Hare, as part of my academic program, am conducting research on the involvement of learners in school governance.

As part of this process, I am inviting you to participate in an interview and a questionnaire.



Should you consent, I wish to guarantee that any information you may provide will be confidential. At no time will your identity be divulged or made available to anybody other than the researcher.

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Thank you

Cynthia Nomalungelo Makubalo (Mrs)

MED Candidate, School of Post Graduate, UFH.

I ----- hereby give  
consent to participating in the study on  
participation in school governance

Date : -----

Signature : -----



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## Appendix 2 : Permission to conduct research in schools



the

EASTERN CAPE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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K.D. Matanzima Building \* Owen Street \* MTHATHA \* P.O Box 218  
\* LIBODE \* 5160 \* REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA \* Tel: +27  
(0)47 5027 436 Fax: 047 5311 314 \* Website: [ecprov.gov.za](http://ecprov.gov.za) \*

Email:

10 March 2006

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The District Director

Department of Education

Libode

Re: Access to conduct research at Libode schools

Will you please grant me permission to conduct research at Vulindlela and Ganumthetho senior secondary schools as from July 2006? I also request your permission to refer to the Departmental policy papers and relevant documents to pursue my arguments..

Thank you

C.N. Makubalo

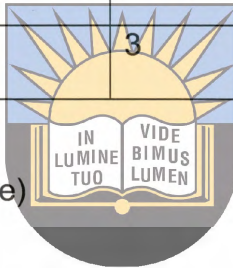
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**Appendix 3: RCL Survey**

**Section A: biographical data**

1. Gender (Please tick one)

Category	Code
Male	1
Female	2
Any other, please specify	3



2. Age group (Please tick one)

Category	Code
8-12	1
13-15	2
16-17	3
Above 17 years	4

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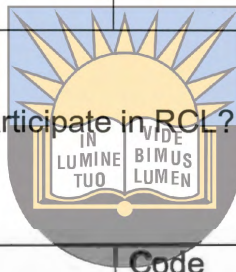
3. Your grade (Please tick one)

Category	Code
12	1
11	2
10	3

4. How many learners form your RCL?

Category	Code
1-5	1
6-10	2
Above 10	3

5. How do learners get to participate in RCL?



Category	Code
They get elected	1
They are nominated	2
They volunteer	3
Any other, please specify	4

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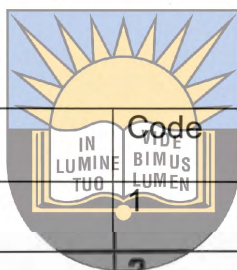
6. In your understanding what kind of learners normally participate in your RCL?

Category	Code
With outstanding academic performance	1
With outstanding leadership qualities	2



Those who can stand against education	3
Those who can stand against parents	4
Grade 12 learners	5
Any other, please specify	

7. What are functions of RCL in your school? (Tick as appropriate)



Category	Code
Policy making	1
Policy implementation	2
Financial management	3
To organise farewell parties	4
To organise student strikes	5
To organise student trips and tours	6
Any other, please specify	7

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8. Do RCL members attend SGB meetings?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

9. If the answer is yes in 8, how are they invited?

Category	Code
In assembly	1
Sent letters	2
Any other, please specify	3

10. If the answer is yes in 8, who determines the agenda?

Category	Code
SGB chair	1
Principal	2
Parent	3
Teachers	4
Learners	5
Other	6

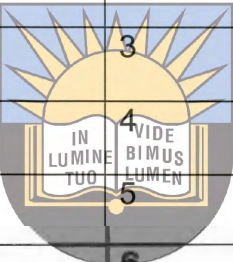
11. As learners, do you get an opportunity to suggest items for the agenda?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

12. If the answer is yes in 8, what issues do you normally suggest for tabling?

(Tick as appropriate)

Category	Code
Fees	1
Fundraising	2
Admissions	3
Review of results	4
Discipline	5
Security	6
Politics	7
Sport	8
Other	9

  
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13. What issues do you discuss in these meetings?

