

**EFFECTIVENESS OF RURAL-BASED SECONDARY SCHOOL
GOVERNING BODIES IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Thabitha Makaela Chauke, hereby declare that this thesis for the Doctor in Philosophy in Rural Development (PhDRDV) submitted to the Institute for Rural Development, School of Agriculture at the University of Venda has not been submitted previously for any degree at this or another university. It is original in design and in execution, and all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature

Date

Thabitha Makaela Chauke

To my late grandparents, Dorcas and Ernest Modiba, for their unconditional love and unwavering support, and for the thirst they always had for all their grandchildren to get education.

ABSTRACT

The need for sustaining the provision of high quality education in all countries cannot be overemphasised. Linked to this is the centrality of ensuring that effective governance prevails. In an effort to address the latter challenge in South Africa, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) were introduced through the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996. A SGB is composed of democratically elected members, viz. Principal who serves in an *ex officio* capacity, teacher representatives, learner representatives in secondary schools, and parent representatives. The parent representatives are the majority in this body. The current case study was carried out to analyse the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary schools with respect to their designated roles and responsibilities.

The mixed methods approach in two sequentially integrated phases was applied in the study undertaken in Vhembe District's Thulamela Municipality in Limpopo Province of South Africa. There were nine secondary schools located in rural areas from four circuits. In each circuit two schools were sampled, a performing and an underperforming. Principals, teacher governors and non-governors, learner governors and non-governors, teacher union representatives, a traditional leader, circuit managers, manager for governance, deputy managers for governance and parent governors participated in the study. Interviews were held with Principals, and the following governors; teachers, learners and parents, individually, and focus group interviews were held with the following non-governors: teachers and learners who were purposively sampled to take part in this study in Malamulele cluster of Vhembe Education District. A questionnaire was generated from the results of the qualitative data and completed by Principals, parent governors, teachers and learners.

To analyse and organise qualitative data, Thematic Content Analysis was used and for quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 was used. The results revealed that the governors related well with traditional leaders; parent governors' illiteracy impacted negatively on their performance; Principals and teachers were not supportive to parent governors; funding received from government was insufficient; and learner governors were passive during meetings with other governors. There were no statistically significant effects of schools and interest group or category of respondents on the views expressed. However, statistically significant effects ($P < 0.05$) were observed with regard to the following challenges: "some Principals are not conversant with Department of Basic Education (DBE) policies and may mislead SGBs in making informed decisions"; "the writing of quarterly reports

by SGBs that would assess their progress in relation to their plans,” and “some teacher governors are bench warmers and are not interested in SGB activities”. It was recommend that Traditional leaders be represented in the SGB; parent governors be encouraged to further their studies to improve their literacy; training should address the needs of schools instead of using a one-size-fits-all type of training; and the funding model used by government be relooked into so that rural secondary schools and their communities could benefit more.

The cordial relationship existing between traditional leaders and SGBs was crucial for improved disciplining of learners and nurturing strong bonds between schools and neighbouring communities. This work provides ingredients for formulating strategies for improving the performance of rural-based secondary SGBs and enhancing their contribution to local development.

Key words: Effectiveness, governance, secondary school, rural development, school governing body

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CGD Centre for Global Development

DBE Department of Basic Education

DMG Deputy Manager for Governance

EEA Employment of Education Act

ESD Education for Sustainable Development

FET Further Education and Training

GEM Global Education Monitoring

GET General Education and Training

HoD Head of Department

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

LEA Local Education Authority

LRA Labour Relations Act

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

NDP National Development Plan

NPC National Planning Commission

PFMA Public Finance Management Act

PTA Parent Teacher Association

PTSA Parent Teacher Student Association

RCL Representative Council of Learners

RSA Republic of South Africa

SANCO South African Civic Organisation

SAPS South African Police Services

SASA South African Schools Act

SDA School Development Association

SDC School Development Committee

SGB School Governing Body

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

UNEP United Nations Education Program

UNESCO United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation

WHO World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine that a child of farm workers can become the President of a great nation.¹

1.1 Introduction

The words quoted above were extracted from one of Nelson Mandela's speeches and are significant because throughout the world, countries are concerned about the quality of formal education which might help promote development (Mncube, 2007; Mncube & Harber, 2010). Also, MacJessie-Mbewe (2004) and Chimombo (2005) are of the view that education is a key to human, political, social and economic development in a newly independent nation. For instance, Chimombo points out that education was used in Malawi to promote social and economic development. The author explains that, "Human development is partly a matter of people and communities improving their own lives and taking greater control of their destinies. Education is broadly used as an instrument for social change" Chimombo (2005: 130). It is against this background that (Omoniyi, 2013:178) argues, 'No country has achieved constant economic development without considerable investment in education and human capital.'

One of the primary challenges identified in the diagnostic report of the National Planning Commission (NPC) presented to President Jacob Zuma was that 'the quality of school education for Black people is poor.' (National Planning Commission, 2012: 38). The poor quality of education has implications on the learners being denied access to employment due to incompetence. Taking this background into account, the NPC adopted, through the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 that South Africa should have a quality school education system that can compete internationally in both numeracy and literacy. Thus, this vision is contained in Chapter 9 of the NDP 2030. The latter move shows that education is a powerful vehicle that can be used to eradicate poverty. However, for all this to be achieved there is need for effective governance within education institutions such as schools. It is unlikely that this can be achieved if School Governing Bodies (SGBs) lack the capacity to

¹ Nelson Mandela-former President of South Africa

deliver on their mandate. Douglas (2013) states that literature shows that leadership and management provided in a school have more influence on the quality of education and improvement, than on the availability of resources.

The current study was carried out to analyse the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary schools of Vhembe District's Thulamela Municipality in Limpopo Province of South Africa. Strategies for strengthening SGBs' ability to contribute towards more effective governance, improved quality of education and development in schools were then developed. It was hoped that if the latter strategies were implemented to satisfaction, SGBs would become effective vehicles of rural development.

The provision and sustenance of education of high quality which is linked to effective governance is a thirst throughout the world. Administrators and politicians do whatever is possible to quench the thirst, hence the introduction of school governors.

1.2 Background

My experience dictates that democracy refers to political change which encompasses education, the economy and environment, among other dimensions. Various in-country policies inform and guide how democratic practice is realised. This implies that when a country moves from a repressive system to a democratic dispensation, its policies must also change. Accompanying these changes is the need for educating its people on the relevant policies that guide them.

Harber and Mncube (2011) contend that education is a weapon that can be used to combat poverty and promote development of any nation. Their argument is based on the view of Phillips and Schweisfurth (2007:5) that "Education is seen as contributing to the public good, and therefore as deserving of the allocation of public interventions and in need of public control." In other words education is 'the major component of human capital. It plays an important role in fostering economic growth and enriching the overall quality of life (Aref & Aref, 2012: 2191). Mncube and Harber (2010) further point out that there is enough literature generated from Western countries that supports the creation of democratic space for effective education to be realised. Democratic education results in quality teaching and learning, and effective learning brought about by democratic forms of organisation within the school system (Mncube & Harber, 2010). The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) (2013:1) reports that 'If all students in low income countries left school with basic reading skills, we could eradicate 12% of world poverty. As such, it is an essential investment.' The report

further states, 'In Jordan, 25% of women with only primary education who live in rural areas work for no pay, for example, compared with 7% of those with a secondary education. In El Salvador, only 5% of working adults with less than primary education have an employment contract, compared with 47% of working adults with secondary education (GEM, 2013:2)

The preceding arguments reveal that governments recognise the importance of quality education and effective schooling. Strengthening governance would help in the realisation of democratic education and thus bring about an impact on development. A way of achieving this is through establishing representative SGBs. For example, Crozier (2000) observes that the 1988 Education Act of England stipulates that SGBs should comprise parents, teachers and the management teams in schools.

The involvement of parents in strengthening governance in schools in England is not new. It is revealed in the Education Act of 1944 that parents have always been involved in the education of their children with the specific aim of ensuring that good education is acquired. Harrison and Busher (1995) claim that the involvement of parents in the education of their children has been in operation since 1902 when the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were legislated. The Act stipulates that such parents had to be powerful in terms of education, knowledge and the power to act on the education of their children. Crozier (2000) takes this issue further and indicates that apart from SGBs, the Local Management of Schools (LMS) comprising parents, employers and the wider community also serve as a watchdog for education in Britain. Thus education and schooling are not left in the hands of School Principals and teachers only.

In France, Secondary School Councils are responsible for governance (Lusaseni, 1998). They comprise the Principal, five members of the administrative personnel, five co-opted members, five elected teacher representatives, five elected parent representatives and 2-5 student representatives, depending on the level of secondary schooling. In addition, each school has a Disciplinary Council that deals with serious matters and has the powers to suspend both teachers and students from school-related activities. Two teachers, a parent, a student, a pastoral staff and a medical personnel representative constitute the Disciplinary Council.

Taking into account the situation in Africa, Obanya (1999) contends that education is required to inculcate cultural and social norms, which help prepare an individual for a future role in society. Accompanying the preparation is the inculcation of skills needed for survival and societal development. This implies that it is crucial that parents play a pivotal role in the education of their children. According to Obanya (1999), 'the wind of democracy' is prevailing in Africa, although prolonged strikes accompany it. The author cites the Central African

Republic as an example, revealing that schools in that country were closed for three consecutive years (1991-1994) because of government wan not allowing participation by all as democracy dictates.

Masunungure (2009) argues that although activities in some countries reflect democracy in action that does not mean that countries practise democracy. The author cites an example of Zimbabwe's 2008 elections, where he avows that the winds of change were defied. Between 1988 and 1990, in countries such as Mali, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe strikes interrupted the school year every other month (Obanya, 1999). Ncube (2007) cements the notion that citizens enter into strikes to display their dissatisfaction. In this particular scenario, teachers in Zimbabwe also displayed their dissatisfaction and deserted schools. Recently in South Africa, at Vuwani in Limpopo Province, communities registered their dissatisfaction about the decision taken by the Demarcation board and burned more than 20 schools (Kanyane *et al.*, 2016 and Maserumule, 2016). Focusing on the situation in Zimbabwe, Baruth (2013) concurs with Chikoko (2008) in their revelation that Section 9 (1) of the revised Zimbabwe Education Act of 1996 stipulates that the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture runs government schools. However, the government aids non-governmental schools which are run by Rural District Councils (RDCs) and Town/City Councils. Section 8 of the same Act stipulates that it is the duty of the RDC to oversee the elections of School Development Committees (SDCs) (Chikoko, 2008). An SDC comprises five members elected by parents of pupils, the head of the school, his or her deputy head, a teacher and a Councillor that the national government appoints. Chikoko (2008) and Baruth (2013) agree that the failure of the Zimbabwean government to manage education effectively led to the establishment of this body. Declining pass rates and worsening quality of education constituted part of the failure of Zimbabwean government to manage education effectively (Chikoko, 2008). Thus, the establishment of SDCs was meant to create a collaborative platform where the government, schools, parents and the community at large could find solutions to the challenges facing the education system.

In South Africa, SGBs were introduced through the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996. Their mandate was to regulate and democratise education at the local level. The Act stipulates that all public schools in South Africa shall have democratically elected SGBs made up of the Principal, representatives of teachers, learners, parents and non-teaching staff at the school. Besides providing direction, the Education Act also proposes the involvement of parents, learners and teachers in the delivery of education, decision making, planning and management of resources. The Van Wyk's (2004) argument that the state alone cannot manage education cements the importance of parental involvement. This is a fundamental feature of school governance which underpins decentralisation or devolution of

education. Such devolution or decentralisation has immense potential for breeding a sustainable learning society.

As indicated already, the need for ensuring that the governance of the school is not left in the hands of the Principal and his/her management necessitated the introduction of SGBs. It was assumed that the involvement of parents in how schools were run would promote the attainment of high quality standards of education and also lead to the development of communities (Clarke, 2009). Chimombo (2005) contends that effective schooling is significant all over the world. The 2005 global monitoring report advocates for strong support and involvement of education authorities, principals, teachers and local communities in ensuring that there is high performance in the school system (van Ginkel, 2005). It is, therefore, not surprising that the South African Department of Basic Education introduced SGBs in post-apartheid South Africa.

Before 1994 in South Africa, Parents, Teachers and Students' Association (PTSA) as well as Parents and Teachers' Association (PTA) were integral in the school governance system. During that period, the Department of Education appointed members who served in the existing structures (Chaka, 2006). In contrast, members of the SGBs are democratically elected as specified by SASA. One of the major criticisms labelled against SGBs is that they do not know what their roles and responsibilities are (Heystek, 2004; van Wyk 2004; Khoboka, 2009; Shumane, 2009). This is why they are often perceived as weak, marginalised and ineffective in playing their oversight role (Bush & Heystek, 2003; Heystek, 2004; Khoboka, 2009; Shumane, 2009).

Clarke (2009) highlights the notion that governance is positively correlated with developmental factors. The author further argues that accountability, rule of law and control of corruption, among other factors are some of the major features of governance often emphasised in development programmes. Taking into consideration the seriousness of the roles that SGBs must play, it is crucial to have people with adequate knowledge, skills and expertise that can be deployed in efforts that seek to achieve quality education and development. Closely linked to this is the need for eradication of poverty in rural communities through effective governance. Human, social, political and economic development can be attained through SGBs. This is the case, yet the democratically elected SGBs in rural communities in South Africa might not know their roles and responsibilities.

Section 16 (1) of the SASA 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa: RSA, 1996), posits that SGBs shoulder the responsibility of entrenching governance in all public schools. This implies that all schools should form SGBs. Section 20 (1) (a) of SASA 84 of 1996 reveals that one of the functions of SGBs is promotion of the best interests of the school, ensuring that it

also develops whilst providing quality education to learners. They are expected to adopt the constitution of the school they govern and also develop the mission statement which provides the direction the school should follow (RSA, 1996). Besides this, SGBs are also responsible for adopting the way learners should conduct themselves. As they perform their functions, SGBs are supposed to support the Principal, educators and other staff in carrying out their duties in the school. Lastly, SGBs are responsible for adopting policies that may be relevant in the day to day running of the school. It should be emphasized that the policies adopted and generated should be aligned with the constitution of the country, which is the Supreme law.

The South African government through the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced the SGBs as a way of regulating, democratising and improving the quality of education throughout the country. According to Clarke (2009), parents constitute the majority of the members of any SGB. According to Welsh and McGinn (1999) and Clarke (2009), parents are involved in their children's education in order to continue democratising communities. It is expected that only two learners and another two members of the teaching staff must be part of each SGB. Shaeffer (2005) and Mncube (2008) demonstrate that learners are also part of the equation, implying that they should not be left out. Phaswana (2010) is of the opinion that learner involvement is beneficial not only to learners, but also to the whole school in terms of the functioning of the school. They can bring about change to fellow learners thereby precipitating development and growth in as far as education is concerned. Learners benefit through opportunities that help build their confidence, stronger relationships with teachers and peers, improved reasoning skills and insight (Phaswana, 2010).

It is important at this stage to indicate that the following are the core functions of SGBs as promulgated by SASA 84 of 1996: to advise the regional director of Education needs and the curriculum of the school; promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school; and to provide and assist in the operation and development of the school (RSA, 1996; Crozier, 2000; Chikoko, 2006).

The Centre for Global Development (CGD, 2002; Aref & Aref, 2012) highlight that education is essential for development because it gives people the skills that help them prosper and pull out of poverty. Improved health, higher wages and economic growth, democracy and political stability are the major indicators of the value of an effective education system, (CGD, 2002; Aref & Aref, 2012). Matsuura (2005) further demonstrates that in its quest for sustainable development, the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), uses Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as an important part of

quality education in the improvement of human resource development. (Aref & Aref, 2012: 2192) opine that ‘Education is widely accepted as a key factor in achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development.’

The CGD (2002) goes further to highlight that in 2000 one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for members of the United Nations (UN) was to achieve universal primary education in order to enhance the chances of countries to develop. Among the 17 sustainable development goals that were introduced in September 2015, two of them that are critical and relevant to this study are to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and end poverty in all its forms everywhere. The two goals are linked to and seen as an extension or supplement of the millennium goals mentioned below.

In an effort to ensure implementation of this resolution, developed countries and the private sector started funding education-based initiatives in developing countries. It was against this background that ESD’s goals for the decade (2004-2014), according to van Ginkel, (2005: 27) are to: (1) “improve access to quality basic education; (2) reorient existing and to address sustainable development; (3) develop public understanding and awareness, and (4) provide training programs for all private and civil society.”

The aforementioned aims of ESD serve to support the notion that the decade (2005-2014) is an instrument through which change in education and mobilisation intended to making sustainable development have to become a reality for all- individuals, governments and institutions, (van Ginkel, 2005). Matsuura (2005: 17) summarises the aforementioned argument by stating that, “Ultimately, the Decade’s goal is to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in attitudes and behaviour that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all.”

The argument stated above qualifies to label education as being significant economically, socially and politically and being beneficial to both the individuals and society (Harber, 2004; 2010). Arma (2005: 59) further argues that not only is education important in bringing about development to individuals’ lives, but it also helps in creating citizens who can “absorb and filter information, leading to a more conscientious society.” It is through education that most countries in Asia enjoy technological development, industrial growth, urbanization and agricultural urbanization. Harber and Mncube (2011) and Matsuura (2005) opine that any country needs education in developing the values and behaviours needed for a suitable

political culture that will be sustainable for a democratic political system. The scholars mentioned are supported by Shaeffer (2005: 33) as he demonstrates, “In February 2005, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of United Nations Education Program (UNEP) signed a joint statement recognising the important role played by education in poverty reduction, economic growth, improving the capacity of people, ...” This is where SGBs who have been mandated by the SASA 84 of 1996 should play their role effectively in developing their communities.

In Vhembe District, all secondary schools that participated in this study have elected SGBs as mandated by SASA 84 of 1994. According to DBE, the performance for grade 12 results ranges between functional, that is, a performance between 60 and 100%, and dysfunctional, which is a performance below 60 %. The question is whether or not the performance could be attributed to the role played by the SGBs. Whether or not SGBs in rural communities in South Africa have the capacity, expertise and skills to eradicate poverty and bring about sustainable development through education as per the mandate of SASA 84 of 1996, remains to be unveiled.

1.3 School Governing Bodies and their Composition

School governing body is referred to as a statutory body of people who are elected to govern a school, (Section 16 of SASA 84 of 1996). The body consists of learners in the case of a secondary school, teachers, the Principal, members of the non-teaching staff employed at the school, and parents of learners who are not employed at the school (RSA, 1996; Niitembu, 2006). Serfontein (2010) states that the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 dictates the nature of partnership involving the state, parents, educators and learners with respect to funding, governance and organisation of schools. This implies that all public schools are bound to have School Governing Bodies (SGBs). This is designed to ensure devolution of powers and concomitant responsibilities. Chikoko (2008) and Mncube and Harber (2010) contend that decentralisation of education governance is recognised and recommended throughout the world. However, it is not clear whether the decentralisation is being managed in such a way that it yields desirable results and is beneficial to rural communities.

In various countries, the governance of schools is undertaken under different names. In Europe as well as in other African countries, it is referred to as the school board. The composition of school governance as well differs from country to country. In South Africa, the School Governing Body (SGB) controls the governance of Education for schools. Niitembu

(2006) states that Potgieter, *et al.*, (1997:11) explain school governance in terms of the school governing body as:

...determining the policy and rules by which your school is to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school.

Serfontein (2010) concurs with Visser (2003) and van Wyk (2004) that governance implies guidelines that are employed for the distribution of power. Maile (2002) and Ngidi (2004) believe that school governance involves determining policies and rules by which schools are to function. But Kuye and Kakumba (2008) view governance as a way in which power and resources are applied towards the realisation of objectives of schools. It should be remembered that the involvement of SGB in the school management is aimed at the realisation of school objectives in a manner that promotes democracy and accountability.

Chaka (2006) states that governance is about the democratic capitalist government with minimal state intervention. In other words, the state does not govern alone, but it brings with it on board other stakeholders in the form of parents, teachers and learners. One of the major reasons for inclusion of other stakeholders as participants is accountability as aforementioned. Apart from accountability, people take pride and respect and attach more value in something they own (Rollock, 2006). It is believed that if someone owns something, he/she takes care of it. So, if parents are directly involved in the governance of the education of their children, their level of commitment will rise. One should also keep in mind that governance is a continuous process that aims at improving or making school situations better than they already are. It is important to scrutinise the benefits of the participation of school governors in the education of their children.

1.4 Benefits of School Governing Bodies' Participation in School Governance

Community involvement in school governance has been found to have some benefits. Shaeffer (2005: 37) points out that, "Youth are identified as a key stakeholder group in both UNESCO's draft international scheme for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)... youth have always been a major force in initiating change and as such must be involved in ESD planning and decision making processes." Dieltens and Enslin (2002) contend that more participation in school governance implies democracy, and further argue that the democracy would be enhanced and quality is likely to be the fruits of the whole exercise. Chikoko (2006) concurs and propounds that school clustering and decentralisation

of education are acknowledged internationally and perceived as reforms in education that go in line with good governance.

Mabovula (2009) and Phaswana (2010) contend that learners who participate in governance are more confident and their reasoning skills as well as their relationship with other learners is appreciable. The authors further suggest that the school shows improvement in terms of its functioning if learners are involved. Sarason (1995), Siririka (2007) and, van Wyk & Lemmer (2009) agree that the involvement of parents in governance results in an improvement in the following areas: academic performance, attitudes to learning, security and emotional stability, behaviour and school attendance. These cited benefits do not go without challenges.

1.5 Challenges SGBs Face in Executing their Duties

Although members of the SGB in South Africa are mandated by the SASA 84 of 1996 to execute their duties, studies show that there are a number of challenges they encounter. Heystek (2004) highlights that Principals question the effectiveness of SGBs in fulfilling their mandate. One of the major reasons for this state of affairs is that parent members of SGBs in most schools are academically illiterate and do not carry out their support work as stipulated by SASA 84 of 1996. Mncube (2009) and Xaba (2011) agree with Maile (2002: 239) in this regard and argue that illiteracy makes members not only ineffective but intimidated and therefore become not committed and may not attend meetings. Illiteracy is not a problem in South Africa only. Chikoko (2008) and Douglas (2013) report that governors in Zimbabwe and Kenya respectively, also face the problem of illiteracy. Niitembu (2006) concurs with Chikoko (2008) and states that in Namibia, especially in rural areas, parent governors do not understand their role and thus are ineffective as they are not informed. If members are not capacitated to execute their duties, and do not attend meetings, how will they govern?

Mncube (2009) states that one of the reasons why some parent governors do not attend meetings is the timing. In a study the scholar conducted in KwaZulu Natal, the results reveal that some meetings were held in the evening, a time that is not convenient to the parent governors (Mncube, 2009). In the same breath, an element of parent governors' lack of capacity was cited by Mabasa and Themane (2002). The scholars contend that some governors are not conversant only with legislation under their jurisdiction; hence, they also do not know when to make a contribution which might be or not be relevant. This contention is supported by Ngidi (2004) and Xaba (2011) who highlight an element of parent governors not being free in the midst of teacher governors. This implies that they are confident about what

they do. The situation also suggests that some illiterate governors are threatened by situations they find themselves in, especially amongst their learned counterparts.

On the other hand, Chaka (2006) has suggested that women governors are discriminated against by their male counterparts; hence they feel intimidated and less interested in participating effectively in school governance. Their exclusion reportedly is rooted in a situation where males refuse to accept that women are human beings first and females later. Experience reveals that although rural areas are dominated by women, they are unlikely to be seconded as front runners for chairpersonship position. Instead people, including women themselves, would recommend an illiterate irresponsible drunkard man rather than another woman who may be more responsible, enthusiastic and committed. Ngara and Ayabam (2013) suggest that lack of self-confidence; political violence; and cultural and religious discrimination are some of the contributory factors leading to few women's participation in political activities. Based on my teaching experience, I concur with Chaka (2006)'s observation. I have been, and am still teaching twenty nine years later, and have experienced this kind of treatment against women governors.

Another area of governance that seems to be a growing thorn on the flesh of both government and governors is financial accountability (Woolman & Fleisch 2008; Serfontein 2010). Financial accountability has now been amplified to another unacceptable and unpalatable level of corruption due to lack of capacity and skills (Rangongo, 2016). Serfontein and de Waal (2015) reveal that most governors are involved in corrupt activities such as bribes, favouritism in hiring or promotion, fraudulent cheques and many other fraudulent activities. One the reasons for parent governors' involvement could be ignorance and factors mentioned in the previous paragraph. It is easy for learned governors to take advantage of the vulnerability and ignorance of the parent governors.

To illustrate further the depth of the seriousness of financial accountability, Woolman and Fleisch (2008) and Serfontein (2010) further allude to the fact that on a number of occasions government and school governors are at logger heads because of mismanagement of school funds. In such situations, governors would blame the school Principal while government blames either the principal or both. The challenge in this regard would be that DBE is confusing the public and disregarding SASA 86 of 1996, if it regards the Principal as its only appointed member and hence the chief financial accounting officer.

However, Section 49 (1) and (2) (a) of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) number 1 of 1999 (RSA, 1999) states that all public entities must have an accounting authority, and

this means that in a public school the accounting authority is the SGB. The act stipulates that one of the functions of the accounting authority is to manage and safe-guard assets, revenue and expenditure and liabilities of the public entity. This implies that the Principal as a chief executive officer cannot be an accounting officer according to section 49 (2) (b) of PFMA 1 of 1999. This, therefore, implies that in terms of financial accountability in schools, the whole SGB is accountable. Contrary to this, research shows that where financial mismanagement arises, the government tends to hold the school principal alone for accountability.

Mncube (2007:129) buttresses this argument arguing that “rather than preventing the apartheid-era inequalities of social class, gender and race, SGBs tend to exacerbate these inequalities.” Mabovula (2009) and Phaswana (2010) agree that learners are marginalised and kept at the periphery in most schools when decisions are made. The scholars argue that this situation is caused by guidelines from the DoE that promulgate that the principal should inform the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) members about decisions that the SGB might have taken.

The challenges mentioned, are not only experienced in South Africa. Crozier (2000) states that in the United Kingdom (UK) the battle is between the social classes where the working-class parents are threatened by the middle-class parents and as a result do not attend parents meetings. On the other hand, some teachers do not want to accept that when they are governors, they are at the same level as the parent governors (Crozier, 2000). South Africa is still in its youth stage of democracy. One is not entirely surprised by the challenges mentioned herein. Throughout the world, governance is still a thorny issue, but it is significant that parents are part of the equation of seeing to the education of their children because they are primary educators (Crozier, 2000).

1.6 Statement of the Research Problem

The performance of most SGBs in rural areas in South Africa is reported to be substandard (Rangongo, 2016), resulting in poor school governance and unsatisfactory community development. However, the performance of the SGBs in terms of decision making and financial management varies from one school to another (Bush & Heystek, 2003; Douglas, 2013; Rangongo, 2016). Given the variability in the performance of SGBs, it is crucial to build an understanding of the underlying reasons behind this underperformance. Moreover, it is not clear how the SGBs’ performance affects the development of rural communities. Therefore, this study was conducted in order to shed some light to these issues through

investigating SGBs at rural secondary schools in the Malamulele Education Cluster of Vhembe District in Limpopo Province of South Africa.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary schools in Thulamela Municipality of Vhembe District, Limpopo Province of South Africa. This was done in order to develop strategies that potentially strengthen their ability to contribute towards better governance, improved quality of education and rural community development in terms of improved service delivery and standard of living. In order to address the overall objective, the following specific objectives were to:

- a) assess the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles in rural schools;
- b) assess the challenges that SGBs face in executing their roles within rural schools;
- c) explain how SGBs contribute to rural community development;
- d) determine how SGBs' performance could be strengthened in rural schools;
- e) determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural area-based SGBs as perceived by the communities they serve; and
- f) suggest strategies that might help improve the performance of rural area-based SGBs.

1.8 Research Questions

The following questions were designed on the basis of the objectives of the study. They guided the data collection process.

- a) To what extent do SGBs play their designated roles in rural school governance?
- b) What challenges do SGBs face in executing their duties in rural schools?
- c) How do SGBs contribute to the development of rural communities?
- d) How can SGBs' performance be strengthened?
- e) What are the ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs as perceived by the communities they serve?
- f) What strategies can help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs?

1.9 Assumptions made in the study

Some assumptions were made when this study was undertaken. For example, it was assumed that school governance and its impact on development especially in rural communities of South Africa was a contemporary issue that would be of interest to both educationists and grassroots communities throughout the world. It was also assumed that the area selected for the study, namely Malamulele cluster in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province of South Africa, would commit to the successful implementation of the study. Lastly, it was assumed that the study would generate information that was applicable, to a certain extent, to other education clusters in the country.

1.10 Operational Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

Effectiveness is one of the key critical pillars of this study. It refers to use of resources in a manner that they are intended for, leading to the achievement of set objectives. Therefore, in this case effectiveness means that SGBs use financial, physical and human resources in a manner that enhance success in their schools. Apart from this, it also refers to the ability to mobilise resources for the school, planning, implementing and monitoring the plan, networking with community members to rally behind them for the benefit of their schools, formulating policies and constitutions as well as managing conflicts.

Governance is another key concept worth explaining. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2009:20) defines governance as “A system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector.” Paquet (2001) opines that governance implies the management of collective decisions of all different stakeholders in an institution for the benefit of the institution’s beneficiaries. Key to this management is the formulation and determination of policies and rules to serve as a vehicle for the institution. A school is found within a society where socio-economic conditions, politics and laws of the country prevail. Thus, a school should serve as an institution that can successfully manage its political, economic and social affairs through interactions with the state, civil society, private sector and grassroots communities.

