

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

In the 1970s and 1980s most South African schools were characterised by strikes and class boycotts. In the early 1990s, schooling collapsed in many parts of South Africa. This collapse paved the way for an ailing learning culture in black communities. Black Trade Unions and community organisations engaged in various stay-aways from work, and students supported these movements through class boycotts. The protesters were protesting against the apartheid government and its racial laws. Gains were made during the protest action. The system of government gradually changed for better. The government abolished all forms of racial laws in education. The government gave free textbooks and writing materials to school learners¹.

Among the factors that caused a poor learning culture were poor discipline, absenteeism, the undermining of parents' authority by the children, the teachers' attitudes in the formation of South African Democratic Teachers Union, the formation of Student Representative Councils, the reduction of school fees, and school managers² who lost control over the students and the educators³. The government of the day was concerned about this disorder, which was caused by politics, and effective education hardly took place.

¹The term "learner" or "learners" is used to denote scholars/students at school level. Many writers and other sources, cited in this study, however, use the term "pupil." For the purposes of this study, the two terms are synonymous.

² The term "School manager" is used to refer to a school principal or headmaster/mistress.

³ The term "Educator" refers to teachers and any persons offering, directly, tuition and training to others, in an education institution.

Hlanganani South area will go down in the history of the former Gazankulu homeland as one of the areas that experienced their first education uprisings in 1990. Schools became political learning centres. Political meetings were held at schools. Some learners were taught the basics of politics during and after school hours. The overthrowing of the late Professor Ntsan'wisi's government and his Ximoko Progressive Party was talked about a lot in the Hlanganani South area. Professor Ntsan'wisi was a Bantustan leader and he was accused of supporting the apartheid government. Schools ceased functioning for a period of more than a month in 1990. The learners wanted a democratic government that would have politics and a background of political education.

There was no discipline in the schools of Hlanganani South area. Pupils were free to do as they wished. Educators did not have a say in the smooth running of the school. The abolishing of corporal punishment by the former Gazankulu Education Department aggravated the lack of discipline at schools. The school became a political learning institution. "Freedom now and education later" was one of the slogans that brought disorder and indiscipline to the school situation. Learners became unruly, disobedient and rude towards the educators and parents. The protest action caused a situation at school that was new in the Hlanganani South. This situation created boundaries between most learners and educators at school that were not there previously.

Absenteeism by learners was common in Hlanganani South area during 1990s. Most learners arrived at school late and left for home before the end of the school day. Learners often refused to do exercises, homework or to write tests. Most learners, especially those at secondary schools, also took part in repeated protest marches, stay-aways and boycotts. Some would come to school and wander around the school premises for fun, and had sit-ins during the school days of the

academic year. The “Pass one pass all” slogan was chanted throughout the year. Under this situation quality education could scarcely take place, and order, discipline, and the acceptance of authority were destroyed. In many schools, the culture of learning was entirely absent.

The parents’ authority was seriously undermined and challenged by the learners. Parents were afraid to discipline their children. Parents shrank away from exercising control over their children. Most parents did not attend the meetings convened by school managers. The involvement and support of some parents in the education of their children were seriously lacking. The communication chain between the parents and the school was shattered into pieces. Before 1990s, when parents were called to schools they would come in large numbers. Parents would cooperate with educators at school by telling them that if they did not see their children at school, they must send pupils to their homes to bring them to school. When parents were called to school, they would come in large number. Most parents had confidence in school managers and educators.

With the formation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in the 1990s, educators wanted to have a voice in workplace. Some lazy teachers developed a negative attitude towards learning and teaching. For lazy educators SADTU meant absenteeism, late coming, irregular class attendance, lack of teaching tools like schemes of work and poor preparation. This dispelled the teaching and learning culture in the school environment. For many teachers SADTU meant the banning of inspectors and subject advisors from the school premises. Discipline and order among most educators deteriorated with the formation of the teachers’ Union. Teachers took part in defiance campaigns that were in the form of chalk-downs, stay-aways, demonstrations, sit-ins and protest marches that were organised by the unions. School managers and some educators

who were unwilling to take part in campaigns were intimidated. Sadly, it was difficult for the Department of Education to take action against these educators. Quality teaching and learning hardly took place under those conditions. The culture of learning was severely eroded at both school and homes.

The formation of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) in most African schools contributed a great deal to the erosion of the learning culture. The SRCs worked with various political organisations like African National Congress in the communities and they always opposed the management of the schools. “Pass one pass all” was their motto. Some educators and school managers were harassed by SRCs and could not execute their tasks properly. Learners established environments that promoted a poor learning culture at schools. SRC’s were indoctrinated into looking down on the government of the day as well as the former Gazankulu Education Department. Knowingly or unknowingly the learners ended up hating education in general. Incidents of chasing educators and school managers from schools were rife throughout the Hlanganani South area. In addition, learners damaged school buildings and equipment.

Early in 1993, Grade 12 learners embarked on a strike demanding a reduction of school fees, a reduction of Grade 12 examination fees and the abolition of afternoon lessons. The situation was not conducive to learning. Schooling continued to collapse in many parts of the area and many school days were lost. The moral tone of many schools declined. The situation became stormy and unbearable for many educators and school managers.

Some school managers lost control not only over the students, but over teachers as well. There was low accountability amongst the educators. There was no uniformity in the way the schools were administered. There was a need for the

centralisation of administration to a certain degree in order to decrease school problems pertaining to registration, payment of school fees, and the management of examinations and results throughout the area. Some school managers were not well informed in the management fields; hence, corruption and misappropriation of funds were common. Some schools were without school managers and educators acted as school managers. In late 1990s the Northern Province Education Department (which is called Limpopo Education Department now) kept on delaying the appointment of school managers and their deputies. Under these conditions, a lively learning culture hardly took place.

The situation in most Hlanganani South schools remained unchanged. A high failure rate remained unchanged in most Hlanganani South schools. Most parents continued to distance themselves from schools and School Governing Body meetings. Most schools still lacked discipline and there were learning problems. Most educators continued to arrive at school late or absent themselves.

During the early 2000s, the situation of parent involvement in most schools does not seem to have improved from the situation of the 1990s. Most parents still go to school when their children have problems. The Acts and the legislations encourage parents to go to school. If it is a norm to most parents to go to school when they have problems, the Department of Education should make them aware that it is an obligation and they are doing injustice to education of their children. Most pupils continue to fail especially in secondary schools. Most pupils show their frustration from failing by changing from one school to another. Late coming by children persists in most schools. Most girls drop out due to pregnancy. The relationship between most parents and educators in most of Hlanganani South is still sour as it was in the 1990s. Most children at schools still study alone without the supervision of educators in the afternoon during study periods. Teacher

absenteeism is appalling in most schools. Most School Governing Bodies continue to condemn the school management for the misappropriation of school funds.

However, there has been an increasing awareness amongst parents of the need to be involved in the education of their children. The politicians and educationists showed the awareness in media. The learning culture in some rural areas of the Limpopo Province in particular had drastically gone down. Parental involvement was the core in developing that culture. Increasing parental involvement has become a national educational goal. Study after study (Bauch 1990; Beale 1985; Bond 1973; Epstein 1986; Jowett & Bangisky 1998; Kennedy 1991; and Piltch 1991) has shown that when parents get more involved, students learn better. Teachers also experience more positive feelings about teaching with greater parental involvement.

1.2 The problem

In Hlanganani South most parents do not seem to be involved in the education of their children. There is a high failure rate in the schools of Hlanganani South. There is no discipline in most secondary schools. The absenteeism of pupils is extremely high. Learners do not write tests and homework. Most schools are no longer undertaking educational trips. Most parents do not come to schools during School Governing Body elections. When educators embark on strikes no schooling takes place. Most learners study alone during study periods. The culture of learning is seriously lacking in most Hlanganani secondary schools.

Epstein in Van Wyk (1996:35), Swap (1993), Honsby (1992) and Henderson (1987), all agree that when parents are involved in education of their children,

learners could earn better grades, and education problems such as high failure rate and teenage pregnancy could be minimised when parents and educators work together in formal situation and home situation. Children would go and register with tertiary institutions. Behavioural problems of children are lessened both at school and home. Teaching and learning culture could be restored when parents support educators by making sure that children go to school everyday and engage in learning activities.

Educators would have less work at school because there would be fewer disciplinary problems, failure rate, drop out etc. Educators would be motivated to teach and learners to learn.

Given the situation above, the research problem gave rise to the following research questions:

- What mechanisms need to be introduced to improve the current state of parent involvement in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?
- What positive factors do the Hlanganani South area has regarding parent involvement and how could these be effectively utilised to promote the learning culture?
- How can school management effectively use parent involvement to improve the learning culture in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?

1.3 Aims of the research

In light of the above questions, the aims of the study are outlined below:

- To determine the factors that promote learning in the schools of the Hlanganani South area.

- To explore parent involvement and the learning culture in the surrounding areas of Hlanganani South.
- To determine what parent involvement entails in the community schools and home environment.
- To determine the roles that various stakeholders like Community Civic Education Desk that have an interest in education in Hlanganani South area can play in facilitating parent involvement.
- To provide guidelines for successful parent involvement and learning in the community schools of Hlanganani South.

1.4 Definition of terms

1.4.1 Parent involvement

Herman (1997:28) dismisses a common understanding of parental involvement as follows, “So often when we think of parental involvement, visions of school-based activities come to mind, volunteering in the classroom, fund raising and sometimes site council participation”. Morrison (1978:21) supports this as follows, “In the past there was a tendency of narrowing a definition of parent involvement, such a definition, has usually emphasised getting parents involved in the education of their children in public schools and private pre-school programs as well as limiting parents in programs and viewing them as people who provide help and augment the educational program.” Morrison further defined parent involvement comprehensively as a process of actualising the potential of parents, of helping parents discover their strength, potentialities, and talents and using them for the benefit of themselves and family

1.4.2 Parent

Morrison (1978:28) defines the parent as the one who provides the child with a basic care, direction, support, protection and guidance. This means that a parent could be a natural parent, a foster parent, a surrogate parent, an aunt, an uncle or

any adult related to the child. The South African Schools Act (1997:vii) defines the parent as, “ the natural parent of a learner, the guardian of a learner, a person legally entitled to custody (physical control) of a learner, and a person who undertakes to act as a parent of a learner for the purposes of the learner’s education at school”.

1.4.3 Learning culture

Chrispeels (1992:172) said that the culture of an organisation is the organisation. A school’s culture is the most important variable for bringing about effectiveness. On the other hand, it is the most difficult variable to describe. Chrispeels quotes Rutter (1979) and Monitor (1988) who said that the school culture and climate is comprised of variables such as safety and an orderly learning environment, norms of collegiality, high expectations and a home–school mission which creates the ethos of the school and which are significant in contributing to a school’s overall effectiveness.

“An atmosphere conducive to learning fosters a climate of order and respect in which teachers and pupils can thrive. This encourages the *esprit de corps*” (Bennet 1987:10).

Masitsa (1995:28) defines a learning culture as follows, “It is an atmosphere characterised by order, discipline, safety and respect at school (where teachers truly teach and pupils truly learn), at home and in the community, which is conducive to orderly learning, inculcates a work ethic, fosters a sense of locality and devotion to the learning process in which everything culminates in commendable academic achievement at school”.

Mcurdy (1989:31) defined learning as follows, “Some schools are cheerful and hum with excitement and purpose. Others appear morbid. Some people who work and study in schools see each new person as an opportunity for improving their understanding of the world around them. Others fear that today will be worse than yesterday. These feelings of satisfaction and productivity constitute school climate.”

1.4.4 Learning

Nobody can be said to be educated without having learned something. Learning is the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Akinpelu (1981:200) defines learning as follows: “It is a change or a modification in the behaviour of an organism as the result of the experience or a reaction to stimulation in the environment. Bell (1986:1) further defines learning as the process by which human beings acquire a vast variety of competencies, skills, and attitudes.

1.4.5 Informal learning

Informal learning in this study refers to learning that takes place in home environment. Parents and older siblings teach children family and community rules, regulations, norms and values. Learning in the home environment is less organised and structured. Parents are primary educators in the home environment.

1.4.6 Formal learning

Formal learning takes place in the classroom situation. Formal learning is more organised and structured than informal learning. Secondary educators who have professional qualifications teach the pupils.

1.5 Literature review

The resources that were used for the literature study were mainly books, policy documents, journal articles, and papers on parent involvement read at conferences. The researcher looked at the literature review of parent involvement in South Africa and the world. The University of South Africa library has a variety of sources on the topic of parent involvement.

1.6 Research methods and design

The research method that was used in the study was qualitative. The researcher chose the method because it is exploratory and descriptive. The method allowed the research to move from what the researcher and the research subjects knew about parent involvement to what was less known or completely unknown about parent involvement. Interviews and questionnaires were used to gather information for the research project. The researcher held personal interviews with parents, school managers, and educators. Four Hlanganani schools under the jurisdiction of the Limpopo Province Education Department were chosen. A strict interview schedule was used to ensure that the relevant and important aspects of the topic were covered. Questionnaires were used to establish the views and opinions of parents, educators and principals on parent involvement in education with regard to their individual participation in their personal capacity. In the research, the researcher therefore used a qualitative research design study with the parent involvement as the main focus. This is dealt with in Chapter Three. The findings of this survey together with the broad information acquired from the in-depth literature study will be used to inform school managers, educators and parents on how to maximise parent involvement in education.

1.7 Defining the field of study

The study addressed the problem of parent involvement in the Hlanganani South area late 1990s to 2000s. The situation appears to be the same in the early 2000s. Studies of parent involvement in the Hlanganani South area are lacking in the field of Comparative Education. The study looked specifically to Hlanganani South where the problem has been identified and the recommendations will be for Hlanganani South area.

1.8 Sequence of the study

Chapter one is concerned with the identification of the problem to be investigated, its delimitation, the purpose of the study and study methods. In this Chapter key terms were identified and explained. Chapter Two is a thorough literature study with the objective of providing a broad theoretical background of parent involvement and factors that influence it or hinder it.

Chapter Three is a description of the research methodology and research design. Chapter Four is a presentation of data and analysis of the research findings. In Chapter Five recommendations on how Hlanganani South school managers and educators could involve parents in education are given.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. The history of parent involvement in the world towards the education of the child

2.1 Parent involvement in informal education

Parent involvement in informal education is an old concept. The concept is as old as humankind. Throughout the world parents have been involved in the education of their children informally. Berger (1983:1) says in prehistoric times, prior to the development of written records, which is believed to have occurred between 6000 and 5000 B.C., parent involvement was a crucial factor in the education of their children. Children were taught rules and regulations of both the family group and of larger society. Berger (1983:2) adds that children were also taught various processes needed to obtain their food supply. This was very important for children to survive and become adults. Children were taught how to gather wild foods, to hunt, to herd cattle, and to produce crops.

Parents have always been called the primary educators because they are involved in the education of their children from birth. Berger (1983:2) quotes Frost (1966) saying that primitive societies did not develop schools, and the family was the most important teaching agency in any society then. Children learnt from their parents and they were reminded that they would be adults one day. Parents were not professionals and they depended on their intuitive and experiential knowledge when teaching their children. Frost in Berger (1983:2) says the methods, which parents used during their teaching, were telling and showing. Children who failed

to measure up to the standards set by the family group were punished.

As time went on education moved to formal mass schooling. Qualified school teachers taught children in the formal institution. Teachers were called secondary educators.

2.2 Beginning of formal education in early societies

Formal education was established and taught in formal institutions outside the home. Braun and Edwards (1972) in Berger (1983:2) say there was a need in early societies to preserve communities of humankind and to maintain a stable society and a viable state. The researcher indicated in the above section that schools developed and education had to take place in the formal school situation. The schools developed between 3787 to 1580 B.C.

Parents who could afford it sent children to learn in a formal situation. Teachers who were professionals taught them. Teachers were skilled professionals and qualified in their jobs. The teachers' teaching and learning activities were more structured and organised than the informal education at home. Parents in early societies did not distance themselves from schools and they cooperated with teachers in the education of the child.