Category	Code
Fees	1
Fundraising	2
Admissions	3
Review of results	4
Discipline	5

Security	6
Politics	7
Sport	8
Other	9

14. Who has the most influence in discussions in meetings?

Category	Code
SGB chairman	1
Principal	2
Parent	3
Teacher	4
Learner	5
Other	6

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Please explain your answer provided in 13 above.

15. Who speak the most in the meetings?

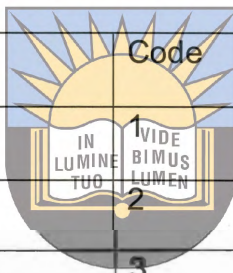
Category	Code
SGB chairman	1
Principal	2
Parent	3
Teacher	4

Learner	5
Other	6

Please explain your answer provided in 14 above.

16. Has the RCL ever raised issues considered controversial by other members?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3



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Please explain your answer in 19 above.

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17. What is most fulfilling about serving in the SGB?

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18. What is most frustrating about serving in the SGB?

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19. What do you think could be done to improve the situation mentioned above?

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Thank you for sharing your experiences!

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## Appendix 4: SGB Survey

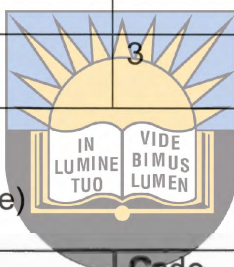
### Section B: Biographical data

1. Sex (please tick one)

Category	Code
Male	1
Female	2
Any other, please specify	3

2. Age group (please tick one)

Category	Code
Under 40 years	1
41-50	2
51-60	3
61-70	4
71-80	5
Over 80 years	6



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### 3. Educational qualification

Category	Code
University degree	1
College diploma	2
Matric certificate	3
Secondary school education	4
Primary school education	5
Have never been to school	6
Any other, please specify	



### 4. Which SGB component you are representing? (Please tick one)

Category	Code
Principal	1
Educator	2
Parent	3
Learner	4

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5. What is the composition of the SGB? (Please tick one)

Category	Code
Principal, Educators, Parents and Learners	1
Principal, educator, parents	2
Parents and principal	3



If the answer 5 is 1, please answer the following, how many learners are participating?

Category	Code
2	1
1	2
More than two	3

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6. What is the average age of learners participating in the SGB?

Category	Code
8-12	1
13-15	2
16-17	3
Above 17 ears	4

7. Is there a difference between learners currently serving and those elected?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3



8. If the answer is 1 in 8, what is the reason for such difference? (Tick as appropriate)

Category	Code
They were fired	1
They lost interest	2
Requested to be released	3
Any other, please specify	4

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9. Please explain the answer provided in 9 above

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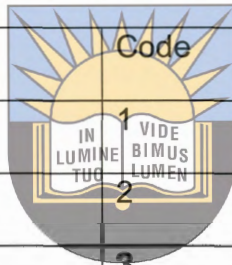
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10. Does the learners' component of SGB attend SGB meetings?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

11. If the answer in 10 is 1, how often do they attend SGB meetings?

Category	Code
Very often	1
Often	2
Rarely	3
Very rare	4



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12. If the answer is 1 in 10, how are they informed about such meetings?

Category	Code
A written invitation	1
Verbal invitation	2
Assemble	3
Any other, please specify	4

.....  
 .....  
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13. If the answer in 10 is 1 do learners in SGBs receive agenda before SGB meetings?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

14. Do learners get opportunity to suggest items for the agenda?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

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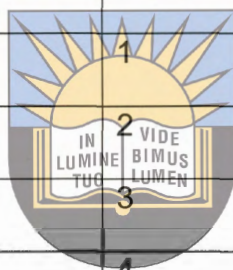
15. If the answer is yes in 14, what issues do they normally suggest for tabling?