School governance is the anchor of this study. Potgieter *et al.*, (1997:11) define school governance as “...determining the policy and rules by which your school is to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in

terms of the law and the budget of the school.” Kuye and Kakumba (2008) support this view and opines that governance involves the way in which power and resources are utilized in order to realise the set objectives an organisation sets for itself. Serfontein (2010) distils cooperation, coordination, support, interdependence, transparency, accountability, consultation on matters of mutual interest, and sticking to agreed procedures as the key principles of cooperative and acceptable governance.

Reference has been made to *secondary schools* in South Africa although this has not been clarified. A secondary school refers to an institution that provides education from Grade 8 to 12. Secondary schools located in rural areas are characterised by economical marginalization and lack resources required to effectively deliver on their mandate. They are populated by learners whose parents mostly are labourers and work in the primary sector of the economy, or work in urban areas and come home after a month or two.

Central to this study is the need for connecting school governance with rural community development. Development is a broad concept, which in this context embraces eradication of poverty, productive employment, social integration, crime prevention and drug control.

Development is defined by Cowen and Shenton in Crush (1995: 28) as “a process of enlarging people’s choices; of enhancing participatory democratic processes and the ability of people to have a say in the decisions that shape their lives; of providing human beings with the opportunity to develop their fullest potential and of enabling the poor, women, and free independent peasants to organise for themselves and work together. It is a means to carry out a nation’s development goals and to promote economic growth, equity and national self-reliance.” This definition is compounded because it clarifies the goal of development and elaborates on the desirable action to take. The erection of buildings, availability and maintenance of a vegetable gardens, an improvement in the quality and quantity of passes of learners, hiring of teachers and other employees for the school, improvement in participation of SGBs in decision making, increase in attendance of meetings and reporting are some of the dimensions used to measure development.

Rist (2007:488) defines development as “the general transformation and destruction of the natural environment and social relations in order to increase the production of commodities (goods and services) geared, by means of market exchange, to effective demand.” The SGBs have a mandate to see to it that schools are built for conducive teaching and learning to take place. They are also obliged to hire competent teachers who ensure that learners become responsible citizens and competent successfully in labour markets. With this in mind, it is evident that curricular must guarantee the realization of these ideals. Thus, taking

into account Rist's (2008) views, SGBs must address both the natural environment and social relations as these anchor development.

A key variant of development is rural development, which denotes economic, and community development actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, remote villages and the country side. In this study, rural development was, therefore, contextualised as engaging that people residing in the rural communities within the Malamulele Education cluster participated in activities that helped improve their lives. This view originated from the belief that the local residents understood their challenges and potential solutions better than outsiders. It is important to briefly explain what a School Governing Body is because it would help build an even better understanding of its roles, resulting in the crafting of an appropriate set of tools to examine performance.

Section 16 of SASA 84 of 1996, states that a *school governing body* is a statutory body of people elected to create an enabling environment within a school (secondary school in this study). It consists of learners, teachers, the principal and parents of learners who are not employed at the school (RSA, 1996; Niitembu, 2006), and its critical and core function is to serve the best interest of learners (RSA, 1996).

1.11 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is made up of ten chapters. Chapters 4 to 9 represent the key objectives of the study. In each of these chapters the results are presented, analysed and discussed. In Chapter 1, the background of the study is introduced. First, a brief overview of SGBs is given before the benefits that SGB governors enjoy and challenges associated with their work are discussed. The purpose of the study is articulated followed by the limitations and assumptions underpinning the study are also discussed.

Chapter 2 focuses on a review of the literature relating to SGBs. The origins of SGBs as a vehicle for decentralisation or devolution of powers in manning the education enterprise in the country is presented. Moreover, the roles and responsibilities of SGBs as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996 and their legal status as a fourth tier of government are reviewed.

The second part of Chapter 2 concentrates on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in relation to the topic under study. It begins with the identification of and clarification of key concepts, and moves on to the examination of theoretical frameworks. The concepts clarified then became helpful in the analysis of the collected data at a later stage.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research design and methodology used in this study. The sampling procedure, data collection and analysis methods together with ethical considerations

considered during the process of data collection are also discussed. The chapter also displays reasons why certain tools and methods were used.

Chapter 4 focuses on a detailed assessment of the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles as per mandate by SASA 84 of 1996. The chapter begins with an introduction and goes on to discuss the characteristics of the schools whose key respondents took part in this study. This is then followed by a presentation of the results and a discussion thereof, which is followed by a conclusion.

Chapter 5 elaborates on an assessment of the challenges that SGBs face in playing their roles within secondary schools. The chapter begins with an introduction and followed by a presentation of the results and discussion and then a conclusion.

Chapter 6 concentrates on the contribution of SGBs to rural development. The subject under discussion is introduced and this is followed by a presentation of results and discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 7 focuses on ways through which SGBs can be strengthened. After the introduction, the results are presented and a discussion follows before concluding remarks.

Chapter 8 discusses strategies that might help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs. The chapter is introduced and the results are then presented and a discussion is followed by conclusion.

Chapter 9 focuses on the ideal characteristics of individuals who are most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs. The chapter starts with an introduction of the topic, followed by the results that are then presented followed by a discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 10 gives a synthesis of the study as well as recommendations about the effectiveness of rural-based SGBs in secondary schools and the implication on rural development in Malamulele cluster, in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province of South Africa.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Throughout the world, governments are decentralising or devolving delivery and administration of education. The reasons for devolution of power in education are highlighted. The roles and responsibilities of SGBs as stipulated in the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 are articulated in this chapter. The examination and interrogation of the legal status of SGBs is also put forward in order to get a full understanding of SGBs.

2.2 The Reasoning behind Decentralisation of Education

When a democratic government decides on a policy change, usually the decision is preceded by more research to determine the viability and sustainability of the impact to the citizens thereof. Mention has been made that decentralisation or devolution of power is practised throughout the world. It is for this reason that van Wyk (2004) argues that the state alone cannot manage education. The author highlights the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. This is a fundamental feature of school governance which underpins decentralisation or devolution of education. Such devolution or decentralisation has immense potential for breeding a sustainable learning society.

Johnson (2001) states that studies reveal that decentralisation of power can positively affect the lives of rural communities in different ways. Not only can it help empower them to utilise and manage resources in an efficient way, but it can also help them improve their participation in decision making processes as well as helping them improve in collaborating with other agencies for production of 'synergistic outcomes,' (Johnson, 2001:526). The question of empowerment of local community is also emphasised by Chikoko (2006) who argues that although the empowerment may seem to be little but its presence is felt.

The need for ensuring that the governance of the school is not left in the hands of the Principal and his/her management necessitated the introduction of SGBs in South Africa. It was assumed that the involvement of parents in how schools are run would promote the attainment of high quality standards of education and thereby develop communities (Clarke, 2009). Chimombo (2005) contends that effective schooling is significant all over the world.

Chikoko (2006:104) attest that decentralisation overtakes the ‘cumbersome and slow nature of centralised governance,’ because it acknowledges the uniqueness of the values, culture, needs and creativity of the local role players. Aref and Aref (2012: 2193) buttress the local players in education and argue that ‘Education in rural development processes can support and uphold local culture, tradition, knowledge and skill, and create pride in community heritage.’ Although decentralisation or devolution of power is advocated throughout the world, there are those who are critical about it, however that does not erase and overshadow the significance of decentralisation in rural communities.

2.3 Historical background of school governance

School governance in South Africa can be categorised into four phases, namely, the policy formation process research; analysis of policy discourse; empirical work testing policy intention; and policy as practice and the transformation policy (Lewis & Naidoo, 2006). The scholars opine that the policy formation process research was informed by the concern about who should control education in the new South Africa. According to the scholars, the policies for school governance in place today came into being as a result of the contribution by Chisholm and Fuller (1996) that lead to the birth of SASA 84 of 1996 and subsequently the issuance of the National Norms and Standards of 1998. The scholars argue that the present school governance policy was developed because of the Kruss (1997), Pampallis (2003) and Weber (2002) research on the analysis of its continuity and discontinuity.

After the promulgation of SASA 84 of 1996, the debate was now on analysing the policy discourse. Several authors such as Sayed and Carrim (1997), Sayed (1997), and Gilmour (2001) started with the interrogation of the policy discourse (Lewis & Naidoo, 2006). The interrogation was done with the aim of development of policy at macro level but concentrating ‘on analyses of legislation, policy documents, and frameworks put forward by the new education and political establishment,’ (Lewis & Naidoo 2006:416). During the interrogation, it is indicated that Pampallis (2003) discovered that the policy was riddled with internal inconsistencies and conflicting imperatives. Another setback according to Lewis and Naidoo (2006) was that predictions were made in relation to school-based outcomes instead of the outcomes being informed by empirical work at school-level. And this is what most of the time makes programmes by government to be unsuccessful, the policy makers do not consult the implementers.

After the process of policy development was done, the policy had to be tested by taking it to school- empirical work testing policy intention. Lewis and Naidoo (2006) contend that the aim of this exercise was to determine if there was any action done by schools in relation to school

governance, and it was discovered that there was a lot of work that had been done in schools concerning the institutionalisation of SGBs and there was progress as such. It was mentioned in the preceding paragraphs above that some scholars discovered that the policy was riddled with internal inconsistencies and conflicting imperatives, hence Lewis and Naidoo (2006) contend that parents should receive an increase in training for skills development and understanding of policy in order that they could implement the policy properly.

Lewis & Naidoo (2006) mention that the policy makers did not consult with the policy implementers when making their decisions, as such the policy as practice and the transformation of policy aims at making consultation with the implementers of the policy. This means that researches now go to schools and ask teachers, Principals as well as parents about the policy. It attempts to de-center the school governance debate by focusing on what sense local actors make of the policy as they engage, interpret and redefine it. This approach respects the agency of local actors,' (Lewis & Naidoo, 2006: 417). All role players are equally important and if people want to succeed in whatever endeavour they wish to engage in, it is important to bring all members on board, this includes the illiterate parents in rural communities who are members of the SGBs in schools located in their communities.

Governance according to the IFAD (2009) embraces not only a society or institution, but the state, civil society and the private sector. The idea is for an institution to be able to manage "its economic, political and social affairs" (IFAD, 2009: 21) by interacting with the institutions mentioned. In other words, the school governors should be able to address the economic, political and social affairs through interaction with the state, civil society as well as the private sector.

The SGBs interact with the government through the policies and regulations that government has put in place for school governors to be able to use as they execute their duties. The SGBs as legal bodies operate within specific laws. Clarke (2009) opines that the following laws and regulations or acts serve as a benchmark for SGBs to operate within the law: the Constitution Act, No. 108 of 1996 which is the supreme law of the Republic; and the legislation affecting schools could then be summarised under four categories as follows: the general statutes including education; the public service statutes; the General labour legislation as well as the School-specific statutes. Each of these categories would be elaborated on in the next section that deals with the SGBs as legal bodies or persons. When SGBs operate, they are expected not to violate any of the laws stated as they represent the regime and its economic plan as well as the political will of the country.

The SGBs also have to interact with civil society because they represent society to further and address societal, political as well as economic issues. Current and outcropping societal issues that need to be addressed by SGBs through education are illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS to name a few. Furthermore, SGBs interact with the private sector to address economic issues. Schools buy materials that are necessary for learners to acquire quality education from the private sector. The private sector could be engaged in fund-raising for schools by SGBs to supplement the funds allocated by government as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996, (Clarke, 2009). The private sector is interested in quality education because if the products from such an education are of good quality, then that would boost the economy of the country through quality production, and the private sector would not be running at a loss because people would be employed and therefore there would probably be few criminals.

The IFAD (2009: 21) suggests the following as criteria or conditions to be met for an institution to be successful in its governance:

The institution must operate in a transparent manner; must be responsive and accountable to the members of the community; must manage collective affairs in such a way as to enhance development opportunities for all; and to resolve potential conflicts among community members peacefully.

The conditions set in the citation are what are globally regarded as good governance, and this implies that school governing bodies or governance officers in institutions, have to operate within the jurisdiction of what has been stated above in order to be successful in the execution of their duties. The section that follows attests to the fact that history reveals that parental participation has been in existence throughout the world.

2.4 Parental Involvement in School Governance

Participation of parents in the education of their children through school governance has been in existence in different countries before the twentieth century. Although some middle-class parents in the UK regard education “as a shared responsibility between themselves and teachers,” (Crozier 2000: 27), most working-class parents view education as a responsibility to be shouldered by teachers. This means that their intervention in education is minimal. In the United Kingdom, the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were set up in 1902, (Harrison & Busher, 1995). Crozier (2000) attests that school governance dates way back before 1944 in England. This idea is captured in the 1944 Education Act, which stipulates

that powerful parents in terms of educational knowledge and the power to act were involved in the governance of education of their children (Crozier, 2000). The involvement of parents in education was seen in the form of Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Crozier (2000) posits that the PTA's involvement in the education of their children takes place in three types of activities, namely, social, educational and finance matters. In other words such parents are responsible for curriculum, administrative, social, financial and economic matters.

Obanya (1999) is of the opinion that because education is about developing the human potential, its orientations should be determined by the people's involvement thus making it work. Throughout the world, governments see the importance of decentralising education, (Chikoko, 2008; Mncube & Harber, 2010). This implies that education of children should not be left in the hands of teachers alone; parents as well as learners should also be involved. After all parents are the primary educators (Crozier, 2000).

Chikoko (2008) argues that because centralisation made it impossible or difficult for participation in decision-making of stakeholders in Zimbabwe, the government then was forced immediately after the country got its independence, to employ the decentralised governance whereby communities were given chance to air their views and make decisions about the education of their children. Since governance is now decentralised, there is legislation in line with the decentralised governance- Education Act of 1996 (Revised), which allows the establishment of School Development Associations (SDAs) in government schools, and School Development Committees (SDCs) in non-governmental schools.

According to Niitembu (2006) and Chikoko (2008) the South African school governance and that of Namibia and Zimbabwe are similar. These countries' education systems were respectively governed by policies of both apartheid and colonialism. Niitembu (2006) and Chaka (2006) argue that long before independence in both South Africa and Namibia, parents were mandated to participate in schools. In South Africa parents participated through Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parents Teachers and Students Associations (PTSAs) or School Committees or management councils, and that was between 1976 and 1984 (Chaka, 2006).

In Namibia, parents participated through School Management Councils (SMCs), in accordance with the Education and Training of 1979 (Niitembu, 2006). The author reveals that the participation by parents in governance did not succeed and was ineffective because some parents felt that they were being abused by government as the body was not inclusive of teachers or learners. Chaka (2006) concurs with Niitembu (2006) that the parents were used as state puppets because there were no elections for such bodies. Members were

picked at random and as a result such bodies were not democratic and therefore were unlikely to be transparent.

Consequently, the structures that were put in place to monitor and govern education collapsed, when independence ushered democratic governments in both Namibia and South Africa. The South African Schools Act (SASA) came into being through the recommendations of the Hunter Commission (Chaka, 2006). Given that governing bodies were established in schools it is crucial to look into the reasons behind decentralisation of education.

2.5 The Role and Responsibilities of School Governing Bodies

In the preceding section it was mentioned that SGBs need to address a number of societal issues through education, and the following are amongst those that are to be addressed: illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS. The societal issues mentioned are universal but seem to be prevalent in rural communities. In order to address the issues mentioned, SGBs therefore are expected to play the following roles as they appear in Table 2.1.

The role of governors is far wider than it could be legislated. This is evident in the amendments that are made. So far studies reveal that the functions and duties of school governors are difficult to implement and that is what makes the governors' work more intricate. Chikoko (2008) states that, one of the duties of school governors in Zimbabwe was the hiring of teachers. The Zimbabwean government later accused the governors of nepotism and the duty was then withdrawn from parent governors. In South Africa, the governors are to make some recommendations regarding appointment of teachers, but this has also shown to be a thorn in the flesh of unions who want that some of their incompetent members to be recommended. It also is a thorn in the flesh of school governors who are academically illiterate and consequently persuaded to recommend according to the panel that they had appointed to do the job on their behalf. This is a challenge to government because if there is a dispute, it means appointment comes to a halt and attention is given to the dispute until it is resolved. As a result it would come not as a surprise if this role of recommending educators for appointment could be withdrawn from being executed by school governors, just like what happened in Zimbabwe.

Table 2.1: The roles of governance members

Roles	Source
a) Help in disciplining and improving children's attendance	Crozier, 2000; RSA, 1996; SASA 84 of 1996
b) Act on behalf of their children	Crozier, 2000; RSA, 1996; SASA 84 of 1996
c) Hire and fire staff through the head teacher	Crozier, 2000 ; Douglas 2013
d) Serve as link with Local Education Authority advisor (LEA)	Crozier, 2000
e) Provide and assist in the operation and development of the school	(RSA, 1996) SASA 84 of 1996; Niitembu (2006);
f) Advance moral, cultural, physical and intellectual welfare of pupils at the school	(RSA, 1996) SASA 84 of 1996; Niitembu (2006); Beckmann and Prinsloo (2009)
g) Develop the mission, goals and objectives of the school	(RSA, 1996) ;SASA 84 of 1996; Beckmann and Prinsloo (2009)
h) Advise the regional director of Education with regard to the needs and curriculum of the school	(RSA, 1996) SASA 84 of 1996;
i) Perform other duties as may be mandated by the Act	(RSA, 1996) ;SASA 84 of 1996; Beckmann and Prinsloo (2009)

In a study conducted by Beckmann (2009), Beckmann and Prinsloo (2009) and Serfontein (2010), the state and SGBs of specific schools locked horns with regard to an issue of hiring a principal of a school and his/her deputy. The SGB made their recommendations to the Head of Department (HoD) in line with the Employment of Education Act (EEA) 76 of 1998 and the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 as legislation- section 20(1)(i) of SASA dictates, and to the SGB's surprise, the (HoD) did not endorse the SGB's recommendation. According to the authors, the state was left saddened and surprised when the court ruled in favour of the SGB.

Subsequent to the developments mentioned, the state came up with the Education Laws Amendment Act, No 16 of 2006 (RSA, 2006) which was added to section 6(3)(f) of SASA, and it provides that the HoD could appoint any suitable candidate from the recommended list by the SGB (Lewis & Naidoo, 2006; Beckmann, 2009). This implies that the duty and power of the SGB has been reduced or removed. The school governors have been stripped of their right to represent their children in education. How do they continue to develop their communities with diligence and confidence then if their rights continue to be violated?

Crozier (2000) states that according to the British Education Act of 1988 and the LMS, parents have the power to hire and fire staff through the head teacher. This implies that parents monitor the work of teachers and call them to account. For parents to monitor teachers' work, it means that they must be powerful and knowledgeable in education and curriculum issues. Crozier (2000) posits that, as a result of the legislation referred to, the relationship between parents and teachers is not a healthy one. Teachers do not like their 'privacy' to be invaded, but because the parents hire the right kind of teacher and if the teacher does not perform the parents would dismiss him/her; this does not go well with teachers. In other words parents have control over teachers.

Legally an SGB is a juristic body wielding legal powers to perform its duties as per mandate by SASA 84 of 1996. The section that follows elaborates on the legal status of SGBs.

2.6 The Legal Status of SGBs

Studies show that there are a number of challenges that SGBs face in South Africa and/or in some developing African countries, especially in rural communities. For example, it was only in 2005 that the then Minister of Education Ahmed Gamal Eddin Moussa encouraged communities to establish boards of trustees in Egyptian schools, who are responsible for governing the education of their children (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2006). It should be borne in mind

that the education system of Egypt is one among African countries that has the highest percentage in terms of providing universal access to primary education, as well as improving primary completion rates in 2005 (Ginsburg et al., 2006). Of course there were political and technical reasons for the encouragement in the establishment of boards of trustees, but as mentioned earlier, the politicians were sceptical about the readiness on the part of parents, the lack of capacity and empowerment, and they were also concerned about reducing the quality of education, (Ginsburg et al., 2006). The then Minister of Education in Egypt (1991-2004) had this to say about their government's reluctance to decentralise education to the community:

It is very easy to say that we are going to decentralise, but we have to see what are the historical experiences in this region, what has succeeded and what failed,... if we look at Egypt, by transferring power to governors, who is going to have this power ... and if you are delegating power to an inefficient partner, the quality will go down ... You have to train them, you have to empower them, you have to give them the credentials to do that ... and this has to take time(Ginsburg et al., 2006:13).

The statement mentioned above was a legitimate and genuine concern from a responsible Minister, under the circumstances considering the cloud that surrounds the challenges decentralisation in developing countries encounters, some of which have been mentioned in this study, hence it is of utmost importance for politicians to consult researchers who have to do a lot of research before introducing a new programme.

Chikoko (2006) highlights that parent governors have displayed the following challenges in Zimbabwe: inability to cope with the demands of school governance because of illiteracy; and the inability to make informed decisions and therefore forcing professionals such as teachers and principals, to make decisions on their behalf; and make room for government officials to take advantage of the situation and sideline parent governors as they do not know what they are supposed to do, they do not know what they want, or when to talk, and they lack confidence.

The debate alluded to above paints a bleak and unattractive picture about the status of governance of education in most rural developing countries in Africa. In spite of the ugly picture painted, in South Africa, SGBs enjoy the legal status and empowerment accorded to them by SASA. Mestry (2006:28) asserts that, 'A school is a juristic person with legal capacity to perform its functions and the SGB acts on behalf of the school. This means that a public school may enter into a contract with another legal subject to purchase books, but it carries all the responsibilities and liabilities attached to its status.'

In South Africa, the SASSA 84 of 1996 mandates the SGBs to perform certain roles. The roles should be performed in line with the Constitution of the country as well as human rights. For example, SGBs are expected to play a role in the hiring of teachers and non-teaching staff. The SGBs' role in the hiring of teachers comes in two-fold: they recommend to the Head of Department (HoD) who should be hired if the post is gazetted, and the recommendation should be in line with the Labour Relations Act (LRA) (RSA, 1995) and the Educators Employment Act (EEA); they can hire a teacher or a non-teaching member who will be paid from the school's coffers, but they should first get an approval from the HoD.

The law –SASSA allows SGBs to develop a number of policies that would help determine the direction the schools want to venture into. Some of the policies that a school's SGB has to develop include language policy, code of conduct for learners and, HIV and AIDS policy. The SGBs also have to perform another legal job that is extremely important which is the selection of subjects- the curriculum. This is one of the most difficult, and yet crucial tasks because the choice of subjects would determine the future of the children and the contribution they are likely to make in the community because of the curriculum that shall have been prescribed for the school by the SGB. This role relies heavily on the competency and availability of teachers. The SGBs should remember that the policies they develop should be fair, just, diverse and inclusive, and based on the constitution of the country.

At the helm of all legislation is the supreme law of the country- the Constitution of the RSA. All policies should be aligned to the constitution. The aim of this exercise is to promote democracy, participation, accountability, transparency and public involvement, (Lewis & Naidoo, 2006). It is for this reason according to Lewis and Naidoo (2006:418), that SASSA 84 of 1996 'articulates an espoused theory that the four goals of equity, quality, efficiency and democratic transformation can be achieved by changing the school governance landscape to focus on citizen participation, partnerships between the state, parents, learners, school staff and communities, and the devolution of authority towards the individual school and community.' The following discussion gives a highlight on the laws under which SGBs operate and these laws inform the policies that are drawn by the SGBs as well as the decisions taken.

2.7 The Constitution

The Constitution is the supreme law of a country. All the laws and policies developed should be informed by the Constitution as it also contains the Bill of Rights (Clarke, 2009). The laws

that affect schools and school governing bodies tabled above are categorised according to the area of specialisation and they are as follows (Clarke, 2009):

2.7.1 School-specific statutes

An SGB is a body that is school-based and it needs to work within the parameters of the school. As they execute their duties, SGBs have to use the following legislation as a guideline:

The National Education policy Act No. 27 of 1996 which provides for a national policy of education, including the policy on salaries and conditions of employment; South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 which provides for a uniform national system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; South African Council for Educators Act, No. 31 of 2000; and Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 which provides discipline, discharge, retirement and regulation of service for state-employed teachers;

2.7.2 Public service statutes

A school does not exist in a vacuum, it exists within a society and as SGBs are engaged with the public on societal issues, there are certain legislations that govern them. The following are the legislations direct the SGBs in the execution of their duties:

The Public service Act No. 86 of 1998 as amended which provides for the organisation and administration of SA; includes employment of public servants like non-educators staff; Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1999 which regulates management of finances in all levels of government; effective revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities management; The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act No. 3 of 2000 which gives effect to the right to administrative action that is fair, legal and reasonable.

2.7.3 General labour legislation

One of the functions of SGBs is to recommend educators and non-educators to the HoD for appointment and also to hire educators and non-educators using the school funds. SGBs therefore have to know the laws that are labour-related and regulate labour issues, in order not to violate the labour rights of employees. The following are the laws that govern labour issues and SGBs have to know and use them accordingly:

The Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993 which provides for health and safety in the workplace; the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999 which provides for national, sector and workplace strategies to develop

skills in the workplace; to provide financing by means of a levy-grant scheme with employers; the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 which regulates labour relations in the workplace, collective bargaining, strikes, resolution of labour disputes, workplace forums, trade unions; the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 which promotes equal chances and fair treatment in the workplace; affirmative action for groups that were previously disadvantaged; the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 which provides the basic conditions of employment for all employees.

2.7.4 General statutes that include education

These are laws that SGBs have to know because they affect education in general and do not necessarily influence their day-to-day administrative activities. They are important and are as follows:

The Protected Disclosure of Information Act No. 26 of 2000 which protects 'whistle-blowers' who reveal unlawful or irregular practices of employers; the Promotion of Access to Information Act No 2 of 2000 which provides right of access to information held by any public body; the General and Further training Quality Assurance Act No. 58 of 2001 which provides for quality assurance, issue certificates at the points of exit of General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET), norms and standards; the South African Authority Act No 58 of 1995-provides for the development of a National Qualification Framework and SAQA to serve this; Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998 which regulates the establishment of governance and funding of public FET institutions

2.8 School Governing Bodies' liability

2.8.1 Liability

In the previous section, it was mentioned that SGBs are a legal body; they can sue and be sued. 'This means that a public school may enter into a contract with another legal subject to purchase books, but it carries all the responsibilities and liabilities attached to its status,' (Mestry, 2006:28). Having said this, it implies that SGBs carry a liability for the schools they represent. Serfontein (2010:103) views liability of SGBs and the State in this manner, 'by providing juristic personality to public schools (Schools Act: section 15), the State denotes authority (capacity to conclude juristic acts on its behalf) to public schools.' This means that the State through SASA mandates SGBs the legal status and therefore expects these organs of the State to be liable for their actions. Do these organs of the State have the capacity,

skills, expertise and knowledge to perform such a mammoth task? Liability in this discussion will be looked at in two categories, namely, delictual liability and contractual liability.

Delictual liability

Delict is regarded as an intentional act which gives rise to a legal obligation between parties even though there has been no contract between them, it is tantamount to a wilful wrong, which is, doing wrong wilfully (Havenga, 2006). Serfontein (2010) cites an example of safety for all stakeholders who use a school to reach their goals, like learners, teachers, and other personnel. One of the duties of an SGB is to see to it that learners, teachers and non-teaching staff are in a safe environment at all times. Serfontein (2010) states that Shaba (2000) opine that if the SGB can fail to provide a safe environment for all who use the school, then the SGB may be responsible for delictual liability. Squelch (2001:13) in Serfontein (2010) define safe schools as, 'those who are free of danger and possible harm; places in which non-educators, educators and learners can work, teach and learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation and violence.' Serfontein (2010: 106) buttresses Squelch's definition of safe schools by identifying the characteristics of a safe school as follows:

The presence of certain physical aspects such as secure walls, fencing and gates; buildings that are in a good state of repair; and well maintained school grounds. Safe schools are further characterised by good discipline, a culture conducive to teaching and learning, professional educator conduct, good governance and management practices and an absence, or low level, of crime and violence (Squelch, 2001:13).

While the argument stated above is appreciated, safety is one aspect that is intangible. The presence of the aspects mentioned does not guarantee the safety of learners, teachers and non-teaching staff. What is important is that SGBs should know their duties and try by all means to execute them as they have been mandated because failure to do that would result in them being sued if something bad happens to one of the stakeholders mentioned.

Contractual liability

The SGBs have a contractual liability with parents, learners, teachers and the communities within which the school they represent is located (Serfontein, 2010). Visser 's (2003) view about the legality of SGBs as reflected in Serfontein (2010: 103) is, 'From the Schools Act as

a whole, it may be concluded that the primary legal responsibility regarding the conclusion of contracts on behalf of schools vests in SGBs.'

The SASA mandates SGBs to represent and report to the parents about the school activities. They are also mandated to represent the learners by developing policies that will help the learners to achieve their goals through education. They are also contracted to teachers whom they have recommended or hired, they expect the teachers to deliver and help the learners to progress. The SGBs are also contracted to the State by virtue of them being organs of the State. If the parents do not stick to the contract agreed with the SGB of their school, the SGB is legally entitled to take them to court or sue them. The same applies to the teachers, if the teachers do not deliver; the SGB has a legal right to recommend to the HoD for their expulsion. Crozier (2000) avows that the 1988 Education Act mandates parents in England to hire and fire teachers through the head teacher and the link with the Local Education Authority (LEA) advisor if a contract is breached.

The State could be held liable for a liability that an SGB fails to meet or for a breach of a contract between an SGB and another subject, (Serfontein, 2010). The arguments presented above mean that when the SGB enter into a contract with another subject, the breaching of the contract by either party will lead to the SGB being sued or suing as the SGB is a juristic body. Since the SGB represents the State if it is sued, then according to section 60 (1), (3), (4) and (5) of SASA 84 of 1996, the State may be held liable for such breach of contract.