Berger (1983:2) asserts that in Greece there were regulations that governed people to teach their children how to read, write and swim. Schools were in sessions for hours and parents had the right to choose the school they desired for their children. Roman parents were actively involved in the education of their children in the formal situation. Modern educationists like Rousseau, Pestalozzie, John Locke and Froebel studied extensively on the importance of parent involvement in

the education of the child by postulating theories and concepts. Pestalozzie was regarded as the father of parent involvement and he was an advocate of parents as primary educators while Froebel saw the mother as the first educator of the child.

The following section looks at parent involvement in modern societies throughout the world. The study looks closely at formal institutions and how parents have been involved in the education of their children.

2.3 Parent involvement in formal modern societies

It was indicated in the above sections that parent involvement was not a new concept in formal education in 2002. The concept had been in operation all over the world, for example, in the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia since the 1960s. Research and studies were done throughout the world and demonstrated that children had a significant advantage when their parents were directly involved in the learning process.

Jowett and Bangisky *et al* (1991:1) discuss parent involvement as undoubtedly one of the most important issues in the educational debate in Britain. The interest had been reflected and fuelled by legislation. In 1967 the Plowden Report (1967) came into effect in British Education circles and it was acknowledged by researchers, educators and government agencies in order to study parental involvement in a broader perspective. The Plowden Report stated that the children, for whom they were responsible, were the link between teachers and parents. The report stressed that teachers and parents should be partners in more than name.

Furthermore in British education, the Warnock Report (1978) and the Taylor

Report (1977) contributed greatly in parent involvement studies. Kogan in Cullingford (1985:65) discusses the 1984 Green Paper that was issued by the British Government. The paper encouraged parental representation on school governing bodies and wished to see more effective functioning of school governing bodies.

The British Education Acts of 1980, 1981, 1986 and more significantly 1988 emphasised the role of parents in the education of their children. The Acts emphasised the relationship between the home and school, access to information by the parents, and involvement in assessment and representation on governing bodies. Based on the promulgation of the above British Acts, Reports and Green Paper that Cullingford (1985) has quoted, the researcher is convinced fully that the British government increased the accountability of schools to parents and supported home-school contact at all levels of British Education.

In the United States of America parent involvement programmes were strongly supported by various stakeholders such as the President of the country and his educational advisors. Researchers, practitioners and policy makers had noted the importance of policy makers of parent involvement as a component of effective schools. Epstein (1986:38) says research on family environment has constantly documented the importance of parent involvement at all grade levels. Epstein contributed greatly to the subject of parental involvement and she wrote books, theories and edited various articles on parent involvement like, *Theory to practice: School Family Partnership lead to School Improvement and Student Success* (1994).

Liley (1997) undertook a study of parental involvement, "Parental involvement: contribution to school effectiveness", in the Cockburn District of Western

Australia in state primary schools and the findings of the research suggested that instructional forms of parental involvement were considered to contribute to school effectiveness. The study indicated that parents were important resources to schools. Walker (1998) also carried out a parental involvement study on children's literacy during the primary school years and it revealed there was a general community acceptance that it was a good thing.

The researcher chose Britain and the United States of America from the developed countries because the researcher found extensive literature on parent involvement there. The researcher, having visited some schools in Rhode Island, United States of America (USA), and observed parent involvement in the schools, could relate to some studies and writings on parent involvement in the USA. Furthermore, by using Britain and the United States of America as an example, the researcher was looking at parent involvement as a process rather than in terms of its geographical or economic reasons and so forth. The researcher did not use countries in Southern Africa because like South Africa they had been victims of colonialism. The researcher was aware that the European colonialist countries were directly or indirectly answerable for South African education being the way it was.

When studying different literature on parent involvement, the following factors appeared to have had effects in the minimal role parents in Britain and the USA were playing in the education of their children. Some parents are not interested in being involved in the education of their children. Some of them distance themselves from the involvement process because they do not know how they can be involved in the formal situation. They also get no help from the teachers or government about parent involvement. Some uneducated parents do not bother much about formal parent involvement because they do not have the knowledge of working with their children at home and in formal school activities. Some

parents see schools and homes as different entities and having no relation. There is a lack of institutions that teach both parents and teachers about the home-school partnership.

World research studies reported on below showed that there are benefits when parents play a significant role in their children's education. The benefits of parent involvement include: student learning and achievement, positive attitudes and behaviour of students, a positive school image, high attendance rates, school success, motivated pupils, psychological benefits for children, parents contributing financially, as well as the maintenance of discipline at school.

Solomon (1991:360) says that Henry Becker and Joyce Epstein reported that parent involvement benefited student learning by probably increasing the educational productivity when parents and children spent time with one another at home. These writers support their arguments with findings from other studies, such as one that concluded that students in Catholic and other private high schools performed better than comparable students in public schools because of the relationship between the schools, the families and communities they served. Kennedy (1991:25), a school principal in Missouri, USA, observed that parent involvement led directly to higher grades and test scores, and better long-term academic achievement. Bauch (1990:78) reports that educators in the USA agreed that parental involvement in children's learning influenced attitudes and promoted achievement, but the form of involvement that contributed the most is unclear.

When the attitude and behaviour of students are positive as a result of parent involvement, there is an increase in student achievement scores, a decrease in student dropouts, and an improvement in student motivation, self-esteem and

behaviour, and more parent and community support for the school (Williams Jr 1988:87).

In a study of parent involvement carried out by Potter (1998:10) at the State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, indicated that the school's image improved in the community as the program of parent involvement evolved and as parents and businesses became more involved in the academic as well as the co-curricular activities. Parents felt welcomed and the bottom of the class performed better academically.

Bauch (1990) says apart from student achievement, parent involvement improves attendance and school success. Parent involvement helps to reduce school failure in education. Pearson (1990:15) says an obvious advantage is that children benefit from the extra practice and the extra motivation that comes from knowing that their parents are interested and involved in their education.

Apart from physical requirements such as clothes and food, the family also provides a good psychological background without which the child would experience anxiety and aggression. The omission of these essential needs is an obstacle to the education process (Jowett & Bangisky 1998:42).

Parents also contribute towards the financing of the school, directly and indirectly in the form of taxes. Beale (1985:215) observes that pupils behave better, thus fewer discipline problems occur. School rules and regulations are easily applied at school. Bond (1973:2) indicates that parents who make the effort to visit the school and talk to the class teacher, and are willing to communicate in other ways are undoubtedly more likely to be interested and concerned with their child's work and activities generally within the home situation. Bond goes on to say that,

the results in the attitude towards work and attainment is even more spectacular and encouraging.

Parent involvement has value for teachers, learners and the community in the education of the child. Piltch (1991:58) asserts that everyone agrees that parent involvement in a child's education is vital. He goes on to say that when parents take an interest in a child's learning, and provide incentives for a child to read independently and complete homework, the child is more likely to be successful.

Riley, Secretary of United States of America Education Department during the 1990s quoted Sanders as saying when schools are operating at maximum efficiency, they are responsible for about 40 to 60 percent of what a child learns. The other 50 to 60 percent of learning comes from the family and community (Riley1997: 18). In a situation where parents are uninvolved in their children's education, for example, 40 percent is learned at school and 60 percent learning that should come from the parents will be missing.

2.4 Parent involvement in South Africa

The South African experience of parent involvement is unique and different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. The South African experience may be looked at in terms of the South African education eras, that is, Before 1652; 1652-1800s; 1850-1948; 1948-1976; 1976-1994, and the democratic era (since May 1994) (Claassen 1995: 455-458). Furthermore, the experiences have to be classified according to the different South African races. In this study, the focus is on education for black learners, in black schools.

In a study conducted by Van Wyk in 1994 in a South African township (in Pretoria), the black parents under study parents were not involved in the education of their children due to various problems of a more practical nature such as illiteracy, working long hours and getting home late, children in the care of grandparents, or older brothers and sisters, and extreme poverty in the communities (Van Wyk 1996:112). Mkwanazi (1994:29), also in a South African study, found that most teachers and principals attribute the lack of parent involvement to the parents themselves. She pointed out that teachers are not critical of themselves in the process of parent involvement. She added that most parents are extremely interested and wish to assist in their children's progress but cannot do so because of the lack of stability in the broader social, economic and political context prevailing at the time of her research (Mkwanazi 1994:27).

Early education, or pre-colonisation education started before 1652. Continued under Dutch rule, during the era of a liberal education policy and during the apartheid education system (1948-1994). The study also notes legislations of parent involvement in the form of Acts, Reports and Papers. Evaluation of this legislation is discussed in terms of their failures and successes.

2.4.1 Education before 1652

Before colonisation, which started in 1652, there was no formal education in South Africa. Just like other societies in the world, parents were the primary educators right from birth. However, Claasen (1995:455) identifies two phases of child's education, namely an informal phase and a formal phase. Informal education was elaborated upon in the first section and it will not be repeated. In the second phase the African children had to receive their education during the period of initiation. Young boys and girls who had already graduated helped

parents with formal lessons during the initiation periods. There was no doubt that parent involvement was a success in all phases.

2.4.2 Missionaries and Dutch rule education 1652-1800s

During the time of Dutch rule, which occurred between 1652-1800, itinerant teachers and missionaries were secondary educators in the formal institutions. The role of parents in the education system was there because parents sent their children to school. Parents encouraged and supported their children in their education (Claasen 1995:455). There were missionaries during this period that offered Christian education. Missionaries came from Europe and America.

Christie (1985:67) says there is no doubt that the church did a lot of good for education of the country then. Missionaries were humane people who spread the Christian faith among the African tribes and at the same time brought education and western medicine. People were taught to read and write, as well as the Christian doctrine. Missionary education was not well received by Africans as it caused division among them. Missionaries wanted Africans to leave their culture and follow the western culture. Some educated Africans deserted their culture and followed the western style and they were called the black elite. Christie (1991:75) quotes Etherington as saying, "Parents withdrew their daughters from mission schools and rotated their sons so that they might earn shirts and wages."

The education in the four provinces during the liberal era (1850-1948) flourished and encouraged parents to play a role in the education of their children. In the Cape Province parents had to teach the children themselves or use itinerant schoolmasters (Muller 1990:60). There were no schools for children who could not attend school in Cape Town or in one of the smaller towns.

In the Natal Province parents had local control of education and they had a voice in the education of their children (Behr & MacMllan 1971:45).

In the Transvaal the Volksraad passed the Burger's Education Act in 1874. The Act provided for the establishment of farm and town primary schools and a secondary school or gymnasium in Pretoria. The Act also provided parents with a voice in educational matters through elected school commissions. The Act allowed parents to support the education of their children in the management and administrative sphere.

2.4.3 Apartheid education 1948

The education system for Africans in South Africa changed for the worse when Dr D.F. Malan took office in 1949. The Eiselen Commission was appointed to look into the education system of the country and made recommendations to the government. The commission gave birth to the Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953. Concerning parent involvement Section 6(1) of Act No 47 of 1953 states:

“... Subject to the provisions of this Act, the minister may, on such special conditions as he may stipulate and in accordance with such general principles as he may determine in consultation with the Minister of Finance, out of money appropriated or set aside by Parliament for native education:

Subsidise any Bantu school established or maintained by Bantu authority, or any native council, tribe or community (herein after called a Bantu community school), or Assist in the establishment or maintenance of any such school.”

The Act set the tone for African parents to participate fully in the education of

their children (Mkwanazi 1993:52). Parents had to establish and build community schools so that children could learn. Parents controlled and financed the education of their children in the formal school situation. That meant children from communities, which had no money, were denied the right to basic education in the formal situation. Some children had to walk long distances to attend school. African children were the ones who suffered most under this Act. The white people were also involved in the education of their children. The government helped white parents in financing the education of their children by building schools and supplying those schools with teaching and learning aids. They got books free and their education was of a higher quality than that of Africans (Mkwanazi 1993).

The Act also allowed African parents to participate actively in the management of Government Bantu schools such as regional, local and domestic councils as well as other boards. Their role was to participate in the teaching and learning activity of the education of their children. Christie & Collins (1982:66) say in 1955 the state enacted legislation to restrict the total operation of mission schools and the state schools replaced them. In 1953 there were over 5000 state-aided mission schools. By 1965, 509 out of a total 7222 African schools were state-aided mission schools.

The Bantu Education Act gave the Minister of Education a great deal of power to have control over teachers, syllabuses and any other matter related to the establishment, maintenance, management and control of government Bantu schools. The Act divided the education system into two departments, namely the Black education system and the White education system.

The Bantu education Act was criticised by African parents, English speaking

missionaries and black elite groups. The Act was racist and it was against the Christian norms and values of Africans and English people who were in South Africa then. The Act contradicted itself when it stressed that it offered Christian education, where as it was relegating African education. African parents had to pay a lot of money to build schools, paid school fees and supported their children while they were at school. Lodge (1990) and Samuel (1990) cited in Van Wyk (1996:87) concur, “Less apparent at the inception of the Bantu Education Act was that the system imposed increasing financial obligations on African communities. Parents were, for example, responsible for purchasing uniforms, stationery and textbooks for their school going children.”

In a nutshell the Bantu Education system was not well received by both Africans and white missionaries throughout the country. Riots and school boycotts were rife in the country by the late 1950s. School committees, school boards and management councils could not convince the government about how bad the system of education was for the Africans.

Section 2 (h) of the National Education Act (1967 Act 39 of 1967) supported Bantu Education by giving parents rights to participate in the education of their children through school boards, management councils (for every public school providing regular or specialised education) and boards of management (Behr 1988:67)

During this time there were two parent bodies, statutory and non-statutory bodies.

The statutory parent body constituted a management council and school committee or school governing body. The body had certain powers given to it by law, hence, the term ‘statutory’, and functioned in most traditionally white

schools, but was not well established in black schools (Van Schalkwyk 1988:88).

The management councils executed tasks of professional activities. They reported on those activities and made recommendations to the director of education. Some of their duties were to make recommendations regarding the appointment of teachers as well as to collect and control money collected. The statutory body served as the mouthpiece of the parents with regard to the physical and material matters of the institution. The body carried out all the duties that were entrusted to it by the educational authorities (Van Schalkwyk 1988: 89).

The management council consisted of the principal of the school concerned and many others as determined from time to time by the education authorities. In the Transvaal such councils consisted of eight members of which four were parents (Van Schalkwyk 1988:89). Parents who were less educated could not make good recommendations, for example, in the appointment of a teacher. An incompetent teacher could be appointed ahead of a competent one due to race, ethnic grouping etc. In the different Acts that were referred to in the above section, very few gave detailed information with regard to the training of school committees, school boards and management councils.

According to Van Schalkwyk (1988:88), school boards functioned in the district level and they had supervisory, advisory, administrative and managerial tasks to education. They were responsible for the maintenance of the grounds, buildings, surroundings and apparatus. They worked hand in hand with the regional council regarding advice pertaining to provision and maintenance of buildings and grounds as well as the establishment or closure of institutions. Therefore, to execute that task exceptionally, training was important to parents. Depending on circumstances, such as the class of the school district or the number of educational

institutions within its boundaries, a school board could consist of 6 to 12 members representing various institutions.

Van Schalkwyk (1988:149) defines the non-statutory body as free and autonomous associations or committees that were established from their own members and on their own initiative in order to promote parental interests in formal education.

Van Schalkwyk (1988:150) says the main purpose of this body was to combine the efforts of parents and teachers to a very limited degree when some services were required by the school such as collection of funds, entertainment or assistance with the transportation of pupils. They merely rendered services and made no contribution to the more fundamental matters of education such as policy making. They had to organise and manage matters of mutual interest to the local parent community.

The differences between the two bodies and their functions were outlined above. The two bodies were successful in some schools and unsuccessful in other schools and communities. Some schools were closed during the 1980s due to school boycotts. The bodies had successes and failures in the country.

The non-statutory bodies, which were well established in the rural areas, succeeded in executing their duties and functions.

2.4.4 Period of 1976 Soweto uprising

Behr (1988:37) says a new dawn in the education of South Africa set in on 16 June 1976 when a well organised mass protest of some 6000 school children from

Soweto led to a confrontation with the police. The event triggered off riots, violence and unrest, which swept throughout South Africa in the months that followed. Statutory bodies in the form of management councils and boards were there but they could not resolve the education situation. Guidance and support of parents was crucial in bringing stability to the chaotic situation. Innocent people were killed during the riots and schools were damaged (vandalism). The situation was uncontrollable especially in urban areas. Lessons, however, continued to run smoothly in some schools in rural areas. Most educationists called the period between 1976-1994 a period of reform.