Category	Code
Fees	1
Functional management	2
Admissions	3
Review of results	4

Discipline	5
Security	6
Extramural activities	7
Other	8

16. If the answer is 1 in 10, how active are learners during SGB meetings?

Category	Code
Very active	1
Active	2
Less active	3
Inactive	4



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Please explain your answer above

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17. Which SGB roles and functions does RCL participate in?

Category	Code
Policy making	1
Policy implementation	2
Code of conduct	3
Fundraising	4
Curriculum issues	5

Please explain you answer above

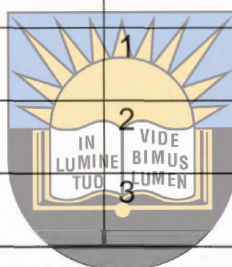
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18. Do learners make any difference in the SGB and school in particular?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3



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Please explain your answer provided in 18 above?

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19. Do you perceive learner participation as important in your school?

Category	Code
Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

Please explain your answer provided above

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20. What frustrates you about learner participation?

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21. What fulfils you about learner participation?

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22. What do you think should be done to improve the situation referred to in 20?

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23. In your opinion, what fulfils learners in their SGB participation?

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24. In your opinion, what fulfils learners in their SGB participation?

.....

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.....



**Thank you for sharing your experiences!**

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## Appendix 5: Interviews for learners and SGBs

1. Does the school have RCL?

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2. Does RCL form part of school government body?

Yes or No



3. If "Yes"

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(a) What qualities influence RCL election?

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(b) What are the outstanding qualities?

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(c) What do you mean / or can you elaborate more on this issue?

---

4. What is the role of learners in school governance ?

Tick as appropriate.

- Decision making -----
- Policy making -----
- Policy implementation -----



4.1) If the answer is policy making – Can you unpack these policies.

4.2) What problems learners encounter in policy making?

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4.3) Do RCLs really participate in school governance?

4.4) What is their contribution?

5. If you really participate

(a) What is it that RCL are doing??

---

(b) Are RCL really involved??

---

(c) How are they involved? ?

6. (a) Which problems are learners faced with ?

---

(b) Who has the most influence in discussions during SGB meetings?



(c) How does the principal give direction in SGB meetings?

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(d) How does the SGB chairperson tell the meeting about the proceedings in a meeting ?

---

7. (a) Is the RCL confident in participation ? Yes or No.

---

(b) If the answer is yes:

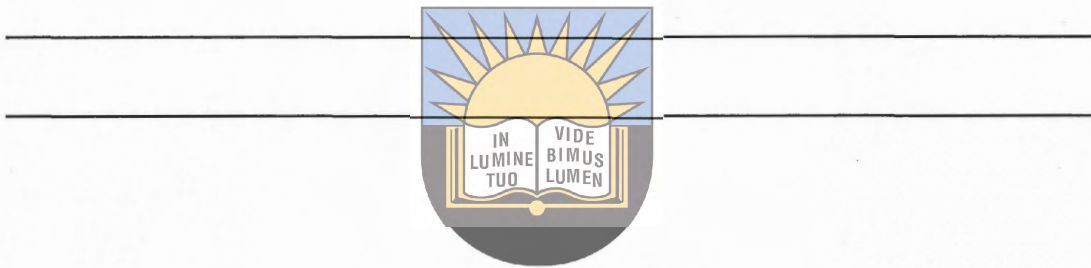
➤ What are they saying ?

---

➤ What are they doing ?

---

8. What are the frustrations RCL experienced in school governance ?



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**EASTERN CAPE**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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13 March 2006.

Mrs. C.N. Makubalo  
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Libode



**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH SURVEY AND USE OF  
RELEVANT DEPARTMENTAL DOCUMENTS.**

Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research to all sampled personnel in the districts and schools as determined. Your research subjects are all components of the School Governing Bodies. It will also be appropriate to produce this letter when administering questionnaires, conducting interviews and making observations in these institutions. You are also permitted to use and refer to the departmental policies, papers read and other relevant documents to validate or pursue your arguments made.

Thank you.

.....  
District Director