2.8.2 Fourth tier of government

Government views school governance as another form of government. This is attested to by Heystek and Bush (2003:127) and they quote RSA (1997: 2), 'Just like the country has a government, the school that your child and other children in the community attend needs a 'government' to serve the school and the community.' The activities of SGB as promulgated by SASA indicate that SGBs are indeed a government. This is emphasised by Lewis & Naidoo (2006: 148) as they argue,

SASA promulgates that the four goals of equity, quality, efficiency and democratic transformation can be achieved by changing the school governance landscape to focus on citizen participation, partnerships between the state, parents, learners, school staff and communities, and the devolution of authority towards the individual school and community. Towards this end, SASA provides a uniform mechanism for stakeholders to interact in the decision-making process, specifies who should participate, and identifies the areas over which particular stakeholders should exert influence. In theory, it grants schools and their constituent communities a significant

say in decision-making by devolving power to stakeholders who participate in the “democratic governance” of schools.

In South Africa, government consists of three tiers, namely, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The SGBs are regarded as another form of government because of their constitution, the way they operate, and the roles and functions they have to perform as mandated by SASA. Wolman and Fleisch (2008: 48) posit that SGBs are autonomous and are therefore regarded as the fourth level of governance. The authors base their argument on the following statement:

There has not been any challenge on the constitutionality of SGBs. Like any form of government, it has to be constituted according to a specific legislation. The SGBs are constitutionally elected and the law states that the chairperson of the SGB should be a parent.

According to Woolman and Fleisch (2008) the absence of public debate about SGBs creates an acceptable impression about its administration, managerial and political work in this young democracy. The scholars further state that SGBs have potential to be a source of social cohesion because they display interactions that people have with the state- they have to report school activities to parents through parents’ meeting quarterly, and have to request for parents approval of the budget after it had been drawn. This means that they provide a way for real political engagement with different stakeholders like parents, teachers, the business community, the tribal authority and the community at large. They have been elected in office by the people and therefore they enjoy acceptance and participation across different classes and languages in spite of their lack of capacity, and as a result they are a unique political tradition in SA (Woolman & Fleisch, 2008).

‘Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government; that whatever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights,’ (Thomas Jefferson, letter to Richard Price, 1789). Although SGBs are organs of the State and are democratically constituted, they have been greatly challenged by the State through a number of amendments on how they should operate. Why should the State make such a lot of amendments if SGBs are democratically constituted? Maybe they are not well informed and therefore cannot be trusted and relied on to correct the wrongs. The discussion below scrutinises the amendments of SASA by the State.

2.9 Amendments to SASA 84 of 1996

As another form of government, it is expected that SGBs are involved in the formulation and development of policies that govern them. These policies should be informed by the constitution of the country which is the supreme law. It is surprising to note that Professor Bengu, the first Minister of Education after apartheid did not regard SGBs as government, he said, 'implementation plans can only be really made by a government,' (Lewis & Naidoo, 2006:418). If a senior member of the central government does not regard an organ of State as government, it leaves many questions unanswered relating to the credibility and the weight of SGBs. Seemingly the democracy that is preached daily has many colours, it affects some organisations more than others. The SGBs are being dictated to by the national government through the provincial government. Instructions come from above and move down to be implemented. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise to learn that the policy in SASA is being amended on a daily basis.

Recently reports abound attesting to the disharmony that exists between SGBs and the DoE. It was reported that different provincial governments and SGBs are at loggerheads and they find themselves at courts, (Woolman & Fleisch; 2008; Beckmann, 2009; Serfontein, 2010). In the reports matters relating to hiring of teachers, financial management are the ones that seem to be causing disharmony between the government and the SGBs. The issue in relation to the hiring of teachers is who has an upper hand between the State and the SGBs.

Beckmann (2009) and Beckmann and Prinsloo (2009) report that section 20(1)(i) of SASA mandates SGBs to recommend to the HoD the appointment of educators, and this is done in line with the EEA 76 of 1998 and the LRA 66 of 1995. The authors contend that the subsection mentioned makes it clear that the provincial government is holding the keys to the employment of educators, and not the SGB. Despite the power to recommend educators for appointment, section 6(3)(f) states that the HoD may appoint any suitable candidate from the list provided by the SGB, (Beckmann, 2009). In other words, the HoD's appointment is not influenced by the SGB's recommendation list. That being said, then what is the significance of the recommendation by the SGB? Is the SGB a rubber stamp? What information does the HoD have at his/her disposal that he/she will employ to inform him/her decision for his/her appointment? SGBs may argue that they were there in the interviews by virtue of the panel that had represented them during the interviews, what about the HoD?

Regarding discussion above about the legislative amendments of SASA, Beckmann (2009: 138) opines that, '... it could be viewed as the final removal of power in this regard from SGBs and a decisive re-centralisation of significant power that has been delegated to the

governors of schools.’ Lewis and Naidoo (2006: 419) summarise the amendments in relation to the employment of educators instituted to SASA by the State with these statements,

Amendments in SASA include the eroding of SGB authority over appointments to teaching and non-teaching posts by reducing the time for sending recommendations to the provincial DoE (RSA, 1999), giving provinces authority to appoint, without SGB’s input, temporary transfers, (RSA, 1999), first time educators and educators re-entering the system (RSA, 2000).

As of now, SGBs are not allowed to make payments or provide other benefits to educators unless authorised by the Provincial government (RSA, 2004). Lewis and Naidoo (2006:419) avow that ‘several legislative amendments are double-edged, bringing to light conflicts between the goals of promoting democratic participation and equity.’

The following are some of the amendments to SASA that affect the power and autonomy of SGBs, as adopted from Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 60- 65):

Establishment of SGB-funded posts- the 1997 Education Laws Amendment Act; Suspension pending expulsion and co-opted members- the 1999 Education Laws Amendment Act; HoD to determine reasonable and fair use of school facilities- 2000, Section 20(1) (k) of SASA; No loans to SGBs- 2001, Section 11, and 36, and 37(3) of SASA; No unauthorised SGB payments to state employees- SASA 2004; Suspension and no fee schools-The 2006 Education Laws Amendment Act.

2.10 Conceptual Framework of the Study

To understand how parents and learners could strengthen school governance in their communities and thereby bring about development in their communities, the arguments by Obanya (1999) as well as those put forward by Harber and Mncube (2011), were engaged. The engagement was also to augment the core and focus area of the study which is school governance and its impact on development in rural communities.

According to Johnson (2001) and Harber and Mncube (2011) education is a weapon against poverty and hence it results in the development of a nation. The authors’ argument is informed by the idea by Phillips & Schweisfurth (2007: 60) as they argue:

Education can be used as a weapon against poverty and other forms of development. Education is seen as contributing to the public good, and therefore as deserving of the allocation of public interventions and in need of public control.

The statement above according to Harber (2004; 2010) implies that education is of significant economic, social and political benefit to both individuals and the society. Harber and Mncube (2011) argue that individuals and the society realise economic benefit in the form of human capital theory where education increases the skills of employers as well as productivity, hence economic growth. When individuals and the society at large change attitudes towards science, gender equality and the desire to achieve, they are benefitting social fruits (Harber & Mncube, 2011). Politics and education go hand in hand, and when a country moves from being a repressive entity to a democratic one, its policies change as well. Accompanying these shifts is the need for reorientation of the country's population. Hence it is vital for the country to educate its people about policies that govern them. It is for this reason that Harber and Mncube (2011) argue that any country needs education in developing the values and behaviours needed for a suitable political culture that will be sustainable for a democratic political system.

Harber and Mncube (2011) further contend that education can be employed as a tool for reproducing the *status quo*. This implies that on one side of the coin, children from poor economic backgrounds attend schools that are poor and hence get poorly paid because of inferior education, low status jobs precipitated by inferior education, or worse unemployed. Harber (2009) concurs and states that it is possible that out of the situation, a few poor children become successful. On the other side of the coin, political elites make use of expensive private schools to help retain the privileged status of their families. This applies not only in South Africa, but throughout the world. So the economic gap between the poor and the rich continues to widen because the poor continue to be poorer and the rich continue to be richer. It is, therefore, imperative that curriculum should embrace community involvement as a crucial vehicle for development (Singh *et al.*, 2004).

Bush *et al.*, (2006) state that Tikly (2003) is of the opinion that the apartheid legacy was regarded as an impediment towards parental involvement in governance. This opinion is supported by Obanya (1999: 15) who has made the following observation:

*... colonialism has created a hiatus between the people and the government.
This 'they' and 'we' divide has remained till this day, the implication
being that the citizenry sees the government, not as part of the community
but merely as 'those who rule the rest of us.*

The statement above creates an impression that parents have made a choice of not willing to be involved in the education of their children. Mention has been made that there are a number of challenges that parent governors in particular, face and are therefore unable to execute their duties as dictated to and empowered by SASA 84 of 1996. One of the major

reasons for this state of affairs is that members of SGBs in most schools are academically illiterate and do not carry out their support work as stipulated by SASA 84 of 1996. Xaba (2011), Harber (2009) and Mncube (2009) concur and Xaba (2011) states that Maile (2002) suggests that the illiteracy makes members not only ineffective but intimidated and therefore become not committed and not attend meetings. Legislation in terms of SASA empowers parents to take a leading role in matters pertaining to the education of their children, if they choose to find an excuse in the name of apartheid and colonialism, then the future of the children is doomed.

According to Obanya (1999) Education and Politics work hand in hand because politics is about power for governance of people while education reflects the politics of nations. The author further claims that internal strife, political instability, unrealistic goals and inconsistent policies are among the major factors that impede development and educational emancipation in Africa. For this reason, Ward *et al.*, (2003) contend that the Kenyan government recognises the importance of education and as such asserts that education is a basic human right and a powerful tool for human resource and national development. It is, therefore, imperative that politicians should play their game in a manner that enables for the prioritisation of the needs and aspirations of a nation.

The aim of democracy is transparency, accountability, participatory, plurality, fairness and reasoning (Harber, 2004; 2009). The author emphasises that participation is seen as important to the efficient working of any modern or developed state in delivering effective (stable) government, and as one of the key text on education and political development. Contrary to democracy is authoritarianism which is not accountable, unfair, individualised and non-transparent. This form of political system is characterised by top-down communication which is hierarchical and the author contends that the citizens are submissive and do not ask the authority questions.

The discussion above reflects an interwoven relationship that exists in education, politics and democracy. Education is an agent used to attain political development and democracy. Harber (2010:65) emphasises the statement by putting forward the following argument: A democratic education has implications for both school management and the curriculum. In a democratic school students would be expected to be involved in some way in school management, usually through some form of elected school council with at least some responsibility in matters of significance to students and in all secondary schools and in which their views are represented along with those of parents and teachers. Legislation in South Africa, for example, has made such councils mandatory in all secondary schools. In terms of curriculum it means at least some choice for students of what they learn, though here there is a long continuum of possible levels of freedom of choice from complete freedom at the one

end to subject options and courses in which students are allowed some self-direction through negotiated study and project work at the other.

The section that follows aims at emphasising the significance of not individualising governance, and thereby allowing democracy to be exercised in order to impact on development.

2.10.1 Governance

Throughout the world effective governance, democracy, decentralisation and accountability are preached. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2009: 20) defines governance as, “A system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector.” A school in this context is found within a society and it is an institution that is affected by the politics of the country, it is also affected by the state that provides the laws that govern its direction. In addition, it is affected by the economy as well as the social affairs of the country. This implies that a school is not an island. It is imperative, therefore, for a school as an institution to manage its political, economic and social affairs through interactions with the state, civil society and private sector.

For purposes of this study, governance will be referred to as school governance. Maile (2002), Ngidi (2004), Niitembu (2006) and Maluleka (2008) state that Potgieter *et al.*, (1997:11) define school governance in terms of the school governing body as: “...determining the policy and rules by which your school is to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school.” The scholars’ definition is supported by Kakumba (2008) who opines that governance involves the way in which power and resources are utilized in realizing the set objectives for an organisation.

Serfontein (2009) avows that the following are principles of cooperative and acceptable governance: cooperation, coordination, support, interdependence, transparency, accountability, consultation on matters of mutual interest, and sticking to agreed procedures. One of the duties a school governing body is to bring about development, the discussion below is on development.

2.10.2 Rural development

Haque (1977:17) views development as “a process by which one’s overall personality is enhanced.” This implies that there is a positive approach and change at the way one views processes and aspects. The personality enhancement can be achieved through economic or material aspects (Haque, 1977). One has to possess economic material in order to develop one’s personality.

Community development is viewed by Haque (1977:17) as “social development, and it is a process in which economic and non-economic elements interact organically with each other.” The measurable and non-measurable elements interact and qualify a society as either developing or not. If people have education and subsequently get jobs and get paid, that is an economic element of development. The education helps them in getting jobs. And when people’s behaviour is positive as a result of the education they acquired, that is non-economic element of development.

The notion of viewing community development in terms of measurable and non-measurable elements is supported by Nemes (2006) who attests that non-economic elements such as culture, politics, sociology and ecological values are used as indicators for development. As a result the SGBs which comprise teachers, learners as well as parents, who are in the majority and from the local community (SASA 84 of 1996), are expected to spearhead community development through schools they are attached to.

The parents in collaboration with teachers know and understand the culture, politics, sociology and ecological values of the community within which their schools are located and therefore can influence development through the services they render with ease. Van der Ploeg *et al.*, (2000:396) argue that rural development ‘implies the creation of new products and services...’

The challenge that SGBs face is whether they can be creative enough to create a service or a product that will bring about development in the sense that the value of such a product or service has been increased and competes well in the market. Van der Ploeg *et al.* (2000) further argue that rural development is not necessarily about new things being created, but relooking into the old ways of doing things. This is supported by Terluin (2003) who opines that rural development focuses on respecting local traditional values, culture and norms. The local community members are the key role players in rural development.

2.11 Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Study

This study is informed by the participative management theory, modernisation theory as well as the community-led rural development theory. The section that follows discusses the theories mentioned.

2.11.1 Participative management theory

Dieltens and Enslin (2002) supported by Smit and Osthuizen (2011) are of the opinion that more participation in governance which is proposed by SASA 84 of 1996 implies that democracy would be boosted and therefore equality among schools would be realised. Section 29 of Act 108 of 1996 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa highlights the fundamental right to a basic education. The state is, therefore, obliged to help promote and protect this right (Serfontein, 2010). In support of the act, the author states that the state has embraced the SGBs seeing that alone it cannot manage to provide quality education.

Niitembu (2006) contends that a democratic education embraces broad participation in decision-making as well as accountability in both managers and those involved in decision-making. The author further suggests that in most organisations today shared governance, collegiality and collaboration are employed in order to accomplish transformation and practise democracy. The involvement of parents, teachers, learners and other stakeholders in schools could result in transparency, satisfaction, improvement and accountability.

There is evidence that there is a linkage among education, politics and development. Studies show that education is an instrument through which communities can develop; it is up to communities to use it. Rangongo *et al.*, (2016: 1) contend that although it cannot be disputed that education is a key vehicle to sustainable development; 'there is a need for accountable systems of educational governance.' School Governing Bodies in South Africa can take advantage of the availability of the 'free' education to develop their communities.

2.11.2 Modernisation theory

The modernisation theory is based on a sociological approach premised on the belief that "economic prosperity comes with modernisation and that this will only occur when the majority of the population holds 'modern values'," (Harber, 2004). The author argues that this approach is supported by the notion of achieving economic and technological development through "hard work, punctuality, competition and capability of divorcing work from family ties,"

(Harber, 2004). The author further states that this theory proposes that there is a modern person who is characterised by: universalism; openness to new experience and social change; an acceptance of diversity and a readiness to plan ahead.

Based on the characteristics mentioned, the author is of the opinion that education was found to have very strong correlation with an individual's modernity. It is further suggested that young people use schools to socialise into modern bureaucratic norms and behaviours. In other words schools play a major role in shaping young people through the way they conduct their day-to-day activities in a similar planned pattern.

The modernisation theory also has flaws. Not all societies are modern, and in some societies, freedom of expression, acceptance of diversity and readiness to plan ahead are some of the impossibilities because of bureaucracy. Education therefore does not necessarily serve to emancipate societies as such, but it is used to oppress them like it was the case during apartheid and colonialism. The SGBs therefore, because of the powers vested in them, can use education to emancipate and develop communities within which they are stationed by being democratic and accountable.

2.11.3 The community-led rural development theory

Community-led rural development is an endogenous development approach (Terluin, 2003). The author qualifies that endogenous development approaches are local and are therefore grounded on local resources and value greatly local culture and norms, and as such encourage local initiatives. Community-led rural development 'focuses on the strengthening of the self-help capacity of local actors, which is considered to be a precondition for establishing and sustaining local economic development,' (Terluin, 2003: 332). This implies that the local communities are the key role players in bringing about development through 'organisational expertise with regard to group processes, conflict resolution, mediation, leadership, understanding the business of government, and achievement of shared vision,' (Terluin, 2003: 332). Nemes (2006) adds weight to role of local key players and states that they should be empowered and capacitated through appropriate training and development programmes that address their needs.

The involvement of local actors is an indication of democracy and decentralisation, which according to Johnson (2001), are preconditions for rural development that is effective. The SGBs are mandated by SASA 84 of 1996 to be the main key players for rural development and hence are expected to bring change through education. Secondary schools in rural communities are likely to benefit a lot in terms of improved quality education, discipline as well as positive attitude towards education by learners and the community at large, if SGBs

in they are actively involved and participate in activities such as the drawing of policies, mission and vision of the school, the learners' code of conduct and other roles as promulgated by SASA. Johnson (2001) argues that if local communities are involved in decision making processes, they are likely to be effective in the governance of their institutions.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter gave an overview of the literature that is relevant to this study, the history of school governance in South Africa. It also highlighted on the reasons for decentralisation, the roles and responsibilities, legal status and liability of SGBs, the amendments that were made to SASA 84 of 1996, as well as the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study. The review reveals that the impact that could be made by and performance of an SGB hinge on its capacity, depth of knowledge and skills it possesses. This study sought to explore whether or not the performance of SGBs in Vhembe secondary schools that are located in rural areas could lead to a conclusion that they are effective. The next chapter presents the research methodology that was employed for this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary and thereby develop strategies for strengthening the ability of SGBs to contribute towards effective governance, improved quality of education and development in rural secondary schools. In addressing the main objective, attention was paid to a number of issues discussed in the statements below. This chapter displays a detailed explanation on the methods that were used in the collection and analysis of data for this study. Reasons why certain activities were done are also provided.

The first aspect of the chapter focuses on why the Malamulele cluster was chosen to be a research area for the study. It then addresses the steps that were followed to get access to the area under study. This is followed by the research design chosen for this study. Thereafter the identification of the population and study respondents as well as the sampling methods used. The data collection tools and techniques are presented, as well as the methods used in the analysis of the collected data.

3.2 Description of the Study Site

This study was conducted in the Malamulele cluster of Vhembe district, Thulamela municipality in Limpopo Province of South Africa. Vhembe is one among the five districts in the province. It is situated south of Zimbabwe and also shares borders with Mozambique on the north eastern side, Botswana on the north western side and the Kruger National Park on the eastern side. A map for the cluster and the surrounding areas and countries has been attached (Figure 3.1). The area is predominantly a rural community; characterised by mostly illiterate community members and therefore parent governors and it befits the title of the study, and thus is convenient for this study. The main economic activity is farming; however, there is evidence of tertiary economic activities in the form of services rendered by both the local and provincial governments. A lot of people who are unemployed thrive on the social grants provided for by government. Most families in rural areas are headed mostly by females while their male counterparts who are employed are absorbed in other provinces in the country. Vhembe district is made up of three ethnic groups, but Malamulele cluster comprises two ethnic groups, namely, Vhavenda and Vatsonga. The Bapedi are found in other clusters in the district. A map on the following page has been displayed to show the area where the study was focused.



Figure 3.1: Provinces of South Africa map. Source: Source: Map data@ 2017 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd. Google

Study Area



Figure 3.2 Limpopo Province map. Source: Map data@ 2017 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd. Google

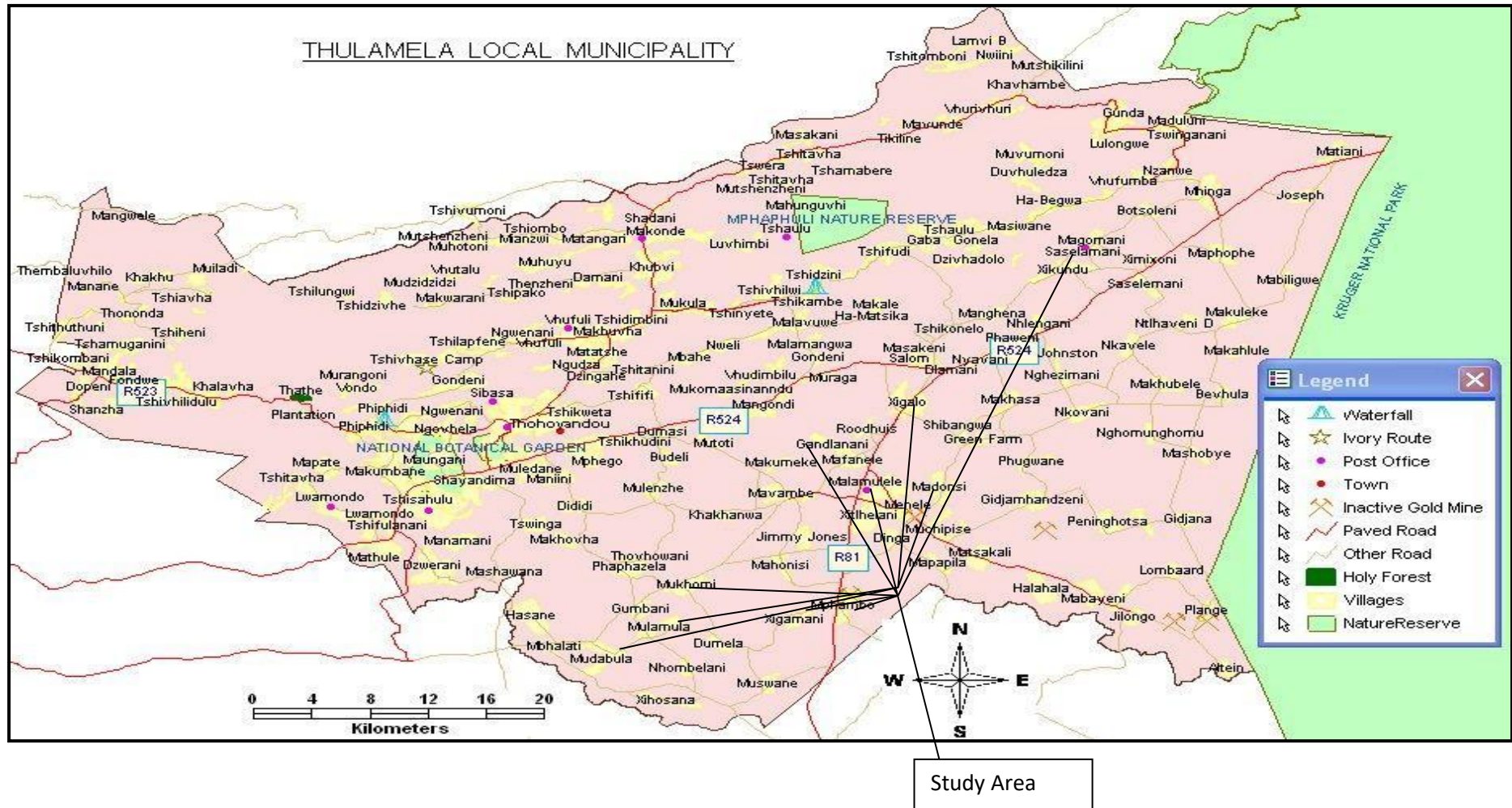


Figure 3.3: Thulamela Municipality map. Source: Thulamela Municipality (2012)

3.3 Research Design

In this study a mixed research design was used. Research design is described as a plan or procedure to be followed as well as plan of the study that is used to address research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001 and Kumar (2011)). It is a guiding tool of which the aim is providing the most valid and precise answers to research questions in relation to research method as well as the approach used (Subbiah, 2004 and White, 2005). This study describes and explores the situation that SGBs in secondary schools in rural areas face. It also provides information about the governance by SGBs in rural secondary schools. It is therefore a combination of descriptive and explorative research. Kumar (2011:11) defines exploratory research as, 'a study undertaken with the objective either to explore an area where little is known or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular research study.'

Literature shows that much has been written about SGBs (Douglas, 2013), but this study seeks to explore the implications of SGBs' governance on rural development. Curiosity about the activities of SGBs in secondary schools in rural communities and the impact they have towards bringing about development in the schools and communities they serve, lead to the beginning of this investigation. It is hoped that at the end strategies that would help improve the *status quo* about governance in rural secondary schools, and thereby bringing about development in rural communities would be developed. While exploring, a description of the situation that SGBs in rural secondary schools face was also unveiled. This means that an observation about the activities of SGBs was made and a description of the observation is highlighted (Babbie, 2010).

An inductive approach was used in this study. Leedy (1997: 94) opines, 'Inductive reasoning begins, not with a preconceived conclusion- a major premise-but with an observation.' This opinion is supported by Conradie (2002:16) who makes the following argument about inductive reasoning, 'the conclusion in the inductive argument explains the facts, and the facts support the conclusion.' An observation about the behaviour of SGBs in secondary schools was made and then an investigation was conducted in order to make some conclusion about them.

3.3.1 Research Approach

It was mentioned in the preceding paragraphs that both the qualitative and quantitative techniques of investigation were employed in this study in exploring and investigating the effectiveness of rural secondary SGBs in Vhembe district of Limpopo Province. The use of

the strategy that is characterised by two phases referred to by Creswell (2009) as a sequential exploratory strategy.

In this study phase one is the qualitative collection of data and the analysis thereof, followed by phase two which is the quantitative collection of data and the analysis thereof which is informed by the first phase (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009:211), 'The purpose of this strategy is to use quantitative data and results to assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings.'

Krefting (1991) states that Kirk and Miller (1986:9) define qualitative research as, "a particular tradition in social sciences that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own language, on their own terms." The definition is greatly influenced by behaviour of both the researcher and the subjects under study (Merriam, 1998). The behaviour is influenced by two principles, namely, naturalistic inquiry such as physical, socio-cultural and psychological environments; as well as subjective meanings and perceptions of the subject– unobservable inquiry, (Schmid 1981, as cited by Krefting, 1991). The notion of subjectivity is also emphasised by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1994:4) and it states that it accentuates the importance of culture, point of view and behaviour of the subjects under study as well as 'the holistic understanding of the social setting in which the research is conducted.' In this study focus group and individual interviews were held with different key respondents to collect qualitative data. The details of the respondents are displayed in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

On the other hand quantitative data is referred to as research data that could be quantified to help answer research questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2000). Quantitative method emphasizes quantity. It aims to product precise and generalizable statistical findings (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). In this study, categorical ordinal data was used in helping to answer research questions. Saunders *et al.* (2000: 328) argue that in such data the 'values cannot be measured numerically but can be classified into categories according to characteristics in which you are interested or placed in rank order.' In other words, such data cannot be positioned on a numerical scale. As a strategy for phase two, a questionnaire informed by themes that were coming out from the interviews in phase one, was generated. The section that follows focuses on the participants and how they were sampled to take part in this study.

3. 4 Population and Sampling Procedures

The research population in this study consisted of members of SGBs, principals of schools, circuit managers, deputy governance managers in the circuits, the manager for governance

in the district, traditional leadership, teacher unions, teachers, learners and parents in the secondary schools that are in the Malamulele cluster. Babbie (2010:199) defines a study population as, 'that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected.' The Malamulele cluster was divided into four circuits and the information about the circuits and schools is summarised in Table 3.1.

The size of the sample in qualitative research is determined by the purpose of inquiry, what is useful and credible or what the researcher wants to know, it is therefore not statistically determined, (de Vos *et al.*, 2011). Table 3.2 on the following section provides detailed information about the population and sample size for this study. From the information tabled, it is clear that it would be difficult or impossible for all the members mentioned to have take part in this study. Therefore it was necessary that a sample of the entire study population be taken to represent the study population. Although the number of participants to be engaged in terms of interviews has been determined, the actual number of participants engaged depended on data saturation as de Vos *et al.*, (2005; 2011) contend. In this study there were 45 participants who were interviewed (Table 3.2).

Sampling is defined by Kumar (2011:193) as, 'The process of selecting a few from a bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group. A sample is a subgroup of the population you are interested in.' Babbie (2010: 198) defines a sample as, 'a representative of the population from which it is selected if the aggregate characteristics of the sample closely approximate those same aggregate characteristics in the population.'

Purposive sampling was used to select schools whose members participated in this study. As shown in Table 3.1 there were 48 secondary schools in this cluster, and from the 48, there were only 4 that were located in an urban area. The members of the 4 identified secondary schools located in an urban area, did not take part in this study by virtue of them not being in a rural area. Therefore, there were 44 schools whose members qualified to participate in this study.