The promulgation of the Education and Training Act of 1979 (Act 90 of 1979) which took effect on 1 January 1980, and which initiated a new dispensation for Black Education, replaced the Bantu Act of 1953 and it wanted to do away with the aspects of the previous system. Subsection 7 of Act No 90 of 1979 places the position of parent involvement within the: “...establishment of Councils, committees, boards and other bodies for schools and conferring certain powers in regard to community schools upon certain other bodies (Education and Training Act, No 90 of 1979)”

The Act gave the parents a platform to participate in the education of their children in the community. Parents could make provisions and exercise particular duties and powers in connection with the control and management of public schools. Local councils, committees and school boards were established.

State schools got grants and aid from the government, and teachers continued to be hired by the school committees and the state. It was not the duty of the parents to pay them, but that of the state. The Act was also applicable to the homelands

The Delange Report (1981) also recommended that communities desiring facilities in excess of the given norms would have to provide these from their own funds. Parents in the rural areas continued to finance their education under their various homelands. Schools in the cities were declared state schools and were financed by the government. Act 70 of 1988 also stressed parental involvement in terms of Section 2(h) of the National Education Act, 1967 (Act 39 of 1967)

In the early 1990s the country was in political turmoil. Schooling for black learners was characterised by riots and boycotts. This was the period when political activities were unbanned. Parents lost control of their children's schools and education, because schools started experiencing by a high failure rate. This research study suggests that the high failure rate was due to the fact that parent involvement was lacking in the education of the child especially in secondary schools.

The Acts of parent involvement passed by the then government were also applicable to Hlanganani South through the Gazankulu Education Department. Gazankulu was a Shangaan homeland. Some homelands were independent, but Gazankulu was one of those that were not independent. Education offices were at Giyani, which was the capital of the homeland. Schools were usually not interrupted by the strikes. The homeland had four districts, namely Giyani, Malamulele, Ritavi and Mhala. Hlanganani South fell under Giyani. There were education offices called circuits in the four districts. Though the concept functioned in different eras, how it functioned remained the same. There were no riots in Hlanganani South except before the early 1990s. The involvement of parents was not disturbed when compared to what happened in the other black townships like Soweto.

2.4.5 Education in the democratic era (from 1994)

The democratic era began with the democratic election of April 1994 and then non-racial education system based on equality was instituted. The National Department of Education and the nine provincial education departments, each headed by a minister came into existence. Each provincial department administered and controlled its education system. A fair amount of autonomy was given to the provincial governments.

In the democratic era parents were encouraged by the Acts and White Papers to involve themselves in the education of their children. In March 1995 the White Paper on Education and Training was released. The paper is titled Education and Training in democratic South Africa. Concerning the parents the White Paper (1995a:21-23) highlights the importance of parent and community involvement:

“The principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stake holders, interest groups and role players. This is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the education process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not.”

The White Paper took parents and community involvement in the education of the child into consideration. Parents continue to be given a chance to involve themselves formally in the education of their children.

On 31 August 1995 The Hunter Report Committee released The organisation, governance and funding of schools Report. Among its observations the Hunter Report (1995:51) acknowledged that, “Parents have both the right and the responsibility to participate in the education of their children”

The Report entrusted parents with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt school policy. Parents could comment and make suggestions with regard to decisions taken by the school. Parents, through school governing bodies, performed various functions in the school like the maintenance of school buildings, the purchase of textbooks and materials and the purchase of equipment. In cases where the governing body of the particular school did not have the relevant capacity, the Report stressed that the educational authority would exercise those powers on behalf of the governing body (Hunter Report 1995:57).

White Paper No.2. The organisation, guidance and funding of schools, released in February 1996, included the following:

“School Governing Bodies involve all stake holder groups in active and responsible rules; encourage tolerance, rational discussion and attractive decision making (White Paper 1996:16).

According to the White Paper (Department of Education. 1996:17) each public school ought to have had a governing body by January 1997, which should have comprised:

- Elected representations of
- Parents or guardians of learners currently enrolled at school
- Teachers
- Learners (in secondary schools)
- Non-teaching staff
- The principal (ex officio) and
- Members of the community, elected by the governing body.

Parents are involved in the School Governing Bodies in South African schools. The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 Subsection (16) states that governance and professional management of every public school is vested in its governing body. Parents form part of the governing body. In July 2000, the Minister of Education released the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation and parent involvement was among the principles of the evaluation. The policy recognises the role the parent community could play in the process. The process encouraged parents to help the school achieve its vision and mission in school success. The school would be considered to be successful by the government if parents took an active role in teaching and learning activities.

2.5 Why parents globally play a small role in the education of their children from the past to the present

Most parents in the world play a very small role in the education of their children due to a variety of reasons such as, parents with little or no education, cultural diversity, lack of knowledge and skills, teachers' attitudes, natural fear of schools, psychological problems, students discouraging their parents from visiting the schools, communication breakdown between the home and school, and stress.

Raffaele and Knoff have quoted Monacker (1988) as saying that some parents experienced educational failure themselves and did not trust that teachers had their children's best interests at heart (Raffaele & Knoff 1999:450). Others may have perceived their education to be different from their children's formal education. Still others may have felt disempowered by the traditional bureaucracy operating in most school systems. Greene (1992:57) says that for many parents school brought back memories of their own failure. Some felt uncomfortable,

embarrassed and even guilty when they walked into a school. Others did not feel valued by the school. Some parents had fears and they were too shy to come to the school environment. Some parents had the perception that their cultural values were not accepted or affirmed by the school personnel.

Raffaele and Knoff (1999) quote Moles (1993) who says that disadvantaged parents and school personnel may lack knowledge and skills for interacting with each other. However, Stouffer, the former associate of Pleasant Valley Community School in Iowa blamed educators for doing nothing to increase parent involvement at secondary school level. Chavikin and Williams (1988) on the other hand, say that parents frequently lack understanding of an administrator's roles, pressures and concerns. Administrators fail to capitalise on the parents as an educational resource and parents fail to latch on to administrators as access points to gain the increased involvement they desire. Administrators sometimes hold negative views about parent involvement, hence, they place limits on the ways parents could participate in the education of their children.

Lintos (1991) discusses teachers as a determinant of uninvolved parents. Lintos adds that teachers who have low expectations for children or who believe that poor parents do not care about their children and do not want to be involved in their education may contribute directly to a lack of parental involvement and to children's failure.

Herman (1998:27) identifies natural fear as another reason for parents' absence in the education of their children. According to Herman this fear seems to be most prevalent in schools undergoing significant change and parents who have had negative childhood experienced in school.

Pitch (1991:58) points out that many parents are so overwhelmed with the task of simply making a living that they are unable to spend a significant amount of time monitoring a child's school progress. He further indicates that some parents have physical or psychological problems that keep them from being constructive educational partners.

Loucks, a lecturer in the Department of Educational Administration at Southern Illinois University reports that many students often discourage their parents from coming to school (Loucks 1999:20). For the most part, students related parents' visits to the school with discipline situations or with poor grades.

Swap (1987:79) identifies communication measures between home and school as another factor that continues to prevent parents from playing a major role in the education of their children at school. Swap states that effective communication between home and school will become increasingly more difficult to achieve in the next few years due to a variety of factors, the most significant being the large numbers of families where both parents are in the work force, leaving them little time for school related activities.

Seefeldt (1985:99) indicates stress as a cause of poor parent involvement. She says mothers in the USA are increasingly employed outside of the home, and more parents than before are facing the job of child rearing without a partner. They are overburdened and short of time such that they do not have time to involve themselves in the education of their children.

In a study carried out by the United States of America Education Department in 1994 the following were identified as obstacles to parental involvement: lack of time, uncertainty about what to do, cultural differences and a lack of a supportive

environment.

Research studies taken in South Africa especially in exclusive black communities indicate that the obstacles, which hamper parents from becoming involved in the education of their children, are illiteracy, a lack of time, a negative school climate, a lack of parental involvement opportunities, urbanisation, social circumstances, attitudes of parents, and the attitude of both educators and school managers.

In a study of parent involvement carried out by Van Wyk (1996:121) she reports that some Gauteng parents especially in black townships did not bother much about their children's education and therefore did not involve themselves in the children's activities. They did not check their children's written work or go to school to inquire about their progress from their teachers. Despite the benefit that goes with parental involvement, parents in the rural areas and black townships continued to distance themselves from the education of their children. Apart from basic obligations given to children by their parents, parents did not know other ways or means in which they could be involved in formal education at school. Most parents lacked knowledge of parent involvement and nobody bothered to equip them with basic skills necessary for that concept.

Many African parents in South Africa cannot read or write. Helping children in formal education would remain a problem for some time. Coetzee (1991:216) reported that the level of illiteracy in South Africa was estimated at 8.3 million people, of which the vast majority was black people.

Kruger (1988:3) identifies the following obstacles that prevent parents from becoming involved in the education of their children: a lack of time, parents' rights that could not be interpreted by teachers and parents, a negative school

climate and lack of parental involvement opportunities. Both teachers and parents lack the knowledge and skills of formal parental involvement. Kruger (1988) again observed that parents did not give themselves time to be with their children nor visit the institutions where their children were learning.

Many teachers in public schools do not want to accept that parents have the right to be involved in the education of their children. Some parents and teachers interpret parents' rights in the education of their children incorrectly; hence, involvement at times shakes the authorities of the school. Some teachers in public schools in the rural areas saw parent involvement as another form of policing teachers in their jobs. As a teacher in a rural area, the researcher frequently hears his colleagues complaining about parents acting as police. This researcher thinks that this also happens in other parts of the world.

Teachers lack knowledge of parent involvement activities. Parent involvement policies in most schools are absent. Despite the call by the Education Department that parents had to form part of the School Governing Bodies, the government did very little to implement the policy such as by holding workshops that would allow them to carry out their duties in a practical way.

The attitude of some parents towards schools and teachers in most parts of the world leaves much to be desired. In this researcher's community, which is also the context of this study, some parents accuse teachers of being lazy, drinking liquor during school hours, engaging in love affairs with schoolgirls, failing their children and so forth. Some of the accusations are true about most of the teachers. However, there are others who are committed to their profession. Teachers are academic parents in a school situation and they should not act unprofessionally in front of the school children and the community in which they are serving. Parents

should have had formal ways of dealing with these problems collectively rather than by pointing fingers at teachers from a distance. Parents should have corrected their children in a mutual and friendly way if the education goals of the child were to be realised. Surely, the managers of schools need to step in here and intervene with regard to the behaviour of educators.

Though there are a number of obstacles that hamper parents from becoming involved in the education of their children such as illiteracy, a lack of time and the climate of the school, the attitudes of both educators and school managers are crucial factors in parent involvement activities in South Africa, especially in rural areas as is shown in this study.

2.6 The situation of parent involvement in Hlanganani South

Hlanganani South is a rural community and it is a disadvantaged area of the former Gazankulu Government. This is the place where the researcher conducted his research project. The problems experienced with parent involvement in public schools of the Hlanganani South seem to be the same problems experienced by the rest of South Africa and the world. There is no literature review of parent involvement in Hlanganani South due to the lack of research studies in the area. The literature review of the situation of parent involvement in the Hlanganani South can be done within the broad literature on South Africa because Hlanganani South is in South Africa.

Most parents in Hlanganani South are illiterate. Some parents are working and others are not working. Large numbers of working parents are labourers in the Gauteng Province and on farms around Limpopo. Most parents who are working on farms earn very little to support themselves. There are parents who are partially

not working and they depend on the pension fund of their grand mothers and fathers, and child support grant. The rate of unemployment seems to be high because most parents are not working.

Most educators were trained at the teacher training institutions around Limpopo and Gauteng Province. Very few educators were trained at universities around South Africa. Most educators in Hlanganani South schools come from the villages and urban areas of the Limpopo Province.

The age groups of children in secondary schools ranged from thirteen years up to twenty -five years. Most pupils repeated grades in Hlanganani South schools.

Most Hlanganani South public schools are not fenced; they have poor toilet facilities, shortage of water at schools and lack of learning resources and classes.

The relationship between parents and children in some situations is good. There are also home situations where the relationship between parents and children has turned sour.

There is not much variation in the parents' socio-economic and political backgrounds. Before and during the period of this research, poverty levels seemed to be high in Hlanganani South. The administration of schools seemed to be poor due to the generally low socio-economic background in the area. There is also a high failure rate; school drop out; teenage pregnancy and absenteeism of both children and educators.

Parent involvement in some urban areas of Limpopo Province, where Hlanganani is situated, communication between home and school in most urban areas is

through parent meetings, telephone and letter book. The schools also send out letters to inform parents of meetings or invitations. Sometimes the letters sent to individual parents relate to problems a child may be experiencing or causing at school. In exceptional cases, the parent might be contacted by phone. Most parents attend meetings compared to a “handful” of parents in public schools of the rural areas. However there are situations where parents do not involve themselves in education of their children. One school manager in the urban areas indicated to the researcher that most parents pay school fees. The instances of parent involvement in urban areas in this study project were mainly of parents who had children in urban schools.

The media were full of reports during the 1990s and the 2000s that parents should be involved in the education of their children in the Limpopo Province including the Hlanganani South area. The government had legislated parent involvement. People were talking about parent involvement and the learning culture in Hlanganani South area. Unfortunately, people did not know how they could be involved in the education of their children. The research study addresses the problem of parent involvement in the schools of Hlanganani South and answered the following questions:

- What mechanisms need to be introduced to improve the current state of parent involvement in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?
- What positive factors do the Hlanganani South area has regarding parent involvement, and how could these be effectively utilised to promote a learning culture?
- How can the school management effectively improve the learning culture in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?

The HRSC had shown that research on parent involvement has been conducted in the world and South Africa. However, such research studies had never been conducted in the Hlanganani South area.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The researcher used his research data in this chapter and presented in detail what he had done in investigating his research topic, choices he made and why, for example, choosing schools, data collection methods he used and why he used them, how he used his data collection methods, what questions he asked, issues like reliability that he considered and how he applied them. He also covered three most important subheadings, namely, research design, data collection and reliability.

3.2 Historical background of the qualitative approach

This section looks specifically and briefly at how the qualitative method originated and has been used by educationists. It also examines the situation of educational research in the past, present and future. The researcher discusses the relationship between the qualitative approach and other disciplines namely, psychology, anthropology and sociology.

Borg and Gall (1989:379) declare that the qualitative approach was first used in Anthropology and Sociology. Anthropologists worked closely with human culture, customs and the organisation of mankind as a whole. Sociologists dealt with countries, areas, and ways of people, capitalism, poverty and class of people.

Anthropologists and sociologists studied people mainly. They understood the

phenomenon they were studying. They analysed meaning and understood it as a totality. The phenomena were studied using the qualitative approach.

The educationists addressed conspicuous problems that they came across in education using the qualitative approach. They addressed the same problems their counter parts, namely, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists dealt with.

The qualitative approach revealed problems in education. Educationists started to study people as anthropologists and sociologists did. They followed in the footsteps of anthropologists and sociologists from the 1960s onwards. Most people, governments and different stakeholders started to use the qualitative approach. The concept of parent involvement has changed for the better since those years. The qualitative approach had a phenomenological background in its historicity.

3.2.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

The research method that the researcher used is qualitative as it was indicated in Chapter One. The researcher used the qualitative instead of the quantitative approach because the qualitative method uses words rather than numbers. Below are various definitions from a number of researchers.

“Qualitative research refers to those research strategies such as participant observations, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, fieldwork, etc., which allow the researcher to obtain first hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to “get close to the data,” thereby developing the analytical conceptual, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data

itself – rather than from the preconceived, rigidly structured, and highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed” (Filstead 1970:6).

Filstead describes qualitative research extensively and differentiates this method from quantitative methodology. The definition shows various qualitative strategies and explains how this researcher worked with the data.

Green (1986:69) defines qualitative research as follows, “Qualitative research is concerned with meanings as they appear to or are achieved by persons in lived social situations. Research of this kind cannot be carried out by people who see themselves as detached, neutral observers concerned with the kinds of observation measurement and prediction that are pressured to be unbiased, unaffected by the inquirer’s vantage point or location in the world.”

Green’s definition gives the characteristics of a qualitative researcher and explains his or her goal. Green emphasises that meaning is very important in qualitative research.