Table 3.1 The circuits in Malamulele cluster

Name of circuit	Number of secondary schools	Number of schools that participated
Malamulele West	13	3
Malamulele Central	15	2
Malamulele East	11	2
Malamulele Northeast	9	2
Total	48	9

Table 3.2 The participants and sizes involved in the study

Participant	Total population	Total sampled	% sampled
Governance Manager	1	1	100
Traditional leader secretary	1	1	100
Circuit managers	3	3	100
Deputy governance managers	2	2	100
Teacher unions	2	1	50
Principals	44	9	20
SGB chairpersons	9	9	100
Teacher governors	88	18	20
Learner governors	88	18	20

For purposes of this study, 20 % of the 44 schools were sampled to participate, so 9 schools participated in this study. De Vos (2001:194) argues that, 'some methodologists suggest that drawing a 10% sample of a known population has become a convention which serves as a handy rule of thumb.' The reasoning behind the 20% is supported by de Vos (2001) who states that the sample size will be determined by saturation of information, that is, when the information starts to repeat itself. Judd *et al.*, (1991) emphasise that sample size for participant observers is not an issue to crack one's skull with because the numbers do not form part of statistical analysis, but the sample should be representative so that if another study is conducted, the results should not contradict the present ones. Hence, in this study, using the percentage mentioned, it means that 9 schools represented the entire cluster. In each circuit, there were two schools that were sampled except in Malamulele West, where three schools were sampled (Table 3.1).

The following procedure was followed; each school whose members participated in this study was purposively sampled on the basis of the grade 12 results for the three years preceding the collection of data period. Schools were sampled on the basis of their performance being 60% and above or 59% and less. The reasoning behind using the grade twelve results as a criterion for being sampled is to determine whether or not the results are as a result of the contribution made by the members of the SGB. All in all, including circuit managers and deputy governance officers there were 148 members who were envisaged to take part in the interviews for this study.

The aim of sampling therefore is to choose respondents from a population in such a way that the chosen respondents precisely reflect a description of the members of the population from which they were chosen, (Babbie, 2010). According to Kumar (2011:192) sampling in qualitative research is influenced by, 'the ease in accessing the potential respondents; your judgement that the person has extensive knowledge above an episode, an event or a situation of interest to you.' In this study, it was easy for the research assistant and I to access the respondents. The respondents are members of the SGB and the non-SGB members who reside or work in the same village where the schools whose members took part in this study, are located. The non-SGB members for this study consisted of teachers and learners. Hence, it is assumed that they have knowledge about the activities that take place in their schools. The respondents get reports about their schools' developments or activities from the tribal court once a month or from their children attending at those schools or from the teachers of their children and the Principal of the schools where their children attend.

3.5 Data Collection

According to Bassey (1999) gaining access entails all the processes of getting official and social permission to conduct research for one's study. For this study, approval to conduct research was granted by the University of Venda's Research Ethics Committee, approval: SARDF/12/CRD/24/0912. The Institute for Rural Development (IRD) then requested the DoE in Vhembe District to allow me to conduct research.

For the purposes of this study, a letter that was written by the IRD was submitted to the district senior manager who gave her permission to go to circuit managers (see Appendix A). The district senior manager is the overseer of the entire district and he/she represents the DoE in the provincial government- Limpopo. Circuit managers for the four circuits in Malamulele cluster were then asked for permission to be granted to research in their schools (see Appendix B), and the permission was granted (see Appendix C). Principals and SGB chairpersons were also asked for permission to conduct research in their schools (see Appendix D).

After permission was granted, the respondents were requested to sign consent forms. The learner respondents who were below 18 years of age, their consent to participate in the study was sought from their parents/guardians (see Appendix E).

The exercise explained above was to align with the suggestion by Sapsford & Jupp (2006), who opine that gaining access to a research site and passing through the gatekeepers and reaching the respondents is not an easy task as highlighted above. The research assistant and I, after the official process of writing letters was done, went to the research sites to informally introduce ourselves and seek for social permission. This is what is referred to by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) as forging a relationship with people who are likely to be engaged in the study. The authors further suggest that the researcher's arrival with a permission letter in their territory is likely to send a lot of positive and/or negative signals. It is, therefore, imperative that the researcher creates a lasting and good impression and thereby acceptance, in order to remove any doubts in the participants' minds, and this could be done by spending sufficient time with the participants, (Chikoko, 2006). The scholar suggests that it is the researcher's duty to help the participants feel that they are important and that their role in the research study is equally significant.

A multi-method data collection approach encompassing interviews, questionnaires and observation was used in order to collect data for this study. This is referred to as triangulation (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Leedy, 1997; Saunders *et al.*, 2000). Triangulation

is defined as, “the use of different data collection methods within one study in order to ensure the data are telling you what you think they are telling you,” (Saunders et al. 2000:99). Leedy (1997) contends that the main reason behind the use of triangulation is to check if the findings are credible. Mouton (2009) opines that the use of triangulation increases the likelihood of the findings being more reliable. This implies that the data collection methods complement each other as each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. And by complementing one another, ‘their respective shortcomings can be balanced out’ (Mouton, 2009:156).

Regarding the multi-method of data collection Chikoko (2006:159) argues that “the limitations in one particular method are counter-balanced by the strengths of another.” In other words, one data collection method’s weakness or limitation is compensated for by another one. The discussion in this paragraph creates an impression that the use of one method may not yield the results that are credible and reliable. It was for this reason that a multiple data collection technique was used in the collection of data for this study. The following research questions informed and formed the basis for the interviews that were conducted:

- a) To what extent do SGBs in rural secondary play their designated roles?
- b) What challenges do rural secondary SGBs face in executing their duties in their schools?
- c) How do SGBs contribute to the development of rural communities?
- d) How can rural secondary SGBs be strengthened?
- e) What are the ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs?
- f) What strategies can be developed to help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs?

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews were used in this study as it assumed that they result in a true and accurate reflection of the participants’ lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The use of different forms of interviews as data collection tools dates back to the ancient Egyptians who conducted population censuses, hence they continue to be used by both qualitative and quantitative researchers even today. Kvale (1983:174) also states that interviews are one of the mostly used methods in the collection of data in social sciences. The author further states that qualitative research interview is characterized by the fact that, “it is centred on the interviewee’s life-world; seeks to understand the meaning of phenomena in his/her life

...descriptive, specific, it is open to ambiguities, and depends on the sensitivity of the interviewer.” Owing to their prevalence, Holstein and Gubrium (1995:1) in de Vos (2001:297) asserts that interviews ‘could be regarded as the universal mode of systematic enquiry.’

In this study semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews were conducted with Principals of schools, teacher union representatives, circuit managers, and manager and deputy managers for governance, the secretary for the Chiefs in the cluster, learners, parents, and teachers who are members of SGBs in their respective schools. Huysamen (1983) supported by Smith and Osborn (2007) suggest that the use of structured interviews with similar standardized questions, increases reliability. Unstructured or non-directive interviews are also an important aspect in the collection of data for qualitative studies because they serve as warm-ups at the beginning of an interview or during a new session of an interview (Smith & Osborn, 2007). They are also used to explore an issue and the interviewee is allowed to talk as they wish about the topic under discussion (Gray, 2009). This warm-up was useful in this study because it helped release the uneasiness that usually exists when formal talks have to be conducted. This warm-up was then followed by a semi structured interview with an interview guide.

One school was visited with the aim of conducting pre-test interviews, before formal interviews could be conducted. A new voice recorder needed to be acquainted with before employing it. The pre-test interviews were done with the principal as well as teachers in a school whose members did not participate in the study. This exercise was eye-opening because it helped in dealing with fear, voice control, articulation of words, controlling one’s emotions in a situation where the interviewee is out of order. This exercise was instrumental in helping the research assistant and I to be grounded and confident. In this study, there were individual and focus group interviews that were conducted, and on both occasions, there was a voice recorder to record the interviews. Before the gadget was used, permission was requested. In most cases, it was granted while in others it was denied.

Individual interviews

An interview guide (Appendix F) was used to conduct interviews with different participants. Individual interviews were held with circuit managers, deputy governance managers, the Principals, SGB teacher governors, parent component- SGB chairpersons as well as the learner component of SGBs in each school whose members participated in this study. The research assistant and I visited the participants mentioned at their respective schools and

requested permission to conduct interviews with them. The purpose of the study was then explained to each participant and permission to record the conversation was sought and the interview was then commenced.

At first the interviewees, especially chairpersons and learners, were not at ease because the responses were very brief and the interviewer had to persuade them into talking by more probing in the form of follow ups. Some parent governors wanted to draw the best picture about their schools to such an extent that to them everything was okay in the school, for example, they indicated that there were no problems that learners created, such as playing truancy or girls being pregnant or boys sometimes involved in nasty fights for girls, which is done by learners in other schools. However, the beautiful picture was made more colourful by the teachers who spoke proudly about how they manage to instil discipline among their learners to an extent that they just stand on the veranda and then the learners would start moving. The picture they created was that of a perfect school. The picture was dented by the learners who went to great lengths in explaining how corporal punishment was used for learners who behave in an unacceptable manner.

Under such circumstances the researcher as Best (1981), is of the opinion that an interview is advantageous because it has room for clarification of a question if it is not well understood. An interview allows the interviewer to evaluate the sincerity and insight of the interviewee. On the other hand open-form of questions in an interview lead to provision of greater depth of response from the interviewee. In spite of the warm reception that was received, there were situations where the respondents did not allow the use of the voice recorder. Out of the 18 teacher governors who were sampled, only 9 were interviewed, this was as a result of saturation of information. There was no new information that was coming from the respondents. The same applies to the learner governors; only 9 out of the 18 sampled were interviewed.

Focus group interviews

A focus group interview is a discussion of a specific topic between a number of individuals with similar or different characteristics, depending on the topic, (de Vos, 2001; Silverman, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; and Gray, 2009). De Vos *et al.*, (2011) suggest that small groups are easy to manage and the members give one another an opportunity to air their views without intimidating one another. In this study, each focus group consisted of six members of the SGB parent component, six non-SGB learners from grade 10 to 12, that is,

two representatives from each grade, and six non-SGB educators. The grade 10 to 12 learners who are in the Further and Education Training (FET) band were selected on the basis of their experience in secondary school and a slightly upper level of maturity in terms of engagement in constructive talks and arguments, when compared to learners in the General Education and Training (GET) band, in this case, the grade 8 and 9 learners. Each group was interviewed separately because they were of different educational status and experience. Another reason for the separation was to avoid intimidation as alluded to by de Vos *et al.*, (2001).

Each group was introduced and welcomed and the purpose of the gathering was stated the research assistant and I. The participants were given consent forms and it was explained that their participation would be recorded but that their names would not be mentioned in the report. It was also stated that before the report is published, the contents thereof would be made available for them to verify if what has been stated was what they had contributed. Mention was also made that the data collected would be used for the study purposes only. The group sizes ranged between 2 and 6 members. This variance was as a result of the fact that data were collected during examination time when learners were writing and teachers were invigilating. Table 3.3 shows the number of participants in each school. Focus group interviews were held with members in only 6 schools out of the 8 whose members were individually interviewed.

3.5.2 Observation

Observations were made in the participants' meetings, that is, how the meetings were conducted and also how the attendance was, without physically participating as recommended by Merriam (2009). Permission was sought to attend such meetings, and this was to align with Sapsford and Jupp's (2006) who attests that the researcher has to negotiate access to gain entry to conduct observational research. Mertens, (1998), Babbie, (2001), and de Vos *et al.*, (2005) contend that observation entails studying the natural and daily activities of the subjects under investigation with regard to the field under investigation. This study utilised the participant as observer because of its qualitative nature and because the aim was to 'get to know well the persons and to see and hear what they do and say,' (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1997: 285). This was to enable the researcher to 'to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening but also feeling it' (Gill & Johnson, 1997:113).

During the observation period, the participants were at first not free, but after the research assistant and I had introduced ourselves again as we did when we first went to secure an appointment with the chairperson of the SGB, they were at ease. I explained the aim of our presence, asked for permission to be present in their meetings and also record the deliberations. The members were told that the information that was recorded would only be used for study purposes, and also encouraged them to do what they are supposed to do without taking notice of presence of the researchers.

In the first meeting in one school, the parent governors did not ask any question and the principal was as surprised as the researchers. At the end, the principal realising that the researchers' presence intimidated the parent governors, asked them to relax. The principal shared with the researchers that some members indicated to him that that they were afraid that if they said something they might be judged as not being fit to hold office and therefore be removed as governors. As a result of the talk the principal had with the governors, there was a remarkable improvement during the second meeting because they seemed to be better in terms of their participation as they asked questions and gave input.

At this point it is worth noting that it was interesting to notice how informative and ignorant both teacher and learner participants were. There was an element of enthusiasm and of honesty as well. There were learners who had brilliant ideas to help their schools develop, and there were learners who were governors but were not exemplary in the way they talked, behaved and dressed. It was also interesting to note that in some schools both learners and teachers were not given a platform to air their views with regard to how development could be brought about in their schools.

3.5.3 Questionnaires

As qualitative data were collected, there were themes that were emerging and the themes were then used to design a questionnaire that was administered to parent governors, SGB and non-SGB teachers, learner governors as well as to principals. A Likert scale of five ranging from one to five was generated. At the lower end, of the scale, there was a total disagreement response, while the upper end represented a total agreement. Confidentiality was considered because there was no place on the questionnaire that required the respondent's name or the school's name, however, the category to which the respondent fell was required.

The questionnaire (Appendix G) was administered to the following participants in the nine schools that participated in this study: School principals; teachers who were non-SGB members were members of the executive of the union on the site, and/or had been part of the focus group interviews, and the following SGB members, parents, teachers and learners. The participant's status formed part of the questionnaire. The status in this study referred to whether the participant was a principal of the school, a teacher governor, a non- SGB teacher, a learner governor or a parent governor. The key respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and were also informed that their names or schools would not be disclosed in any way, and that the information gathered would be used solely for the purpose of this study. They were also given consent forms to complete for their participation to be voluntary. For the questionnaire, the issue of confidentiality was clear as it written at the top. When the interviews started, the key informants were not at ease and as time went by they started relaxing and responding as expected. The information on data collection as highlighted above is summarised in Table 3.3 on the following page.

Table 3.3 Respondents, sampling methods, data collection method, objectives and data analysis.

Respondents	Data collection techniques/ method	Objective	Data analysis
Principals	Individual interview Questionnaire	To investigate the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles; establish challenges that SGBs face in playing their roles within schools; to establish how SGBs contribute to rural community development; to determine how SGBs can be strengthened; to determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs; and; to develop strategies that might help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs	Thematic Content Analysis Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)
Other SGB members	Individual interview	To investigate the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles; establish challenges that SGBs face in playing their roles within schools; to establish how SGBs contribute to rural community development; to determine how SGBs can be strengthened; to determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs; and; to develop strategies that might help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs	Thematic Content Analysis
Teachers	Individual interview		Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)
Parents	Questionnaire		Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)
Learners			
Non- SGB	Focus group	To investigate the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles; to establish how SGBs contribute to rural community development; to determine how SGBs can be strengthened; to determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs; to determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well	Thematic Content Analysis
Teachers	Focus group		
Learners			

3.6 Data Analysis

Mention was made in the previous paragraphs that this study used a mixed approach that comprises qualitative and quantitative techniques of investigation. Nachmias and Nachmias (1997) contend that the analysis of data in qualitative research is an ongoing phenomenon. As the researcher collects data, the analysis of the data takes place. The authors therefore suggest that the researcher should create files and establish codes for the collected data. In this study the data was analysed using Thematic Content Analysis (Creswell, 2009). The data collected from teachers, learners, Principals, parent governors, circuit managers and deputy managers for governance were then transcribed and recorded. Themes were identified and categorised (Cohen *et al.*, 2001). The categorisation was informed by themes emerging from the data collected as well as from the existing theory and literature.

As interviews were being conducted, there were themes that were identified to be emerging and, they were therefore used in generating a questionnaire that was used to further collect data. To analyse the data collected from the questionnaire, one had to look into the type of data it was and treat it accordingly. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 was used in the data analysis for the study. The speed at which SPSS analyses data informed the decision to employ it in this study (Bryman & Cramer, 1996). There were 65 respondents who completed and returned the questionnaires that were distributed, and they were principals, learner governors, parent governors, teachers- both the governors and non-governors. Madriz (2000) argues that quantitative research puts more emphasis on the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables and not processes *per se*.

The questionnaire was administered to the following participants in the nine schools that participated in this study: School Principals; teachers who were non-SGB members were members of the executive of the union on the site, and/or had been part of the focus group interviews, and the following SGB members, parents, teachers and learners. The participant's status formed part of the questionnaire. The status in this study referred to whether the participant was a Principal of the school, a teacher governor, a non- SGB teacher, a learner governor or a parent governor. The key respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and were also informed that their names or schools would not be disclosed in any way, and that the information gathered would be used solely for the purpose of this study. They were also given consent forms to complete for their participation to be voluntary. For the questionnaire, the

issue of confidentiality was clear as it written at the top. When the interviews started, the key informants were not at ease and as time went by they started relaxing and responding as expected.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct research for this study was granted by the University of Venda's Research Ethics Committee, approval: SARDF/12/CRD/24/0912. This was to align with the ethical considerations in research. 'Ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group. It is subsequently widely accepted and offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students,' (de Vos, 2001: 24). Nachmias and Nachmias (1997) consider research ethics to be those issues that are related to the research participants' rights and welfare as well as the researcher's obligations. Chikoko (2006) avows that to be ethical implies that one is able to conform to professional practice that is accepted.

After the approval, interaction with respondents and anybody from whom help was sought was done openly and honestly (Saunders et al., 2000 and Cohen et al. 2001). The following are some ethical issues that were taken into consideration and therefore formed the basis and a guide for this study; informed consent, competence, voluntarism, full information, comprehension, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. The discussion below is an elaboration of the ethical issues mentioned. In this study the respondents were given an opportunity to choose whether they wanted to be observed or interviewed after they had been made aware of the objectives of the study and the consequences thereof (Somekh & Lewin, 2006). Informed consent is defined by Nachmias and Nachmias (1997: 84) as 'the procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decision.'

Having secured an appointment with the respondents, they were informed about the intention of the study, as well as its purpose and expectations without hiding anything at the beginning of the contact. The permission letter to conduct the research was made available to Principals who allowed the research to be conducted in their schools. The letter had the following details: self

introduction, purpose of the study, a choice to the participants to opt out any time during the study, that the information provided would only be used for purposes of the study and in strict confidence. This gave the participants a chance to decide whether or not to participate in the study, as suggested by Flick (2006).

At the same time a suggestion by (Kvale, 1996, Nachmias & Nachmias, 1997 and de Vos, 2001) was heeded in relation to emphasising to the respondents about the importance of providing accurate and complete information. Information such as the research title, why the research is conducted, the objectives of the project and what the researcher hopes to achieve through the study were highlighted at the beginning of the contact between the researcher and the participants. A consent form was then given to key respondents and also indicated that the participant's involvement was voluntary (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1997), and that the participants were free to withdraw from participation any time. For those learners who were below 18 years of age, their parents were requested to sign on their behalf.

For those participants that were unable to read and write, the research assistant read out the contents of the consent form aloud and also explained where the participants did not understand. For example one of the participants wanted to know if their names were going to be publicised, and the researcher indicated that their names were not going to be publicised and there was nowhere in the research report that names of schools or participants were going to be written. The participants were given pseudonyms as suggested by Chikoko (2006) in order to protect them from any harm that might occur as a result of their names being exposed to the public. After reading aloud and explanations were made, the research assistant requested such participants to make a cross if they wanted to be included in the study.

Somekh and Lewin (2006: 6) define confidentiality as 'a principle that allows people not only to talk in confidence, but also to refuse or allow publication of material that they think might harm them in any way.' It is, therefore, important that a researcher should have feedback sessions with the participants before publishing a research report. Chikoko (2006) states that the researcher must be trustworthy and treat any information with strictest confidentiality. During this study, people of different social and economic status were interacted with; all of them were respected without applying any biasness or prejudice. Their contribution to the study was appreciated. Based on the advice highlighted above, the suggestion highlighted by the scholars mentioned was heeded to and confidentiality, trustworthiness and were exercised and none of the participants was harmed emotionally or physically.

CHAPTER 4: EXTENT TO WHICH SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES PLAY THEIR STATUTORY ROLES

The best way to address and change the ways of thinking of people in developing countries is through education.²

4.1 Background

The statement above cements the importance of education in revolutionising and developing rural communities. The need to conduct this research was informed by the idea that throughout the world there is devolution of power with regard to decision-making processes in relation to the management of education. This is now being placed in the hands of the whole society. In his address to school principals in 2009 at the Durban International Convention Center, South Africa, President Jacob Zuma reiterated that because education is very important as it affects the whole society; therefore it needs the attention of the whole society (Ndou, 2015). This means that parents and interested parties have to be involved actively in deciding the fate of their children in education matters.

South Africa, like any country that yearns for democracy and development, introduced SGBs as a way of democratising and decentralising the management of education in the country's schools. SGBs are therefore a legal entity and democratically constituted, the question that one asks is whether these democratically constituted bodies in rural communities and in secondary schools perform their duties as promulgated by SASA 84 of 1996.

One of the roles of SGBs is to generate policies that would govern their schools. A study conducted by Masino and Niño-Zarazúa (2016), reveals that for development to be realised, it hinges on policies that are behind the crafting of knowledge and creativity. This is an investment that most developing counties regard as a priority. This is evidenced by the crafting of the millennium development goals and subsequently and recently the 17 sustainable goals for development. The idea of investing on quality education received major support and funding from the first world countries (World Bank, 1980; UNESCO, 2007).

²Akito Arima- former Minister of Education, Japan, 2005

South Africa is among the nations that have 'gradually shifted from access to schooling to improving learning quality' (Masino & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016: 54). This is evident from President Zuma in his address to principals, when he emphasized that the quality of education in the country could improve if teachers are on time in class teaching (Zuma, 2009). To emphasise the seriousness of the significance of quality education, the President took a step further in 2010 and appointed a National Planning Commission. The Commission looked into how to improve the country after 18 years of being a democratic state. The commission's recommendations were adopted in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 after 9 primary challenges were tabled (National Planning Commission, 2012). One of the challenges identified by the Commission was the poor state of schooling education in the country. In order to redress this state of affairs, chapter 9 of the NDP Vision 2030 is devoted to education matters in the country.

The shift from Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is about achieving universal primary education, to Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is about inclusive equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong opportunities for learning, is also evidence that quality education is important and could result in development of communities (Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). The question is whether or not SGBs have the capacity to craft policies that would ultimately lead to development in their communities.

In trying and answer this question, the main objective of this study which was: to develop strategies for strengthening the ability of SGBs to contribute towards more effective governance, improved quality of education and development in rural secondary schools, was crafted. It was against this background that research was undertaken to answer the following question of which the main purpose was to find ways through which the main objective of the study could be realised: To what extent do SGBs play their designated roles? This chapter presents the results on this research question.

As already alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, the existence of SGBs is an indication of the devolution or decentralisation of power in school governance from the central government which in this case is the provincial and district offices of education to circuits and schools (Chikoko, 2006). Douglas (2013) asserts that the decentralisation should invoke adequate community involvement as well as concern from parents. Moreover, Chikoko (2006) attests that the devolution of power entails three key areas that serve as yardsticks for effective governance in any decentralised school system, namely; the types of decisions that are decentralised, the

capacity the stakeholders possess to be creative and implement change in order to bring about development, and shared vision.

Niño-Zarazúa (2016:7) emphasises and supports Chikoko (2006)'s idea of effective governance that for development to be realised, there must be 'relatively good institutional capacity.' The issue of SGB members being capacitated reverberates from different quarters. A teacher in a focus group raised a concern about government imposing programmes that are not thoroughly researched to communities and said,

'... the programmes that are not well researched must not be implemented to our education system. We are not guinea pigs'

This sentiment was reiterated by the then Minister of Education in Egypt, Ahmed Gamal Eddin Moussa (1991- 2004) when had articulated this caution about his government's reluctance to decentralise education to the community:

It is very easy to say that we are going to decentralise, but we have to see what are the historical experiences in this region, what has succeeded and what failed,... if we look at Egypt, by transferring power to governors, who is going to have this power ... and if you are delegating power to an inefficient partner, the quality will go down ... You have to train them, you have to empower them, you have to give them the credentials to do that ... and this has to take time(Ginsburg, et al., 2006: 13).

This is a legitimate and genuine concern from a responsible Minister, under the circumstances considering the cloud surrounding the challenges decentralisation in developing countries faces, hence it is important to do a lot of research before introducing a new programme. The question of government implementing well researched programmes was articulated by a teacher in a focus group interview. Instead of education being the hands of politicians, it was suggested that scholars should be engaged before implementation. The question is whether SGBs in schools have been relatively well capacitated to play their designated roles as expected. The yardsticks mentioned by Chikoko if considered when the stakeholders execute their duties, are likely help bring about development in the schools within which SGB members operate because they serve as features that should not be ignored if the stakeholders wish to be effective and successful in their endeavour to be effective in their governance of school, improve the quality of education, and bring about development. In this study key respondents were from nine schools from

Malamulele cluster in Vhembe district as alluded to in chapter 3. Table 4.1 below reflects a bird's eye view of the characteristics of the schools that took part in this study.

4.2 Research results

The results presented in the following paragraphs are based on the interviews as well as the questionnaires. The first part of the presentation is based on the interviews while the second part is on the questionnaires. The results presented in the following paragraphs are based on the interviews as well as the questionnaires. The first part of the presentation is based on the interviews while the second part is on the questionnaires. The following criteria were used to determine the level at which SGBs were playing their duties as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996:

4.2.1 Raising of funds and asking for donations to supplement government allocations

The roles and responsibilities for SGBs as promulgated in SASA 84 of 1996 cover a wide spectrum. A Principal responded in this way when asked if he knew the SGB's roles and responsibilities,

Were micro-waved into understanding the duties of SGBs.

The issue of 'micro-waving' was also articulated by teacher governors as well as the parent governors. The respondents claim that the training about roles and responsibilities who last for a few hours at least once in three months. A Principal said that the training they received lasted for an hour. The training about the roles and responsibilities is said to be inadequate. A parent governor had this to say about the training,

We were trained on financial management and how to recommend teachers for appointment.

A teacher governor complained that the documents that are used were written in English and most parents are illiterate, even if they want to read on their own they cannot because language barrier. There is evidence to suggest that training on the roles and responsibilities takes place although it is not enough.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the studied schools in Malamulele cluster in 2012

Descriptor	Identity of schools								
	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH	AI
Number of learners	430	682	276	519	212	624	702	222	337
Females	209	336	131	251	105	341	348	120	156
Males	221	346	145	268	107	283	354	102	181
Principal's gender	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	M
Educators' number	17	24	11	17	8	20	30	8	17
Females	6	26	7	7	1	10	12	3	8
Males	11	8	4	10	7	10	18	5	9
SGB chairperson's gender	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Gender of learners in the SGB	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female	Male and female
Distance from nearest town in kilometres	25	23	40	48	50	36	27	64	15

One of the roles SGBs have to play is to augment the funds that they receive from government through norms and standards by raising funds and asking for donations. Table 4.2 displays the results on how the key respondents as well as focus groups responded. All the participants indicate that SGBs are raising funds and asking donations for their schools to supplement what they get from government. The question is what the respondents think SGBs are actually doing in this exercise. A parent governor said,

'We look into ... fundraising and donations...'

This governor was supported by another one who said,

'We have a garden and we sell vegetables and get money.'

The availability of gardens is a reality which does not take place in all schools. Few schools have gardens that help in augmenting the feeding scheme as raising funds. A teacher had this to say,

'The SGB is struggling and depends on the guidance and leadership of the Principal ... they just rubber stamp or append their signatures.'

The idea of struggling was reiterated by a learner in a focus group who registered his frustrations in this way,

'The SGB should have called a meeting and suggested to parents that they should pay a certain amount of money so that we do not suffer as learners. Look we were without papers and there were no chalks.'

If SGBs just rubber stamp or append their signatures, it implies that someone is doing the job on their behalf.

4.2.2 Frequency of meetings

Another criterion that was used to determine the extent to which SGBs do their jobs according SASA is the frequency of the meetings they have. SASA 84 of 1996 requires that SGBs should meet at least once in a term. Most respondents indicated that SGB members met monthly to discuss finance issues as per the prescripts from the DBE. A department official revealed one of the reasons they hold meetings and said,

'... they hold meetings only when they have challenges.'

The implication was that if they did not have problems then no meetings were held. It also implied that they did not have a schedule that showed when their meetings should be held. A teacher governor said that the reason for SGBs not attending meetings was unemployment,

'... most members are .unemployed and they are unable to be able to travel to meetings ... some of them do not have money to travel to meetings.'

A teacher said this about SGBs' attendance of meetings,

'SGBs concentrate on catering and claiming for travelling expenses.'

This view was supported by an utterance from a principal who said,

'... they focus on finances only.'

A department official respondent made the following comment,

'Meetings are chaired by school Principals and they (the Principals) also call meetings instead of that being done by chairpersons.'

One wonders why they focused on finances only. Could it be that they somehow benefitted from the finances, or poverty, or that they were suspicious that some governors may be unfaithful and misappropriate the finances? The prescripts require that the finance committee which is composed of the principal, SGB chairperson and his/her deputy, finance officer and the treasurer should meet on a monthly basis to discuss finance issues such as procurement, payment of services as well as bank statements. If they met monthly, there was no reason for them to be suspicious.

4.2.3 Drawing of school policies and SGBs' support for school community

Drawing of policies and supporting the school community are among the core or key responsibilities of SGBs. Policies drawn help in maintaining discipline and guiding and steering the direction the school has to take. Sadly, the picture painted in table 4.1 indicated that the two roles were the worst performed or poorly attended to by SGBs. A department official said,

'They do not know what they are expected to do and therefore are not supportive ... as one reads the documents, one could detect that the policies are drawn by Principals because these people can hardly write a constructive letter.'

One Principal supported the utterance stated and said,

'The principal in most cases does not only guide as promulgated by SASA, but he/she does everything.'

A department official commented that,

'These people are easily manipulated by some Principals who should be helping them, because they just sign.'

The official's opinion was cemented by another when he contended,

'There is no way in which the SGB in a rural community can come up with a vision for the school except through the Principal. The Principal steers the direction in which the school must go...'

A teacher governor made the following comment regarding the generation of policies by SGB members,

'Policies are drawn by the Principal and sanctioned by the SGB.' A parent governor said,
'We support the Principal and give them space to do their work.'

Does giving them space to do their work mean that the Principal should do his/her professional work- that of drawing policies as he/she is knowledgeable?

Table 4.2: Extent to which School Governing Bodies play their designated roles

	Department officials	Principals	Teacher unions	Teachers	Learners	Traditional leadership	Parents	Frequency
Number of participants	6	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
The SGB raises funds to supplement government funding	6	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
The SGB meets at least once a month	6	9	2	9	9		9	44
Parent governors seem to be more interested only in school monies only	6	9	2	9				26
The SGB draws school policies				9	9		4	13
Parent governors know what they do and support school community					3		5	8

It was mentioned in the previous paragraphs that this study was a mixed method, and therefore it comprises both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The previous section dealt with qualitative approach's results and the section that follows presents the results for the quantitative approach.

4.2.4 Results for Quantitative Approach

As interviews were being conducted, there were themes that were identified to be emerging and, they were therefore used in generating a questionnaire that was used to further collect data. To analyse the data collected from the questionnaire, one had to look into the type of data it was and treat it accordingly. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 was used in the data analysis for the study.

The data collected for this study falls into the ordinal measurement scale (Boone & Boone, 2012 and Bertman, 2007). Ordinal data is 'data in which an ordering or ranking of responses is possible but no measure of distance is possible' (Allen & Seaman, 2007:64). Knapp (1990: 121) goes further to state the following about an ordinal measurement, '... the categories comprising the scale must be mutually exclusive and ordered.' In this study numbers 1 up to 5 were assigned to the five categories of the scale of total disagreement at the lower end to total agreement at the upper end. Therefore in this study, the frequencies and the Chi-square were used for the analysis of the data collected. This implies that the mean and standard deviation are 'inappropriate for ordinal data' (Jamieson, 2004:38). Table 4.3 below displays the results in relation to the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996.

There were 65 respondents who completed and returned usable questionnaires, and these were principals, learner governors, parent governors, teachers- both the governors and non-governors. The distribution was made to nine schools.

The results in table 4.3 reveal that 35 % of the respondents agree that SGBs raise funds in their schools; and 31 % of them strongly disagree that school funds are raised by the SGB. There is a further indication that 57 % of the respondents strongly disagree that parent governors are only interested in school monies, hence only 17 % of the respondents are in agreement with the view that parent governors are interested in school monies. Table 4.3 further reveals that only 27 % of the respondents agree that parent governors know what they are expected to do. There is a further revelation of 33 % of the respondents agreeing to the view that SGBs support their communities and this is cemented by the 43% of the respondents who strongly agree with the view. Regarding the SGB's roles of generating policies and implementing them, the results show that 33% of the respondents agree that SGBs play the roles, and this is supported by the 35 and 31% respectively of strongly agreement. In relation to SGB's monthly meetings, 35 % of the respondents are agreement that there are monthly meetings and this is supported by the 31 % who strongly agree that SGBs meet monthly.

However, it must be indicated that in all the designated roles that SGBs play, the Pearson Chi-square values ($p > 0.05$) revealed that there was no significant statistical difference in view between the schools and the category of key respondents who took part in this study.

4.4 Discussion

In this study the results revealed that the extent to which SGBs play their roles as promulgated by SASA 84 of 1996 is as per the expectations. All the key respondents' responses suggested that schools do get the support they should be getting from SGBs, except in the drawing of policies, raising of funds and the parent governors' main focus of interest. The results' revelation is not necessarily a surprise or shock as such, because studies show that the behaviour of parents in rural communities is in compatible with these revelations, although there is an improvement that has been registered in this study.

Table 4.3 Extent to which School Governing Bodies play their designated roles

Role played	Percentage of respondents in agreement	Extent of agreement with the view (n=65)						Significance of effect of:	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Category	School
1. The SGB raises funds to supplement government funding	35	31	12	23	15	23	100	ns	ns
2. The SGB meets at least once a month	31	19	17	17	17	31	100	ns	ns
3. Parent governors seem to be more interested in school monies only	17	57	11	6	11	15	100	ns	ns
4. The SGB develops school policies	33	17	11	22	15	35	100	ns	ns
5. The SGB implements its policies effectively	33	9	12	28	20	31	100	ns	ns
6. Parent governors know what they do	27	19	12	28	11	31	100	ns	ns
7. Parent governors support the communities surrounding the school	33	14	12	23	8	43	100	ns	ns

ns = No statistically significant difference ($P > 0.05$)

Aref, (2011:37) contends that education in rural communities does not receive the support expected as a result of some of the following barriers,

Parents lack appreciation of the overall objectives of education; mismatch of what parents expect of education and the school is seen as providing; the belief that education is essentially the responsibility of the state; the length of time required to realise the benefits of better schooling, ...

Mestry (2016) asserts that parents lack interest in fundraising activities because they believe that fundraising is the responsibility of principals and the teachers. Tatlah and Iqbal (2012) cite that lack of or poor training and inadequate induction as contributory factors to parents' minimal involvement in school activities.

In this study, Aref's (2011) views on parental involvement are supported by parents' minimal or non-attendance of meetings in some cases as articulated by some respondents in this study; minimal participation in fund-raising implies that they believe that education is the responsibility of the state and the principal who gets paid on a monthly basis. The parents' attitude was reflected in the recommendation that they must be paid a stipend at least on a quarterly basis for what they are doing for their children. It seems their reluctance to participate actively is exacerbated by them not being paid while their counterparts, that is, teachers and the principal get paid. This negative behaviour was registered by a principal in a study by van Deventer *et al.*, (2015). The scholars assert that the principal participant indicated that the rate of burglary and theft in his school was at an alarming rate due to the school's location in a squatter camp, however, after a talk with community members, the theft and burglary, according to van Deventer *et al.*, (2015:8) 'subsequently became isolated incidents.'

The attitude of the parent governors also reflects that they have certain expectations that are different from those of education. In trying to illustrate this matter further, in one school a learner missed a final examination paper because his father had sent him to go and look for the lost cattle. This behaviour shows that parents in these rural communities to a certain extent do not seriously regard education as important as the whole world does. It also reflects that they were not adequately inducted, and therefore they are ill informed. Johnson (2001:525) argues that if elected members are ill informed, 'their ability to influence democratic process can be limited.'

The parents themselves indicated that they did not play their roles as expected, this is lack of '... local organisational capacity and suitable skill ...' Aref (2011: 500). The parents do not have capacity to perform their roles, then they resort to having more trust in the principal and

the teachers; that is why they give them all the liberty to generate policies and then they ratify only them. The parent governors' more trust and reliance on the principal and the teachers can have catastrophic results. The learners as well as the teachers also suggest that the principal is working alone because there is no support from parents. Rangongo, *et al.*, (2016:1) revealed that 'lack of knowledge of legislation and skills,' result in parents being manipulated and school funds being mismanaged.

There are issues that are emanating from these revelations: there was not enough advocacy on the roles of SGBs; the training that these governors received was not enough; there is no mutual trust between the school and the parent governors, that is why when parents are elected, some key respondents thought that most of their talks are about money, financial support from government is not enough; the SGBs lack financial management skills to raise funds for their schools; the principal is the principal player in SGBs' activities.

The South African government's move to decentralise education is acceptable and this is the norm practised throughout the world today. The SGBs need intensive training so that they could be vehicles to be employed to eradicate poverty and bring about development in rural communities. If parents do not know what they are supposed to do, it is the role of government to empower them through proper and relevant training. The training would address among others the following areas: financial management, how to conduct meetings, planning, generation of policies, crafting the vision and mission of the school, reporting to parents and convincing other community members to support the school. The results for a study by Dee (2004) suggested that education attainment impacted positively on citizens' responsibility and their quality of participation in society. This highlights the importance of empowering those elected in school governance through educating them.

Xaba (2011:201) asserts, 'Basic among the school governance challenges, is the capacity to govern.' The scholar contends that capacity building for SGBs in the form of training is not effective because the training is 'inadequate and irrelevant, and does not necessarily address the core functions of SGBs.' Capacity building of SGBs and sharing the vision for the school need serious attention. Sections 16(A)(3) and 19 (2) of SASA 84 of 1996 dictate that the principal must render all necessary assistance regarding capacity building to governing bodies in his/her school. Principals as people who work with governing bodies daily, know their governing bodies' strengths and weakness, their level of education, and therefore should take it upon themselves to capacitate the governing body in their schools.

The capacity building process which could take the form of training would be addressing specific needs for the school. In a way, the question of micro-waving workshops that were referred to in the preceding paragraphs would be addressed. To cement the critical role

played by principals, Maforah and Schulze (2012:227) contend that, 'Principals are instrumental to functional schools ...' the functionality according to Mohajeran and Ghaleei (2008:53) could be realised through when Principals are engaged in 'providing a clear school mission and positive climate ...' The significance of the mission was highlighted by Chikoko (2006) in the preceding paragraphs as key to effective governance.

Principals could also take advantage of the authority vested in them in capacitating SGBs and see to it that the mission and vision of the school is shared among the governors so that the school could be an agent of development. If the principal and the SGBs are moving on the same wavelength, there is definitely going to be improvement. The principal therefore is the pulse of the school.

A study conducted by Bauch (2000) suggested that parental involvement plays a major role in the education and development of their children and communities. The poverty levels in rural communities are alarming such that any chance of making money is grabbed with both hands, this could be coupled with the revelation that SGBs' rates of raising funds are low.

4.5 Conclusion

As highlighted at the beginning of the chapter, the main objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary schools in Thulamela Municipality of Vhembe District. It then meant developing strategies for strengthening the ability of SGBs to contribute towards more effective governance, improved quality of education and development in rural secondary schools. In attempting to look for ways of addressing the main objective, the activities in this chapter in particular, aimed at responding to the following question: To what extent do SGBs play their designated roles? The results in this study reveal that SGBs' attitude towards education needs reinforcement so that it is more optimistic. For example, by staying away and not attending meetings arranged by schools, parents are sending a message that they do not care about their children. They also imply that schools can do whatever they like with their children, they do not care.

The results further revealed that government support to schools and their SGBs in the form of preaching the importance of education; enforcing parental involvement in the education of their children and supporting their schools; supporting principals as the principals are on the receiving end because they represent the Head of Department in their respective schools; is inadequate. It was also revealed that the workshops that government conducts do not address the needs of schools and the SGBs.

It was further revealed that influential people who command great respect and authority did not participate in the governance of schools in their communities. Abraham Lincoln once told his fellow American people that in order to bring about change and development, people should start thinking about what they can do for their country instead of what the country could do for them. This kind of mentality invokes a sense of ownership, patriotism, responsibility, commitment and belonging in people. This could lead to development in rural communities. People in rural communities should start taking advantage of the free education that government is providing to develop their communities. This is a choice they have to make for themselves.

CHAPTER 5: CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN EXECUTING THEIR DUTIES

The greatest glory in living lies not in ever falling, but in rising every time we fall³

5.1 Background

Education and development are positively correlated (Mncube, 2007), implying that the former is beneficial to societies particularly in terms of economic growth (Harber, 2010). In support of this view, Phillips and Schweisfurth (2007: 60) have this to say about education and development:

‘Underpinning the existence of this sub-field is the assumption that there is a positive relationship between an educated population and national development in all its forms, and that education can be used as a ‘weapon’ against poverty and other forms of underdevelopment. Education is seen as contributing to the public good, and therefore as deserving of the allocation of public investment, and in need of public control.’

Some studies have revealed that there are several challenges that hamper SGBs from executing their duties as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996 (Carrim, 2011; Xaba, 2011). However, in their quest to bring about development in their communities through education as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996, SGBs encounter several challenges. In this chapter, the results of a study on this issue are, explained and conclusions drawn. The first part of the presentation of the results is based on the qualitative approach and the second part is the quantitative approach. The themes that emerged during the interviews are presented and elaborated on in the first part and a discussion follows.

5.2 Results of the Study

Challenges SGBs face in executing their duties

The three features of decentralisation, namely types of decisions that are decentralized, the capacity the stakeholders possess to be creative and implement change in order to bring about development, and shared vision, mentioned at the beginning of this study serve as a

³ Nelson Mandela- former President of South Africa

cornerstone in this section. If the capacities of stakeholders are not well-developed they would find it hard to be creative and implement innovations meant to improve the quality of lives of people in their communities. If they hardly participate they would find it hard to share the same vision to direct their schools.

There are a number of challenges that serve as impediments to SGBs executing their duties as SASA 84 of 1996 dictates. The challenges to be presented have been grouped according to the key respondents and they have an effect on and/or affect the key respondent in question as well as other stakeholders in the SGB. The challenges are presented as follows:

5.2.1 Challenges outcropping as a result of the Principal

The Principal is an *ex officio* member of the SGB and SASA 84 of 1996 dictates him/her to support the SGB in executing their duties. The results presented revealed that most Principals played a hide and seek game and were not open with SGB members. It was not clear if the game played by principals was deliberate. Both teachers and all the respondent managers attested to the fact that principals as enlightened officials who represent the DBE did not only hide information, but they did not know the policy of the department they represented. A principal respondent alluded to the idea of not knowing the DBE policy and made this acknowledgement,

We are bombarded and flooded with lots of information and documents daily, where do we get time to study these documents. My primary duty is to make learners pass and the rest is secondary to me.

A teacher said,

The principal hides information from the SGB, he/she does not capacitate them, they are not given the platform to govern. the principal takes advantage of the illiteracy of parents and manipulates them.

The notion of hiding information also surfaced when the department official said,

Principals hide information from SGB governors regarding meetings, parent governors are not informed about meetings.

To indicate tactics and the extent to which principals could go to achieve what they wanted, the official went further to say,

The principal can either coerce or negotiate with the SGB about the adoption of the mission and vision of the school. The principal may feel threatened by the adopted members and have inferior complex.

A parent governor gave this report,

The principal seems to be afraid of controlling the school monies especially from teachers.

The element of fear and intimidation among principals was supported by a teacher respondent as well, this is what he said,

Teachers are perceived as a threat to principal. Members are afraid of the principal who may victimize them, they are quiet. SGBs should be invited to meetings without Principals because they intimidate SGB members. ... he/she is a Mr./Mrs. Know-it-all and DBE does not want help.

To further illustrate that principals were using intimidation when working with other people at schools, a teacher respondent further elaborated on the fear factor and said,

Some principals run their schools like a family. ...teachers are scared to come up with suggestions.

An articulation by department official supported the notion of fear of or intimidation by the principal and this is what the department official said,

... so they are easily manipulated by principals. Principals are not supportive to the illiterate parent governors, they are impatient.

A department official attested to the fear factor in principals, and this was in relation to co-opting individuals with expertise in certain fields that had to be identified and requested to come and assist the school as most parents are illiterate. And this is what he said,

Unfortunately our colleagues who are principals seem to be afraid. Either the principal is afraid that the person who is knowledgeable would take him out or principals having inferiority complex.

To divulge the question of principals' inferiority complex, the respondent went further to indicate that some principals went to an extent of not attending SGB meetings, but when they encountered problems, they ran to the DBE crying that they were not part of the meetings and when it suited them they would continue not attending meetings. This is what he said,

The principal as an ex officio means that he/she is a member of the SGB by virtue of her appointment of principalship. He/she represents the DBE and therefore there can't be an SGB without the principal. If he/she is absent he/she must delegate someone to represent him/her. But our colleagues, principals if they have issues with the SGB they may choose not to attend the meetings and eventually it becomes a trend. Some members of the SGB who happen to have issues with the principal and want to deal with the Principal, they may use that as a leverage to deal with him/her. When the issues discussed suit the Principal suit him/her, it's okay, but when they don't, he/she will say I was not part of the meeting, so ...

A teacher in a focus group displayed his worry about this behaviour of principals alluded to above specifically in relation to the running of schools like their families, and articulated the following suggestion,

Their (principals') minds have to be democratized. The leaders need to undergo democratisation workshops. I don't think it's their fault.

The picture painted about and by principals seems not to be very attractive. The section that follows draws a picture about teacher governors.

5.2.2 Challenges resulting from teacher governors

Interaction with teachers revealed that they were good people who were good at blaming others. The discussion that follows highlighted the blame they put on the Principal for the dysfunctionality of SGBs in schools. But as the engagement continued, they realised that as the SGB ship sunk, they were also part of the contributory elements towards the sinking SGB ship. One teacher unionist avowed that 60% of their members did not attend meetings arranged for capacity building for SGB related project for members of his union, he said,

The majority of our members are ignorant. ... literate parents like teachers do not want to be elected as SGB members, some of those who do, do it for wrong reasons, like personal benefit in the form of he/she wanting to enhance or give his/her CV a boost or worse coming to control the whole school community.

A teacher respondent disputed the claims made by union respondents about the union's capacitating teachers through workshops conducted for governance, and this what he said,

... if the unions say that they have equipped or empowered the teachers, they may be lying.

A teacher accepted that teachers were bench-warmers in SGB meetings because they failed to assist the limping academically illiterate parent governors but only blamed them, and he said,

When an SGB fails, all members are equally responsible. Teachers are the main killers of the SGB.

The teacher's opinion was supported by another teacher when he said,

Teachers when they are in an SGB meeting forget that they are teachers and they behave like the illiterate parents. When teachers attend SGB meetings they have to report, ... and they don't and we don't expect them to come and report either.

Another teacher articulated a different view in support for the parent governors, and he said,

'We can assist the illiterate parents by reading policies that are written in English and translate them to their vernacular because they are good at oral tradition and are used to listening. We can also workshop them.'

5.2.3 Challenges emanating from parent governors

The effects of apartheid policies continue to be felt in South Africa twenty three years after its demise. Most parents in rural communities are illiterate and depend on those who are able to read and write. A teacher had this to say,

In our school we had a lady chairperson who had to be told what to do in every item that was to be attended to when she was chairperson.

Another teacher respondent voiced his worry about the behaviour of parent governors in this way,

My worry is I have never seen any SGB meeting being called by the SGB, these meetings are called by the principals.

This attestation aligns with what was articulated by a department official earlier in this report. The fact that these parents are illiterate is not their fault, but the repercussions are mostly felt by their children and the society at large. A teacher respondent opined,

... the fact that these parents are illiterate is an indication of the results of the system in the past, and that is the government.

SASA 84 of 1996 states that parents whose children attend their lessons in a specific school are fit to be elected as SGBs in the school. There is no clause in SASA that deliberates on the educational qualifications of the parents. This implies that SASA is quiet about the education status of a parent and therefore, any parent who has a child in a specific school qualifies to be an SGB member in that school irrespective of whether or not he/she is able to read and write can stand for elections.

The challenge is how the parent governors manage finances if they cannot read and write. A department official said this about SGBs' management of finances,

They have difficulty in managing financial processes of the school.

Another challenge arose when these parents did not attend meetings that had been arranged by the same body they were members of. Table 4.1 displays that all the respondents indicated that it was a great challenge for parent governors to attend SGB meetings. There could be a number of reasons why these parents did not attend meetings, but the implication was that those parents lacked an understanding of the seriousness the risk they were putting their children at. They were not supportive of the people they had placed their children in their care, and they were also not supportive of their children. This was an indication that they were ill-disciplined and ignorant because they were unable to prioritize. How did they discipline their children if they were not disciplined?

A teacher and Principal said this about parent governors' absence from meetings,

Unemployment makes them to be unable to attend meetings.

This implies that because they were busy with odd jobs, if they did not work how their families would survive. Another challenge that was detected from parent governors was that they always talk about catering and finances that benefit them only. If they knew that they were elected to advance and improve the quality of education for their children and communities may be they would change their focus from catering and travelling allowances and see how their presence could bring about development.

Another area that was lacking with regard to the parent governors was them not having capacity to report to the community. A parent governor said,

They may choose to be quiet in the meeting and when they go out they hold another meeting to oppose what was agreed upon.

A teacher governor attested to this and said,

When confronted by community members outside, they say they did not say a word about the matter and when minutes are scrutinized, it is found that they were present.

The teacher governor went further to say that even when they gave a report they did not report that the SGB agreed about this matter, but they could choose to say Mr. So and so said this. This had also been detected by a department official when he scrutinised SGB minutes, he realised that minutes recording and storage was an area that was thorny and needed serious attention from the DBE.

The parent governors are a representative of the parents in the community, as such they have to give those whom they represent feedback about the developments in the school, but they do not report. There could be a number of reasons for this, but maybe one of them was the same parents whom the governors had to give report do not support them as they did not attend meetings when requested to do so. Who would get the report if those they needed to report to were not available?

5.2.4 Challenges as a result of learner governors

SASA 84 of 1996 stipulates that in secondary schools, the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) should form part of the SGB. Surprisingly, the results in table 5.1 indicated that the same members of the RCL who had been mandated to represent fellow learners were always asleep during SGB deliberations; they hardly uttered a word except when the chairperson greeted them. One teacher said,

I think learners are passive during meetings because they show respect to their elders, traditionally it is disrespectful for a child to be on the same platform with his/her parents. The other thing is that these children lack confidence, they are sort of still in shock ...

The impact of culture on the learner governors' passiveness was elaborated by a teacher when he said,

Learners' passiveness in SGB structures might have been rooted deep in their traditions. They see educators as parents and parents have to be respected. Respect in the sense that one does not have to engage in a debate of whatever kind with his or her elders. And remember that no meaningful development will ever take place for as long as a part of a whole is passive. It is important to note that culture makes a

person who he is without which life to such a person becomes meaningless. So we can't fight traditions, we rather review their (learners') inclusion in structures of that magnitude. By this I am not trying to undermine equal representation or democratic participation processes.

A learner supported the idea of fear from the learner governors and said,

Learners fear to voice their ideas during meetings.

Sometimes learners got a lot of non-cooperation and resistance from fellow learners who were bully when they gave reports about decisions agreed upon during SGB meetings. One of the learner said,

...sometimes they make demands that are unreasonable and when we refuse to take them to the principal ... we are threatened.

The learner was supported by the one who said,

... they put more pressure on you and intimidate you.

A teacher respondent had this to say,

... if I was not in the class when they were giving that report, I don't think they would have succeeded because of the noise I heard them making when the girl started talking.

A learner who seemed very brave told the researcher that,

When I find a boy smoking in the school yard, I take him straight to the Principal and tell the learner to tell the Principal what he was doing. If he refuses, I tell the Principal myself what he was doing.

The picture painted by the learner governors and teachers is shocking and scary. It implied that the learner governors worked under stressful and life-threatening conditions. Their lives were under siege and they were bullied. Sadly, the question of whether or not the learners reported the threats and intimidation to the school management was not pursued during the interviews; however, the situation is volatile.

5.2.5 Challenges outside the control of School Governing Bodies

Child-headed families

It is a norm that parents are requested to report at school sometimes for different reasons. Those learners whose parents have passed away or were working somewhere far from home posed serious challenges when the school had to engage their parents. One Principal said,

The girl has a child and has been absent for almost two months. I suggested that she be given a chance to come next year but the SGB refused. She has now surfaced and wants to write the exam and I know she is going to fail. I had planned to go to her home today, but look now, she is here.

When payments agreed upon had to be made, these types of learners usually did not cooperate and there was no parent to take them into task. In this kind of situation, the Principal is the most frustrated person, because he/she knows that such a learner would fail the examinations.

Sometimes learners from child-headed families were difficult to deal with because they were parents themselves and took no instructions from anyone in their families, and instead they were the ones giving instructions in their homes or families. A teacher voiced his frustrations about such learners in this way,

They dodge lessons and when you have to punish them you encounter a lot of resistance, especially from boys. ... they are bosses or fathers in their own homes. ... they give commands in their homes and you irritate or surprise them when you tell them to go and clean toilets ...

A learner said that after the trial examinations most learners did not go to school although their principal had told them not to stay at home because,

'... there is no elder at home to tell them to go to school.'

5.2.6 Insufficient allocation of government funding

Money is needed in schools to make resources available. The availability of resources is likely to improve the quality of performance of teachers and learners. Quality results open opportunities for learners to succeed as they continue with their studies and ultimately get

better jobs. When they are employed, their economic status improves and thus development in their communities. In Limpopo, 2012 was a year the DBE and other departments were subjected to administration by national government. As a result the allocation was reduced to an extent that some schools had to lay-off some of the support staff members. One department official indicated that work was overwhelming and they needed assistance in the form of human resources but that was a challenge,

... because at the moment because of the fact that we are under administration as a province ...

A principal attested to the lack of funds and said,

'There is lack of funds for travelling to attend meetings.'

One teacher said that because of lack of funds, the tribal authority gave their school papers and ink for June examinations. Another teacher suggested that lack of funds could be a factor compelling the DBE to conduct few ineffective workshops.

5.2.7 Blanket workshops and training

After every new group of SGBs has been elected, the DBE conducts a series of workshops with the aim of inducting the members and creating awareness among the SGBs about their roles and responsibilities. Thereafter there would be workshops on specific roles which according to their experience may seem to be extremely important. The following roles usually fall among the most important and usually workshops are conducted to address them; financial management, safety and security, asset management, admission policy, and recommendation on post establishment, to name just a few. What the DBE did was to call all members of the target group in the cluster and addressed them at the same time. They held what is called a blanket workshop. Members were not given time to air their views and their needs. A department official acknowledged this hiccup and said,

Training is blanket- not good because it does not address the needs of schools.

Besides the 'blanket' workshops being conducted, the quality of the workshops, the time allocated for the workshops as well the incompetency of the personnel conducting the workshops left much to be desired. A teacher registered his frustrations in this way,

... the period devoted to such workshops is insufficient, and the efficiency of the personnel manning governance is questionable.

A teacher also added salt to the wound about the workshops and voiced the following,

The time allocated for training is too short. ... because of the low quality of workshops they receive.

Another teacher vented his anger and frustration about the workshops and vomited in this manner,

They only train for 1 hour or 2 hours and they only involve maybe the Principal, the chairperson, the secretary and the finance officers, and the rest of the members are not attended to.

A principal made the following comment about the workshops,

... they are not capacitated and the workshops do not help them. They do not know what they are expected to do and therefore are not supportive.

Another Principal made the following response,

We were micro-waved into understanding the duties of SGBs.

The question of 'micro-waving' was reiterated by another Principal and this was what he articulated,

We rarely get trained. ... poor quality training- it's just like microwaving,... they are doing it for compliance and say to their bosses that they have done training, ... the facilitator just reads.

5.2.8 Insufficient time allocated to unions for training their members

All teachers except temporary ones employed by government belong to different teacher unions. Unions therefore, have an interest in the affairs of their members. For example, when gazetted posts are advertised, these teacher unions go to lengthy preparations in guiding their members on how to manage interviews should they be short listed. The teacher unions indicated that they had a number of projects that they had scheduled to address with

their membership. For example, they joined forces with the DBE through circuits to address and guide SGBs in terms of what policy requires of them regarding the whole process of managing interviews from short listing and up to recommendations of the preferred candidate for the post to the Head of Department (HoD). The teacher unions also indicated that they found it hard to work with the DBE in some cases because the DBE did not allocate them time to see their members for guidance and training on issues that related to them being effective in their duties especially for school governance. One of the teacher unions said,

The DBE does not afford us enough time to workshop our members.

The issue of unions capacitating teachers through workshops was disputed by a teacher respondent and this is what he said,

... if the unions say that they have equipped or empowered the teachers, they may be lying.

Table 5.1 below summarises the identified challenges faced by SGBs in the execution of their duties.

5.2.9 Government imposes not well-researched programmes to communities

A lot of research has been conducted on the performance and challenges facing SGBs in general. Much has been written and it seems there are no solutions to the challenges that this body faces. The DBE has taken the SGB to court on several occasions and some SGBs in certain schools have done the same to the DBE. The following are the SASA 84 of 1996 amendments made by the DBE:

Establishment of SGB-funded posts- the 1997 Education Laws Amendment Act; Suspension pending expulsion and co-opted members- the 1999 Education Laws Amendment Act; HoD to determine reasonable and fair use of school facilities- 2000, Section 20(1)(k) of SASA; RCL as the only recognised and legitimate body; no loans to SGBs- 2001, Section 11, and 36, and 37(3) of SASA; No unauthorized SGB payments to state employees- SASA 2004; Suspension and no fee schools-The 2006 Education Laws Amendment Act. As of now the DBE is in the process of making a recommendation for an amendment on section of 20 (1), paragraph (j) of SASA 84 of 1996 because SGBs seem not to be playing the game of recommendations of educators to the HoD according to the DBE' s rules, but they play according to SASA' s rules.

Table 5.1: Summary of the identified challenges faced by School Governing Bodies in the execution of their duties

Variables	Governance manager	Circuit managers	DMG	Principals	Teacher unions	Teachers	Learners	Traditional leadership	Parents	Frequency
Number of participants	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
a) Insufficient funds received from government	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
b) Illiteracy impedes parent governors from reading and interpreting policies that govern them	1	3	2	9	1	9	9	1	9	44
c) Bully learners threaten learner governors when they give SGB reports	1	3	2	9	1	9	9		4	37
d) Some Principals are not conversant with DBE policies and may mislead SGB in making informed decisions	1	1	2	3	1	6				14
e) Parent governors do not attend meetings arranged by SGBs and this impacts negatively on their commitment and decisions taken	1	3	2	7	2	6	4	1	6	32
f) Parent governors talk little or nothing about school development issues, but more about catering and claims for their travelling	1	2	2	7	2	9				23
g) Some teacher governors are bench warmers and lack interest in SGB activities so they lack commitment	1	3	2	8	1	2				17
h) Learner governors are passive during SGB meeting so they are afraid or respect the presence of their elders	1	3	2	7	2		4		5	24
i) Inadequate training is not addressing the needs of individual schools so it is irrelevant	1	3	2	7	2	6				21
j) Most teachers do not attend SGB meetings arranged by unions so they lack capacity regarding SGB activities		2	2	6	1	5				16

Government views school governance as another form of government. This is attested to by Heystek and Bush (2003:127) and they quote RSA (1997: 2), 'Just like the country has a government, the school that your child and other children in the community attend needs a 'government' to serve the school and the community.' The activities of SGB as promulgated by SASA indicate that SGBs are indeed a government. If this is the case, then the question that needs to be answered is why government should make such a lot of amendments to SASA if SASA is its organ. Perhaps one could speculate that the projects and programmes that government force on the people are not well researched, and government is surprised as it did not anticipate some reactions or behaviour from its citizens.