Green in Sherman & Webb (1988:5) says, “Qualitative research is an effort to comprehend not only the modes of cultural arrangements but the ways in which these arrangements are experienced by individuals, in order to provoke intelligibility and involve one personally and inter-subjectively in conscious pursuits of meaning”. Green indicates that the concept concerns itself with the meaning and subjectivity of a phenomenon that the researcher is studying.

Booyse *et al* (1993:15) in Research in Education, Unisa Study Guide (BEd), stress, “As far as the qualitative approach is concerned, researchers should strive

for the best possible comprehension or understanding of a given phenomenon within its unique context, rather than studying it in a universal context. Qualitative researchers usually work in an exploratory-descriptive way and use sensitising or empathising rather than quantifiable concepts. Data gathering is performed by means of qualitative methods while data analysis is characterised by the use of interpretative framework models and schemes.” The authors define the concept clearly and outline what the researcher does in context.

Edson in Sherman and Webb (1988:5) argues, “Qualitative inquiry is a form of moral discourse, an attempt to understand us in relation to the larger world. The larger world includes both the past, the present and historical study as a way to reveal relation”. Edson stresses understanding and the life world of the research subjects as vital in a research study.

Van Wyk (2000:135) quotes Roy and Latrobe (1999:105) who maintain that, “Qualitative techniques look for answers through direct observation of case studies, in depth interviews, and focus group. In direct observation, the researcher is at hand to watch, listen and ask appropriate questions as an event occurs. The researcher records these happenings.”

Roy and Latrobe above define qualitative research in terms of what the qualitative researcher does in the field. They also mention research strategies in their definition.

The above definitions show commonalities that prevail amongst them. The researchers quoted above agree that the concept consists of numerous approaches. Some of them mention that the researcher works with words as opposed to numbers that the rival quantitative researcher works with. Most researchers point

out that qualitative research is subjective and descriptive in nature. The researcher works with the subjects in their environment. The researcher also deals with social reality and tries to understand the life world of the subjects that he or she is studying. In the following section, the researcher indicates what led him to choose qualitative research.

3.2.2 Reasons for choosing a qualitative approach

The qualitative approach above other approaches was chosen for the following reasons: Firstly, the researcher chose the method because it is descriptive. The approach allowed the researcher to investigate and move forward from what the researcher and his research subjects in the Hlanganani South know about parent involvement to what is less known or unknown about the study project.

Secondly, the approach allowed the researcher to use words to describe rather than numbers since the intention was not to measure or count. In this study the researcher discussed and explained the phenomenon of parent involvement by writing.

Qualitative approaches use numerous structured strategies, which fit in well with the researcher's project. The researcher interviewed parents, teachers and school managers. If there was misunderstanding in the interview, the researcher was able to clarify it immediately.

Participant observation is another strategy of the qualitative approach. However, it was not used because it was not suitable for the research study.

In interviews the researcher spoke with the subjects, interacted with the subjects

and was able to get hidden information. Information concerning parent involvement from both worlds was attained. The two worlds of the parent involvement process could be understood.

The qualitative approach is an inductive approach. The researcher started from what the respondents knew and moved to the unknown. Both parents and school managers in four schools knew, for example, the state of parent involvement and the academic support of children, but how the involvement should be carried out both at school and home was unclear to them.

An understanding of the phenomenon formed the cornerstone of the qualitative approach. The approach enabled the researcher to understand parent involvement activities partially as a process from different perspectives as a whole rather than halves. An example of this includes the history of parent involvement, parent involvement in South Africa, factors that promote parent involvement, factors that hinder parent involvement and so forth.

The researcher understood the phenomena from the subjects and in relation to the larger world by including the past, the present and a historical study as a way to reveal the relation. The researcher discussed parent involvement in the pre-democratic and democratic society by looking at Acts and legislations.

The researcher in this study explored and described the phenomenon of parent involvement. The researcher explained and interpreted the data by analysing what was said and describing using word rather than numbers or graphs.

The history of parent involvement in the world, South Africa, and in particular Hlanganani South, and factors that inhibit parent involvement are explained. The concept of parent involvement was studied as totality from different perspectives as a whole rather than in halves.

The researcher wrote down the words used by the participants during the interviews. He took notes during the interviews. The researcher took one hour to record the interview session with each research subject. The researcher also used the notes of the participants recorded during interview sessions in presenting and analysing data. The qualitative approach is human because there is personal contact between the researcher and the subjects.

Parent involvement is a process. What was the process of parent involvement in Hlanganani South? How did a school manager negotiate meaning about parent involvement to parents in their environment?

Patton (1990:39) says, “Qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting. The research setting is a naturally occurring event, program in community, relationship, or interaction that has no predetermined course established by and for the researcher.” Schools and homes are natural places where parents and educators are found. The researcher went to schools and homes to conduct the research study.

There was personal contact and insight in the process. The researcher had directed, contacted and got close to the people, situation and phenomenon under study. The researcher’s personal experiences and insights were an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon (Patton 1990:40).

3.3 Research design of the study

Looking at the research study from the researcher’s stance, the researcher had

indicated that the primary aim of his research study was to discuss, describe and understand parent involvement in the schools of the Hlanganani South. The study looked at the situation of parent involvement in the world, parent involvement in informal education, parent involvement in the South African context, the relationship between the family and the school in the pre-democratic and post-democratic era, parent involvement and legislations in South Africa, parent involvement in Hlanganani South, the relationship between the schools and families in Hlanganani South, and state of learning culture in the schools of Hlanganani South.

The design was to be exploratory and descriptive. The researcher focused on the Hlanganani South secondary schools. Investigations were conducted at Hlanganani South public schools where the problem of lack of parental involvement had been identified.

Listed below are the research questions as outlined in 1.2:

- What mechanisms need to be introduced to improve the current state of parent involvement in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?
- What positive factors does the Hlanganani South area have regarding parent involvement, and how can these be effectively utilised to promote the learning culture
- How can school management effectively use parent involvement to improve the learning culture in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?

The study project had to answer the above three research questions about the need of parent involvement in the Hlanganani South.

3.4 Description of sample and participants

According to Mulder (1982:53) population refers to members of a group who are similar with respect to one or more characteristics as defined by the researcher. Macmillan and Schumacher (1993:159) state, “The sample consists of individuals selected from a larger group of persons, called the population. The sample is selected from the population to provide subjects. If the selection sample is done correctly it will yield good results. The sample is smaller than the population. It represents the population.”

About the sample size, Patton (1990:184) says, “There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources.”

The population of a study could include all schools in the Limpopo Province, all parents in the Limpopo Province or all educators in the Limpopo Province. Since it was not possible to include the whole population concerned in this investigation, the researcher took a sample from the population and conducted the research with the group.

The purposeful sample was selected so that the researcher would be able to manage the group for the study he was investigating or studying.

Hlanganani South is a rural setting. There are thirty-two schools. The researcher chose the secondary schools to form part of the research sample, because it is in secondary schools that one finds a high incidence of the following problems: high failure rate, high drop out rate, absenteeism, late coming, dodging of classes and

refusing to write learning activities and tests. Of the twelve secondary schools, the researcher chose four secondary schools that are in the area. All the twelve schools are almost dysfunctional schools in terms of parent and community involvement perceived to be lacking. Therefore, it was not possible for the researcher to conduct his research project with twelve schools because the sample would be large and unmanageable. As well as their dysfunctional status, the researcher took a step further and looked out for schools that had big and small student enrolments, and schools that enrolled mainly learners from both Xitsonga and Sepedi-speaking background. The two African languages the researcher is fully competent in. The four schools chosen, namely, School A, B, C and D satisfied the criteria identified by the researcher. A profile of each school was developed by the researcher, that is, the buildings, number of staff, classrooms, number of students, learning facilities and extra-mural activities, and these appear in chapter four (Tables 4.1 to 4.4).

The participants consisted of four school managers, six educators and twenty-eight parents.

In school A the parents were chosen at a parents meeting. After the school manager had introduced the researcher and the purpose of his visit, parents volunteered by raising hands if they wanted to be participants in the project.

In school B, it was difficult to get parents. The principal gave the researcher permission to go to the community and look for parents who were willing to be part of the study. The principal suggested that parents who were hawkers on the school's premises be chosen.

In school C and D the principals gave the researcher permission to go to the

village and get parents who had children at the participating schools. Generally, finding parents in their natural setting was easy and they were willing to help.

3.5 Gaining entry

The researcher established good human contact and built a good relationship and understanding between himself and the research subjects. Firstly, this allowed him to get valid data from the subjects. Secondly, the researcher had to build a good relationship and an atmosphere of trust to convince participants that he had a concern about the education of the children in the Hlanganani South area.

In other research studies in Hlanganani South, most researchers had conducted both qualitative and quantitative research work with primary schools and secondary schools. In most research studies, quantitative research dominated over qualitative research projects. The research subjects had mainly been teachers and learners who had to fill in questionnaires at schools. There was little contact between the researcher and the research subjects, for example, the researcher could just arrive at school and hand the school manager research questions to be filled in by educators, the school manager and sometimes the learners. Sometimes the researcher would organise with the principal for his or her questionnaires to be filled in at school without him being physically involved in the process. In some instances, the research subjects ended up not even knowing the researcher. When the process was finished, the school manager would take the questionnaires back to the researcher.

This study was different from previous research projects undertaken in Hlanganani South, for the following reasons: Firstly, the researcher established a good relationship with the school managers, educators and parents who were the

participants in the study. Secondly, there was more contact between the researcher and the research subjects. Thirdly, he conducted interviews with the research subjects in their natural places, that is, homes and schools.

The researcher asked for permission from the school managers and their School Governing Bodies to conduct his research work. They granted permission and he explained the aims and procedures of the research project to all the participants.

In the Hlanganani South area there are Xitsonga-speaking people and the small groups of Tshivenda and Sepedi speaking people. The selection of the four schools was influenced by the geographical location of these schools rather than the ethnicity of the researcher, which also happens to be Tsonga. The four schools that he chose could be easily reached. Rivers and bridges separated the community where he taught and the schools that he chose. For example, in school C and B there were Sepedi speaking parents whose children attended Tsonga schools. He avoided Venda speaking schools because he could not speak or understand the language. He could speak Sepedi fluently but not Tshivenda. The way schools were administered by the principals; the educators and the way parents were involved in the education of their children, were almost the same.

To most parents in this area, dressing of teachers has an influence in the learning and teaching tradition. Most parents in Hlanganani South accused educators of wearing jeans, tackies and T-shirts while they were on duty. Some parents regarded educators, who wear informal clothes to school, as cheque-collectors. Most of the parents believed educators should be formally dressed because they then thought they were capable of teaching and maintaining good discipline. The researcher dressed formally to fit in with their principles.

In late 1999 the researcher got a grant from the Center of Race and Ethnicity of Brown University, in Rhode Island, Providence, USA, to visit schools and see their culture of learning and teaching. He went there from 27th March to 12th April

2000. He also went to see how parents were involved in the education of their children. Professor Fayneese Miller was his host while at Brown University. She was the director of the Centre and Karen Zarensky-Ball was her assistant director. He visited Central High, Hope High, and Bridgeway. He also spoke to Brown students and education lecturers about education in South Africa. Brown students asked several questions about the South African education during the pre-democratic and post-democratic eras. The Rhode Island schools sent textbooks to the researcher so that he could give children at the school he was teaching. Almea Matanock and her fellow Brown students played an important role in collecting and sending the books to South Africa where the researcher lives. The researcher decided to give the participating schools one Biology textbook to the value of approximately R500 each.

3.6 Data collection

The researcher used interview strategies to collect data from the participants. He used interview methods because he came face to face with the participants. He asked them questions and he wrote down their responses.

Patton (1980:278) says of the purpose of interview, “The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind. We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. The purpose of interviewing them is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective.”

The researcher interviewed parents, educators and school managers on the concept of parent involvement using different headings such as, parent involvement and School Governing Body (see Appendices).

During formal interviews, the researcher directed the proceedings and the respondent answered the questions. The procedure was formal. There was a face-to-face conversation between the researcher and the respondent. The researcher wrote down what the respondent said. The researcher asked questions about a particular topic, which the respondent knew or was quite familiar with. The questions that the researcher asked were structured, systematic and organised. The researcher asked the respondents about parent involvement and the questions posed were followed by answers that the respondent gave. The researcher wrote down answers.

3.7 Interview Guide

The interview guide was drawn to direct the researcher during an interview. The interview guide drew out some latent issues of parent involvement in Hlanganani South such as how parents viewed the concept of parent involvement, school governance, discipline, educator union, teaching and learning culture at the school, school fees and communication. The interview guide explained the situation of parent involvement in Hlanganani South, the present learning culture in the area and the views, which the Hlanganani South parents had towards the process. The interview questions were formulated in simple language and could be understood by literate and illiterate parents, knowledgeable school managers and teachers and less knowledgeable school managers and teachers.

Some of the questions asked were as follows:

Parents

- What is it like being a parent in the Hlanganani South?
- Does your child have a study room at home?

School managers

- How would you describe parents of Hlanganani South?
- How does your school communicate with parents and guardians?

Educators

- How does learning proceed when you have embarked on strike?
- How do you rate communication channel between the school and parents?

Questions were posed to parents, educators and school managers during interviews.

The researcher was certain and convinced that the questions asked yielded the desired information that the researcher wanted. The depth of the interview guide was based on problems of the research project described in Chapter One and the literature study in Chapter Two.

The responses that the researcher got from the interviews certainly highlighted the need for parent involvement in the education of their children

As indicated earlier in this Chapter, the researcher got permission from the school managers and the School Governing Bodies to conduct interviews. The interviewees were interviewed one by one. School managers and educators were interviewed in their staff room. Parents were interviewed at school and those who did not come to school were interviewed at homes. Parents were interviewed in their home language and the researcher wrote their responses in English.

Educators and school managers were interviewed in English.

3.8 Reliability

Best and Kahn (1993:45) define reliability as the level of internal consistency or stability of the measuring device over time. When two forms of a test are administered to the same sample of individuals, or when the same test is administered on two occasions, the same individuals will usually obtain different scores. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:48) say, “In qualitative studies, researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their data.” The researcher designed the study to prevent other researchers from replicating the results of the findings. The methodology could be replicated but each context would yield the unique results. Best and Kahn (1993:208) define validity as the quality of data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure.

To get reliable and valid data in this aspect, the researcher defined his role and tasks that he had to carry out clearly. Interviews were arranged, conducted and directed. Responses from participants were written down. The researcher created conditions suitable for data collection by making the subjects feel at ease so that they could answer questions unhindered.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants was two fold. Firstly, both the subjects and the researcher were primary educators. Secondly, the researcher was a professional educator. He was concerned about the education of their children. He also depended on professional experience to get reliable data from the participants.

The researcher took notes during the interview session. He wrote down what was said or reported during the interview by the research subjects. He wrote down statements and where possible some direct quotes from the research subjects. Statements and quotes illustrated participant meanings.

An examination and reconsideration of the participant's responses was done in the data analysis stage in Chapter Four. The researcher handled the data with care so that the reliability of the data was maintained.

The definitions determine if there is a correlation between the questions that the researcher asks the participants and the responses that they give him.

The following questions may be asked to ensure reliability during data collection:

- Did the researcher observe what he wanted to?
- Are his observations relevant to the phenomena he is studying?
- Are the research questionnaires within the level of the participant's understandings?
- Are the participants responding within the parameter of the research study?
- Is the meaning of the phenomena clear to both the researcher and the respondents?

The data that the researcher collected were correct, logical and acceptable information or facts from the participants.

Though the data collection period was four weeks in length, the researcher could go to the participants when more data were needed, and as such, there was no exact date for final data collection. McMillan & Schumacher (1993:391) support that, "The lengthy data collection period provides opportunities for continual data analysis, comparison, and corroboration to ensure the match between research

based categories and participant reality.”

The participants were Xitsonga-speaking people and a minority of Sepedi-speaking who were immersed in the Xitsonga-speaking communities.

The researcher was respectful to his research subjects and that allowed him to get valid data. He had self-control and he maintained his professionalism during the process of data collection.

3.9 Confidentiality and anonymity

The setting and participants were not identifiable in print. The researcher coded names and places, for example, schools were not named, but referred to as school A, B, C and D. Participants likewise were referred to as Participant 1 or Participant 2, Parent I, School manager C. The researcher coded names to ensure confidentiality and thus protected their privacy.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4. Interview guide for parents and their profile

The researcher presented and analysed data under the following headings: home environment, academic achievement, teachers at school, learning during teacher union strikes, school fees and finance, school buildings, community involvement, and the need of parent involvement activities.

The questions the researcher asked were designed to find out what the subjects know about the research topic and to get their innermost feelings on the study project.

Table 4.1. PARENTS AT SCHOOL A

Parent	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Employment	Hawker	Pastor	Headman	Hawker	Pensioner	Educator
School level	Grade12	Grade7	Grade11	Grade4	-	-
Gender	F	M	F	F	M	M
Age	38	58	52	44	66	40

(a) Description of the School A

There is a high failure rate, absenteeism of learners, late coming and even absenteeism of educators. The windowpanes are broken; paint peeling off

the walls and papers scattered around the schoolyard. The school was built by community and comprises four buildings. The school has a Principal, deputy school principal, twenty-six educators and nine hundred and five (905) pupils.

The school has a playground, but is lacking in learning resources, having no library or laboratory. There is always a low pass rate in Grade12. The Indunas and civic education desk complain about the poor learning and teaching atmosphere at the school.

Table 4.2. PARENTS AT SCHOOL B

Parent	I	II	III	I V	V	VI	VII	VIII
Employment	-	-	-	-	Hawker	-	Hawker	Hawker
School level	Grade 7	Grade 10	Grade 11	-	Grade 9	Grade 12	Grade 11	
Gender	F	M	M	M	F	M	F	F
Age	40	40	32	52	40	31	38	38

(b) Description of the School B

School B has a school manager, thirteen educators, and four hundred and eighty (480) learners. The school comprises two buildings. There is no playground. The extra-mural activities are mainly soccer, netball and athletics. There is a low pass rate in most grades.

Table 4.3. PARENTS AT SCHOOL C

Parent	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Employment	-	-	Self employed selling homebrew	-	-	-	-	-

School level	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender	M	M	F	F	F	F	F	M
Age	50	50	60	48	60	57	59	56

(c) Description of the School C

The school has a school manager, twenty-nine educators and nine hundred and ninety (990) learners. There are four buildings and a playground. There is a shortage of learning resources and toilet facilities are poor. There is a high failure rate in most grades. The extra-mural activities are mainly soccer, athletics and netball.

Table 4.4. PARENTS AT SCHOOL D

Parent	I	I I	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Employment	Sculptor	-	Pensioner	-	-	-	Pensioner	-
School level	Grade 7	-	-	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 7	-	Grade 6
Gender	M	F	M	F	F	M	F	M
Age	45		66	39	43	40	64	44

(d) Description of the School D

The school has a school manager, fourteen educators and three hundred and sixty learners. It is a small school. The school had two buildings with four classes each. It has no playground. The extra-mural activities are mainly soccer, netball and athletics.

4.1.1 Introduction

The researcher asked the participants the following question in the introduction during the interview: What is it like being a parent in the Hlanganani South? What is your job? Where did you hear about the concept of parent involvement in education? What do you understand about the concept of parent involvement in education?

Parents in school A gave different responses to this section. The work of parents ranged from hawker, pastor, teacher, Induna and so forth. The monthly income of most parents ranged from R200, 00 to less than R4000, 00 per month. The average income was R1000, 00 per month. The concept of parent involvement was heard from the government, education department and schools. Parent I saw herself as a parent or adult responsible for looking her children.

In school B, Parent 1 who was about 40 years old and a member of School Governing Body said it was good to be a parent in Hlanganani South. However, she said that her parents taught her to be a good parent. Formal education influenced her because at school she was taught to be obedient which she still practises and instilled in her three children. She is a housewife and receives an amount of R600, 00 from her husband who is a labourer in Gauteng. When the researcher asked her where she had heard about the concept of parent involvement in education she replied,

“I heard it from the school principal during meetings and from the nearby primary school where my other two children are attending.”

Parent II from school B is a male of forty years and was not employed

(during period of research). His parents taught him to be a good parent and to have respect. His formal and informal education influenced him to be involved in the education of his children at school.

Parent III is a male of thirty-two years and he was not employed during this time. His parents taught him to be a good parent. He had two children who were still at school, one in primary school and the other in secondary. He heard about the concept of parent involvement in education from the principal and school inspector.

Parent IV is a man of fifty-two years. He was not working but sometimes earns his livelihood by digging toilet wells. He struggles to support his five children who are all at school. To him the concept of parent involvement came naturally.

Parent V is a woman of forty years and she is a hawker. Her parents taught her to be a good parent. She gets less than R300, 00 as a hawker to support her two children. She heard about the concept of parent involvement at school.

Parent VI is a man of thirty-one years and was not working. He taught himself to be a good parent. He struggled to support his two children. He heard about the concept of parent involvement from the media (Munghana Lonene FM)

Parent VII is a woman of thirty-eight years of age. She said her parents taught her to be a good parent (Informal). She was a hawker who got about R60, 00 per month, which, she said, was too little to support her three

children.

Parent VIII was a woman of thirty-eight years. She said having two children had taught her to be a responsible and good parent. She was hawker and made about R100 per month, with which she struggled to support her two children. She heard about the concept of parent involvement from the meetings at school and the media.

Seemingly, primary education influenced most parents to be accountable in the education of their children. It moulded most parents and they still practised it. The concept of parent involvement was heard from various sources, namely school principals, inspectors, schools, and the media.

Most participants in school C were jobless and one was a pensioner. The number of their school-going children ranged from two to six. The informal education that they had received from their parents influenced their parenthood. The concept of parent involvement was heard from different spheres, namely, school, TLC's, and the media. Participant III who depended on selling homebrew for livelihood said she had not heard about it.

Participants in school D indicated how best it was to be a parent in Hlanganani South. Most parents agreed they learn about parent involvement in education from informal education through their parents. Most participants indicated that they were not working. Most parents had mastered the basic parenting skills. Most said that they had heard about the concept of parent involvement from different spheres, namely the Limpopo Provincial Education Department, legislation, school meetings,

and through the media such as the radio and newspapers.

The questions asked were related to the research questions in 1.2 and investigations because they determined the understanding and parent involvement. Working parents would be able to provide basic needs to their children at schools. The understanding of parent involvement by parents would lead to the creation of learning atmosphere at schools.

4.1.2 Home Environment

This is the environment where the children are born and bred. Most children receive their primary education while living in the home environment. It prepares children to enter into formal secondary education.

The section looked at how parents as primary educators support and guide children with teaching and learning activities. The section also looked at how secondary teachers supported both children and parents with learning and teaching activities.

Participants had to answer the following questions: How do you support your child by providing a learning environment at home? How often do you buy reading material for your child? The questions on home environment asked parent's involvement at home and the parent's role as primary educator.

Most parents interviewed indicated they gave guidance and support to their children with learning activities at home. Parent III from school B added that he did not want his children to be like him when they were

grown-ups.

(a) School A

In school A parents provided a good home environment; they encouraged and supported their children in completing homework. For example, Parent I said, “I give examples for the homework that he is writing and then let the child complete the rest of the work given.”

Most parents spoke to their children about the necessity and importance of completing their homework at home. Others just encouraged them to write.

As regards leisure activities, playing, watching television Parent III in school A said: “I see them playing but I remind them of their duty to do manual work and study their books throughout the afternoon.”

Some said that they did not have money to buy reading materials. Parent II said, “When I paid school fees I expected my child to get books. In the olden days I used to buy books for my children.” However, Parent IV, who is an educator, viewed the parent’s role as the involvement in daily school activities, to do everything that ended up assisting the children at school and to give positive support in all educational issues.

(b) School B

Six participants in school B indicated that they saw their children playing throughout the afternoon, for example, boys played soccer. However, they also did manual work like gardening, while girls swept houses and fetched water from the taps that were around the corners of the streets.

Two research subjects advised their children to do their homework. Parent V said he bought picture books almost once per year, and Parent VII said she bought newspapers that had learning activities when she went to town. Most participants hardly ever bought learning materials.

On children doing homework, most participants saw them doing the work and they supervised, encouraged and sometimes forced them to do their homework.

Parent I believed parent involvement was good and she was quick to point out that it was difficult if one had no money. Parent IV saw it as a means to help children in school attendance. Parent V saw parent involvement as helping the child to read and be clean. Parent VII saw parent involvement as going to school when there were problems and parent VIII saw it as cleaning the school and principal's office.

Most houses in Hlanganani South have thatched roofs. Generally, girls sleep in one hut and boys sleep in another hut as groups. Sometimes groups sleep together in one. Parent V said she had no study room. The rest disagreed and said that their children did have room to study, for example, sometimes three children studying at one table, and (Parent V) five boys studying in one room.

(c) School C

In school C parents stated that they provided a healthy learning atmosphere for their children to continue with their education at home. Participants indicated that they gave maximum support and rendered

guidance to their children about their schoolwork. Participants indicated that children spent the afternoon playing; doing manual jobs and others wrote or read their learning activities. Participant IV said of her grandson, “The boy writes homework in the afternoon and finishes during the night. He has no study room and he writes outside. When the weather is harsh there is a problem and he cannot do his work properly.” Most children did not have a study room. They did their schoolwork during the day.

Some parents in school C still found time to teach their children writing skills. Participant II said he always assisted his children with writing.

Most parents found buying learning books difficult because they had to pay school fees for their children. The parents’ job towards the education of their children was seen as facilitation between the children and the school.

(d) School D

Most participants at school D sometimes encouraged their children and supported them with learning activities in the home environment. They showed them the importance of education. Parent VII spoke about how he supported his children in a home environment, “There are ways that I use. Firstly, I look at their school work, look at what appears difficult to my children, and follow the work carefully. I show them the role models in education, for example, teachers, inspectors and MECs.

Most participants indicated their children played in the afternoon or did light manual work, namely, fetching water with wheelbarrow or wood for fire. They read their books during the night.

Parent VII spoke about how she influenced her children at home to learn: “I tell them to get learning irrespective of whether I’m educated or not so that they live a bright future.”

Parent III who is a pensioner always reminds his children that, “Education today is wealth. When you are educated, you are a rich person. Nobody will take your education. Earthly things like going around, drinking, dodging school periods, disrespect, etc, come to an end.”

Parents seemed to understand their roles as primary educators in their home environment. Some parents had a fair understanding of their roles as primary educators.

4.1.3 School Governing Bodies

This section highlighted the role of the school Governing Body in school governance: how they worked, their functions, and their management of the institution as the mouthpiece of parents. Parents had to answer the following questions: How often are you called to school for SGB meetings? Who calls you? What are the duties of the SGB?

School A rarely called parents to the School Governing Body meetings. Parent II said, “I don’t think a School Governing Body is existing in this school.” Parent V added that he had not been called since 1999. When asked who had called him then he said, “All I remember is that I got invited verbally and it just landed into my ears and who called us I can’t remember.”

In rating the SGB, most participants said that they could not rate it because they did not know how it worked.

Regarding the question of what participants thought were the duties of School Governing Body, the responses included the following:

- to solve problems at school;
- to accompany children to trips;
- to see to it that learners learn;
- to influence learners and teachers to do the work;
- to inculcate a spirit of respect at school; and
- to see to it that the school progresses.

In school B Parent I, who was a member of School Governing Body was not sure how often she was called for SGB meetings but she went on to guess that the SGB secretary invited her. Parents I and II were not sure on how often they were called but they agreed that the school informed children when there were meetings. Parent III was also not certain but she was sometimes informed in emergencies by letters. Parents IV, V, and VIII agreed that sometimes they were called once per month and the school informed the children. Parent VII said sometimes once after five months the principal had called him. Parent VIII said they had meetings about twice per month and the school informed the children.

Five participants rated the SGB as good and they were satisfied with how it worked. Parent III doubted the SGB and how it functioned. Parent IV rated it as fair because the SGB called them for minor issues like when an educator had had a quarrel with a child in class. Parent VII rated it as very low because meetings, which the SGB called, bore no fruit and there was poor administration of funds at school.

Participants saw the duties of SGB as follows:

- to help teachers in school governance;
- to facilitate learning and teaching activities between the parents and the school;
- to organise meetings between the parents and the school;
- to maintain school buildings;
- to control school attendance;
- to look after school property; and
- to solve school problems on behalf of the parents.

Participants in school C were not sure how often they were called to school for SGB meetings but they certainly said to the researcher that they had been called for SGB meetings.

“We are called when there is a meeting and secondly called when there is a concern, for example, late coming and learner absenteeism etc.”

Parent IV said,

“Sometimes they call us, sometimes they do not call us, and we just simply hear there was a meeting. We do not understand how they operate because when they call us they just tell us about the money.”

Participants indicated the different ways they were called, ranging from the principal sending the pupils to tell the parents about a particular meeting to seeing a person going around telling people that there would be a meeting at school.

Parent V said,

“Most parents partially hesitate to rate SGB because they do not know how it works.”

How parents were called in school A was unclear. Most parents understand the duties of SGB, though they had never been called to SGB meetings. Understanding how the SGB works could be viewed as the parents' strong point in parent involvement.

4.1.4 Academic Support

Academic support in this study entailed the following: the effort that the parents put into supporting their children, the interest that parents showed in the academic activities of their children, the knowledge that the parents had about the academic achievement of the children, the skills that parents had regarding the learning and teaching activities of the children, and the extent to which they supported their school in teaching and learning activities. Participants had to answer the following questions: How often do you enquire about the progress of your child at school? How many times per week do you speak with your child about career guidance?

Parent I in School A said she asked the educators about academic support of her children twice per week. Parent III said she had limited knowledge of what her children were learning at school and therefore, she did not ask. Parent II said he waited for the results at the end of the year. Most parents did not speak to their children about career guidance.

Four parents said they did not know their children's teachers. One parent said,
 "We do not meet with teachers of our children, and as a result I do not know them."

Parent IV said:

“Relationship is not there because we do not know each other. I am just annoyed by the unbecoming behaviour of some teachers who engage in love affairs with girls. They do it in front of the children. They are not answerable and parents do not react and I blame both parents and teachers for this.”

The participants gave different times when schools knock-off. Times ranged from 13H00 to 15H30. Parent II said he had not seen his children studying recently. Parent V said: “Grades 11 and 12 do have compulsory studies.”

Parent VI singled out the Grade 12s as the only children who had compulsory studies. Four of the participants said they had not been to schools recently.

Parent II said of his visit then,

“I found teachers sitting under the trees and they gave me a quick welcome. Classrooms were noisy but I didn’t ask them why children were making noise.”

During the investigation in school C, the researcher found that the participants did not go to school to enquire about the progress of their children. Some participants indicated that they checked the books of their children once per week on Mondays.

Three participants indicated that they scarcely spoke to their children about career guidance. Five parents indicated that their involvement ranged from once a month to once a year.

Seven participants indicated that the relationship between themselves and the teachers was good. One parent did not view it as positive because, as he said,

teachers did not teach their children, they just “basked in the sunlight in the morning and during winter.”

Six parents indicated the learning and teaching climate as good and one participant said,

“The learning and teaching climate is good because teachers call us if there are problems and there is no longer corporal punishment at school. Since the abolishing of corporal punishment, teachers call us if there are problems at school.”

Four parents said learning in a democratic society was good and they accepted it. Educators now recognised parents and there were schools. Four participants said it was unacceptable because there were strikes. One parent indicated that in the pre-democratic era, there were no schools, but the standard of learning was very high and quite acceptable to the communities.

Parents gave different times when school knocked off, these times ranged from 13H00 to 16H00. Some parents were not exactly sure when the school knocked off. Five parents said they did not see their children studying and three participants indicated that learners do study but they did not know exactly when school closed for the day.

Two participants indicated that results were bad and were not acceptable to the parents in the community. They hoped for better results that year. Three parents believed the results were average. Three participants indicated that they were fairly acceptable.

Most participants in school D indicated that they rarely enquired about the

progress of their children nor did they speak about career guidance. Parents indicated different times when the school closed, ranging from 14H00 to 15H30. Most participants generally did not know whether there were or not study periods at school.

Parent IV said of the atmosphere of teaching and learning,

“When I go to school premises then I saw teachers and most children standing on the veranda and making noise. The education seems to be there but sometimes the on-going battle between learners and teachers is appalling. Learning culture at the end of the day suffers.”