A teacher attested to this school of thought that not well researched programmes were forced on to the society and he said,

Failure of SGBs is on the part of government because government is actually bringing into schools policies that are not well researched based on politics. I think there must be difference between politics and education. actually they must be product of people who are scholars themselves not politicians.

5.2.10 Results on the quantitative phase of the study

It was mentioned in chapter 3 that this study was carried out using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The results revealed that 55 % of the key respondents agreed that schools received insufficient funds from government. This revelation was cemented by the 72 % of respondents who strongly agreed that indeed government allocates insufficient funds to schools.

Furthermore, the results revealed that 41 % were in agreement that illiteracy contributes towards governors being unable to interpret policies that govern them and further 45 % in strong agreement with the notion that illiteracy is an impediment. It was further revealed that 43 % of the key respondents strongly disagreed that bully learners threatened learner governors when they gave SGB reports, this is indicated by the 26 % who were in agreement that there was a threat to learner governors by bullies. On the other hand regarding learner governors, the results revealed that 36 % of the key respondents indicated that they were passive participants during SGB meetings. The passiveness was cemented by the 35 % who strongly agreed that indeed the learner governors were indeed passive in SGB meetings.

There were no statistically significant effects of schools and interest group or category of respondent on the views expressed. However, as shown in Table 5.2, statistically significant effects ($P < 0.05$) were observed with regard to the following challenges: “some Principals are not conversant with DBE policies and may mislead SGBs in making informed decisions” and “some teacher governors are bench warmers and are not interested in SGB activities”.

5.3 Discussion

The results of the current study relate to many role players in the education sector in South Africa, including the government which is responsible for funding. For instance, the funding allocated to schools was reported to be inadequate. All the schools that participated in this study, charge a certain fee as complementary to what they receive from government. Limpopo is one of the poorest provinces in the country with the highest unemployment (Naidoo et al., 2015), and yet parents are expected to contribute towards the education of their children.

Harber and Mncube (2011) assert that the fact SASA 84 of 1996 allows public schools to levy fees could mean that government accepts that it is unable to fund schools because it does not have enough resources. It was mentioned during the interviews that SGBs raise funds to outsource teachers with a good track record to help the learners. Sadly, the charging of fees by schools widens the gap of accessing quality education between the poor and the rich, however, schools in rural communities, although they are struggling to pay the fees, they seem to be benefitting from the contributions they make as their children pass grade 12.

As a member of the UN, South Africa is expected to tow the line in terms of living by the resolutions that members of the UN have taken. South Africa was ready to implement policies arrived at in the UN, and to prove that, the country developed NDP Vision 2030. Chapter 9 of the NDP is devoted to education matters in the country. This was to align with the international community that shifted from Goal 2 of the MDGs, which is about achieving universal primary education, to Goal 4 of the SDGs, which is about inclusive equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong opportunities for learning (Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). However, Harber and Mncube (2011: 241) opine that “there was never any real expectation that the ambitious reforms would seriously alter education in South Africa for everybody but it was to be seen to be doing something.’

Table 5.2: Challenges faced by School Governing Bodies in the execution of their duties

Roles played	Proportion of respondents in agreement, %	Extent of agreement with the view(n=65)						Significance of effect of	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Category of respondents	School
1. Insufficient funds received from government	55	5	3	8	12	72	100	ns	ns
2. Illiteracy makes it impossible for them to interpret policies that govern them	41	14	5	19	19	45	100	ns	ns
3. Bully learners threaten learner governors when they give SGB reports	26	43	8	8	14	26	100	ns	ns
4. Some Principals are not conversant with DBE policies and may mislead SGBs in making informed decisions	29	37	5	14	14	31	100	*	ns
5. Parent governors do not attend meetings arranged by SGBs	22	28	8	31	17	17	100	ns	ns
6. Parent governors talk little or nothing about school development issues, but more about catering and claims for their travelling	22	43	11	12	17	17	100	ns	ns
7. Some teacher governors are bench warmers and are not interested in SGB activities	24	26	6	31	19	19	100	ns	*
8. Learner governors are often passive during SGB meeting, implying that the student voice never contributes to governance	36	22	8	15	20	35	100	ns	ns
9. The training provided is not addressing the needs of individual schools.	28	20	8	29	14	29	100	ns	ns
10. Most teachers do not attend SGB meetings arranged by unions	22	32	12	22	6	28	100	ns	ns

*= $P < 0.05$ ns = no statistically significant difference ($P > 0.05$)

One could safely state that these submissions in Vhembe district of Limpopo Province carry some weight of truth in them. This is because of the insufficient funds that are allocated to schools where the majority of parents are unemployed and depend on grants. The SGB under the circumstances have to work with their schools and raise funds for a better education of their communities. Schools are compelled to raising funds by charging school fees under the disguise of fund raising. The charging of funds is not an alternative if quality education is envisaged. Chikoko *et al.*, (2015) point out that there are secondary schools in KwaZulu Natal that charge fees to complement government funding.

According to SASA 84 of 1996, the principal's main duty is to advise the SGB in all their activities as he/she represents the Head of Department (HoD). He/she is only appointed SGB member. As a leader and manager, he /she gives direction and therefore has an influence on the direction the school must take. By virtue of the Principal's status, one could say he/she is the pulse of the school, without him/her there is no life in a school. If the Principal is not conversant with the policies that govern schools, and also hides information from them, who will assist the SGB?

If 'leadership is an 'attitude of "serving"' and management is an 'attitude of "doing"' as espoused by Shley and Schratz (2011: 277), then the serving and doing attitude of Principals needs to change. This is to help them assist and advise SGBs in their schools to execute their roles accordingly. The Principal is expected to involve people, work with them, show them respect and trust them, and not hide information from them.

Available literature reveals that parent governors lack the necessary skills to execute their duties as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996 (Mncube, 2009; Xaba, 2011; Naidoo *et al.*, 2015; Rangongo, et al., 2016). Johnson (2001:525) is of the opinion that the ability to read and understand is a skill important to office bearers, 'one's ability to understand information about laws, policies and the rights to which one is entitled is often highly dependent on one's ability to read.' These are the skills parent governors lack, and if they lack these skills, how do they generate policies and help the Principal, teachers and learners and the community at large. It was for this reason that it was recommended that an office bearer must be literate enough to comprehend the laws and policies that govern institutions they occupy.

The parents seem not to be committed to helping educators who are assisting their children (Pitt *et al.*, 2013). They need to be capacitated as Xaba *et al.*, (2015: 205) highlighted through the

following expression, 'Empowering parents' means allowing them to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to cope with their roles as children's primary socializing environments.' Schools are compelled by SASA 84 of 1996 to identify gaps and needs in the parent governors, and help the DBE in the training and thus empowering parent governors.

On the other hand, parents tend to rely more on others than utilising the little resources at their disposal. During the interview process of data collection, some key respondent suggested that parents should be given a stipend by DBE once a quarter when they meet. In other words, parents should be paid for being parents. Chikoko *et al.*, (2015: 4) opine that 'in development efforts in Africa, for example, the needs-based approach has planted a legacy of absolute dependence on outside help and powerlessness on the part of the supposed beneficiaries, to the point where people can no longer see anything of value around them. Instead, all they see are needs and deficiencies.' This mentality could lead to such parents being lazier, full of complaints, more depended on handouts and others, and abused and vulnerable.

When parent governors are trained, they are probably going to silence teacher governors who according to Xaba (2011) are ineffective. Xaba goes further to say that the Principal and the teachers look down upon and always complain about the illiterate parents instead of helping them (Olivos, 2006, and Chikoko *et al.*, 2015). The department needs to improve on the training that they offer to SGBs, and emphasis needs to be placed on the quality as well as on addressing identified schools' needs.

The results revealed that the learner governors were passive. The key respondents in this study also indicated that in some schools, the learners are not allowed to participate in SGB deliberations. Pendlebury (2010) suggest that in rural areas teachers used English during their meetings with learners to silence them. The author goes further to suggest that because of power relations, learners are subjected to being silent during the meetings. This is to support the notion that culture and tradition take precedence. According to SASA 84 of 1996, learners in secondary schools must participate in SGB meetings through the RCLs. Harber and Mncube (2011: 239) argue that '... the present system of education in South Africa requires that learners to be active participants in a lesson so that they can raise their concerns, views or opinions coming up with new ideas.' This gives the learners an opportunity to develop into critical and analytical thinkers.

Being exposed to sittings and participating in the SGB meetings, the learners are being exposed to problem solving skills and being prepared for the future. When learners work with adults, they learn from them on how to manage time and set goals among other things (Koller & Schugurensky, 2010), and Mncube (2015: 325) emphasizes that working together results in teamwork, interconnectedness and interdependence among the members. Davids (2016: 61) has this to say about giving learners time to listen to them, 'Changes in learner conduct and attitudes have had positive spinoffs in the classroom.'

Teachers are another stakeholder in the SGB that some of the key respondents complained about. Teachers are highly unionized and that could disrupt school activities. However, some Principals are hands-on and in a study conducted by Chikoko *et al.*, (2015: 12), one Principal had this to say, 'I am very clear about what unions are supposed to do . . . and one thing I know is that they cannot discuss labour issues during teaching time at the expense of the learners'.

The results also revealed that Principals were not supportive of the SGBs. This is against SASA 84 of 1996, which states that the Principal must support their SGBs, identify needs and gaps and address them accordingly. The DBE must come on board and assist Principals who have proved to have gaps in SGB related matters, and because of the gaps, Principals are unable to capacitate their SGB.

5.4 Conclusion

The challenges alluded to in the preceding section pertaining to all the governors are serious and any intervention to address them would help improve performance of parent governors. The parent governors' lack of capacity needs more attention. Their illiteracy impacts negatively on their ability to read and interpret policies that govern them. The Principal as mandated by SASA 84 of 1996 has to capacitate them so that they could in turn support him/her. Schools have to identify gaps in the governance structures and address them accordingly. Studies show that if parents realise that they are taken seriously, they give their all in supporting their schools.

Teachers also need support so that their attitude towards parent governors could change. As torch bearers, their duty is to help both the learners and their parents to be brought so that together they could be a body that adds value to schools. Learners are the future, and therefore

need to be nurtured and helped into becoming leaders. When teachers speak English during meetings, they reject the learners who must be assisted, who will assist the learners if not them.

There is still more that needs to be done by all stakeholders if school governance is to function according to the legislation prescribed. As it was revealed during the interviews, the trainers also need more training to enable them train others who will effect change needed by schools.

CHAPTER 6: CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country⁴

6.1 Background

Section 20(1)(a) of SASA 1996 mandates an SGB to promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school. Having said that, the SGB would then do whatever it takes to provide education of quality. This could compel such an SGB to improve its communication, see to it that the learners' morals, physical and intellectual aspects are taken care of in order to produce a complete individual in totality. What is the contribution of SGBs towards the development of the rural communities they serve?

In spite of the challenges that SGBs in rural communities face, it is worth noting that the contribution of SGBs towards development of their communities is practised and in some cases acknowledged throughout the world. Auerbach (2011:16) contends that schools in Latin America '... the school honors parent contributions while rallying resources for them and involving them in student learning.' The honouring of parents gives them courage and zeal to contribute more, as it was stated by a key respondent during interviews.

The parents' contribution is a signal that their involvement in the education of their children is significant. The significance of education is cemented by Aref (2011:498) through this statement, 'A rural community cannot foster development without an educated people.' Considering that in South Africa education is in the hands of SGBs, it is worth scrutinising the impact SGBs are making towards developing their communities. In this chapter the results displayed in the following paragraphs about the matter under discussion emanate from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study, and conclusions are then drawn.

⁴ John F. Kennedy- former President of the USA

6.2 Results of the Study

The first part of the presentation of the results in this chapter is on qualitative approach which is followed by the quantitative approach. One of the reasons why schools exist is, to bring about development to communities within which the schools are located. A school is not just there for the sake of being there. This is realised in the mission and the vision of the school in question. The ability of an SGB to articulate clearly the mission statement and vision of its school serves in a way to determine the direction in which the school should go in terms of curriculum that should be followed- the type of subjects that would be taught, the types of teachers that would be hired, and ultimately the future of the learners who are taught in the school in terms of the careers they would follow.

School Governing Bodies must be composed of people with knowledge, skills and expertise that can be employed in order to bring about quality education and thus development. Closely linked to this is the need for the eradication of poverty in rural communities through effective governance. Human, social, political and economic development should be attained through these SGBs. The respondents in this study agreed that their schools were doing something to help their children to become better persons. The difference would be the degree of involvement of the stakeholders as well as the depth to which they follow-up on what they had agreed upon. The respondents cited policies that their schools had drawn to see to it that there is order and improvement in their schools, however, the discussion presented in the previous paragraphs revealed that some members of the democratically elected SGBs under the area of study, to a certain extent did not know their roles and responsibilities.

The respondents in this study opined that some SGBs were indeed doing what it takes to bring about development in their communities through the schools in which they operated, and this was reflected in Table 6.1. Some indicators for development are articulated below.

6.2.1 Advancement the moral welfare of pupils at the school

There are a number of reasons why a learner schools, and one of them is so that this learner could develop in totality. Some SGBs were doing everything in their power to help develop learners in total. A parent respondent attested to this idea by saying,

'We come to school and talk to learners during morning assembly.'

Table 6.1: School Governing Bodies' contribution to the development of rural communities

	Key informants										
	Governance manager	Circuit managers	DMG	Principals	Teacher unions	Teachers	Learners	Traditional leadership	Parents	Frequency	
Number of participants	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45	
Responses											
a) They ask for donations to improve school buildings for a conducive teaching and learning environment	1	3	2	7	2	6	6	1	9	37	
b) They write quarterly reports to see their progress in relation to their plans	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45	
c) They liaise with other departments such as Health and SAPS to raise awareness about health, crime and other issues related to moral conduct	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45	
d) They involve Traditional leadership in learner discipline and parent governors' elections to stress the importance of commitment and acceptable moral behaviour	1	3	2	9	2	7	9	1	9	44	

A principal respondent avowed,

We invite motivational speakers once a quarter to come and talk on different issues as a way of addressing our learners. There are days where we request priests to come and address them on spiritual issues.

The respondents also indicated that they also invite the Department of Health and Social Welfare to come and address learners on health related issues such as teen pregnancies, HIV and Aids, and sexually transmitted infections. One teacher indicated,

This year the number of learners who are pregnant has decreased, we have two in grade 9, two in grade 10, three in grade 11 and none in grade 8 and 12. This is an improvement comparatively speaking.

The decrease in the number of teenage pregnancies was supported by a Principal who said that a visit and talk by the circuit manager had influenced learners in choosing to behave responsibly.

Schools sometimes become battle grounds for gangs and thugs. Seeing that boys will always be boys, SGBs in schools took it upon themselves to invite the South African Police Services (SAPS) to come and conscientise learners about the dangers of being involved in crime related activities such as drugs, theft, fights and other crime-related matters. A parent governor voiced this,

We have a healthy relationship with the police, time and again we invite them, and they do not disappoint us.

6.2.2 Advancement of the physical welfare of pupils at the school

Some SGBs in the area under study- Malamulele cluster are doing everything in their power to advance the physical welfare of the learners in schools under their jurisdiction. As one moved around schools, one saw the greenery of vegetables in the school gardens. This was done to supplement the nutrition programme that is provided for by the DoE the aim of which is to expose and teach learners about a balanced diet. One parent governor made this comment,

We have a borehole and a garden because we want our children not to worry about food when they are at school. We want them to learn and be better than us.

A principal was supported by another parent on the importance of security of the whole school community through the erection of a palisade security fence and the availability of security personnel and said,

We used money from norms and standards to erect this fence. We erected half of it year before last, and last year we erected the last part.

A parent governor indicated,

We applied funds from the lottery and we received R150 000 which we are going to use for sports grounds for our children to play different games.

6.2.3 Advancement of the intellectual welfare of pupils at the school

The primary aim of the existence of schools is develop the intellectual field of learners and help them develop into responsible adults who would serve their country with diligence. The SGBs in the Malamulele cluster were outsourcing skilled teachers from other schools in different subjects to come and help improve the quality of the results their learners would receive at the end. A parent governor said,

We agreed with parents in a meeting that was held with the circuit manager, our Chief and the ward counsellor to raise funds to support teachers for travelling expenses when they conduct extra lessons on Saturdays, during winter, Easter and spring holidays. We agreed that each parent whose child is in grade 12 should pay a certain amount to help our learners.

A principal in another school took out a record book where he records names of teachers from other schools, dates on which they came and the time they spent in the school with his learners, as proof that the support for learners has been given a blessing the parents. A learner opined that he was happy about the support they get from the SGB because,

... when we are busy studying in the evening, some SGB members, especially males, would come and see if indeed we are studying. Sometimes the Principal comes to support us, and sometimes the circuit manager also comes.

6.2.4 Communication with parents, DBE and other stakeholders

One of the ways through which an SGB could reach out to people is through communication. When the SGB communicates with the outside, in a way it could market its school. This could be a way of the school telling the world the direction into which the SGB wishes to take the school. It could be another chance of SGB unveiling what their school is made of, the kind of teachers that are at its disposal as well the curriculum it provides to its learners. In other words, this could be another way of enticing potential clients through the stakeholders.

An SGB is obliged by law to communicate with the DBE, parents who have put them in office, learners, teachers, as well as other stakeholders. Section 18 (2) (1) of SASA 84 stipulates that SGBs should have at least quarterly meetings, and the prescripts from DoE require that SGBs should give reports to parents at the end of each quarter. When the SGB meets with the parents a full detailed report about its developmental activities for the quarter have to be given to all the parents as well as other interested stakeholders.

When people are given reports about the activities in the school where their children learn, their interest in education might be aroused and they may change their attitude towards education. Department official respondents agree that SGB should submit reports to the department, and department official had this to say,

The DBE requires that SGBs should give quarterly reports where all stakeholders would be available.

Another department official went further to suggest that the Chief in the village should be invited in such a meeting when such a report is outlined. A parent governor had this to say about reporting to the community,

We meet with parents here at school at the end of a quarter, when the Principals calls us. We meet at the Tribal court when there a community meeting on Sundays and tell the community about what is happening in our schools.

The results in the table revealed that the Traditional Leader agreed that the SGB of the school in his village report school activities at meetings held at the tribal court. Based on the results tabled, it could be concluded that the SGBs do contribute towards the development of their schools.

Table 6.2 School Governing Bodies' contribution to the development of rural communities

Role played	Percentage of respondents in agreement	Extent of agreement with the view(n=65)					Total	Significance of effect of:	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree		Category	School
1. They ask for donations to improve school buildings	19	39	12	20	9	20	100	ns	ns
2. They write quarterly reports to assess their progress in relation to their plans	28	29	11	17	12	31	100	ns	*
3. They liaise with other departments such as Health and SAPS to raise awareness about health, crime and other issues related to moral conduct	33	23	14	12	12	39	100	ns	ns
4. They involve Traditional leadership in ensuring that learners are disciplined	29	22	25	9	11	34	100	ns	ns
5. They involve traditional leaders in parent governors' elections to stress the importance of commitment and acceptable moral behaviour	26	26	15	19	8	32	100	ns	ns

*= P < 0.05

ns = No statistically significant difference (P > 0.05)

6.2.5 Results on Quantitative Approach

The discussion that follows is a presentation of the results informed by a questionnaire that was distributed to Principals, both SGB and non- SGB teachers, SGB learners and parents. Table 6.2 summarises of the results from the questionnaire that was distributed and completed by different key respondents.

The results unveiled that minimal work was done by SGBs in bringing about development in their communities. Only 19 % of the key respondents agreed that SGBs asked for donations, and 20 of the 65 strongly agreed that indeed SGBs asked for donations for their schools to benefit. This is aligned to the utterances during the interviews that were conducted. It was only a quarter of the key respondents who agreed that the Traditional leadership was involved during the elections of the governors.

Furthermore, the results revealed that in all the contributions that SGB made in their communities to bring about development, the Pearson Chi-square values ($P > 0.05$) revealed that there was no significant statistical difference in view between the schools and the category of key respondents. However, as shown in Table 6.2, statistically significant effects ($P < 0.05$) were observed with regard to with regard to, 'the writing of quarterly reports that would assess their progress in relation to their plans.'

6.3 Discussion

The poverty levels in rural areas of Limpopo are very high; however, parents acknowledge the importance of quality education by supporting their children. The articulation by the parents, learners as well as Principals about the contributions that parents make towards resourcing teachers of good track record is an indication that SGBs are working towards developing their communities. Chikoko *et al.*, (2015) attest that schools in KwaZulu Natal contribute to complement insufficient funds from government and the performance of learners is impacted positively thorough this gesture.

The results reveal SGBs' inefficient capacity on governance. This is a challenge that (Niño-Zarazúa, 2016: 7) as he argues that effectiveness and efficiency are realised 'in contexts with relatively good institutional capacity). Throughout the world, education is seen to be broadening chances of people to and eradicating poverty (Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). The involvement of

Traditional leaders would not be regarded as a taboo or interference, but as a means through which rural communities could cement and improve the quality of education and thus resulting in development in such communities.

The minimal involvement of the Traditional leadership in the discipline of unruly learners invokes elements of disregard, disrespect and negative perception of the Traditional leadership by some community members. Tshitangoni (2014) contends that Traditional leaders wield more authority in their communities and they are respected. This is evident by the attendance during scheduled meetings at the tribal courts. This level of attendance is contrary to the one at most schools as it was revealed during the interviews. This shows that Traditional leaders still have space and authority to make a difference in their communities Lund (2006). SGBs could take advantage of the Traditional leaders to help them influence people to support development of their communities through education.

Tshitangoni (2014: 76) argues that ‘traditional leaders are viewed to be well positioned to can meaningfully contribute in economic development of their areas.’ This view cements the idea that traditional leaders enjoy and command authority from their subjects under their jurisdiction. Given the circumstances about the role Traditional leaders play as well as their influence, a memorandum of understanding could be entered into with them and they could make a huge impact in terms of assisting SGBs in bringing about development in rural communities through education.

The revelation that parents were not able to write reports about their progress is disturbing. One wonders why they behaved in that manner. Aref (2011) opines that parents in rural communities believe that education is the responsibility of the state, and as such their commitment is not noticeable. However, Auerbach (2011) reveals that parents in rural communities avoid situations where their culture and tradition are not considered. The scholar goes on to say that the parents are always willing to assist in the education of their children not in an academic manner, but in a traditional manner. Schools therefore need to school parents first if they want them to behave in an academic or professional manner, like writing and giving reports at community meetings.

School Governing Bodies are mandated by SASA 84 of 1996 to raise funds to augment what government allocates to schools. As reflected in table 6.2, the results revealed that this role was poorly performed. This is an indication that the role players lack skills in fund raising (Rangongo *et al.*, 2016). On top of what was suggested as a contributory factor by Auerbach (2011), Xaba (2011) submits that parent governors are often bullied and silenced during meetings by the

educators. Their voice is silenced by the professionals and how can they have the energy to stand and support those who are silencing them. Educators need to understand that school governance is about working together and collaborating for the benefit of the learner. Auerbach (2011:18) illustrates this point by saying ‘as parents ... become more aware of education issues through leadership training or community organising, they often undergo personal and political transformation.’

The involvement of other stakeholders by SGBs makes schools not to be seen as islands. When different departments come to schools to assist, it gives a sense of belonging to the whole community and also cements what is reflected in the code of conduct for learners. If engagement of other stakeholders could be improved, schools would be better places for the learners to learn.

6.4 Conclusion

Traditional leaders do not seem to be taken seriously by SGBs, and yet studies reveal that their involvement could impact positively towards developing their communities. The results revealed that in terms of contributions towards development, SGBs have a long way to go. Much as rural areas, schools in the areas and its residents cannot be wished away, learned people like principals and teachers have to work towards helping parent governors to improve on their servicing schools through SGBs.

The initiatives that SGBs make in developing their communities not matter how small they may be, are worth noting. It is a huge step that parents take when they accept that the funds received from DBE are little and agree to augment for the benefit of their community. It is also great when the parents help the principal in the monitoring of their children’s evening studies. The involvement of other stakeholders such as SAPS, the department of Health, for different reasons, that is another area that parents need to be commended on. The parents behave like what the former President of USA, J.F. Kennedy, advised that people should think beyond themselves and think about their nations. It should be noted that parent governors are protected by SASA 84 of 1996 which is silent about the literacy levels of parents who are elected as school governors. It is the mandate and competency of the Principal to train such elected members for schools to benefit from their participation in schools governance.

Parents also need to learn to stand their ground when it comes to matters pertaining to the education of their children. They have to allow themselves not to be intimidated or bullied by anybody because there is so much they can offer to the betterment of the lives of their communities through the education of their children.

CHAPTER 7: WAYS THROUGH WHICH SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES COULD BE STRENGTHENED

*What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself*⁵

7.1 Background

Rural communities have their own characteristics that make them unique. SGBs in rural communities are also unique and therefore they have to be handled in a way that befits their uniqueness. The discussion that follows concentrates on ways through which SGBs in rural communities could be strengthened to improve on its mandate according to SASA 84 of 1996. There is evidence to suggest that improved performance hinges on the right attitude, capacity building and offering the necessary support (Auerbach, 2011; Riddell & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). In this chapter, the first section presents the results for both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, followed by a discussion before a conclusion is presented. On the presentation of the results, the first part is based on the qualitative approach while the second one is on the quantitative approach.

7.2 Presentation of results

7.2.1 Involvement of the tribal authority

Traditional leadership has always been given the respect it deserves. Even today in the middle of democracy, Traditional leaders continue to enjoy respect and support from their subjects and the society at large. In one of the focus group discussions, one challenge that was raised was the unsupportive parents who do not attend meetings arranged by SGBs. One of the teachers pointed out that parents attend meetings at the tribal court. According to the teacher, the reason for the parents' attendance of tribal court's meetings was that,

...they are fined if they do not attend.

All the key respondents agreed that SGBs should start forging a healthy relationship with the Tribal leadership as education belongs to all in the society. The Chief and his/her council are the

⁵ Abraham H Maslow

owners of the soil, and it is hoped that they want and wish for development in their community for their subjects. In fact, a dialogue with a representative of the Chiefs lead him to say,

We enjoy the working relationship we have with our school managers, and encourage them to attend some us for some of our meetings, we shall be happy to give them a slot to talk to parents and we shall rally behind them as usual.

A teacher indicated that education issues are discussed at the tribal court under SANCO. The respondent said,

SANCO has a number of desks like, health, education and many others.

The idea of education being discussed in rural communities was supported by all the teachers during the discussions. The Chiefs are willing to support SGBs and this is an indication that they are yearning for development in their communities through education.

7.2.2 Acknowledgement of SGBs' work and continuous support

When one is assigned with a task, it is appreciated and motivating when the assigner sometimes shows interest by enquiring from the assignee how things are going. A teacher had this suggestion,

The DoE must sometimes visit schools to see how SGBs are coping and talk to them, which is motivating.

A department official acknowledged the importance of support from government and indicated her predicament and voiced the following comment regarding how her hands were tight because of bureaucracy,

Human resources are a challenge at the moment because of the fact that we are under administration.

The idea of insufficient support from government was also highlighted by another department official who expressed his concern and view in this manner,

The DoE should employ deputy managers in all circuits who will support the SGBs.

When members of the SGB perform their duties as prescribed by SASA 84 of 1996, section 27 (2) of SASA 84 of 1996 categorically clearly that such members may not be remunerated in any way for performing such duties.

From the discussions that were held with key respondents and focus groups pointed a finger at poverty, and said that it had been as one of the major contributory factors towards the inability of parents' failure to honour arranged meetings by SGBs. As a result of poverty, a lot of people in rural communities are unemployed and therefore do any odd jobs that may cross their paths. The situation then dictated that parents had to choose between attending SGB meetings and getting a little income from the odd jobs they were engaged in. A teacher had this to say about this matter,

In fact poverty is killing us.

This submission was made after it was realised that most parents elected for governance were illiterate. The implication is that, the literate ones did not send their children in schools in rural areas, and therefore they did not qualify to be governors. A teacher union representative made the following utterance,

Literate parents like teachers do not want to be elected as SGB members.

This scenario exacerbates the rurality of and poverty in rural areas. Seeing that there were parent governors in rural communities who were committed to helping and supporting their schools, they also displayed traits of selflessness, being visionary, having a passion for education and being patriotic, these people therefore needed to be recognised and acknowledged. A teacher uttered the following sentiments,

These people must be motivated in the form of certificates or a stipend of some kind.

The question of stipend was supported by almost all the key respondents and focus groups, except department official who believed that SGBs and SMT needed to be organised and have a plan of action so that no time was wasted as parent governors,

...have cattle to look after, and they do not have time to waste.

The DBE and schools should continue supporting SGBs through workshops and any form of engagement. According to SASS 84 of 1996, section 19 (1) and (2), both the school and the department have an obligation of supporting SGBs through training and workshops, and this

needed to be budgeted for. All the key respondents agreed that the DBE should continue to workshop SGB members and also improve on the quality as this was revealed that it left much to be desired.