Parent VI said,

“In previous years some children passed and others failed hopelessly. The relationship between teachers and parents seems to have deteriorated. Teachers seem to be educated and educating our children, the problem is that our children are no longer punished and they do what they want.”

Participants gave different responses in school D. Parent I did not bother to open the books of her child and she was satisfied just to see her child go to school.

Parent II said,

“Children have not been doing well in exams because they play and as a result they fail.”

Parent III enquired about the progress of his grandchild directly from her and he was satisfied when the child told him that she was doing okay. On learners who roamed around the street the old man said,

“It is dangerous and I feel pity for them. The learners are absolutely not disciplined.”

Concerning the question of how many times the parent spoke to the child about career guidance per week Parent IV said,

“I ask him some times and warn him not to do evil things except education.”

On learners who roamed around the street during school the participant said,

“Learners are destroying their future.”

Parent V said,

“I inquire about the progress of the children from their teachers; sometimes I hear through school reports”

Most parents did not know when school finished each day. Some parents agreed they still saw their children before school came out.

4.1.5 Teachers at School

The question sought to find out how much the participating parents knew about teacher absenteeism from the school without a good reason or permission to do so.

Parent II said,

“I just hear that teachers absent themselves from the school. Sometimes children come early and say their teachers are not there (at school)”

Parent III condemned late coming and absenteeism and said it was not being tackled. Parent IV added that the principal gave the absentees warning forms to sign (leave forms).

Three participants said teachers had a heavy workload and parent II contradicted this and said,

“Teachers do not have workload and they are not doing the job satisfactorily. When children fail teachers have also failed because they do not do their homework. Teachers fail, not learners.”

On interruption of learning when teachers embarked on strikes, Parent V said,

“It is a problem when educator organisations embark on strike. The strike destroys our children’s future. Children do not gain. Children do not even go to school and they take advantage of it. I suggest they do it on Saturdays and Sundays.”

On the issue of relations between teachers and parents, it was found that some teachers did not respect most parents. Parent II said,

“They call us names; they even tell us about our poverty. Teachers tell our children about their family issues. There is no respect and the standard of teaching has gone down.”

Most parents blamed teachers for doing nothing to increase their involvement in the education of their children. In school B Parent I was not certain about teacher absenteeism. Four participants indicated that it happened but they thought teachers had permission when they were not at school. Four participants categorically stated that absenteeism did not happen.

In school B, parents viewed the teacher’s workload differently. Six participants indicated that teachers had a heavy workload; they added that there were many children and a few teachers. Furthermore, the learners were problematic, and in some instances, they fought with teachers and they carried dangerous weapons. An example was cited in which one learner had a gun and some children had

butcher knives.

Eight participants agreed that when teachers embarked on strike learning was disturbed and eventually stopped. The respect that was shown towards parents by teachers was appreciated.

Seven participants agreed that teachers were doing a great job in reminding them about their involvement. It was stressed during meetings. Parents were told that they were answerable when children did not come to school. Parents were also reminded that they were primary educators and it was their basic right to be involved.

The government and the community built the schools. Parents indicated that they went to the school when there were meetings, when they were called usually, when their children had learning problem and when they went to pay school fees. One parent said they went to school every four months. One parent said that they did not go to the school. The school had no waiting room, only the school manager's office.

Most participants in school C said they had not noticed absenteeism at the school. Some teachers at school were forced to work under difficult conditions because of the heavy workload. Four participants indicated they believe teachers had heavy teaching workloads. Parent V said the job suited educators because they were qualified to do it. Participant II warned teachers that,

“If they tell themselves that their teaching workload is heavy it will be heavy but if they do the job there will be no workload.”

Some parents felt teachers showed respect for the parents. Some parents did not

notice any disrespect shown to them by the teachers. Cases of disrespect had not been reported.

It was felt by some that some had remained silent during the 1990s and decreased the involvement of parents in learning and teaching activities by doing nothing. Parent IV said of the situation,

“Maybe educators are planning something we do not know and when they get time they will tell us.”

Five participants agreed teachers often worked under severe and difficult conditions due to the teaching workload. Parent III's view differed from those of other participants in this regard and said, “Only teachers themselves who are accountable can tell if they experience a heavy workload.” Two parents disagreed and said teachers did not have a heavy workload.

Four participants said teachers seldom absented themselves from school. Parent III said most parents hadn't noticed absenteeism at school. Parent V1 said that, “Before democratic government it was a sin for the teacher to be absent from the school.”

Six participants in school C said that learning and teaching stopped when teachers embarked on a strike. Parent V added, “Education does not take place when there is a strike.” Two parents were less sure whether teaching and learning proceeded during a strike or not.

All participants agreed teachers respected most parents. Most educators persuaded parents to get involved fully in school matters. Most parents revealed they had heard of some problems at school.

Parent 1 said, “They tell us that if there are problems we must go to school to hear about them, for example, late coming, absenteeism of children etc.” Parent II said, “They call and show us what learners were learning at school. Parent III said, “They call us when children do wrongs”. Parent V said, “They invite us through letters and they tell us when children want to undertake trips and they support us.” Parent VII said, “They just call us to report to us when children do not listen.”

4.1.6 School fees and finance

Participants in school A were not exactly clear who determined the school fees. Participant VI who was a schoolteacher thought the community generally determined the fees.

Parent IV who was a member of the school governing body said the government and the community determined the school fees.

A financial report was not given to the parents in School A. Parent IV, who was a member of the SGB said,

“The SGB gets the report sometimes after three months, but recently I asked for it but it was not given to me. There is an overlapping of powers with the teachers. The responsibility rests with the principal as far as the financial report is concerned.”

The former Gazankulu Education Department auditors had reported misappropriation of funds at the school ten years before. The school had appeared to look after its financial records very well then.

Four participants in school B agreed that the principal and the inspectors determined the school fees. Four participants remained unsure who determined the school fees.

As with the other schools financial reports were not given to the parents. Parent II said the principal hated him because he frequently asked for a financial report at meetings. The principal insulted his children and told them about their father's poverty.

Misappropriation of funds had not been reported. Most parents revealed that mismanagement of funds by the principal had happened at the school fifteen years before. The frightening experience of misappropriation of funds at the school haunted the parents sometimes.

In school C Parent I said, "School Governing Bodies determine school fees." Two participants weren't sure. Parent IV said, "Teachers determine school fees." Parent V said, "The principal determines school fees." Parent VI said, "We the community determine school fees." Parent VII added, "I think it is the teachers who determine school fees." Parent VIII, "Management come with proposal to parents."

On whether they do pay the fees in school D Parent I said, "I pay school fees at the beginning of the year so that teachers can teach my children with open heart." Parent II said, "I pay in small amounts for example, R30, 00, etc."

Parent III said, "I pay school fees when I get money so that teachers do not trouble us." Parent IV said, "I pay school fees at the beginning of the year." Parent V said, "It depends on when they tell us. Parent V said, "We can pay in halves as long as

we pay in full by the end of the year.” Parent VII revealed, “Some pay and to me paying school fees is a problem because I do not have money.” Parent VIII said, “I pay on quarterly basis.”

As far as finance was concerned, Parent I said, “They give us the financial report during meetings. They say it time and again, almost every two weeks” Parent II said, “I’m not sure.” Parent III said, “I have never come across a financial report.” Parent IV, “The school has not given us a financial report”. Parent VI, “We get it from the tribal office when SGB call us and therefore we get it in full. Parent VII disagreed, “No they don’t call us to give the financial report, they just keep on saying they want money.”

With regard to misappropriation of funds, Parent I said, “There has been misadministration of funds before in this school. Parent II in contrast said, “I haven’t heard and I just see children as they go to school.” Parent IV “It is good here.” Parent V stated, “It was once there now it has come to normal. Parent VI said, “We haven’t come across it and proof of receipts is important.” Parents propose a budget in the School Governing Body and they would also be signatories. One participant indicated that it was once reported some time ago.

It was found that financial report was not given to parents because most parents did not come to SGB meetings when called at schools. It was surprising to also find out that even parents who were in the School Governing Body could not easily get a financial report. The three schools that the researcher had chosen had misuse of funds.

4.1.7 Building, General Cleaning and Surroundings

The participants in school A agreed that the community had built the schools themselves. The school did not have a waiting room. Parents had not rendered services at the school, such as, cleaning etc.

“Parents are not called to school, except those who are members of the School Governing Body” said parent VI.

Parents were often heard saying as long as they had elected the SGB, they were their mouthpieces. They thought it was unnecessary to involve themselves fully in the education of their children.

In school B, the community built the schools themselves. However, most parents still distanced themselves from the school, unless they were called during meetings. Parents went to school when there were problems. Due to poverty, the school lacked a waiting room. Most parents got together to clean the school once in 2000. Parents found it extremely difficult to return and clean it again.

Five participants in school C indicated that the community and government built schools. One participant indicated that he just saw the school standing (Parent II)

Concerning school visits by parents, Parent I said, “I’m at work everyday, Monday to Friday, therefore I don’t have time.” Parent II said, “I go to school when there are meetings only.” Parent III stated, “I do not have time to go to school.” Parent IV was a hawker and indicated that she visited the school when she went to sell. Parent V, indicated she had gone to the school recently and she hoped to visit the crèche five days later. Parent VI sometimes visited the school once or twice per month. Parent VII said, “I go to school when they call me only.” Parent VIII stated, “I go to school when there is a meeting. Secondly, I visit the

school on a monthly basis to check the progress of my child, and lastly, I visit the school when the management of the school invites me.”

With regard to school cleaning Parent I said, “We clean the school sometimes when we get time.” Parent II explained, “We who are working, clean the school on Sundays. Those who are not working clean during the week.” Parent III added, “We clean the school especially on Sundays.” Parent V said, “We cleaned the school once last year and now I do not hear anything about cleaning.”

4.1.8 Community Involvement

Community involvement in the study entailed different structures: community organisation structures that participate in the education of the children, how people organise themselves in a variety of organisations, the role which these structures played in the education of the children and how much knowledge community structures had and how they supported learning and teaching at school. Participants had to answer the following questions: How often do you attend the education meeting in your tribal office or Induna’s kraal? What is the business sector doing to increase learning culture at school?

Participants in school A conceded that education meetings were held at the tribal or Induna’s kraal. Parent III said education meetings were held in the community.

Participants in school B indicated that they sometimes attended meetings at the tribal office or Induna’s kraal once or twice per year or when there were learning or teaching problems. Three participants indicated that they didn’t attend but they confirmed that education meetings were held in most tribal offices.

Business people gave donations when asked by the schools and they attended education meetings when they were invited. One hawker said she sold food to teachers and children at reasonable prices.

In school C the community was generally unprepared to involve itself fully in the education of the children. The researcher interviewed the Induna and he indicated the meetings were always called once in December when most people who worked in Gauteng came back for the Christmas holidays. The researcher suspected that most children were left alone or with their older siblings during the year.

Most business people contributed donations when asked by the schools. Sometimes they assisted by selling books, pens and other learning materials at affordable prices to both parents and children.

In school D parent II agreed, “Yes, we were called to the tribal office by the tribal council to discuss matters on school fees and learners who went to school and played.” Parent III said, “We just meet at schools.” Parent IV stated, “We are called about once per month to tribal meetings on education.” Parent V, “The tribal chiefs do call us on matters concerning education.”

Some education meetings were held at the tribal office or Induna’s kraal. Business people sometimes gave donations to schools when asked. They sometimes sold their goods to children at reasonable prices. Most tribal authorities showed commitment and identified education problems at their council meetings.

4.2 Interview Guide for School managers and their profile

Table 4.2. PROFILE OF SCHOOL MANAGERS

School manager	A	B	C	D
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	45	47	43	40
Teaching Experience	21years	28years	19years	14years

The researcher interviewed four school managers on the following topics: policy of the school on parent involvement, Hlanganani south school governing bodies, encouragement of parents to attend SGB meetings, communication between the school parents, community involvement, learning culture, unions and learning atmosphere at school, school finances, and discipline of the children amongst other topics.

4.2.1 Policy of the school on parent involvement

The school manager of each of the four participating schools responded as follows when asked about parent involvement:

School manager A: “The policy is open to all parents and if they feel they want to come to school they must arrange first and follow correct channels, for example, if a parent experiences problems at school, he or she is free to come to the school manager, etc.”

School manager B: “The policy encourages full intervention by parents. The

policy clearly shows the responsibilities of the parents.”

School manager C: “Parents feed their children and give them basic needs, for example, clothes, good health, etc.”

School manager D: “We call parents to come to school and sign an undertaking that binds them to involve themselves in learning activities of their children.”

4.2.2 Hlanganani South School Governing Bodies

Concerning school governing body meetings, the school managers responded as follows:

School manager A “Meetings should be four per year but due to hectic schedules, meetings are held every time.” (i.e. Whenever possible)

School manager B: “The school holds meetings every month unless there is an emergency meeting.”

School manager C: “The school holds meetings once per quarter except when there is an emergency meeting.”

School manager D: “The year plan indicates four prescribed meetings per year but 10-15 emergency meetings take place.”

When asked about the attendance register they said:

School manager A: “We have a roll call and individual problems are recorded in the books.”

School manager B: “We use roll call to check the attendance.”

School manager C: “We use a roll call to show if the number is increasing or decreasing.”

School manager D: “A roll call register is used but response is poor. The school sends children to call their parents about a particular meeting. There is a positive response to individual meetings but poor response to mass meetings.”

4.2.3 Other structures on which parents serve in the community

When asked if parents served in other structures in the community they said:

School manager A: “Parents serve in the school governing bodies only.”

School manager B: “We do not have any structure except in one incident where parents came to clean the school as a group.”

School manager C: “Yes there are other structures in which parents serve, for example, civic, education desk, and policing forum.”

School manager D: “Parents serve in the community policing forum, the water project and as council members at the local tribal authorities.”

4.2.4 Tasks of the Governing Body at the School

When asked to define the tasks of the governing body at the school, the manager

from school A said the task of the SGB was to govern the school, decide on policy issues, and maintain the infrastructure of the school. The other three viewed the task of the SGB as relating to governance.

4.2.5 Parents at School

When asked to comment about parents at school the following comments were made:

School manager A: “All parents come during meetings and also on individual cases to deal with disciplinary cases.”

School manager B: “Usually parents of deviant children come to school.”

School manager C: “All parents who have children at school do come.”

School manager D: “Parents of problematic children are called to school.”

4.2.6 Encouragement of parents to attend SGB meetings

School manager A: “Parents come to find out about the progress of their children at school, to tackle over crowding in the classrooms, and to discuss and decide on school fund increase.”

School manager B: “To see transparency in school matters and to get financial reports.”

School manager C: “Parents come to see the development of the school and for

discussions between educators and parents.”

School manager D: “Parents come just to see the developments at school for, example, to receive financial reports.”

4.2.7 Communication between the school and parents

When asked about the communication between the school and parents they said:

School manager A: “There is a two way communication, namely, school governing bodies and letters that are sent to parents via children.”

School manager B: “Communication through letters is given to learners.”

School manager C: “Communication is through letter invitation, announcement in assembly and children individually.”

School manager D: “We communicate with parents through letter writing and tribal announcements through our SGB member.”

The managers reported on their educator’s capability in handling parent involvement:

School manager A:

Teachers are capable to:

- handle visiting parents at school;
- welcome and receive parents;
- give them proper sitting;
- listen to the nature of the problem parents are experiencing; and
- encourage friendship between the parents and the school.

School manager B:

“Educators engage in studies that include parent involvement.

School manager C:

“Educators make friendships with parents.”

School manager D:

“Educators encourage positive relationships between educators and parents when dealing with the concept of parent involvement so some educators are worried when parents do not come to school.”

4.2.8 Community Involvement

Regarding community involvement the managers said:

School manager A: “Parents come to school to receive the quarterly, and half yearly reports.

School manager B: “Parents encourage teachers and learners to work together.”

School manager C: “Parents support their children and pay when they engage in education trips.”

School manager D: “The community is minimally involved as a result of negative perceptions about the school. We rarely see parents being involved in the education of their children.”

4.2.9 Learning Culture

Learning culture and business people.

The managers described the relationship between the learning culture and business people as follows:

School manager A: “Business people contribute in terms of ideas but financially they contribute very little.”

School manager B, “Business intervenes but not many individuals. Business people discourage learners from buying during school hours.”

School manager C, “They donate money when we ask them.”

School manager D, “I have not seen them donating or being involved in learning and teaching environment at school.”

Learning culture at home.

The comments about the learning culture at home were:

School manager A, “Generally there is no effective teaching taking place at home.”

School manager B, “I think there is cooperation between parents and teachers in the supervising of learning activities in the home situation because most children write their homework.”

School manager C, “We give children assignments and home work. We also advise them to draw their home study time.”

4.2.10 Unions and learning atmosphere of school

School managers described the union’s effect on the learning atmosphere of the school as follows:

School manager A: “The union is doing very little towards the smooth running of the school in developing a learning culture. Sometimes education officials are banned by union educators from school.

School manager B: “Unions do very little and not 100% contribution to teaching and learning. In meetings they just concentrate on union matters.”

School manager C: “There are no grudges amongst the union members in the job situation.”

School manager D: “Neither the Professional Educator Union nor South African Democratic Teachers Union support learning and teaching activities.”

Their comments about learning during an educators’ strike were:

School manager A: “Learning comes to a stand still during the strike.”

School manager B: “There is absolutely no effective teaching taking place at school.”

School manager C: “When there is a strike usually we have to catch up later, by for example, teaching even during school holidays.”

School manager D: ‘Professional Educator Union members teach even during school holidays to cover the syllabus. South African Democratic Teacher Union members do not teach during school holidays.’

4.2.11 General Questions

School managers described the contact between the teachers and parents as follows:

School manager A: “It is mainly through personal reports and personal visits by both teachers and parents.”

School manager B: “Contact between parents and the teachers is mainly through reports.”

School manager C: “Parents see reports every quarter and they sign to prove they have seen their children’s results.”

School manager D: “Contact is mainly through letter writing and personal interaction between parents and educators.”

The managers’ reflections on the ignorance of parents towards the children’s progress were:

School manager A,

“Parents’ lack of knowledge about parent involvement and issue of retrenchment in the employment sector cause ignorance.”

School manager B: “The issue of many Africans who say girls should not attend schools leads to parents’ ignorance.”

School manager D: “The ignorance stems from the past. Teachers do everything that is educative, but most parents do not help.”

On the issue of teachers gossiping about parents, they said:

School manager A: “They seldom gossip, if they see certain bad behaviour in children.”

School manager B: “Yes, teachers gossip about parents who over protect their children by not disciplining them when they do bad things.”

School manager C: “Yes, they sometimes gossip, for example, about a particular child who is wayward and does not do school work. The educators sometimes provide solutions for the child.”

School manager D: “Yes, they do gossip, but the gossip is positive and does not tarnish the image of the parents.”

When asked if stakeholders had access to financial reports the managers said:

School manager A: “Stakeholders are free, to have a look at the financial statement of the school.”

School manager B: “Access is there to financial reports.”

School manager C: “Stakeholders have access and it is given to them on request.”

School manager D: “Yes, they have an access.”

When asked how many educational trips the school had undertaken, the managers from schools A, B and D said one, three and two trips respectively. School C had gone on an educational trip to Mpumalanga.

Commenting on the learning climate in the school they said:

School manager A: “The learning climate is very poor.”

School manager D, “The learning climate is low because shebeens, and initiation schools of both girls and boys disturb the school.”

The managers from schools B and C said the learning climate was average in their schools.

When asked about afternoon studies they said:

School manager A, “Pupils study on their own at school.”

School manager B, “There are no formal afternoon studies at this school.”

School manager C, “They just study on their own for certain periods.”

School manager D, “The principal forces pupils to study.”

Their responses on arriving late at school were:

School manager A, “We discipline latecomers by lengthening their study periods,

and by imposing cleaning and gardening duties.”

School manager B, “We lock the gate when the school starts and thereafter we open the gate and let learners clean surroundings.” (The manager acknowledged the contravening of the basic right to learn by closing gate)

School manager C, “We warn the children and then call their parents, because there might be unforeseen problems.”

School manager D, “I tell them to go and fetch their parents and give them punishment.”

When asked about who should initiate parent involvement, the managers commented as follows:

School manager A: “Teachers and school governing bodies have a legal role to play in initiating parental involvement.”

School manager B: “The school managers should be the initiators of parent involvement and teachers should pave the way.”

School manager C: “Apart from the principal and the school management, teachers and SGBs are the initiators of parent involvement.”

School manager D: “The school manager and School Governing Body are the initiators of parent involvement.”

4.3 Interview Guide for educators and their profile

Table 4.6. PROFILE OF EDUCATORS

School	A	B	C	D
Participant	Participant 1 Participant 2	Participant 1 Participant2	Participant 1 Participant 2	-
Age	Participant1 (30yrs) Participant 2 (36yrs)	Participant 1 (36yrs) Participant 2 (35yrs)	Participant 1 (38yrs) Participant (36yrs)	-
Gender	Participant 1 male Participant 2 male	Participant 1 male Participant 2 male	Participant 1 male Participant 2 male	-
Teaching experience	Participant 1 (6yrs) Participant 2 (10yrs)	Participant 1 (12yrs) Participant 2 (10yrs)	Participant 1 (13yrs) Participant 2 (10yrs)	-

The researcher asked specific and general questions relating to: learning in the new democratic dispensation; the school policy on homework; children at school; teaching and learning activities; disciplining of children at school; school policy on studies; communication between the teacher and parents and teacher unions.

4.3.1 Educators in the Hlanganani south

When asked to comment on learning in the democratic society the educators responded as follows:

School A, Participant 1: “Children have a right to learn and right to be taught by teachers.”

Participant 2: “Learning in the New South Africa needs to be seen against a lot of issues, for example socio-economic factors and politics.”

School B, Participant 1: “Learning is poor due to wrong interpretation of democracy.”

Participant 2: “Learning is deteriorating. Learners fail to understand what democracy is all about. Parents fear their own children and that becomes worse at school when they look down upon teachers and hinder the learning process.”

School C, Participant 1: “Parents, pupils and educators work together in decision making.”

Participant 2: Discussed learning in two spheres namely,

- Learning in the pre-democratic era:
- There was no independence and the children felt teachers’ authority.
- There was full control over learning.
- Good teaching yielded better results and
- Schools obtained quality results.

Learning since establishment of democracy:

- Learning at school is appalling.
- Educators did not have zeal to teach and
- Pupils reject teacher and parental control.

4.3.2 School policy on homework

Regarding the school’s policy on homework the responses were as follows:

School A, Participant 1: “I’m a new educator in this school and I know nothing.”

Participant 2: “We give children homework at least twice per week.”

School B, Participant 1: “Learners are given homework every week according to

the time table.”

Participant2: “There is a homework timetable. It depends on subject, for example, languages have a minimum of homework four times per week.”

School C, Participant 1: “We give homework once per week.”

Participant 2: “Giving of homework depends on the teachers.”

The educators revealed the following about the negative attitude of the learners towards homework:

School A, Participant 1: “Children waste time and they are not interested in subjects like mathematics.”

Participant 2, “Teachers force children to write homework.”

School B, Participant 1: “Children dislike homework and think it is a punishment.”

Participant 2: “Children are lazy and they need close supervision from the educators.”

School C, Participant 1: “They see completion of homework as leisure time and they waste valuable time.”

The educators’ comments about the checking of homework included:

School A, Participant 1: “I check homework and every book of the children the next morning or period.”

Participant 2: “Outcome Based Education needs a lot of time and really takes time for checking homework.”

School B, Participant 2: “In the crowded classes it is difficult to check homework. Also it becomes difficult when I check one by one. Generally I do corrections with children collectively. Learners mark their own books and I check the books as a facilitator to save time.”

School C, Participant 1: “I check homework by marking them the following day.”

Participant 2: “I check at the beginning of the period. I go around checking individually. Those who do not write homework I detain them, for example up to

17H00.”

When asked about parents and homework they said:

School A, Participant 1: “OBE is interactive and leads to parent involvement. It is also research based and needs a lot of interaction even from parents.”

Participant 2: “Children who do not write homework clearly show that some parents are less helping their children in homework activities and I question their involvement.”

School B, Participant 1: “They do not help and they distance themselves from the education of their children. There is also high illiteracy in most parents.”

School C, Participant 1: “Most parents are illiterate and they cannot read or write.”

Participant 2: “Hlanganani South is a deep rural area and most parents cannot read or write. I think some parents sometimes help their children with homework.”

When asked about discipline and homework they said:

School A, Participant 1: I chase out those who did not complete the work and I also change homework into class work.”

Participant 2: “I send out those who did not write and let them come to classroom when they have written the work”

School B, Participant 1: “They are punished. They are also reminded that the work given was part of year-mark.”

Participant 2: “Until they write homework, I ban them from the classroom. I know that it is against the law but it works for me. I encourage those who write to keep on writing.”

School C, “Participant 1: “Corporal punishment is banished and I give them another homework.”

4.3.3 Afternoon study period

Their comments about the school's policy on afternoon studies were,

School A, Participant 1: "Afternoon study period is compulsory. Educators arrange lessons to teach and it is a written policy."

Participant 2: "All learners are expected to study and it is a written policy."

School B, Participant 1: "All learners are forced to study Monday to Friday and it is a written policy."

Participant 2: "It is compulsory and there is study time table."

School C, Participant 1: "Afternoon study period is for grade 11-12 only and it is a written policy."

Participant 2: "Afternoon study period is there and we do not expect late coming and absenteeism is forbidden. The study is 110 minutes and is compulsory. Absenteeism is R5,00, and it is a written policy and there is ten days issue (removal of children from the register after ten days)."

When asked about the administration of afternoon study period they said:

School A, Participant 1: "Every one is a class teacher and this forces educators to be in total command."

Participant 2, "We write down the names of those who are present."

School B, Participant 1: "Afternoon study period forms part of completing the syllabuses and teachers teach in the afternoon."

School C, Participant 1, "Teachers are grouped into four groups to administer afternoon study."

4.3.4 Communication

Comments were made about communication as follows,

School A, Participant 1: “Progress reports force parents to be involved in the education of their children by communicating to us.”

Participant 2: “Communication is mainly through meetings that are held by the community on weekends.”

School B, Participant 1: “Communication is mainly through SGB meetings and when a child has done something wrong.”

Participant 2: “Communication comes in generally when there are problems, for example, when the child didn’t write homework and secondly, bad behaviour showed by the child at school.”

School C, Participant 1: “Communication is through School Governing Body members, that is, the School Governing Body communicates with parents on our behalf.”

Their comments about communication channels in the school were:

School A, Participant 1: “Communication channel is best in this school.”

Participant 2: “There is no good communication in this school. There is also no discipline. Learners keep on fighting with dangerous weapons and the School Governing Bodies keep on postponing cases due to absence of parents. SGB is gradually slow to solve these problems.”

School B, Participant 1: “There is good communication between the parents and the school.” Participant 2, “Communication is poor here at school.”

School C, Participant 2: “Communication is not that good at school because there is a gap between the school and the teachers. It is difficult to interact with parents

and what makes it difficult I do not know.”

4.3.5 Description of a good parent

When asked to describe a good parent the educators said,

School A, Participant 1: “A good parent is a parent who is a responsible, caring, accountable, and a parent whose education ideals and aspirations shape a child.”

Participant 2: “A good parent is a parent who when he or she over hears a problem of the child, follows the good communication channels to solve the problem.”

School B, Participant 1: “A parent who is after the progress of the child.”

Participant 2: “Responsible adult, analytical parent assesses the education situation of the child and is close to the educators.”

School C, Participant 2: “A parent who wants to know the scholastic achievement of the child, a parent who comes and helps at school.”

4.3.6 Description of a bad parent

Description of a bad parent were as follows,

School A, Participant 1: “Irresponsible, uninterested in the child’s progress and criticises the school.”

Participant 2: “A bad parent is a parent who uses vulgar language to the teachers’, for example, he or she despises teachers.”

School B, Participant 1: “The one who ignores the progress of her child.”

4.3.7 Parents who sometimes come to school

When asked to comment about parents at school, educators said the following:

School A, Participant 1: “I see parents of learners who play and do not do learning activities.”

Participant 2: “Really parents are not working here, most parents are working in urban areas and we only see learners’ brothers and sisters who come with cross-questions when they come to school and stand for the children’s parents.”

School B, Participant 1: “We see parents of learners who are problematic at school.”

Participant 2: “We see parents of slow learners and learners with behavioural problems and parents who come when there are problems.”

4.3.8 Relationship between the parents and children

Educators’ comments about the relationship between the parents and children were as follows,

School A, Participant 1, “It is proper to say it is good, for example, a teacher heard two learners saying, If it was not for my dad, I would not come to school, therefore it is good to say that the relationship is there.”

School B, Participant 1, “It is good but it seems that the relationship is not goal directed because we do not see parents at school.”

Participant 2, “Generally I can say there is no close supervision of children by parents. Seemingly parents have lost control over their children because they do what they want to do.”

School C, Participant 2, “Children are mirrors of their parents. What they do is more or less, what their parents do at home. There is a control shift of parent’s powers as a result of democracy or modernisation. Parents do not inquire about school attendance of children, performance etc.”

4.3.9 Discipline of children by parents

Educators viewed the discipline of children by their parents as follows:

School A, Participant 1: “I’m not fully sure, but from a distance, children have broken discipline chains into pieces. Most parents keep on blaming educators for not disciplining children on their behalf at school.”

School C, Participant 1: “Very few parents discipline their children. Whether children do something good or bad most parents do not care.”

4.3.10 Teacher unions and learning culture

Their opinions on unions and learning were:

School A, Participation 1: “The South African Democratic Teachers Union speaks of the Culture of Teaching and Learning activities, that is, teachers must truly teach, school managers must manage and parents must parent. The teacher Union strongly supports learning activities at school.”

Participant 2: “Teacher Unions organises workshops to update teachers on new teaching methodologies.”

School B, Participant 1: “The teacher union organises activities like sports for children.”

Participant 2: “They offer general support programmes which come with the government like, back to school campaigns etc, and the union on its own does not take an initiative.”

School C: “The Unions are not that involved except that they encourage teachers to attend classes and not to absent themselves from school.”

4.3.11 Learning and educator strike

When asked about educator strikes and learning they said:

School A, Participant 1: “During strikes pupils come to school, some teachers come to school and learning and teaching is not completely disturbed.”

School B, Participant 1: “Obviously everything ceases in the school environment, and no teaching and learning take place.”

School C, Participant 2: “Some pupils do not come to school. Some Grade12 pupils normally form study groups and they teach themselves when teachers have embarked on strikes.”

4.3.12 Business involvement in learning activities

School A, Participant 1: “So far not much has been noticed because I am a new man in this school.”

Participant 2: “Usually during meetings I’m not here, and I have no knowledge. Meetings are held during the weekend and I’m not there”

School B, Participant 1: “The community stay away from school.”

Participant 2: “Here in the rural areas we are doing nothing. We should really see specific competition on learning activities in the community.”

4.4 Summary of research findings

Three schools that formed part of the research sample, found it difficult to bring parents to school when the researcher needed them to participate in the research project. Most parents did not even know the teachers of their children. They did not know also exactly when schools where their children were attending knocked-off. Learning generally ceased when educators embarked on strike. Most parents blamed educators for doing nothing to increase the involvement of the parents in the education of their children. Parents in four schools rarely got financial reports

from the schools. Three schools reported mismanagement of school funds from the past. Most parents were not still sure who determined school fees at schools. All the four schools had School Governing Body but most parents found it difficult to understand how it functioned.

School managers occasionally had meetings with members of the School Governing Body. They rarely saw parents being involved in the education of their children. Most parents who came to schools were parents of deviant children and parents who had problems, for example, when the child had failed or was scratched from the register

The relationship between most of the parents and school managers was not good due to high failure rate of children. Some school managers were uncertain who should initiate parent involvement activities. Most school managers in Hlanganani South did not have much time to sit and talk with parents of the children they were managing and teaching at school. The school managers could hardly communicate with parents who were attached to their schools. They were also less involved in the community activities, for example, Education desks in Civics, Water projects, Community Police Forums, etc. School managers, as the head of the schools, were doing very little to promote learning at home.

Some school managers struggled to get the school going when teachers embarked on strike. They also had difficulties with parents who sometimes neglected their role in the education of their children. They found it difficult also to control afternoon studies and this resulted in poor attendance. Some school managers failed to exercise discipline at school. The fact that some school managers locked the gates was an indication that they had little understanding of constitution and South African Schools Act, which states, “A child has a basic right to education,

when the gate was locked; it meant the child was being denied that basic right to education.

Educators usually gave homework according to a Timetable. They included homework in the year marks. Children who did not complete homework lost marks. Some children completed homework and others did not. Some parents could not help their children with homework because they were illiterate. Some children were chased out if they did not complete homework.

4.5 Similarities

The four schools that the researcher carried his research project with were built by parents. The schools were all electrified in late 90s. Most houses were made of mud and thatched roofs. Most parents value education and see it as key to the future. Most parents received informal education from home. The four schools had School Governing Bodies. Most parents did not attend School Governing Body meetings. Elected parents in the SGB did not report matters to the people who had elected them. Most parents did not go to school to enquire about the education of their children. Most learners studied alone in the afternoons without the supervision of the educators. Learners frequently absented themselves in the four schools. Research participants were mostly uncertain who determined school fees at schools. Financial reports were mostly not reported to parents by SGB. School managers managed the schools without school policy of parent involvement. Despite the supporting evidence to the contrary, many educators in Hlanganani South did not believe that parent involvement is important for learner success.

4.6 Analysis

The factors that emerged as contributory to parent involvement or lack of, on the parents' side are:

1. Level of education (mainly little or none in Hlanganani South parents who were interviewed)
 - Ignorance about rights and obligations (also as a result of semi-literacy, illiteracy in the Hlanganani South context).
 - Threatening atmosphere of the school.
 - Fear of state institutions to those who have limited skills and knowledge for participation.
 - Unfamiliar surroundings.
2. Traditionalists (rural area parents) versus modernists (educators and schools).
 - Negative misperceptions about and mistrust of educators.
 - Unrealistic expectations from educators.
3. Lack of accountability culture.
 - Educators do not account to community and they are not made to account.
 - Parents do not meet schools halfway in teaching learners and they are not made to account.
 - Inferiority complex of educators (unequal partners)
 - Educators not prepared for parent involvement.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter one the background to the research problem was discussed. The researcher also briefly discussed the research problem, research questions, research aims, and gave a definition of the key terms, the limitation of the study and sequence of the study. Chapter one laid the foundation for the research study. It was followed by literature review in chapter two. The researcher showed how he carried his research project by reporting the participants' responses in chapter four. In chapter five, the researcher discusses the literature review, research questions and analysis briefly. Conclusion of the study was followed by recommendations of the four schools first, recommendations to Hlanganani South Schools and suggestions for further study of parent involvement.

5.2 Similarities between literature findings and study

The literature review covered a variety of aspects such as parent involvement in the world, parent involvement in South Africa and Hlanganani South. Literature study showed that there are benefits when parents involve themselves in the education of their children, for example, learners learn better, educators experience more positive feelings about teaching with greater parental involvement, learners earn better grades, high failure rate is minimised, behavioural problems of children are lessened both at school and home, teaching culture is restored, and learners engage in learning activities. Literature reviewed was mainly journals, books and papers read from conferences.

The parent involvement process was lacking in the four schools of Hlanganani South. Most schools did not have a school policy of parent involvement. The illiteracy and unemployment is high in Hlanganani South. There were same mechanisms of parent involvement in four schools. The schools were built by parents. The schools had poor learning facilities and lack of learning resources. Most educators in Hlanganani South were unionised. Absenteeism was still there in most schools. The financial report was not given to most parents in Hlanganani South.

Most participants in this research indicated that they communicate with parents by means of written communications, school meetings and messages passed on through pupils. However, schools did not communicate with parents on their requests. Although schools maintained that parents were free to contact the school if they had problems, they did not seem willing to meet parents at a time that was convenient for both parents and educators.

Although educators included parents in the School Governing Body or to accompany pupils on education trips away from the school, most educators seemed unwilling to use parents to maintain discipline, end late coming and absenteeism of learners at schools. School managers and educators interviewed stated that their schools did have a written policy on parent involvement although schools had never discussed parent involvement as a way of developing a learning culture in the Hlanganani South.

The research data collected answered the research questions as follows,

5.2.1 What mechanisms need to be introduced to improve the current state of parent involvement in the schools of the Hlanganani South?

The schools in Hlanganani South were presently doing little to improve the current state of parent involvement in the area. The mechanisms that schools are using are inadequate, for example, letter writing or sending oral messages via learners. Most parents in Hlanganani South are illiterate and they would have difficulty in reading the letters. Learners sometimes forget to take the message to their parents.

An urgent need for training and educating of all parties (school managers, educators, SGB, parents and the whole community) on the role of parents in schools. Workshops by Provincial Department of Educations for SGBs and schools, going through the Acts , for example, Schools' Act and procedures for implementation. Introduction of system by schools of voluntarism for parents, for example, to work on school finances, teach music or drama, coach in sport, build minor projects etc, for the benefit of community and so to reduce reasons for asking for money. Write to parents in their home languages. Parents to form cohorts and assist one another. Establish Open Days at school at least once a semester so that all parents have chance to see work of their children. Parents should not come for problems only. During Open Days each class teacher must find time to speak to each learner's parent or guardian. Parents or guardians who never come, or do not come, must be contacted and made to come. Role models in community must be invited to come and address learners on their careers.

5.2.2 What positive factors do the Hlanganani South area has regarding parent involvement and how could these be effectively utilised to promote learning culture?

The schools have school managers and educators who have professional

qualifications and they should actively initiate communication with the parents. The communication could be through letters, telephone, parents and educators visiting one another and most schools communicate with parents through tribal authorities.

Most Hlanganani South parents knew that there are School Governing Bodies and some of them guessed how they worked. Some parents agreed that learning ceased when educators embarked on a strike and they suggested educators should embark on strikes on Saturday and Sundays.

Manny parents are uneducated but are committed to educating their children. There is still a sense of community. Everybody generally knows everybody and so there is some closeness. There is respected authority, chiefs and these could be used to maintain order and discipline in schools. Community members are accountable in the community and answer to chief.

5.2.3 How can school management effectively use parent involvement to improve the learning culture in the schools of the Hlanganani South area?

Genuinely involve parents and treat them as partners. Have clear school policies and strategies that educators are committed and loyal to. Educators need to learn about the culture, beliefs, norms and values of the communities they are in. Set high standards for learners and educators. These must be attainable. Learners and educators must attain the goals. Success (of learners in education exams) is incentive enough.

5.3 Summary of research analysis

The literature review has indicated compelling evidence that parent involvement benefited pupils and schools. However, the education department has done very

little to prepare educators to work with parents in Hlanganani South.

Parents spoke little of their illiteracy that would pose challenges as parents in guiding and supporting their children with Outcome Based Education at home. The researcher was amazed to find out that the educators and school managers remained silent about Abet classes as a solution to the high illiteracy rate in Hlanganani South.

There was no report of misuse of funds in most Hlanganani South schools and schools have enough space to win the hearts of the community in parent involvement programmes. Initiatives have to be taken by schools, especially managers, because they have to open the schools to the parents and open themselves to the community.

The poor culture of learning links to other social ills such as high rate of teenage pregnancies, HIV/Aids and other STDs. HIV/Aids increased early deaths.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the school managers lacked strategies to involve parents in school matters. Some educators kept on pointing fingers at the parents saying they did not want to involve themselves in the education of their children. Most educators do not have the skills to equip them for the task. Parents did not have skills. For supporting education at home both school managers and educators depended on their experience in parent involvement activities. Parents blamed educators for the high failure rate and poor learning culture. Parents became involved in the education of their children when there was a call from school.

Parents could play a major role in maintaining authority, discipline and respect at school. Parents could come to school and help educators to minimise late coming by talking to children, and accompanying teachers to classroom when they are teaching. Pupils might be cool and calm in the presence of a parent in the classroom. Children might show their parents that they respected educators and principals. If parents came to the school, communication channels will be strengthened. If educators teach the children at school, a learning culture will be promoted and exists at school. Parents should make a point that children do school activities at home. Parents should support and guide them at school.

5.5 Recommendations

From the above understanding, the researcher recommended the following for the specific schools he conducted his study with,

5.5.1 School A

Both the school managers and the educators should use their professional expertise to bring parents closer to the school, identify roles which parents could play at school, for example, cleaning, fundraising, renovating the school etc. School managers and educators should come together and work out rules and regulations to promote a teaching and learning atmosphere, and they could inform the parents for such rules and regulations. Educator Unions at site level should work out a strategy for effective learning to take place when educators have to attend union activities, for example, some educators could go and others remain at school. Educators should maintain discipline and order at school. The SGB should give copies of financial reports to the parents who had elected them. Communication channels between the school and parents should be established by

the school and made clear to parents.

5.5.2 School B

The school manager should see to it that copies of financial report should be given to the parents. Parents should be encouraged by the school to attend meetings. Educators should work together with parents to curb late coming and absenteeism of children. Both educators and the school manager should work out a strategy to bring parents to school to participate in decision making, school policy formulations with parent involvement included etc. The school should lay down rules and regulations for formulating a learning culture. The school should engage parents who are on the SGB committee and parents who have children at school about parent involvement as a process. Educators at school should control studies.

5.5.3 School C

Parents should be encouraged to become active in the school and to identify their role in the school. Parents should be more actively involved in decision-making, policy formulations, etc. The school should involve parents in SGB activities. Financial reports should be given to the SGB members and parents by the school. The school and parents should determine school fees together. The school manager and educators should see to it that a teaching and learning climate is maintained at the school. Discipline should also be maintained at the school. The financial officers should be taught financial management skills by the Limpopo Education Department.

5.5.4 School D

The school manager and educators should encourage parent involvement with the school. The school manager and his management team should see to it that there is discipline, order and a good learning atmosphere at school. Educator Unions at site level should see to it that classes run during educator strike action and they must work out a strategy how they should be run. The school should capacitate parents who are in SGB committee and parents at large about parent involvement. Educators should be encouraged by the school manager to attend education meetings that are organised by the tribal chief during weekend. Copies of the financial reports should be given to the SGB and the parents. The school manager should see to it that the financial officer is taught management skills by the Limpopo Education Department. Educational trips should be undertaken by the school to equip learners with learning experience outside school. The school should have a policy on parent involvement.

5.6 Recommendations for Hlanganani South

Based on the findings of the data collected the researcher recommended the following to Hlanganani South,

Limpopo Province Education Department should:

- Convene seminars on parent involvement in education for school managers and educators.
- Have workshops on parent involvement activities.
- Initiate training programmes of parent involvement.
- Schools should initiate symposiums, calling for different professionals who are also parents such as, academics, doctors, engineers, pilots, lawyers, chartered accountants and managers from various structures to talk about parent involvement and to see the value of parent involvement in education.
- Structures that have an interest in parent involvement should be given education and training by the department.

- Businesses that have an interest in education should be brought closer to the school, because they are parents and can contribute to education financially.
- Traditional leaders should encourage parents to become involved fully in education.
- The Hlanganani South community should be encouraged to form professional unions. The unions should visit schools, talk to parents, educators and school managers about the value of parent involvement.
- Campaigns like ‘The back to School’ campaign that was initiated by the government earlier in the democratic, should be formed in the Hlanganani South by the department to alert parents to become involve in the process.
- Care groups, and groups of mothers who teach the public about the health care activities should work with the school.
- Financial reports should be given to parents by SGB.
- The school should teach community norms and values, that is, children should respect adults at home and respect educators at school.
- School managers and educators should be encouraged to register parent involvement education with higher learning institutions like the University of South Africa.

5.7 Suggestions for further study

The researcher recommends that researchers in Hlanganani South could do, Action Research, Case Studies (implementing training) , Comparative studies (effective and non-effective) , for example, the role of school managers in the School Governing Body, the manager and his leadership roles towards the SGB, the importance of having the school manager in SGB.

To identify the roles of parents and learners in SGB etc. The researchers could also study the role of education structures in promoting teaching and learning activities at school.

It is also recommended that the value of parents on the School Governing Body be recognised, the history of School Governing Bodies, their legal sphere, factors that hamper School Governing Bodies etc, be taken into consideration. The

researchers could study: parents, educators, and school managers, as the prime movers in parent involvement. Who should start to initiate the process of parent involvement? How should it be started? When and how is the process possible or not possible? etc. Parents in campaigns in education: How can they be involved in campaigns such as “Back to school”? What is the future of the role of parents in education at Hlanganani South? Whatever the answer to these questions, the importance of communication between the school and parents in developing a learning culture remains.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

- What is it like being a parent in the Hlanganani South?
- Who taught you to be a good parent?
- What is your job?
- What is the monthly income of your family?
- How many children attend school in your home?
- Where did you hear the concept of parent involvement in education?

B. HOME ENVIRONMENT

- How do you support your child with learning in the home environment?
- How does your child spend the afternoon at home?
- How often do you buy reading material for your child?
- Does your child do homework? Who supervises him or her at home?
- How do you view the parent's job at home towards education?
- How do educators help you with a problem situation of your child at home?
- Does your child have a study room at home?
- How do you view the parent's job at school?

C. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

- How often are you called to the school for School Governing Body meetings? Who calls the meeting?
- What are the duties of the SGB?

D. ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- How often do you enquire about the progress of your child at school?
- How many times do you speak with your child about career guidance per week?

- What is the relationship between you and the teachers of your child?
- What is your reaction to learners who roam around the street during schools hours?
- How do you view end year results of pupils?

E. EDUCATORS AT SCHOOL

- How is the educators handled absenteeism at the schools?
- How does learning proceed when teachers have embarked on a strike?

F. SCHOOL FEES AND FINANCE

- Who determines the school fees in your school?
- How do you pay school fees?
- How often do you get a financial report from the school? Who gives you the report?
- What is your view on misadministration of funds at school? What is the situation at the school your child attends?

G. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- How often do you attend education meetings in your tribal office or Induna's kraal?
- Who has built the school that your children attend?
- How often do you visit the school?
- How often do you clean the school buildings and surroundings where your child attends?

H. EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

- How many education trips has the school undertaken so far?

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL MANAGERS

A. INTRODUCTION

- How would you describe parents of Hlanganani South?
- What is it like to be the school manager in the Hlanganani South?
- What is the policy of the school on parent involvement?
- Is it a written or unwritten policy?

B. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

- Is there a School Governing Body in the school?
- How many School Governing Body meetings does your school have per year?
- How do you keep the register of parents who attend the meetings?
- Are there any structures on which parents serve?
- What are the tasks of the School Governing Body in your schools?
- What encourages parents to attend School Governing Body meetings?

C. COMMUNICATION

- How does your school communicate with parents and guardians?
- How do teachers handle visiting parents at school?

D. PARENT AS VOLUNTEERS

- What encourages parents to assist the school in cleaning surroundings?
- What discourages parents from engaging in volunteer activities at school?

E. EDUCATOR UNION

- What is the union doing to improve learning atmosphere at school?
- How does learning proceed when educators have embarked on strike?

GENERAL

How do educators inform parents about the progress of the children at home?

Do educators gossip about parents? If they do, what is the nature of the gossip?

How many educational trips do the school undertook so far?

How are afternoon studies controlled at school?

How is financial report given to parents and who gives it?

How is latecomers discipline at school?

When educators attend union activity who maintains discipline at schools?

In your opinion who should initiate parent involvement?

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

A. INTRODUCTION

- Discuss what it is like being an educator in public schools of Hlanganani South?

B. HOMEWORK

- What is the school policy on homework in this school?
- How do you discipline pupils who have not written homework at school?

C. STUDIES

- What is the school policy on studies?
- Is it written policy or unwritten policy?
- What is done to learners who dodge studies?

D. COMMUNICATION

- How often do you communicate with parents about the education of their children?
- How do you rate communication channel between the school and parents?

E. EDUCATOR UNION

- What is the educator union doing to promote learning activities at school?
- How does learning proceed when you have embarked on strike?

F. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- What is the role of the family in the upbringing and education of the child in the community?

G. SCHOOL FEES AND FINANCE

- Who give you financial report at school?

H. ABSENTEEISM

- How is absenteeism tackled in the school?

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