7.2.3 Co-option of skilled people into SGBs

The results in table 7.1 display an unattractive picture regarding the education level of parent governors. All the key respondents agreed, even the governors themselves, that they were illiterate. Seeing that illiteracy is a serious challenge among parent governors, a department official came up with the following suggestion,

They need to be encouraged to co-opt some skilled personnel to come and assist them.

The idea of co-opting members was reiterated by a teacher, Principals, as well as a department official. Co-opting is not a fashionable idea, in fact section 23 (6) of SASA 84 1996 states, 'A governing body may co-opt a member or members of the community to assist it in discharging its functions.' It was revealed during discussions with key respondents that there were skilled people in rural communities whose services could be greatly appreciated they could render their services to SGBs. These people may be requested to come and render their services to the communities and thereby help in developing the communities.

7.2.4 Conducting workshops prior SGB elections

A lot of people in rural communities enjoy watching and engaging in traditional music and dance. This could be one way of enticing community members to school. So traditional music and dance competitions presented by local teachers, learners and parents could be arranged on a specific day in order to entice community members to come to school. A teacher supported this notion by arguing that,

If parents could see Mr. C (a teacher at the school) in traditional gear dancing, they would definitely come.

Table 7.1 Ways of strengthening School Governing Bodies

Variables	Governance manager	Circuit managers	DMG	Principals	Teacher unions	Teachers	Learners	Traditional leadership	Parents	Frequency
Number of key informants	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
a) Involve Traditional leadership to cement the importance of parental involvement in their children's education through good representation during elections	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
b) Motivate SGB members by recognising their good work through awards such as certificates	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
c) Make SGB members aware of reasons why they are who they are and their role	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
d) Co-opt individual with relevant skills and knowledge from the community	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
e) Conduct regular workshops to address SGBs' needs	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
f) DoE should visit SGBs in their schools to see if they are on the right track and also to motivate them	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
g) Parent governors need to enrol for ABET classes to address illiteracy	1	3	1	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
h) DoE needs to write policies in vernacular language for parent governors to understand them better	1	2	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
i) The Traditional leadership needs to be trained about the role it has to play regarding education matters so that it does not overstep its jurisdiction	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45

Table 7.2. Ways of strengthening School Governing Bodies

Roles played	Proportion of respondents in agreement, %	Extent of agreement with the view(n=65)							Significance of effect of	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Category of respondents	School	
a) Involve Traditional leadership to cement the importance of parental involvement in their children's education	48	8	5	14	11	63	100	ns	ns	
b) Motivate SGB members by recognizing their good work through awards such as certificates	53	5	2	12	15	66	100	ns	ns	
c) Make SGB members aware of and importance of their roles	58	3	2	6	17	72	100	ns	ns	
d) Co-opt individuals with relevant skills and knowledge from the community	51	6	2	14	12	66	100	ns	ns	
e) Conduct regular workshops to address SGBs' needs	50	5	5	14	15	62	100	ns	ns	
f) DBE should visit SGBs to motivate them	54	3	2	11	20	63	63	ns	ns	
g) Parent governors need to enrol for ABET classes to address illiteracy	57	3	3	6	31	57	100	ns	ns	
h) DBE needs to write policies in vernacular language for parent governors to understand them better	58	6	2	3	26	63	100	ns	ns	
i) Traditional leaders need to be trained about the role they have to play regarding education matters so that they do not overstep their jurisdiction	57	3	2	8	17	71	100	ns	ns	

ns= no statistically significant difference (P> 0.05)

When the community members are at school, the school could take advantage of the parents' presence and address them in matters related to the development of the school. The school therefore has to plan and strategise on how to show parents the importance of participating and supporting the school activities. In other words the school has to take the opportunity and elaborate on the mission of the school as well as the vision thereof.

The SGB together with the SMT should tell the parents the direction they were taking the school into and Traditional how their school differed from any other school. Most importantly, the parents need to be shown the significance of their participation and involvement. Such a talk with the parents needs also to include how the Chief and the community at large would benefit from such a mutual partnership between the parents and the school. It needs to be emphasised that the Chief also need to be well briefed beforehand and also be given a slot to emphasise the importance of the role of parents in attending meetings and participating in the education of their children in schools. It is important also to indicate that the Chief also needs to put more emphasis on the significance of education especially these days. If schools and Traditional leadership speak from the same angle, that could yield better results.

7.2.2 Results on Quantitative Approach

The results as displayed in Table 7.2 revealed that almost half (50 %) of the key respondents agreed with the suggestions that cropped up from the interaction with the key respondents during interviews. It was further revealed that an average of 60 % of the key respondents strongly agreed with the suggestions as tabled. The other revelation was that in terms of the suggestions on how SGBs could be strengthened, the Pearson Chi-square values ($p > 0.05$) revealed that there was no significant statistical difference in view between the schools and the category of key respondents who took part in this study on how their school differed from any other school. Most importantly, the parents need to be shown the significance of their participation and involvement. Such a talk with the parents also needs to include how the Chief and the community at large would benefit from such a mutual partnership between the parents and the school. It must be emphasised that the Chief also needs to be well briefed beforehand and also be given a slot to emphasise the importance of the role of parents in attending meetings and participating in the education of their children in schools. More emphasis on the significance of education especially these days needs to be considered by the Chiefs. If schools and Traditional leadership speak from the same angle, that could yield better results.

7.3 Discussion

If indeed education is a 'societal matter' then the majority of community members should be given space to participate actively in matters pertaining to such education and thus have ownership of it (Swanepoel, 1997). Participation of community members in activities meant for them would result in the success of the activities they are participating in (Roodt, 1996). However, the success would depend on their level of commitment and the value they attach to such activities. In rural communities, people gather and discuss matters pertaining to their communities at the tribal court. History dictates that traditional leadership dates centuries back and has always received the respect it deserved. People in rural communities have always been served by their Traditional leaders and as such they trusted and still trust the Traditional leaders.

Tshitangoni (2014:4) asserts that 'At the centre of the Community Development Process (CDP) are education and public participation, implying that communities should be educated and allowed to initiate development through active participation.' This notion is supported by the presence of the Traditional Leaders' advisors, who possess a wealth of wisdom, knowledge and experience, and of which they are prepared to share with their communities. It is also supported by the presence of health desks at the tribal courts as was alluded to during the interviews. And whenever there are meetings, reports from schools under the jurisdiction of the Traditional leader are given by the SGBs.

The results revealed that people who are elected to serve in SGBs are not necessarily well equipped and yet, there are a lot of community members whom if approached could stand for elections and serve their communities better. It was against this background that a proposal was tabled to robe in Traditional leadership to play a role in the facilitation to influence their subjects to participate in SGB activities during their meetings at the tribal court (Tshitangoni, 2014). A non-SGB educator indicated that meetings called by the traditional leader are well attended because if someone does not attend, they are fined. People do not want to part with their money, so they attend the meeting.

Oomen (2000) opines that there is no distinction between democratically elected and Traditional leaders. This implies that with the authority the Traditional leaders wield, this exercise of involving the Traditional leaders could yield better results in the communities under their leadership. If people are influenced by their Traditional leader and stand for the elections in

order to serve, they could perform the job with distinction knowing that they have the support from their Traditional leader. The move itself could also serve as motivation.

Traditional leaders if they could be requested to assist in this matter as alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, they could perform a better job because they are nearer their people and they know their people's needs better (Kwame, 2012). While it is important to robe in the Traditional leadership in school governance, a line should be drawn so that the school does not become a battleground or a no-go area for people outside the Traditional leader's camp. It should be made clear that the Traditional leader has to be neutral when treating his subjects, especially when it comes to matters related to schooling under their jurisdiction.

History tells us that everybody needs a pat on the shoulder for the good they do. This is supported by Auerbach (2011), who asserts that parents get motivation when schools recognise the effort they make for schools. The scholar suggests that recognition could be in the form of certificates. The following was suggested by a parent in a study by Xaba *et al.*, (2015: 202).

'Everything that a parent does, should be written on the notice board or be included in the school records, because that will make us feel noticed and important. The other day I came early to a meeting and found educators struggling to decorate the hall. I rushed home, brought my table-cloths and flowers, since that is my expertise. I decorated it quickly and so beautifully that everybody was admiring it. But what happened thereafter? It was mentioned in passing, not recorded anywhere. No matter how small a deed, we all need recognition. Even passive parents should be recognised by thanking them, even if it can be for attending school activities.'

The parents' words carry a serious message and emphasize the significance of recognition of parental participation no matter how small the gesture may appear. Recognition could also be done by circuits and districts, which would be a way of the department's encouragement to parents to continue with the support to schools. It is against this background that Auerbach (2011:18) encourages that schools should learn to 'nurture parent voice.'

The results also revealed that SGBs did not know and perform their roles as per SASA 84 of 1996 mandate. This revelation was also unveiled in a study by Xaba *et al.* (2015). The law as in SASA dictates that the department as well as the Principal should help governors to know their

role. It is imperative for DBE officials to visit SGBs and give them the necessary support they deserve.

The results further unveiled the significance of co-opting individuals with relevant skills and knowledge from the community. This is aligned to SASA 84 of 1996. There are a lot of people in communities who have been serving and who are still serving different sections of the state. These people own a wealth of knowledge; expertise and skills that could help improve the service rendered by SGBs. Reasons why they are not co-opted could just be speculated, for example, a manager for governance pointed out that Principals are afraid of other people encroaching in their territory. The 'fear factor' among Principals was greatly exposed by governance section from the district, parent governors as well as educators during the interviews. Auerbach (2015: 21) shares the following experience from one of her studies, 'Instead of fearing parent power, said Principal Zavala, tap into it with parents as your allies. Instead of exercising *power over* families and teachers, work with them to develop relational *power to* accomplish goals of common interest.'

Shley and Schratz (2011: 272) contend that government should take the lead in equipping principals because, 'school leaders are an important link in the synchronization of top-down and bottom-up processes.' Principals work with different stakeholders, and therefore Shley and Schratz (2011: 272) argue that the aim of training them is 'sustainable leadership, integrating networks, responsibility before accountability, and differentiation and diversity.' If Principals could learn from these utterances and experience, they would work harmoniously with parents. This is supported by Chikoko *et al.*, (2015) who contend that Principals should give other stakeholders an opportunity to develop their potential by not intimidating them through their power, because that could help in developing their ability fully.

The key respondents registered their dissatisfaction about the quality of workshops that DBE officials conducted. They also complained bitterly about the competence of the trainers as well as the language used during the workshops. Tatlah and Iqbal (2012) observed that lack of or poor training and inadequate induction contribute to parents' non- or minimal participation in school activities. Another concern was the language that has been used in the support materials used as a guide for SGB members. Workshops and induction conducted should be of quality.

Auerbach (2015) and Cheairs (2015) propose that schools need to improve their communication with schools if they want to improve parental involvement. The scholars go further to say that schools should have classes for parents where the parents are taught. The proposal would go well with parent governors in rural communities as illiteracy has been identified as an impediment to their performance. This suggestion could materialise only if schools buy-in the parents' trust. Aref (2011:499) emphasises the concept of 'trust and social participation' if schools are to succeed in their quest to providing education to communities. It is against this background that schools should begin to be seen providing the warmth and accommodating that prevails in families (Auerbach, 2011). In a study conducted by (Auerbach, 2011:18), a Principal referred parents as the 'heartbeat of the school'. They can make the school by being supportive or break it by not being supportive. The level of participation and support that parents can give to a school lies solely in the attitude of the Principal and other staff members. If they are receptive and accommodative, the parents would give maximum support and participation.

7.4 Conclusion

The results show that there is need for SGBs which have been in existence for more than two decades in South Africa to be empowered. The preceding chapters revealed that there are still challenges regarding the way members of SGBs execute their statutory roles, however, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The proposals brought forward are an indication that people have thirst for development and improvement on service delivery in education. This is because there is evidence to suggest that the level of education acquisition correlates with development. Societies need to rally behind SGBs in rural communities in the quest to bring about development through education.

CHAPTER 8: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE OF RURAL-BASED SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

*A good plan executed now is better than a perfect plan next week.*⁶

8.1 Background

Studies reveal that more than two decades into democracy, disparity in terms of learners' performance is still prevalent in South African schools (Spaull, 2013). The scholar elucidates that a dualistic schooling system exists and Blacks are at the receiving end as most of their schools continue to be dysfunctional. This takes place under the watchful eye of SGBs. The schools are characterised by, 'severe underperformance, high grade repetition, high dropout, and high teacher absenteeism' (Spaull, 2013: 1). There are numerous reasons for the characteristics mentioned; however, something needs to be done for the benefit of the South African nation. What is it that SGBs in non-White schools are doing for this kind of characteristics? What is it that SGBs in non-White schools can copy from their counterparts in White schools?

People in rural communities need to take advantage of their uniqueness and develop their communities. In this chapter, the strategies that could be used by people in rural communities to help them enhance local development through education are articulated. Special attention was paid to the role of School Governing Bodies. The results of phases 1 and 2, which were qualitative and quantitative in approach, are presented in succeeding order.

8.2 Results of the Study

8.2.1 Cooperation between School Management Teams (SMTs) and Traditional leadership

A parent governor showed appreciation to what the Chief was doing for the community in the following way:

⁶ George S. Clason

'We were given a land the by Chief free of charge, the challenge now is that members of the SGB do not come to put poles so that the given land could be secured.' This gesture of appreciation was also reiterated by a Principal respondent in another village and he said, *'We did not have toilets and we got funding from 'khoroni'- tribal court- for the erection of toilets.'*

A teacher said that because of lack of funds, the tribal authority donated papers and ink for use during the June school examinations. In support of the view that traditional leaders played a positive role in the development of the school, one principal reported that his school enjoyed the support of the tribal court in their village. This is what he said,

'We have a healthy relationship with our Chief. I think this is because he is a teacher by profession so every time we request him to come to our school, he is always there unless he is engaged somewhere.'

Another dimension was that the civic associations were instrumental in promoting improvement in the local school. One teacher said that the South African Civic Organisation (SANCO) worked hand in glove with the tribal leadership. Taking this into account, he proposed that there should be an education desk at the tribal court. This would ensure discussion of education issues leading to implementation of appropriate solutions. A parent governor expressed her impression about the traditional leader's support and said,

'We agreed with parents in a meeting that was held with the circuit manager, our Chief and the ward counsellor to raise funds to support teachers for travelling expenses when they conduct extra lessons on Saturdays, during winter, Easter and spring holidays.'

8.2.2 Conducting workshops prior to SGB elections

A lot of people in rural communities enjoy watching and engaging in traditional music and dance. This could be one way of enticing community members to school. So traditional music and dance competitions presented by local teachers, learners and parents could be arranged on a specific day in order to entice community members to come to school. A teacher supported this notion and said,

'If parents could see Mr C (a teacher at the school) in traditional gear dancing, they would definitely come.'

The school should take advantage of the parents' presence and address them on the importance of parental participation in and support of school activities. It is crucial to clearly articulate the mission and vision of the school.

The SGB together with the SMT should share with the parents the direction the school takes towards outcompeting others. This will give confidence to parents that their participation in school improvement issues matters.

8.2.3 Drawing a plan of action for SGBs

In Table 8.1 there is an exposition that most parent governors do not attend meetings. A teacher claimed that parent governors were not encouraged to attend meetings because,

'They (parent governors) never call meetings and they always come to listen to the teachers and the Principal.'

A department official had observed that schools did not have a programme for SGBs and as such parent governors might or might not attend such meetings. The manager suggested that,

'Both the SGB and the SMT should agree on a plan that should be adopted for the whole year.'

It is envisaged that if people knew in advance about the plan of action for their activities, they were also able to plan around the schedule tabled.

Table 8.1 reveals the strategies that could be used to improve performance. Principals and teachers were regarded as torch bearers, mainly because of their higher levels of education and experience. They should learn to be patient, accommodating and accept the parent governors with the weaknesses they have inherited from the past education system. Given the weaknesses parent governors have, a teacher suggested that schools should arrange internal workshops for their members to capacitate them.

Table 8.1: Strategies that could help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs

Variables	Key informants									Frequency
	Governance manager	Circuit managers	DMG	Principals	Teacher unions	Teachers	Learners	Traditional leadership	Parents	
Number of participants	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
a) The SMT and Traditional authority need to work together	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
b) DoE should hire visionary principals as well as more deputy managers in all the circuits	1	3	2	9	2	9		1		27
c) Schools need to have a plan of action for SGBs so that they do not idle but know that they attend meetings for a just reason	1	3	2	9	2	9		1	3	32
d) Workshops must be conducted before SGB elections for purpose of advocacy and raising awareness	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
e) Establish an education desk at the tribal court	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
f) Schools have to arrange own workshops to address their own needs	1	3	2	9	2	6		1	2	45
g) DoE must conduct ongoing training and quality workshops	1	3	2	9	2	9	6	1	9	45
h) Give parent governors time and space to perform and necessary guidance	1	3	2	9	2	9	6	1	9	45

Table 8.2. Strategies that could help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs

Variables	Percentage of respondents in agreement	Extent of agreement with the view(n=65)					Total	Significance effect of	School
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree			
1. The SMT and Traditional authority need to work together	61	0	2	5	8	86	100	ns	ns
2. DBE should hire visionary principals as well as more deputy managers for governance in all the circuits	58	3	3	5	19	71	100	ns	ns
3. Schools need to have a plan of action for SGBs so that they do not remain idle but know that they attend meetings for a justified reason	58	2	2	8	17	72	100	ns	ns
4. Workshops must be conducted before SGB elections for purposes of advocacy and raising awareness on the type of work and persons who can be expected to perform	58	2	2	5	20	72	100	ns	ns
5. Establish an education desk at the Traditional leadership (tribal) court	57	3	2	8	26	62	100	ns	ns
6. Schools have to arrange their own workshops to address their own needs	57	2	0	11	26	62	63	ns	ns
7. DBE must conduct on-going training through quality workshops	58	3	2	6	17	72	100	ns	ns
8. Give parent governors time and space to perform, including the necessary guidance	55	5	2	9	14	71	100	ns	ns

ns= no statistically significant difference (P> 0.05)

8.2.4 Results on Quantitative Approach

The results as displayed in Table 8.2 revealed that on average more than half (55 %) of the key respondents agreed with the suggestions that cropped up from the interaction with the key respondents during interviews. It was further revealed that an average of 70 % of the key respondents strongly agreed with the suggestions as tabled. The other revelation was that in terms of the suggestions on how SGBs could be strengthened, the Pearson Chi-square values ($P > 0.05$) revealed that there was no significant statistical difference in view between the schools and the category of key respondents who took part in this study.

8.3 Discussion

The results of this study revealed that residents of rural communities held traditional leaders in high esteem. The involvement of traditional leadership began to surface from chapter 4 where the traditional leader who was interviewed indicated that SGBs were involved in the raising of funds, and that they sometimes reported matters pertaining to education in the schools at the tribal court during community meetings. The involvement resurfaced in chapters 5, 6 and 7, and the emphasis in all the chapters is the positivity about the role of traditional leadership. This is an indication that traditional leadership is not 'withering away' Tshitangoni (2014:30). A parent governor expressed her impression about the support they received from the Chief who attended a meeting in the presence of other stakeholders.

The SGBs alongside with SMTs need to find a way through which they can robe in the traditional leaders in education as suggested. Schools experience disciplinary challenges from both the learners and the parents. Moreover, there is a lot of poverty in terms of physical and human resources prevailing in those schools located in rural communities (Aref, 2011). If the traditional leaders are on board, because of the authority they wield, communities could transform into developed institutions.

Mbokazi (2015) asserts that Traditional leaders have shown interest in the development of schools under their jurisdiction in the safety and security of learners, and that schools need promote the identity of their culture. The issue of education contributing to the promotion of cultural identity is cemented by Aref (2011:36) and Aref and Aref (2012: 2191) as they argue that, 'Education in rural development processes can support and uphold local culture, tradition, knowledge and skill, and create pride in community heritage.'

The interaction between schools and traditional leadership referred to in the preceding paragraph would imply that education matters are discussed and deliberated at length at the tribal court without fear or favour, as the support from the traditional leadership has been confirmed. The traditional leaders' approach with schools displays the following character traits; their approachability, parenthood, caring and warmth. Mbokazi further contends that SGBs could co-opt the traditional leaders as stipulated in SASA 84 of 1996, to add weight in the governance of schools.

The Principal is the only person in the composition of an SGB who has been appointed. By virtue of his/her status as a Principal he/she is automatically an SGB member. It is against this assertion that Maforah and Schulze (2012:227) contend that, 'Principals are instrumental to functional schools ...' Chikoko *et al.*, (2015) opines that an effective leader consults and has influence on others. The department has a role to appoint Principals who are visionary and yet compassionate about their jobs. Auerbach (2011: 17) argues that schools under the leadership of the Principal should regard 'families as assets.' It is the Principal's role to identify gaps in the SGB's performance, and give the necessary support and guidance through workshops that address the needs of the school. This would improve trust and co-operation between the two, and encourage parents or families to be more supportive to school activities.

Auerbach (2011: 17) suggests that if parents are given space and time to be at home in their children's schools, this would be the result, 'As parents ... become more aware of education issues through leadership training or community organizing, they often undergo personal and political transformation.' Van Deventer *et al.*, (2015) concur and emphasize the importance of an open discussion with parents. The scholars state that there was a significant drop in theft and burglary at a school located in a squatter camp after the Principal had a talk with the parents. The role of parents is further emphasized and expressed in other words by Aref (2011:500) as he argues that, 'Education contributing to rural development must be locally controlled.' This is where the parents and the traditional leadership get in and support any education initiative to bring about development and eradicate poverty.

In chapter 4, it was revealed that 31 % of the key respondents strongly agreed that parents did not know what they were supposed to do. The statement is supported by a move to have awareness campaign and workshops before SGB elections are held for purposes of advocacy and raising awareness on the type of work and persons who can be expected to perform. If people know what they would be getting into, it becomes easier for them to

perform and serve better. School governors are viewed as follows, 'As school leaders, school governors are measured on their ability to 'challenge and support the school so that 'weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met (Baxter, 2017:26).' The implication is that SGB members should know what they are getting into even before the work begins. That is why awareness campaigns and advocacy should be done before individuals are elected into power of governing schools.

8.4 Conclusion

The recommendations and/or strategies that are tabled in this chapter are a sign that change is inevitable and communities wish to improve. It is also evident through the results, people notice gaps in the performance of SGBs in their schools and want the gaps to be closed. The involvement of the traditional leader has topped the list regarding changes that need to be effected. The results further revealed the importance of the institution of traditional leadership. In rural communities there is no way in which a blind eye could be turned on the institution of traditional leadership. It is imperative therefore, that different structures in rural communities begin to work together seriously to bring about change.

South Africa is in a global village, this implies that people in rural communities should begin to give education the attention it deserves. Going forward then would be who should be a member of a school governing body besides being a parent as the law dictates.

CHAPTER 9: IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A POTENTIAL MEMBER OF A SECONDARY RURAL-BASED SGB

What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others⁷

9.1 Background

In South Africa SGBs has been in existence for more than two decades and yet the performance of members of this structure is appalling. The previous chapters concentrated more on how members of SGB performed their duties, the challenges they face, how they contribute to development in their communities, strategies to improve their performance and how they can be strengthened. In this chapter, members who aspire to be governors are scrutinized using specific variables. The results are presented and a discussion follows.

9.2 Presentation of results

9.2.1 Results on Qualitative Approach

The results presented in Table 9.1 revealed that not everybody is supposed to be a member of an SGB given the performance of the members who were governing, at the time of data collection. The following variables were used and the key respondents indicated that they were in support of the nomination and subsequent election of a person carrying the traits mentioned below:

An individual who is committed to working for the nation, available and attends as well as participates actively in meetings. This character trait was informed by the revelation in chapter 4 that governors did not attend meetings regularly and such some of the meetings were aborted. This implies that the individual would make time to attend to governance matters. Schools should also come on board and help in the planning for such meetings. Furthermore, the individual should be ready to participate actively and make positive contributions towards the functionality of SGBs in schools.

A responsible person who is selfless has integrity, loyal, visionary, influential and respected by the majority of community members. This character trait was also informed by the results

⁷ Nelson Mandela-former President of South Africa

in chapter 4. Some members were seen to have been selfish in that when meetings were held, they always talked about claims and catering. It is true that according to SASA 84 of 1996, one of the roles of SGBs is to manage the finances of the school; however, if money is directed to benefit parent governors instead of the learners, it cannot be correct. This implies that members should not offer their services in the SGB for selfish reasons.

An individual who is literate enough to can comprehend and apply his mind soberly. One of the challenges that respondents alluded to pertaining to the performance of parent governors was illiteracy. Johnson (2001) contends that people who serve the public must be able to read and understand the laws and policies that govern them, as well as the rights to which they are entitled. If that was not the case, they would not be able to influence those they serve.

An individual who is patriotic and aligned to community-based structures is literate and fearless. There are several structures that operate in rural communities. When a person participates in such structures, they tend to be informed and would therefore be able to apply some of the skills he/she had acquired to the governing body when elected. This character trait was also informed by those SGB members who did not know how to run a meeting. A non-SGB member in an interview pointed out that a former chairperson of his school's governing body was told what to do in all the items on the agenda of the meeting the held. For an SGB to run smoothly and effectively, individuals who are literate enough are needed.

A person who is humble, has a passion for education and development, loves people, innovative and grounded. The SGB members who always inquired about catering and claims and were referred to in the preceding paragraphs did not exude passion for education and development. There was no sense of humility in them and it cannot be recommended that they be part of governors in our schools. An effective governing body needs an individual who is ready for volunteering, innovative and could bring change through his/her contribution.

Table 9.1: Ideal characteristics of a Potential Member of a Secondary Rural-based SGB

	Governance manager	Circuit managers	DMG	Principals	Teacher unions	Teachers	Learners	Traditional leadership	Parents	Frequency
Number of participants	1	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	45
What are the ideal characteristics of an individual who can perform better in a rural-based SGB?										
• An individual who is committed to being available to attend SGB arranged meetings	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	3	45
• An individual who is literate enough to can comprehend and apply his mind soberly	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	3	45
• A person who is humble and respects others	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	3	45
• An individual who influential because of his alignment to community-based structures and as such enjoys respect from the majority of community member	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	3	45
• A responsible person who is visionary in terms of bringing about development through education	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	3	45
• An individual who is not afraid to voice and stand for the truth	3	2	9	2	9	9	1	9	3	45

Table 9.2 Ideal characteristics of a Potential Member of a Secondary Rural-based SGB

Variables	Percentage of respondents in agreement	Extent of agreement with the view(n=65)					Total	Significance of effect of	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree		Category	School
1. An individual who is committed to being available to participate in SGB arranged meetings	55	9	2	5	9	75	100	ns	ns
2. An individual who is literate enough to comprehend and apply his or her mind in a sober manner	58	3	5	3	11	79	100	ns	ns
3. A person who is humble, is respected and also respects others	60	2	2	5	12	80	100	ns	ns
4. An individual who is influential because of his linkage with community-based structures	57	6	2	5	15	72	100	ns	ns
5. An individual who enjoys respect from the majority of community members	56	5	3	6	19	68	100	ns	ns
6. A responsible person who is visionary in terms of bringing about development through education	63	0	0	3	12	85	63	ns	ns
7. An individual who is not afraid to voice and stand for the truth	63	0	0	3	11	86	100	ns	ns

ns= no statistically significant difference (P> 0.05)

9.2.2 Results on Quantitative Approach

The results as displayed in Table 9.2 revealed that on average almost 60 % of the key respondents were in agreement with the character traits tabled with regard to the ideal characteristics of a person who could serve better in a rural-based SGB. This revelation was aligned to the 78 % of those who were in total agreement with the suggestions tabled. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant effects of schools and interest group or category of respondent on the views expressed. These set of results are compatible to what was echoed during the interviews.

9.3 Discussion

The recommendations made by the key respondents are a revelation that people recognise the significance of good governance, and they want change for development to be realised. Studies reveal that participation in community activities in rural areas has proved to be lacking and ineffective (Bryceson, 1996; Kongolo & Bamgose, 2013). One of the contributory factors to poor participation is members not being conversant with their roles as alluded to in the preceding chapters. Studies show that effective participation tends to yield positive results in relation to learner attainment (Ranson *et al.*, 2005 and Auerbach, 2011). Auerbach (2011:18) illustrates the matter further and states that not only do the learners benefit, but their parents as well, 'some mothers were emboldened to pursue higher education for teaching careers after being trained as parent mentors.' The mothers were motivated by the warm reception and accommodation they received from their partners in the schools where their children were learning.

Gann (2015) argues that humility is one of the personality traits in school governors that helps them to succeed in the execution of their duties. The sentiment was also observed by Auerbach (2011) from the Principals whom she worked with as they interacted with parents. Being humble is like when an individual leads from behind and doesn't want exposure yet making things happen in their sphere. Sometimes parent governors are used and exploited by professionals, like what was unveiled by some key respondents when they cited that Principals were abusing the parent governors due to their ignorance and illiteracy. Baxter (2017: 6) contends 'there is still ample evidence to suggest that head teachers (and their senior teams) exert considerable influence on both governor decisions and the ways in which governors perceive their role and

function.’ In such cases, schools need individuals who are not afraid to voice and stand for the truth.

An individual who enjoys respect from community members and is influential is very likely to implement resolutions that shall have been agreed upon. This exercise would address the non-implementation of resolutions agreed upon challenge that was alluded to in the preceding chapters. It is important for individuals with the personal traits tabled in this chapter, to avail themselves not for selfish reasons, but for the benefit of the society at large when the time is right.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored and tabled the characteristics of individuals whom it is thought, given the circumstances, could work better in a rural-based SGB. It is hoped that if they could be shared and implemented, the face of SGBs in rural areas would never be the same. People would begin to have confidence in and respect SGBs. People in rural communities would start enjoying the fruits of education.

It was interesting to hear what people say about education. It was interesting to listen to teacher respondents and how they started blaming the illiteracy and incompetency of parent governors. It was also interesting to learn how the teacher respondents regarded themselves as blameless regarding the lame SGB and its crippling performance. It was again interesting to hear how the teacher component did not hesitate to put blame about the incompetence of SGBs in rural communities on the poor Principal, who is always the sacrificial lamb, even the DoE blames him/her when there is mismanagement of funds by the SGB.

It was also interesting to discover that even Principal respondents as well as all the managers except the manager for governance were quick to put the blame of the SGBs’ inability to cope with its designated work squarely on the shoulders of the poor illiterate parent governor. It became even more interesting when parent respondents spoke eloquently about their unblemished teachers and holy Principals. To put a cherry on top of the cake, the learner respondents also saw some blood on the hands of their parents because of the life illiteracy jacket that they are always wearing. Having presented the results and a discussion thereof for this study’s objectives, the next chapter provides a synthesis and recommendations on this study.

CHAPTER 10: SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Background

The responsibility of entrenching governance in schools is the hands of SGBs according to Section 16 (1) of the SASA 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa: RSA, 1996). It must be noted that school governance in South Africa has been in existence for over two decades, and yet the performance of some of the governors frustrates the main intentions of the institution of school governance and the decentralisation thereof (Chikoko, 2006). Coupled with this frustration is the high illiteracy levels, lack of necessary skills and knowledge (Rangongo *et al.*, 2016 & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016), among most parent governors who rely on the guidance of Principals and teacher governors.

The South Africa government through the National Planning Committee (2012) has identified that the quality of school education for Blacks is poor. This poor quality has implications for Blacks being incompetent and therefore being denied employment opportunities. Research shows that unemployment is one of the contributory factors to crime (Fougère *et al.*, 2009). A high crime rate has a potential of expelling investors from a country. This being the case, the country through the National Development Plan, Vision 2030 devoted chapter 9 on education. The idea behind this is for the country to have quality education that would enable learners to compete internationally in numeracy and literacy. This move by South Africa is to demonstrate that education can be used to eradicate poverty (Aref, 2011), and promote development (Mncube, 2007). In order to achieve the idea of improving the quality of education, the country needs schools with effective capacitated governors who know what they are doing and what they want to achieve.

The performance of most SGBs in rural areas is reportedly (Rangongo *et al.*, 2016), resulting in poor school governance and unsatisfactory community development. However, the performance of the SGBs varies from one school to another (Bush & Heystek, 2003; Rangongo, 2016). Given the variability in the performance of SGBs, it is crucial to build an understanding of the underlying reasons behind this underperformance. Moreover, it is not clear how the SGBs' performance affects the development of rural communities. Therefore, this study was conducted

in order to provide answers to these issues through investigating SGBs at rural secondary schools in the Malamulele Education Cluster of Vhembe District in Limpopo Province of South Africa.

As already mentioned the main objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary schools in Thulamela Municipality of Vhembe District, Limpopo Province of South Africa. This was done in order to develop strategies that potentially strengthen their ability to contribute towards better governance, improved quality of education and rural community development in terms of improved service delivery and standard of living. In order to address the overall objective, the following specific objectives were to:

- a) assess the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles in schools;
- b) assess the challenges that SGBs face in executing their roles within schools;
- c) explain how SGBs contribute to rural community development;
- d) determine how SGBs could be strengthened
- e) determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural area-based SGBs; and
- f) suggest strategies that might help improve the performance of rural area-based SGBs.

10.2 Synthesis of the Results of the Study

The results for each specific objective are outlined in chapters 4 to 9. This chapter gives a synthesis of the objectives of the study as outlined in the preceding paragraph. The synthesis is summarised in Table 10.1.

Table 10. 1. Synthesis of the study on Effectiveness of Rural-Based Secondary Schools Governing Bodies in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa: Implications for Rural Development.

Context of the study

Aim: To assess the effectiveness of SGBs in rural secondary schools in Thulamela Municipality of Vhembe District, Limpopo Province of South Africa, in order to develop strategies to strengthen their performance.

Objectives and key findings	Major findings	Implications for rural development	Suggested interventions
<p>Objective 1 To assess the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles in schools.</p> <p>The SGBs raise funds to augment government funding</p> <p>The SGBs meet monthly</p> <p>The SGBs develop school policies</p> <p>Parent governors support the communities surrounding the school</p>	<p>Minimal performance of designated roles by SGBs,</p> <p>Planning was not a collective exercise</p>	<p>Learner performance and community enlightenment are compromised</p>	<p>The training and capacity building offered by DBE needs to be improved</p>
<p>Objective 2 To assess the challenges faced by rural secondary SGBs in executing their roles within schools.</p> <p>Insufficient funding from government</p> <p>Parent governors' illiteracy</p> <p>Principals and teachers not supportive of parent governors</p> <p>Parent governors not attending meetings</p> <p>Passive learner governors when attending governance meetings.</p>	<p>Government funding was insufficient,</p> <p>High levels of illiteracy among parent governors,</p> <p>Learner governors were passive</p>	<p>Increased dependence on external assistance,</p> <p>Local initiatives become dormant</p>	<p>Funding model for schools by DBE needs to be revisited,</p> <p>Rural communities need to elect members who are characterised by passion and commitment to SBs,</p> <p>Revisit learner participation by SASA</p>
<p>Objective 3 To explain how SGBs contribute to rural community development.</p> <p>They asked for donations</p> <p>They gave quarterly reports</p> <p>They communicated with other stakeholders</p>	<p>Traditional leaders are involved in discipline matters in schools for both parents and learners</p>	<p>Improved discipline and communication</p>	<p>Tribal courts need to have an education desk,</p> <p>Traditional leaders need to be trained on their areas of involvement , and be advised not to cross the line</p>

They involved the Traditional leadership

Objective 4 To establish how SGBs could be strengthened.

Co-opt skilful individuals

Improved planning

DBE to recruit and contract with retired professionals

Involve Traditional leadership

Motivate SGBs

Training should address the needs of schools

Co-opt other members

Objective 5 To determine ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural area-based SGBs.

Passionate, responsible and visionary individuals

Increased ownership

Awareness and advocacy campaigns before SGB elections to be intensified

A committed and literate individual

A humble and influential person

A visionary, truthful and brave individual

Objective 6 To suggest strategies that might help improve the performance of rural area-based SGBs.

Minimal interaction between SMTs and traditional leaders

A compromise on communication

Action plan for interaction between SMTs and traditional leaders to be drawn and used

SGBs to work with Traditional leadership

Advocacy and awareness campaign before SGB elections

Drawing year plans for SGB activities

Workshops that address schools' needs

Contribution to the body of knowledge

- a) The study contributes to the body of knowledge in school leadership and community development;
- b) It is multifaceted and multidisciplinary in nature and covers education, rural development, politics, governance, development studies, and agriculture;
- c) School governance needs to be embraced in the National development Plan;
- d) There is a relationship between an individual' literacy levels and their performance.

Conclusions

- a) Traditional leaders can work harmoniously with SGBs given time and space; b) Government support to SGBs is inefficient and ineffective
- b) Learners' voice is not audible in rural-based SGBs
- c) Illiteracy is compromising the performance of parent governors

10.2.1 Major Findings of the Study

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 dictates the roles that SGBs must play if they are to be doing their jobs effectively. Therefore as government, SGBs need to govern according to specific regulations in this case guided by SASA 84 of 1996 which is informed by the Constitution of the country. Regarding the objective on the extent to which SGBs play their designated roles, seven themes emerged as follows: SGB raises funds to supplement government funding; SGB meets at least once a month; Parent governors seem to be more interested in school monies; SGB develops school policies; The SGB implements its policies effectively; Parent governors know what they do; Parent governors support the communities surrounding the school. The study found that the SGBs' level of performance is just above 30 %. An indication that more needs to be done in terms of empowering SGBs to align to what is expected of them in terms of the law.

These results as displayed in table 4.3 regarding SGBs' performance, have potential to impact negatively to rural development in terms of the quality education being delivered in schools they serve. The fact that SGBs' ability to raise funds, draw and implement policies and support their communities is below 50%, is an indication that they know a little about what they are supposed to do. This implies that through support that needs to come from Principals, government and the community at large, they can improve. The involvement of other stakeholders is the implementation of the participative management theory that envisages improvement in transparency, satisfaction, improvement and accountability. As torch bearers, stakeholders are not only a support structure to the communities they serve, but a ray of hope as well.

With regard to the objective on the challenges that SGBs face while executing their roles, there were ten themes that distilled from the interviews as follows: insufficient funds received from government; illiteracy makes it impossible for them to interpret policies that govern them; Bully learners threaten learner governors when they give SGB reports; some Principals are not conversant with DBE policies and may mislead SGBs in making informed decisions; parent governors do not attend meetings arranged by SGBs; Parent governors talk little or nothing about school development issues, but more about catering and claims for their travelling; some teacher governors are bench warmers and are not interested in SGB activities; learner governors are often passive during SGB meeting, implying that the student voice never

contributes to governance; the training provided is not addressing the needs of individual schools; most teachers do not attend SGB meetings arranged by unions.

In this case, the study demonstrated that government funding was insufficient; and that illiteracy made it impossible for SGBs to interpret policies that govern them; and that learner governors were often passive during SGB meeting. The study further illustrated that SGB members attend meetings and talk about other issues but claims and catering. It is assumed that they talk about how to improve the quality of education of their children as it was indicated that they raise funds to augment government funding. The implication is that although SGBs are unable to interpret policies, the Principal and teachers are probably there to assist. And the little training that is available is assisting them to soldier on in executing their duties. The perseverance and resilience displayed by SGBs in spite of the challenges they face, gives hope to the rural communities they serve. This study did not look into whether or not SGB members resign when they come across challenges in the execution of their duties, therefore, this needs to be investigated.

What is the contribution of SGBs to rural community development? The following themes emerged out of this objective as follows: They ask for donations to improve school buildings; they write reports to assess their progress in relation to their plans; they liaise with other departments such as Health and SAPS to raise awareness about health, crime and other related issues related to moral conduct, they involve the traditional leadership in ensuring that learners are disciplined. The study demonstrated that liaison with other stakeholders tops the other themes in terms of the percentage of respondents in agreement, and it is followed by the involvement of traditional leader in the discipline of learners. The involvement of the traditional leadership is advocated for by the community-led rural development theory, which encourages the participation of local players in bringing about sustainable development. The involvement of the traditional leaders also implies that rural communities benefit from improved discipline of learners and therefore an improved academic performance; increased awareness about health and criminal matters; a possibility of a decrease in crime; and improved delivery of services from the sister departments.

In relation to ways of strengthening SGBs, ten themes emerged as follows: involve Traditional leadership to cement the importance of parental involvement in their children's education; motivate SGB members by recognising their good work through awards such as certificates; make SGB members aware of and the importance of their roles; co-opt individuals with relevant skills and knowledge from the community; conduct regular workshops to address SGBs' needs; DBE should visit SGBs to motivate them; parent governors need to enrol for ABET classes to address illiteracy; DBE needs to write policies in vernacular language for parent governors to understand them better; traditional leaders need to be trained about the role they have to play regarding education matters so that they do not overstep their jurisdiction.

The study demonstrated that the suggestions tabled were supported on average by more than 50 %. The percentage of participants who strongly agreed was more than 60 % on average. The implications for rural development is that people accept that there are gaps and they need improvement. The application of these suggestions would move the performance of SGBs in rural communities to greater heights, and this means eradication of poverty through quality education. It also means that parent governors want to learn. This will effect positively on their performance.

The following were identified as the ideal characteristics of individuals likely to perform in rural-based SGBs, and individual who: is committed to being available to participate in SGB arranged meetings; is literate enough to comprehend and apply his or her mind soberly; is humble, is respected and also respects others; is influential because of his linkage with community-based structures; enjoys respect from the majority of community members; is visionary in terms of bringing about development through education; is not afraid to voice and stand for the truth.

The study revealed that people want to be led by individuals of good moral character and social standing with vision. If rural communities have such kind of leaders, they are definitely in the right direction for development.

Regarding the objective on strategies that might help improve the performance of rural area-based SGBs, eight themes emerged as follows: the SMT and traditional authority need to work

together; DBE should hire visionary principals as well as more deputy managers for governance in all the circuits; schools need to have a plan of action for SGBs so that they do not remain idle but know that they attend meetings; workshops must be conducted before SGB elections for purposes of advocacy and raising awareness on the type of work and persons who can be expected to perform; establish an education desk at the tribal court; schools need to arrange their own workshops to address their own needs; DBE must conduct ongoing training through quality workshops; give parent governors time and space to perform, including the necessary guidance

The study demonstrated that on average, more than 55% participants were in agreement with the suggestions tabled as strategies that might help in improving the performance of rural-based SGBs, with an average of more than 70 % of participants strongly agreeing with the tabled suggestions. This implies SGBs' readiness for change for improvement. It also implies strengthened and improved communication with the Traditional leadership.

10.3 Methodological Issues

In this study the exploratory and descriptive research design was used, wherein the qualitative and quantitative research techniques were applied. The research techniques were informed by the following questions:

- a) To what extent do SGBs in play their designated roles in rural secondary school governance?
- b) How do SGBs contribute to the development of rural communities?
- c) How can SGBs in rural areas be strengthened?
- d) What are the ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs?
- e) What strategies can help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs?
- f) What challenges do rural secondary SGBs face in executing their duties in their schools?

The questions were used in the generation of an interview guide that was used for the collection of data in the first phase of the study. The qualitative technique was used during first phase of the study and individual interviews were held with Principals, circuit managers, manager and deputy managers for governance, and the following governors; parents, teachers and learners. Furthermore, focus group interviews were held with teachers and learners. From the interviews conducted, a questionnaire that was informed by emerging themes, was generated which led to the second phase of the collection of data for the study was. The questionnaire was distributed for completion by Principals, teachers, parents and learners.

Before the data could be collected, requests for permission were sought from circuit managers, SGBs and Principals, and when the permission was granted, a pre-interview session was conducted with a school that was not sampled. The idea was to get used to the questioning, voice control, warm-up exercises as well as the new tape recorder. During the actual collection of data, a brief explanation was given in terms of the aim of the study and ethical considerations, consent forms were distributed before the start of the data collection. Schools were also visited when they held their meetings for observation purposes. After the interviews were conducted, there were themes that emerged and those themes informed the generation of questionnaires. The distribution of questionnaires to Principals, teachers, parents and learners formed the second leg of the data collection. Qualitative data was arranged into meaningful themes using the Thematic Content Analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 was used to analyse quantitative data.

10.4 General Conclusion and Recommendations

Throughout the world, school governance and quality education are a topical issue. They are debated in different quarters by people of different social and economic status. People have interest because education is a matter that impacts on the whole society. Rural areas are equally affected when it comes to the talks about school governance and quality education. The performance of secondary SGBs in rural communities is under scrutiny because of a number of reasons. The results in this study revealed that SGBs relate well with traditional leadership as advocated by the rural development theory. It was also illustrated that a working relationship between stakeholders would strengthen and improve the performance of SGBs. It was further demonstrated that a person with good stature in the community is recommended for school governance. It was further demonstrated that the funding from government is insufficient. The

level of competence of SGBs in rural secondary schools if not given the attention it deserves, will compromise the objectives encapsulated in Chapter 9 of NDP Vision 2030. The following objectives among others are identified as those that are more likely to be compromised if the SGBs' level of competence is left unattended (Butler, 2013:1):

- a) Improve throughput rate to 80 % by 2030;
- b) Increase the number of students eligible to study towards Mathematics and Science-based degrees by 450 000 by 2030;
- c) Produce 30 000 artisans per year;
- d) Increase enrolment at university by at least 70 % by 2030 so that enrolments increase to about 1.62 million from 950 000 in 2010;
- e) Increase the percentage of PhD qualified staff in the higher education sector from the current 34 % to over 75 % by 2030; and
- f) Produce more than 100 doctoral graduates per million per year by 2030.
- g) Between 80-90 % of learners should complete 12 years of school going and or vocational education with at least 80% successfully passing the exit exams;

10.4.1 Recommendations for policy and practice

The results in this study demonstrated that the learner governors were passive during SGB meetings. It was suggested that the learners' silence or passiveness was as a result of their respect for the elders as dictated by the African culture and tradition, others suggested that it was because of the behaviour of teacher governors who did not want to be on the same platform with the learners, this is also another cultural and traditional factor. According to SASA, section 23 (2) (d) and (4), the learners from the eighth grade to the twelfth grade qualify to be members of the SGB, however, the act is silent about the meetings in which the learner governors should participate. This silence gives platform for other members of the SGB to sideline the learner governors and choose the meetings they would like to engage them in. It is recommended that the Act be vocal in terms of whether the learner governors attend all the SGB members or not.

The relationship between traditional leaders and SGB members has been shown to be healthy in this study. And studies revealed that community members have respect for the traditional leadership, it is recommended that the act allow the traditional leadership to be represented in the SGB as a member with or without voting rights. The presence of the traditional leadership in school governance would impact positively on parents' attendance and discipline of both the

learners, teachers and parents. It would also help in the traditional leadership getting firsthand information about schools under their jurisdiction. Other benefits of the involvement of traditional leadership in the education of their children would be in terms of fundraising and talking to relevant people if development has to be implemented in the community, for example, the erection of a school could take years due to the red tape of bureaucracy, but if the traditional leader talks to the Premier, things would just start rolling. However, a line needs to be drawn about the traditional leaders' roles and responsibilities in the SGB, and the traditional leaders be advised not to cross the line.

Government funding has been demonstrated to be insufficient for rural secondary schools. In Limpopo Province each learner in quintiles 1, 2 and 3 schools in 2017 were allocated R875. Out of this money, schools have to pay for all the services, buy stationery and equipment, and develop their personnel through training and motivation. When one considers the needs for primary schools against those of secondary schools, this amount is insufficient, and this was what was revealed in this study. Small secondary schools are the hardest hit and they survive because of the help they get from their neighbouring primary schools. The quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools are no-fee schools; they are not supposed to charge fees. If they have ran out of paper or they need the services of a teacher very good in a specific subject, they ask parents to pay, which usually lands the Principal in trouble with DBE. The principal of a fee-paying school would not get into trouble for asking parents to help the school financially.

Given the situation, government needs to move from a one-size-fits-all model of allocation of funds to schools. Secondary schools in rural areas need more support from government as the parents in these areas are unemployed and depend on social grants from the same government. The reasoning behind this recommendation is to avoid a situation where the poor receive poor quality education and continue to be poorer, while the rich receive education of good quality because they can afford, and continue to be richer.

For an individual to be a parent member of the SGB in a school, section 23 (2) (a) of SASA 84 of 1996 states that the parent must have children at the school. The act is silent about the educational, social and economic status of the parent. The results demonstrated that the illiteracy of parent governors impacts negatively on their ability to read and interpret policies that govern them. It was also revealed that some parent governors feel not accepted because they find themselves among the learned, and that makes them not attend meetings. A

recommendation is made to say that a parent, who stands for elections, must have the basics of literacy and numeracy so that the training that government will embark on after the elections should be based on a laid foundation. Other community members who have retired could be co-opted to help SGBs. For those parents who have other characteristics than literacy and numeracy, they have to be given an opportunity to attend lessons meant for adults.

The training conducted by department does not seem to address the needs of schools, and the microwaving kind of training that was alluded to by respondents needs the attention of the department. It is recommended that the training be improved and address the needs and gaps in schools. It is also recommended that principals and teachers also be trained to help them change their attitude towards parent governors.

10.4.2 Recommendations for further research

This study was conducted in the Malamulele area which is part of Vhembe District, and therefore the results cannot be generalized and concluded for the rest of the Republic of South Africa. It is recommended that similar studies be conducted in other parts of the country. It is further recommended that studies be conducted on the following about school governance:

- a) What is the effectiveness of SGBs in primary schools in rural areas?
- b) How do parent governors react when they face challenges as they execute their duties?
- c) How can parent governors transfer the skills they use in running *stockvels* and *xisevese* to schools where they serve as SGB members to improve their financial management skills?
- d) What is the view of SGB members on volunteering in their schools?
- e) What role can SGBs play in the combat of crime related to youth?
- f) How do parent governors react when they face challenges as they execute their designated duties?

School governance in rural communities needs to be investigated further, so that the findings if applicable could be implemented for better service delivery in education. The study revealed that there are more role players whose services could be employed for the betterment of SGBs' performance, such role players need to be identified and encouraged to participate in school governance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter to District Director

24 August 2012

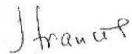
The District Senior Manager
Vhembe District
THOHOYANDOU
0950

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

I hereby request permission for **Mrs. T.M. Chauke** (Student Number: 11618525) who is our PhD candidate in the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation at the University of Venda, to conduct interviews for her research. Her research topic is "**Effectiveness of Rural-based School Governing Bodies: Implications for Rural Development.**"

The research topic calls for intense one-on-one interviews with beneficiaries and officials who are directly involved in the school governing bodies. Would you kindly grant her permission to conduct interviews with the above mentioned respondents.

Thanking you in advance for accepting my request.



.....
Prof J. Francis
Promoter: Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation



University of Venda

Private Bag X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA, TELEPHONE (015) 962 8052 FAX (015) 962 4749
"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based comprehensive University"

Appendix B: Letter to Circuit Manager

Center for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development

University of Venda

P/Bag X5050

Thohoyandou

0950

28 August 2012

The Circuit Manager

Malamulele West Circuit

Malamulele

0982

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

1. The matter alluded to above has reference.
2. I am currently registered for a PhDRDV in the Center for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development, School of Agriculture, and my topic is: *The effectiveness of rural-based secondary SGBs in Limpopo Province of South Africa: Implications for Rural Development.*
3. I wish to ask permission to conduct research in secondary schools in your circuit
4. Attached herewith is a permission letter by the Director of Institute for Rural Development.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Chauke TM

Appendix C: Letter from Circuit



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

VHEMBE DISTRICT
MALAMULELE WEST CIRCUIT

Ref: 17/1
Enq: Masia T.P
Contact: 083 282 0235
Email: tmasia@yahoo.com

To Chauke T.M
ATT: School Principals
: SGB Chairpersons

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MALAMULELE CLUSTER SCHOOLS

1. The above matter refers:
2. Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research in Malamulele Cluster Schools (Malamulele Central, West, North East, East and Vhumbedzi Circuits) on your research topic: **effectiveness of rural-based School Governing Bodies: Implications for Rural development.**
3. Wishing you the best in your studies.


CIRCUIT MANAGER


04-09-2012
Telefax: (015) 851 0038
P/Bag X 9205 Malamulele 0982
LIMPOPO PROVINCE
04/09/2012
DATE

Malamulele West Circuit Building next to Shitshelani Clinic, Private Bag X 9133, Malamulele, 0982
Tel: (015) 851 7919, 7920, 7921 Fax: 086 537 3059

The heartland of South Africa - development is about people!

Appendix D: Letter to Schools

Center for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development

University of Venda

P/Bag X5050

Thohoyandou

0950

5 September 2012

The SGB Chairperson
c/o The Principal

_____ Secondary School

Malamulele

0982

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

1. The matter alluded to above has reference.
2. I am currently registered for a PhDRDV in the Center for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development, School of Agriculture, and my topic is: *The effectiveness of rural-based secondary SGBs in Limpopo Province of South Africa: Implications for Rural Development.*
3. I wish to ask permission to conduct research in secondary schools in your circuit
4. Attached herewith is a permission letter by the Director of Institute for Rural Development.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Chauke TM

Appendix E: Consent Form

Center for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development

University of Venda

P/Bag X5050

Thohoyandou

0950

5 September 2012

The Deputy Manager for Governance

Malamulele

0982

Dear Sir/Madam

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

1. The matter alluded to above bears reference.
2. I am a PhD candidate in the Centre for Rural development and Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development at the University of Venda.
3. I am hereby asking for your participation in this in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree, and the topic for my research is: *The effectiveness of rural-based secondary SGBs in Limpopo Province of South Africa: Implications for Rural Development.*
4. Your participation is voluntary and I undertake to treat all information you shall provide with strict confidence and to use it for research only. Your name or any of your identity shall not be disclosed.

I wish to thank you in advance. Please sign the consent form below for your participation in the study. I fully understand the conditions of participating in this study and agree to be a respondent.

Signed: Date:

Yours truly,

Chauke TM

Appendix F: Interview guide

Information collected is meant solely for research purposes. Confidentiality will be implemented throughout the study period and thereafter. Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated.

Date :Name of interviewer :

Name of respondent :Designation :

Cluster Represented :School Represented :

Duration of the interview: _____minutes

1. Who are members of the SGB that you work with?
2. How often do you meet?
3. What are the expected roles of the SGB members as school governors?
4. Do they execute these roles satisfactorily? Please explain.
5. Have you received any form of training for the job you are doing? Please explain and specify the areas which were covered by the training you received.
6. How often do you get this kind of training?
7. Which members of SGBs do you train?
8. When you train the SGBs, which areas do you attend to?
9. Why these areas?
10. Do you attend SGB meeting to see how they are run?
11. Would you say SGB members' activities bring members bring about development in schools and the surrounding communities?
12. Which development activity would you proudly say SGB members have brought in their schools?
13. Would you say SGB members communicate the decisions they make in their schools to their communities?
14. What challenges do SGBs face in executing their duties in their schools?
15. Do you think SGBs need to be strengthened? Please explain.
16. What are the ideal characteristics of individuals most likely to perform well in rural-based SGBs?
17. What strategies can be developed to help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs?

Appendix G: Questionnaire for Educators

A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick in the relevant box

- a. Post level: Senior teacher Master teacher HoD
 Head/Deputy None mentioned
- b. Teaching experience: 0- 5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years ≥ 16 years
- c. SGB experience : 0- 5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years ≥ 16 years

B: SGB RELATED MATTERS

In this section there is a rating scale of between 1 and 5. Please use the provided rating scale and provide a reason where a need arises. The questions are aimed at finding the extent to which SGB in your participate in school activities and its influence in bringing about development in your school.

Key for the rating scale:

1= Totally disagree 2= Disagree 3= Not sure 4= Agree 5= Totally agree

Theme and sub-themes

Rating scale

1 2 3 4 5

a) To what extent do SGBs play their designated roles

The SGB raises funds to supplement government funding

- The SGB meets at least once a month
- Parent governors seem to be more interested only in school monies only
- The SGB draws school policies
- Parent governors know what they do and support school community

b) What the challenges do SGBs face in the execution of their duties?

- Insufficient funds received from government
- Illiteracy impedes parent governors from reading and interpreting policies that govern them
- Bully learners threaten learner governors when they give SGB reports

Theme and sub-themes

1 2 3 4 5

- Some Principals are not conversant with DoE policies and may mislead SGB in making informed decisions
- Parent governors do not attend meetings arranged by SGBs and this impacts negatively on their commitment and decisions taken
- Parent governors talk little or nothing about school development issues, but more about catering and claims for their travelling
- Some teacher governors are bench warmers and lack interest in SGB activities so they lack commitment
- Learner governors are passive during SGB meeting so they are afraid of or respect the presence of their elders
- Inadequate training is not addressing the needs of individual schools so it is irrelevant
- Most teachers do not attend SGB meetings arranged by unions so they lack capacity regarding SGB activities

c) How do SGBs contribute to the development of rural communities?

- They ask for donations to improve school buildings for a conducive teaching and learning environment
- They write quarterly reports to see their progress in relation to their plans
- They liaise with other departments such as Health and SAPS to raise awareness about health, crime and other issues related to moral conduct
- They involve Traditional leadership in learner discipline and parent governors' elections to stress the importance of commitment and acceptable moral behaviour

d) How can SGBs be strengthened?

- Involve Traditional leadership to cement the importance of parental involvement in their children's education through good representation during elections
- Motivate SGB members by recognising their good work through awards such as certificates
- Make SGB members aware of reasons why they are who they are and their role
- Co-opt individual with relevant skills and knowledge from the community
- Conduct regular workshops to address SGBs' needs
- DoE should visit SGBs in their schools to see if they are on the right track and also to motivate them
- Parent governors need to enrol for ABET classes to address illiteracy
- DoE needs to write policies in vernacular language for parent governors to understand them better

Theme and sub-themes

1 2 3 4 5

- The Traditional leadership needs to be trained about the role it has to play regarding education matters so that it does not overstep its jurisdiction

e) What strategies can be developed to help improve the performance of rural-based SGBs?

- The SMT and Traditional authority need to work together
- DoE should hire visionary principals as well as more deputy managers for governance in all the circuits
- Schools need to have a plan of action for SGBs so that they do not idle but know that they attend meetings for a just reason
- Workshops must be conducted before SGB elections for purpose of advocacy and raising awareness
- Establish an education desk at the tribal court
- Schools have to arrange own workshops to address their own needs
- DoE must conduct ongoing training and quality workshops
- Give parent governors time and space to perform and necessary guidance

f) What are the ideal characteristics of an individual who can perform better in a rural-based SGB?

- An individual who is committed to being available to attend SGB arranged meetings
- An individual who is literate enough to can comprehend and apply his mind soberly
- A person who is humble and respects others
- An individual who influential because of his alignment to community-based structures and as such enjoys respect from the majority of community member
- A responsible person who is visionary in terms of bringing about development through education
- An individual who is not afraid to voice and stand for the truth

Your comments about SGB activities in bringing about development in rural schools:

