ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING
BODIES OF SELECTED FARM SCHOOLS IN THE
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DEDICATION

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the following people:-

• My late parents, Mr. MP Segwapa and Mrs. MG Segwapa who motivated me throughout the years to study.

• To my wife, Maphutheho and children Germinah, Mack and Mokete who supported me during the lonely hours of studying.

• To Mrs. Carol Jansen for editing this work.

• To the Almighty Lord for giving me the strength and wisdom to go through this study.
DECLARATION

I declare that *Assessing the performance of school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

____________________________                                        ___________________
SIGNATURE (Segwapa MP)                                                 DATE
SUMMARY

This research was conducted in the Waterberg District with particular focus on the Nylstroom Circuit. The primary aim of this research was to assess the performance of farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province. The farm schools that were selected for this purpose were in the Nylstroom Circuit since it had a number of farm schools.

The school governing body members such as the chairpersons, the principals and educators in the governing bodies of those farm schools participated in this study. The primary data collection method used in this research was semi-structured interviews. Participant observations were carried out on the sites before the interviews were conducted. Documents were analysed at the randomly selected schools.

This research revealed that many farm school governing bodies cannot perform their duties because of various challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of time off from work and the long distances that have to be travelled to meetings. In order for these farm schools to overcome these challenges, this research made a number of recommendations, based on the conclusions reached.
ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES OF SELECTED FARM SCHOOLS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Key terms:

Performance; school governing bodies; farm schools; assessment; powers; responsibilities; constitution; role; leadership; decision-making; procedures; parents’ involvement; school governance; stakeholder participation; democratic principles
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC : African National Congress
DoE : Department of Education
ELRC: Education Labour Relations Council
EPA : Education Policy Act
ERS : Education Renewal Strategy
ETA : Education and Training Act
GNU : Government of National Unity
HOD : Head of Department
NECC: National Education Crisis Co-ordinating Committee
NEPI : National Education Policy Unit
PTA : Parent-Teachers’-Association
PTSA: Parent-Teachers-Student-Association
RCL : Representative Council for Learners
RSA : Republic of South Africa
SASA: South African Schools Act
SGB : School Governing body
SRC : Student Representative Council
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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994 in South Africa, farm workers have been migrating to the townships. This migration has had a negative impact on the school governance conditions of farm schools. Consequently, the learner enrolment of certain farm schools in the Limpopo Province has dropped so sharply that educators are now facing severe challenges because of the redeployment process that is part of the restructuring process.

Resolution No. 2 of 2003 (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003: Annexure A) determines that permanent serving educators may be absorbed, transferred or matched in the current post establishment of identified schools based on the operational requirements of the said schools in the province. Operational requirements include changes in learner enrolment, the curricula needs of the school, the grading of the institution, and financial restraints, to name only a few.

The enrolment of learners at farm schools has declined quite drastically because farm families are moving to the informal settlements in the nearby townships. This migration has been caused by the fact that people receive low cost houses from the local municipalities. This demographic change has also had an effect on the functioning of school governing bodies (SGBs) of farm schools owing to the limited number of parents that can be elected to governing body positions.
This brings one to the question: if the school governing body is not well constituted, will it not be difficult for the governing body to execute its functions as outlined in section 20 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996? Undoubtedly, this migration has had a negative impact on the participation of parents in the governing bodies of farm schools. As a result, the school affairs are usually left in the hands of the principal who, in some cases, has the assistance of the property owner as well.

The farmer (or governing body where it exists) has wide-ranging powers regarding the management of schools and professional matters to:

- Control the admission of learners.
- Advise the department on the appointment, control and discharge of educators.
- Close the school (subject to the farmer’s registration contract with the department).
- Control the subsidisation of the school.
- Make representations to the circuit office for upgrading the school (and control the process).
- Control school funds.

It appears that a number of farmers find these responsibilities burdensome and would be willing to hand over the responsibility for their school to the state (DoE 1995: 20). In the past, the governing body of a farm school could either be the owner or a governing body consisting of the manager and four selected parents. However, some farm schools establish governing bodies that include parents, and may remove them as they wish. Ultimately, any democratic participation that parents may enjoy is thus not theirs by right (DoE 1995:21).

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a: 14) indicates that the principal forms part of the professional management team of the school and not the property owner. Nevertheless, the property owner is an important stakeholder who
may be co-opted to serve on the school governing body (RSA 1996a:7-8). The parents’ level of literacy contributes to the less than ideal state of the governance of schools by SGBs at present. Some of the central functions that these parents might surrender are the following:-

- The promotion of the best interests of the school
- The adoption of a constitution
- The development of the mission statement
- The adoption of a code of conduct for learners
- The management of finances

Section 25 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 makes provision for the situation that arises if a governing body fails to perform its functions by permitting the head of the department to appoint a sufficient number of people to perform those functions for a period of up to three months. This period may be extended for further periods of not more than three months provided that the total period is not more than a year

Within a year of the first appointment mentioned in the above paragraph, the Head of the Department must ensure that a new governing body is elected (Potgieter 1997:34). It is clear that the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a: 20) did not take cognisance of the farm schools’ conditions and challenges, namely, illiterate parents who serve on school governing body and the lack of capacity of the school governing body members. The act (RSA 1996a: 20) should have outlined proper regulations and provisions to address these challenges. An assessment is therefore necessary to determine whether the school governing bodies of (selected) farm schools in the Limpopo Province can perform their rightful functions.

Various sources dealing with the assessment of the performance of the school governing bodies will be consulted. Section 20-1 of the South African Schools Act
No. 84 of 1996 outlines these functions clearly. School governing bodies are invested with powers to execute their functions and responsibilities since they are democratically elected (Mothata 200:152). This allows the school governing bodies to be the official mouthpieces of the parents of learners, educators and learners of the school on all matters, apart from the administration and management of the school.

The overall aim of this study is to assess whether the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province are capable of performing their functions in terms of Section 20-1 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. To be able to achieve this aim, a literature study is indispensable as part of the methodology. The value of a literature study in this research is to find adequate information regarding the function of farm school governing bodies in the other circuits and to gauge whether the problem has been researched or not. A literature study assists the researcher in becoming familiar with the relevant literature and the more theoretical aspects of the study (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:112-150).

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The main aim of the research is to assess the level of performance of the school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province as set out in Section 20 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.

Research aims of this study are as follows:-

- To establish how selected farm schools can constitute school governing bodies properly.
- To establish how these selected farm schools can help existing school governing bodies to improve their performance.
- To determine how the performance of the school governing bodies of selected farm schools should be assessed.
• To determine if the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province can form sub-committees to assist with the governance of the school.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is:

Are the school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province able to perform the functions set out in Section 20 of the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a: 15)?

This research question leads to other sub-research questions such as the following:

• How can the selected farm schools constitute governing bodies properly?
• How can these schools make their available school governing bodies serve the interests of the school?
• Are the current school governing bodies of the selected farm schools capable of executing their powers and functions as laid out in the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996?
• Is it possible for the selected farm schools’ governing bodies to form sub-committees to assist with the governance of the school?

1.4 DEMARCATION OF FIELD OF STUDY

The qualitative research methodology will be used to study the problems mentioned above by talking to the selected farm school governing body members and conducting interviews with them. In addition, documents will be inspected in order to gather the required data (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:433-6). The interviews that shall be conducted as well as documents analysis will enable the researcher to assess whether the problem is bigger than expected or not. In this regard, White (2003:26-27) comments that the school governing bodies in previously disadvantaged
communities are not well equipped to perform their functions. The low levels of literacy, social and economic factors are amongst others, the major obstacles faced by school governing bodies in rural areas (Lamola 1996:19).

The Limpopo Province Department of Education was responsible for an initiative to improve the situation through capacity building programmes. These programmes deliver positive results in those areas where parents are reasonably enlightened and educated, but do not have any impact on farm school governing bodies that fall within the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. Lamola (1996:45) highlights the fact that the lack of resources and capacity building in the previously disadvantaged communities contribute to the poor participation of parents, with the concomitant negative effect on the school governing bodies’ performance.

1.5 DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 School governing body

A school governing body, also known as a SGB, is constituted in terms of the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:4). Mothata (200:152) defines a school governing body as a democratically elected body charged with the governance of public schools that is regarded as the mouthpiece of parents of the learners, educators and learners of the school on all matters apart from the administration and the professional management of the school. Briefly, Beckman (1999:153) describes school governing bodies as school governors who are elected and function in terms of the provisions of the Act (RSA 1996a:14).

1.5.2 Farm schools

Farm schools are public schools on private property owned by an individual or other persons or an organisation (Mothata 2002:134).
1.5.3 Nylstroom Circuit

The schools around Nylstroom (renamed Modimolle) fall within the Nylstroom Circuit. The circuit office that is situated in Modimolle is still referred to as the Nylstroom Circuit Office. This circuit consists of 20 farm schools, with 18 of these schools offering classes from grades one to seven, while only two are middle schools.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Qualitative research design

The qualitative research method is the most appropriate method for this project. It involves a small number of respondents with the aim of understanding and describing the problem under study. Spoken words are used in the analysis and interpretation of results.

1.6.2 Data collection strategies

Data collection strategies such as participant observations, document analysis and semi-structured interviews are selected as the monitoring tools that will assist in the evaluation process of these school governing bodies (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:383). In order to assess the performance of the school governing bodies properly with regard to their functions, the following monitoring programme needs to be implemented by the researcher.

1.6.2.1 Document analysis

The researcher will peruse documents such as the school governing body’s constitution, attendance register, financial records and invitations to the meetings of each respective school governing body. This is an important exercise as far as the data collection strategy is concerned (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:384)
1.6.2.2 Participant observations

The researcher will attend the school governing body meetings of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province with special reference to the Nylstroom Circuit and will observe their meeting procedures. The frequency and consistency of these school governing body meetings will also be examined. Finally, the researcher will evaluate the participation of the individual school governing members of the selected schools in the school governing body meetings.

1.6.2.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be held with the following members of the school governing body: the principal, who is the head or the manager of the school and also the *ex-officio* member of the school governing body, the chairpersons and/or secretaries and three additional members.

Semi-structured interviews is the appropriate tool to be used for this study since the farm school governing body members may not be able to read and write or answer questions in English. For this reason, the researcher will conduct the interviews in the languages they understand the best. It will therefore require the researcher to adapt his questions to their level of comprehension and translate their responses into the proper scientific language expected for research at a later stage. Interviews will be the primary data collection strategy. Key participants such as the principals, chairpersons and secretaries of the school governing bodies will be interviewed.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

White (2003:40) explains that delimitation of the research addresses the scope of the research. This study focusses on the assessment of school governing bodies of the
selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The respondents in this project are the school governing body members of the selected schools only and not members of the school governing bodies of any other schools.

Since the number of farm schools in the Limpopo Province is small, selected farm schools will also take part in the research. The focus will be on assessing the performance of farm schools in the Waterberg District with special reference to the Nylstroom Circuit. This classification will assist in making this research reliable and valid.

1.8 OUTLINE OF STUDY

This study is divided into five chapters:-

Chapter 1

This chapter includes the orientation and background of the study, the need for this research, the aims, sub-aims, research questions, sub-research questions, definitions and explanations of the most important research terms pertaining to this study. In addition, it contains the demarcation of the study field, the research methodology and design selected, the various data collection methods employed and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter focusses on a literature study, which assists in making the researcher aware of whether the problem has already been researched or not. The researcher is able to acquaint him/herself with the field of study and the research methodologies used in various studies.
In this study, the researcher will also attempt to obtain background information and greater insight concerning the research questions mentioned in 1.3. Further information will be obtained on whether the selected farm schools have properly constituted school governing bodies. The history, roles and functions of school governing bodies will also be studied in chapter 2 by means of a literature survey.

Though section 17 of the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 makes provision for a governing body to serve two or more schools, this provision has a major drawback because of the geographical remoteness of the schools.

Chapter 3

The focus of this chapter is on research design. Mothata (2000:145) defines a research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection strategies to answer the research questions. After having formulated the research problem, the next step will be identifying an appropriate research design.

This research will make use of a qualitative research design. In this qualitative research design, the following data collection techniques will be employed, namely, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis (Hoberg 1999:42).

Chapter 4

This chapter reports the findings derived from the data collected by means of the various data collection methods as well as a discussion of these findings regarding selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province, specifically in the Nylstroom Circuit.

Chapter 5

This is a summarising and concluding chapter. It is therefore imperative to analyse and interpret the data so that conclusions can be reached and recommendations can be
made. In addition, the limitations of this study will be highlighted and areas that require further research will be highlighted.

1.9 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to orientate the research and formulate research aims and questions as well as the sub-aims and sub-questions... The main aim of this research is to assess whether the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province, with particular reference to the Nylstroom Circuit in the Waterberg District, are capable of performing their functions in terms of Section 20-1 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. The research questions highlight important aspects of the research since they focus on the different aspects that need further clarification. To be able to research the questions, the researcher will implement a qualitative research design and make use of various methods such as observations and unstructured interviews.

A number of challenges have been highlighted regarding the underperformance of school governing bodies of the selected farm schools of the Limpopo Province. It is therefore necessary to assess the performance of these selected farm schools particularly in the Waterberg District with special reference to the Nylstroom Circuit.

Chapter 2 focusses on the literature pertaining to this topic and that can help to answer the research questions and provide relevant information regarding the different aspects and complexities of the problems with regard to the functioning of school governing bodies in a rural area.
CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES OF FARM SCHOOLS IN
THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE: THEIR HISTORY AND FACTORS
INFLUENCING THEIR PERFORMANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a broad overview of the history and the establishment of farm schools, stakeholder participation, the roles of the school governing bodies and factors affecting their performance will be discussed. The discussion will be both general and specific with regard to the Limpopo Province farm school governing bodies.

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:8), emphasises the democratic participation of the school stakeholders in education. School governors face severe challenges in the course of their daily activities in post-apartheid institutions. During the apartheid era, school governance was characterised by authoritarian and exclusive practices, while the new policy requires broad and democratic participation by parents, teachers, and learners in the life of the school through the medium of school governing bodies (SGBs).

The Report of the Committee reviewing the organisation, governance and funding of schools (DoE 1995: 54), defines the term ‘governing body’ as the body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt a policy for each public school, in terms of the national policies and provincial educational regulation.
2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LITERATURE STUDY

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:116-125), state that a literature study is carried out in certain sequential steps. These sequential steps are as follows: the first is analysing the problem statement, then searching and reading the literature, after that, selecting the index for a database is carried out, next is transforming the problem into the search language, then the organising of notes follows and finally the writing of the review is carried out.

Literature can fall into two categories, namely primary and secondary sources. Secondary literature includes a review of educational research, a review of research in education, yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE yearbooks), and books in print and encyclopaedias of educational research, to name just a few. Primary literature includes educational journals, educational indexes, government document indexes, dissertations and theses, citation indexes, amongst others. The literature review forms an integral part of the research project.

According to White (2003: 26), a literature study contributes to the shaping of the researcher’s frame of reference and forms a central part of the research process. It also leads to a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the research question identified. Arkava and Lane (1983, in White 2003:65) state that a literature study serves the following functions:

- It may disclose that someone has already researched the research problem. In such an instance, the researcher may decide to choose another topic and start afresh or to replicate the study.
- It provides a thorough insight into the dimensions and complexity of the problem.
It provides the investigator with complete justification for the subsequent steps as well as a realisation of the importance of the undertaking.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that before a researcher can design a study that will contribute to existing knowledge, there is a need to have a good idea of what is already known. It is therefore imperative to do the literature study early in the research process.

2.3 THE ROLE AND COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

2.3.1 Introduction

The role of school governing bodies will be examined in this section, by means of a comparison with Lesotho's approach to school governing bodies. Matalasi (2000:59) outlines the role of school governing bodies in Lesotho in terms of the Lesotho Education Act 10 of 1995. This act contains similar features to those encapsulated in the South African Schools Act 86 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:12). Lesotho has similar rural areas to the Limpopo Province, according to Matalasi (2000:12) and this forms the basis of this comparison.

Matalasi (2000:12), points out that the proprietors (owners) of farms exercised exclusive control over the schools just as in South Africa, prior to the promulgation of the Lesotho Education Act. Formerly, these proprietors nominated their representatives who were fully responsible for the daily running of the school; while parents had very few opportunities to contribute to or exert any influence in the decision-making process that affected their children's education. The same applied to the South African educational situation during the pre-apartheid era where school boards or the school committees were appointed without including the other relevant role players. These school boards or committees had considerable power that enabled them to exploit the majority of illiterate parents in a number of ways. This was the
typical farm school background in both the pre- and apartheid eras (Hendricks 2000:61).

Matalasi (2000:12) indicates that the school governing body in Lesotho, where she conducted her research, had been elected democratically even though the school’s resources were insufficient. One of the problems she identified was that proper records were not kept by this school governing body. In addition, the parents lacked the prerequisite knowledge about their functions and roles and the chiefs, too, were not sure what their roles entailed. Similar uncertainty regarding their roles on the school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province is also evident in instances where farm owners may not be willing to participate in governance matters (Baloyi 2002:68).

Observations have shown that the reason for the apparent lack of commitment and in certain instances, lack of discipline on the part of the parents in the school governing bodies, can be ascribed to poor or no training regarding governance matters. The direct outcome of this state of affairs can be seen in the fact that those particular school governing body members are guilty of drunkenness during school governing body meetings, absenteeism from meetings, losing interest in the school governing body or arriving late for meetings. This is the reason why Baloyi (2002:68), recommends that the school governing body members, particularly in the rural areas of the Limpopo province, should receive special training.

2.3.2 The powers of the school governing body

Importantly, the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:14), lists a number of functions, which need to be carried out by a school governing body. The act also refers to these functions as “powers” or “duties.” The act stipulates that a school governing body should aim to:
• Promote the best interests of the school
• Strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school
• Adopt a constitution
• Develop a mission statement
• Adopt a code of conduct for learners in the school
• Assist the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional duties
• Determine the length of the school day, which should be in line with the terms and conditions stipulated in their employment contracts.
• Assume responsibility for the maintenance of and control over the school's property, buildings and grounds occupied by the school.
• Motivate learners, parents, educators and other staff at the school to give voluntary services to the school.
• Make recommendations to the Head of the Department regarding the appointment of educators and non-educators, as well as staff transfers.
• At the request of the Head of Department, under fair conditions determined by him, allow reasonable use of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not presented by the school.
• Carry out all other functions imposed upon the school governing body by or under the specifications contained in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, section 20.

However, school governing bodies have many more duties than those stipulated in section 20 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:14). In short, these other duties should be consistent with this act. Section 21 of the act (RSA 1996a:16), determines the allocated functions, for which the school governing body may apply to the Head of the Department in writing in order to be given these powers to execute. All duties carried out by the school governing body should be shaped by
and in line with a particular ethical code. The Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Government and Funding of Schools (DoE 1995:19) suggests that the implementation of a school ethos, which is sensitive to race, and gender issues, will require the development of a new understanding and approaches to aspects of the institutional policy by many governing bodies.

In terms of the Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (DoE 1995:27), it is recognised that the schools differ vastly in terms of both their material resources and the managerial experience of their school communities; therefore, not all governing bodies would be likely to choose the same level of responsibility. This implies that schools, which have no prior experience of representative governance structures with real decision-making powers, should make a more modest start than schools with a successful tradition of responsible governance, whatever previous department they belonged to in the old racial and ethnic organisation of schools. In order to resolve this challenge, capacity-building programme must be arranged.

Beckman (1999:159) raises the following questions that he believes might guide capacity-building programmes:

- Do the various legal provisions concerning the functioning of the governing bodies permit them to participate fully in the democratic governance of schools?
- Are governors able to participate in such a manner that quality education, participative and democratic management can be achieved in schools?
- What is needed to enable governors to perform their duties optimally?

Beckman (1999:155) asserts that schools in the country should be viewed as microcosms of diversity, which will also be reflected in the composition of governing body members, consequently, this may affect the quality of their (governing bodies')
performance as well as their capacity-building needs. A number of aspects need to be considered when planning the institution of capacity-building programmes for governing bodies: These include factors such as:

- Different home languages.
- Varying degrees of proficiency in the use of the language used by the school.
- Varying degrees of literacy, ranging from virtually illiterate to functionally literate to highly-trained and educated members.
- Different religious affiliations; which may be problematic, for instance, when setting dates for capacity-building sessions of the governing bodies.
- Various occupations varying from the unemployed to manual labourers to highly-skilled professionals.
- The different levels of experience regarding participation in statutory school governing bodies, ranging from no experience at all, to some experience in non-statutory “school governing councils such as the PTSAs, up to substantial experience in governing bodies.”

The above-mentioned recommendations form part of the possible strategies aimed at resolving the serious challenges faced by farm school governing bodies.

2.3.3 The composition of the school governing body

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:14) stipulates that the composition of the school governing body that is selected, should be fully representative of the population it serves. The composition of the school governing body consists of three distinctive categories. De Wilzem and Comrick (2004:60), describes the three categories as follows:

- The first category consists of elected members, namely,
the parents of learners enrolled at the school.

educators employed by the school

support staff such as secretaries, cleaners and gardeners.)

learners in grade eight or higher enrolled at the school.

- The second category consists of co-opted members, namely:
  - individuals from the school community need not be parents of learners at the school.
  - the property owner of the school property or his delegate if the school is on private property.

- The third category consists of the school principal:
  - the only member who is not elected.

A further important specification contained in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, (RSA 1996a:14), is that these distinctive groups should operate as a single unit as part of the complete school governing body. One of the primary responsibilities of the school governing body is to promote the best interests of the school and not the interests of an individual or of the group; hence democratic representation of the parents is necessary.

2.3.4 Summary

The school governing body has a central role to play as far as the education of the learners is concerned. The school governing body stands in a position of trust with the school and is a juristic body. This implies that it can be legally accountable, for instance, the school can enter into a contract with another person or body. It is important to note that this status carries both responsibilities and liabilities. The composition of the school governing body must therefore be in compliance with the stipulations of the South African Schools Act.
This act (RSA 1996a:14) prescribes that the composition of the school governing body should consist of the following members: parents of learners enrolled at the school, educators employed at the school, support staff, learners in grade eight or higher, co-opted members and the principal as an *ex-officio* member. The school governing body will need to be trained in order to be able to execute its responsibilities efficiently. The kind of training expected should be extensive, which cannot be supplied by a short workshop. It is the responsibility of the Department of Education to provide the necessary capacity building workshops for newly elected school governing body members.

**2.4 THE HISTORY OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**2.4.1 Introduction**

In this section, the history of school governing bodies in South Africa is sub-divided into the following sub-sections, namely:

- A bird's eye view of the history of governing bodies in South Africa.
- The separate development policy within the education system.
- Resistance to the apartheid education system.
- The Tri-cameral Constitution
- The Department of Education and Training.
- The origin of the Parent-Teachers' Associations, Parent-Teachers'-Student Associations and the Student Representative Councils.
- A brief overview of how the school governing bodies were established.

According to Hendricks (2000:60), this period stretches from the time when the National Party came into power in 1948, up to the end of 1996, when the Government of National Unity (led by the African National Congress) changed the country's constitution to a democratic one. The constitution (RSA 1996b:8-18), made the
establishment of the school governing bodies at all public schools compulsory. The constitution requires education to be transformed and democratised in accordance with the following four values and principles:

- Human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedom.
- Non-racialism and non-sexism.
- The rule of law applies, in other words, the constitution and other laws as enforced by the courts, have higher authority than the parliament or the government.
- All adults must be able to vote and there must be regular elections, a multi-party system of democratic government, accountability, and openness.

The constitution recognises that everyone has a right to basic education. The democratisation of education means that role-players such as parents, teachers, learners, and other stakeholders must participate in the activities of the school. Potgieter (1997:6), points out that the governing body makes decisions on behalf of the school and ensures that it functions properly. Through representation on the governing body, all the role-players can share in the decisions of the body. The members of the governing body are accountable to the role-players and should report to them on what they have done to serve the best interests of the learners at the school (Potgieter 1997:7). Section 29 (1) of the constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996b:16), protects the right to education in the following manner: “Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.”

The school governing body of a school must uphold this ideal through governance processes and procedures. Regarding this right enshrined in the constitution, the separate development policy of the previous regime was inconsistent in its application
It had a differentiated approach in terms of the provision of education for different population groups and governance (DoE 1995:29-34).

### 2.4.2 The emergence of governing bodies in the education system

Prior to the dawn of the democratic era in 1994, structures put in place for purposes of school management were known as school committees, which were sometimes referred to as management councils or school boards (RSA 2003:26). Mabasa and Themane (2002:112) highlight the fact that these structures (school committees) did not include stakeholder participation and were dominated by school principals who had to report directly to the government bureaucracy responsible for education. Discrimination against other role-players such as students, created a fertile ground for the broader political struggle for a more inclusive system of governance.

The Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools (RSA 2003:27), points out that at the peak of the political upheaval of the 1980s, initiatives that paved the way for an inclusive and participatory system were the formation of the Parent-Teachers-Student Associations (PTSAs). The realisation of an inclusive system of governance came shortly after that, when the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:8) was passed after the post-apartheid government came into power in 1994. Nonetheless, it was clearly not going to be easy to develop a new ethos for school governance, given the long and entrenched history of undemocratic and exclusionary practices in the school environment (Mabasa and Themane 2000:112).

The Limpopo Province was affected by the situation highlighted in the preceding paragraphs. The geographic educational structures set up in the Limpopo Province, can be divided into the following categories, namely:

- Farm schools (schools on private property)
• Public schools (former model C schools, township schools, education departments for the houses of delegates and representatives.)
• Rural schools (schools in the former homelands, namely, Lebowa, Gazankulu and Venda)

It should be realised that the three homelands within the Limpopo Province each had its own department of education, which operated independently of each other. However, the Department of Education and Training did have some influence on these homeland education departments. The governing bodies of schools under these education departments were called school committees. The environment, in which these school committees found themselves, was unique for each department and they all operated differently (RSA 2003:26).

The former model C schools, as well as township schools under the Department of Education and Training and the Education Departments for the houses of delegates and representatives functioned on a parallel level to the homeland education departments. The various education departments had their own kinds of governing bodies, which were generally called management councils. The management councils were more representative and democratic than the school committees. The management councils also had statutory powers. The school committees governed some of the township schools under the auspices of the Department of Education and Training. This caused confusion amongst this category of schools in terms of the kind of governance they wished to institute (RSA 2003:27).

Later, there was a need for more democratic and participatory governance structures. The formation of the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs) and the Parent-Teachers-Students Associations (PTSAs) became essential in black schools in the Limpopo Province. The Department of Education and Training resented the existence of these structures, as it perceived them to be defiant to the governance structures appointed by it. The farm schools' counterparts in the Limpopo Province, which also fell under
the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and Training, did not have the privilege of choosing between PTAs or PTSAs. These farm schools were primarily controlled by the farmers on whose farms they were situated.

In this regard, the White Paper 2 (DoE 1996:19) explains the Ministry's proposal, which recommends the inclusion of parents in the school governance. This role must be exercised in a spirit of partnership between the provincial education department and the local community. Amongst others, these roles pertain to the following areas:

- **Broad policy**
  The school governing body has a challenge of adopting a mission and a vision statement. It must also develop, implement, and review the governing body policies in order to promote the best interests of the school community.

- **Personnel**
  The responsibility of the school governing in this regard is to negotiate and recommend educators and support staff for appointment in consultation with the provincial department of education.

- **Admission**
  The school governing body of a school drafts and adopts an admission policy in terms of the provincial guidelines.

- **Curriculum**
  Curriculum matters fall under the area of competency of the school governing body of a school. As far as the curriculum is concerned, the school governing body is responsible for the following:

  - It determines the opening and closing times and sets the timetables of the school guided by the provincial act.
  - It draws up a language policy within the appropriate framework, provided that no form of racial discrimination is practised while exercising its policy.
  - It determines school-level curriculum choices.
  - It decides on extra-mural activities.
It develops codes of conduct for both the educators and learners, which should not be in conflict with provincial guidelines.

- **Financial**
  The school governing body must be able to control and raise funds, draw up the school's budget, manage service rentals like water and electricity and also purchase learner support materials and other necessary equipment for the school.

- **Maintenance**
  The school governing body maintains the grounds and buildings.

- **Communication**
  The school governing body must hold regular report-back meetings with parents and maintain school-community communications.

- **Community services**
  The school governing body must organise local services for children and the youth and engage in community, health, recreational and nutritional programmes (RSA 1996a:14).

In order for the school governing body to carry these responsibilities out successfully, it is important that it should adhere to the provisions stipulated in the constitution, and in the national and provincial policies. The new act, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:12), recommends cooperative governance of farm schools. It expects farm owners, learners (where applicable) and the community to work collectively towards the achievement of a shared goal.

### 2.4.3 The separate development policy within the education system

Hendricks (2000:61) states that the government passed various pieces of legislation during this period that focussed on its policy of separate development. The different pieces of legislation provided the white minority population with high quality
education; while the majority of blacks received an inferior quality of education. As a result, this kind of education disadvantaged the majority of blacks in the South African education system. A further consequence of blacks being deprived of high quality education was the negative effect it had on their parental involvement as well.

According to Hendricks (2000:61), the specific legislation referred to in the preceding paragraph, in chronological order is:

- The Bantu Education Act, Act No. 47 of 1953, which divided education racially, was passed first. The other acts that followed, were intended to improve the education system, but instead served to institutionalise and reinforce apartheid education even further.
- The Indians Education Act No. 61 of 1965.

These acts were designed to provide, promote and entrench the provision of separate and unequal education for the different racially segregated population groups.

In contrast with the above-mentioned acts, the Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967 for white education was promulgated for the betterment of governance in schools. This act made provision for parent and educator participation in school education as contained in the Education Policy Act of 1967 (EPA 1967:04) for white education (Section 2.1.). It states that:

(h) The parent community [should] be given a place in the education system through parent- teachers’ associations, school committees, and boards of control or school boards or in any other manner;

(i) Consideration shall be given to suggestions and recommendations of the officially recognized teachers’ associations when planning for purposes of education.
The aim of the Education Policy Act 39 of 1967 was to intensify the distinction between the provision of education for whites and the education for blacks. By giving white parents more powers and functions in governance structures, it would ensure that the provision of education would remain discriminatory in terms of the other population groups in South Africa. The white parents embraced this initiative, while the majority of black parents experienced a deep sense of resentment against these discriminatory practices by the government. As a result, resistance against the education system by the majority of blacks was inevitable.

2.4.4 Resistance to the apartheid education system

Hendricks, (2000:62), argues that the acts mentioned in the preceding sub-section 3.3 of this chapter, largely contributed to the escalating resistance by the disadvantaged communities to the life-long injustices experienced as a result of the inequity of segregation and also the apartheid education system. Anarchy soon broke out when protesting students took to the streets. Discipline in schools became poor as violence began to dominate school environments, which also became the centres of serious crime.

The peaceful protests of the 1950s and the 1960s continued to be prominent and were subsequently accompanied by heightened and intensified mass action and strikes by black learners in the 1976s. The significance of the uprisings was that this was the first time that many high school learners had joined the resistance movement against the apartheid education system and they demanded and subsequently, established the Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at their respective schools (Hendricks 2000:62).

The 1976 riots were instrumental in bringing about a momentous turning point and made an immense impact on the governance and the provision of education for blacks. During this period, the participation of all the stakeholders in the education of
learners was a high-priority demand. The black communities demanded participation within the governance structures of schools in order to influence decisions in matters of common interest, that is, the education of their children. Unfortunately, many high schools were ungovernable at that time (Baloyi, 2002:16).

Later, parents and other role players were also given a chance to participate in the governance of schools. Consequently, according to Hendricks, (2000:63) the states' response was to pass the Education and Training Act No. 90 of 1979, which replaced all existing legislation relating to African education. Furthermore, the act made it possible for local communities to advise the Director-General on matters affecting the control and management of their schools (ETA, Section 7). This act had reservations about the maximal parent participation in governance structures. The primary role of parents in these structures was to advise the Director-General.

In terms of the South African Schools Act (1996:20), there was a conflict of roles regarding the responsibilities of parents in the governing bodies. According to this act, the responsibility of the governing body is governance, whilst the responsibility of the school managers of the school, is its management. In this regard, the governing body, will only make recommendations to the Head of the Department (who, under the previous government, was the Director-General) on, amongst others, the appointment of educators or the suspension of a learner. Overall, the black communities were dissatisfied with the powers given to them by the government.

Because of this dissatisfaction, there was a demand for more democratic governance structures. In some cases, the Student Representative Councils (SRCs) were established in many schools without the approval of the school management and were not recognised as official organs of school governance. This, of course, was not the case in all the schools where the SRCs existed. Unofficial governance structures such as the PTSAs were established more frequently under encouragement of the provincial authorities in some provinces such as Gauteng, the Eastern Transvaal and the Northern Province.
Due to the intensification of the resistance to the education system, the state appointed a Human Sciences Research Council Commission of Enquiry into education in 1981, under the chairpersonship of Prof. J.P. de Lange. This was a significant initiative on the way to educational reform. The report emphasised the necessity for participation of the whole community in education. Consequently, the De Lange Report was compiled (Hendricks 2000:64).

2.4.5 Governing bodies in community schools.

It is necessary to get a clear understanding of what community schools were and why they existed. The White Paper 2 (DoE 1996:46) defines community schools in terms of the role they played in the provision of education at the time. Community schools are public schools in the hands of the public, which owns the land as well as the assets.

However, the state has no role to play in this form of ownership. It is obligatory for the new government to ensure that the provincial department is able to provide continuity of service, open access, and a secure environment for the investment of public funds in buildings and infrastructure.

Community schools were public schools primarily founded in the former homelands. These schools were built and maintained by the community. In theory, community schools are managed by the community subject to the control of the various education departments. In the urban areas, i.e., in townships, community schools were generally built by the State (DoE 1996:46).

These schools had statutory governance structures composed of parents and were generally known as school committees. School committees had no real powers to exert over school policy but played a role in mobilising community funding in order to pay for new buildings, maintenance costs, and other running expenses.
Furthermore, they also raised funds, to employ additional teachers (mostly unqualified) (DoE 1996:21).

Traditional leaders played an important role in the governance of many rural community schools. They were responsible for allocating the land on which the school was built and controlled the collection of community funds for classroom buildings. Their positions of power often allowed them to play a decisive role when key school decisions were made, despite the existence of school committees with formal functions. The real power of the traditional leaders varied from community to community and from area-to-area depending on various historical, social, political and other factors (DoE 1996:46).

2.4.6 The Tri-Cameral Constitution and the Department of Education and Training

When the Tri-Cameral Constitution was promulgated in 1983, it classified education for Whites, Coloured, and Indians as “own affairs.” The stipulations set out in the White Paper on Education in the Republic of South Africa of 1983 were also enforced. It is important to note that Blacks were excluded from the Tri-Cameral arrangement. However, they were catered for in 1986, when the Department of Education and Training (DET) was established to provide for the educational needs of Africans living outside the homelands. The influence of the De Lange Report (Hendricks 2000:65) found its way into the 1983 White Paper.

During this period, the education system was discriminatory. The discriminatory education policies mentioned in the preceding paragraph resulted in poor parental participation in black schools. Hendricks (2000:65) contends that the state ignored some of the important recommendations of the De Lange Report. Subsequently, the South African education system consisted of nineteen separate education departments
(including the four provincial departments for white education and the independent states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei) during this era.

In white schools, parents were given an opportunity to serve on school committees and later on the management councils. Baloyi (2002:15) points out that the principal (who was regarded as the departmental representative on the ground), had considerable power when it came to decision-making, whereas, parents had no clearly-defined roles in the education of their children.

According to Baloyi (2002:16), the parents at rural schools had to rely on principals who manipulated school committees for their own material gain. Hence, the Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (DoE 1995: 98) advocated capacity-building workshops for school governing bodies.

The Department of Education (1995:27) agrees with Baloyi (2002:16), when he points out that many of the old statutory governance structures (especially in those African schools) had little legitimacy in their communities. However, alternative governance structures often had difficulty in operating effectively because of the lack of shared understanding of their roles and purpose as well as a lack of certain other important aspects. For instance, the following were lacking:

- The skills necessary for their proper functioning and for dealing with conflict with the school and department managers.
- Common legislation or a set of regulations to guide the functioning of governance structures in the various departments.
- Capacity-building programmes for those in governance structures and also for school managers

All these challenges suggested a need for alternative governance structures such the PTAs or the PTSAs and the SRCs. The majority of black schools in particular, had a
need for such structures that could address their shortcomings in terms of school governance with the aim of improving the quality of education in their schools.

2.4.7 The origin of the Parent-Teachers Associations, Parent-Teacher-Student Associations and the Student Representative Councils

The Department of Education (2003:27) emphasises that from the mid-1990s, there has been a growth of alternative school governance structures. These are known as the Parent-Teachers' Associations (PTAs), Parent-Teachers-Student Associations (PTSAs) and Student Representative Councils (SRCs). These alternative governance structures were closely associated with the National Co-ordinating (formerly crisis) Committees (NCCs) because of their intense participation and passionate interest in establishing these governance structures.

From the outset, these structures were perceived to be part of a drive to develop a new and more democratic system of education, which would empower all participants in the education process. Furthermore, it would create an institutional crisis for the government, which was not prepared to include all the respective participants. The point of departure was based on recognising that the masses could not be adequately addressed without the participation of all the affected parties.

The Department of Education (2003:27) states that a number of PTAs and PTSAs were not only established in many schools, especially, at African schools, but also in various Coloured and Indian schools as well. These schools were confronted by various challenges regarding the functioning of these structures such as:

- Hostility from the authorities'
- Lack of clarity regarding their roles’
- Lack of skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their functions competently.
Nevertheless, the PTAs, PTSAs and SRCs have continued to exist and have played an important role particularly in crisis management and conflict resolution in the schools during the past decade. Widespread support for the structures under the new conditions has also continued and the principles, on which they were based, were accepted by the White Paper on Education and Training.

Two of these principles are the following:

- The participation of parents, teachers and learners in secondary schools.
- School governance structures with significant powers.

However, continuing dissatisfaction was experienced by Africans, who founded a progressive movement by the name of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee Hendricks (2000:66). This committee was later transformed into the National Education Crisis Committee and subsequently, the National Education Crisis Coordinating Committee (NECC) that was established in 1986.

One of the objectives of the NECC was to obtain community control over schools, hence its call to the government “to hand over the control and management of schools to the community.” A call for the establishment of PTAs, PTSAs and SRCs in secondary schools was subsequently made by the NECC (Lamola 1996:23).

In the rural areas, such structures were not as effective as expected, Baloyi (2002:16), ascribes this lack of effectiveness to the fact that the role players were uninformed about the roles they had to play. This situation placed parents at a disadvantage as principals could easily take advantage of the situation. Added to this was the fact that parents felt unprepared and ill equipped for their roles; a perception that can be attributed to the lack of clear guidelines on how they should operate in the associations.
2.4.8 The pre-democratic period.

The outcome of the initiatives discussed in the preceding section, was an increase in parental power, which resulted in more white private schools opening their doors to black learners. Increased pressure was also exerted on the government to open up all schools to all learners.

Hendricks (2000:67), indicates that the Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly), 1988 (Act No. 70 of 1988) (RSA: 1988), increased parental power by giving white school management councils the power and the right to decide who may or may not use the school's facilities. During this period, the African National Congress and its allies were engaged in preparations in anticipation of the ANC's assumption of power after the democratic elections, while the former government pursued educational reform initiatives in South Africa.

The initiative of the former government resulted in the introduction of the three new education models, namely, models A, B and C in 1990. The model system allowed white schools to admit “non-white learners” to white schools if white parents agreed to it. In the following year, 1991, the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) was formulated in order to deregulate the discriminative education system and finally, there was the launching of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), which focussed on government and administration (Ndlazi 1999:102).

2.4.9 The democratic period and transformation in education

The promulgation of South African's new interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1993 (Act No. 2000 of 1993) contained the Bill of Rights, which opened up opportunities for changes in South Africa, also with regard to education legislation (Hendricks 2000:76). In 1994, the newly democratically elected
Government of National Unity (GNU) published two white papers on education, which ushered in the schools' act.

The South African Schools Bill, which emanated from the two white papers, was promulgated in 1996. This draft Schools Bill proposed amongst others, alterations to the rights, powers and functions of public schools' governing bodies (Hendricks 2000:76).

Ultimately, the South African Schools Act was gazetted on 15 November 1996 and implemented on 1 January 1997. This act makes provision for the establishment of school governing bodies, while Section 20 of this act grants the school governing bodies' powers and responsibilities to contribute towards the education of their children (Baloyi 2000:15).

In contrast with the school committees, PTAs and PTSAs, Mabasa and Themane (2002:112), states that the SGBs have statutory powers and are therefore regarded as “legal or juristic persons” (RSA 1996a:14) Currently, SGBs operate in South African public schools. This new form of governance is democratic, representative, accountable and responsible. Section 16 of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996a:14), clearly states that the school governing body of a school functions within a relationship of trust with the school. In other words, the governing body is expected to act in good faith, to carry out its duties and functions on behalf of a school and also be accountable for its actions.

2.4.10 Summary

This section explains how the majority of South Africans, particularly the blacks (in other words, Africans, Coloureds and Indians) have opposed the divided, unequal and discriminatory system of education. This resistance manifested itself in various forms
through the period stretching from the apartheid era until the democratic era in 1994 when the GNU came into power.

It was during this period that education was under serious scrutiny. To this effect, the resistance not only focussed on defying the discriminatory education policies but also on forging parental participation through governance structures like the PTAs, the PTSAs and the SRCs. It is important to mention that it was the National Crisis Co-ordinating Committee that made politically focussed participation possible.

The engagement of communities with the educational authorities led to the establishment of school committees, school boards or management councils, which were aimed at improving parental participation in schools in various communities. Although these structures had no real power to influence school policies; they played a role in mobilising community funding to pay for new buildings and maintain the grounds. However, they did have a great deal of power regarding decision-making on governance issues. This need for enlisting greater parental participation was reduced during the pre-democratic era when parental power increased and white private schools opened their doors to black learners (DoE 1995:22).

Increased pressure was exerted on the government to open more schools to all learners. During this period, the African National Congress and its allies were engaged in preparations in anticipation of its assumption of power after the democratic elections, while the former government pursued the educational reform initiative in South Africa (Hendricks 2000:63).

In 1994, the new, democratically elected Government of National Unity (GNU) published two white papers on education, which ushered in the school's act, named the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996. This act provides for the establishment of school governing bodies, while section 20 of the act grants school governing bodies the rights, powers and responsibilities to contribute to the education the learners.
2.5 ESTABLISHMENT OF FARM SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.5.1 Introduction

It is relevant to find out how the provinces inherited the farm school system from the pre-democratic South Africa. Another important area to explore from a national perspective is the reasons for the establishment of farm schools. It is therefore necessary to look at the role played by stakeholders in sustaining farm schools. Gordon (1991:3) reports that the farm school system existed in terms of the Bantu Education Act, (Act of 1953) (RSA 1953). It made provision for the establishment of state-aided schools, of which farm schools form a part. It is important to note that many farm schools catered for black learners who lived on white-owned farms or private property.

The primary purpose for the establishment of farm schools was to control the influx of black youth to the towns in accordance with the apartheid ideology. The educational system for black learners living on white-owned farms must also be looked at in the context of the social economic relations characterising agricultural production, the transformation of farm schools and the fact that the transformation of farm schools depends upon political and economic changes (Gordon 1991:3-6).

2.5.2 Emergence of farm schools in South Africa

Gordon (1991:1) points out that the farm school system that was primarily under the church’s control, originated during a period of struggle between the independent black peasant farmers and the largely poverty-stricken white rural community for dominance in agricultural production. At this stage, the state attempted to forge a white-supremacist economy in the rural areas, which developed into the struggle over land labour. The outcome of this struggle was the appropriation of the labour of women and children.
Gordon (1991:2) focusses on the discriminatory nature of the educational provision in rural “white” South Africa, when he indicates that in 1988, the state’s per capita expenditure for farm school pupils was less than half the amount spent on their peers in the townships and a tenth of the amount spent on white state school pupils.

The system of farm schools, according to Gordon, (1991:3), was created in terms of the Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953) (RSA 1953). This act made provision for the establishment of state-aided schools, of which the farm schools formed a part. There were also a small number of state-aided schools at factories, mines or hospitals. Property owners and the state distinguished between farm schools and public schools in terms of the dual management of the schools.

The majority of farm schools cater for black children living on white-owned farms or private property, although in the Cape there are a number of farm schools for coloured children. The farmers were in control of the farm schools. Some of the functions included the ones highlighted in section 1 of this chapter. They are the following:

- Control the admission of learners.
- Advise the department of the teachers to be appointed.
- Control and discharge teachers.
- Close the school.
- Control the subsidisation of the school and control school funds (DoE 1995)

2.5.3 Purpose of farm schools in South Africa

The motive for establishing farm schools was to curb the flow of black youth to the towns in accordance with the apartheid ideology at that time (Gordon 1991:3). The educational system for black pupils living on white-owned farms must also be examined in the context of the social and economic relations characterising
agricultural production. It must be pointed out that the transformation of farm schools depends upon political and economic changes (Gordon 1991:6).

The Education White Paper 2 (DoE 1996:45), states explicitly that the situation of public schools on private property represents a special case. The farm school system is part of the Verwoerdian ideal of a school on every farm, which was aimed at improving the agricultural production capacity of South Africa, which lagged behind that of its international counterparts. This system was devised to create a supportive educational system to ensure that learners who wished to follow an agricultural career acquired the requisite education and skills to meet the aim of improving the agricultural production capacity.

The previous farm school system experienced a high dropout rate, limited provision of schooling at secondary level and a lack of resources to implement an appropriate curriculum, which made it extremely difficult to meet the expected demands. The preceding assertion is proved by Gordon (1991:1), who emphasises the fact that the inequitable distribution and under-provision of resources on farm schools contribute to the above-mentioned dilemma. This situation was exacerbated in certain instances, by the unlimited powers that the property owner had (DoE 1995:20).

**2.5.4 Operation of farm schools in South Africa**

The challenges regarding farm are indicative of the fact that the provision of education must be integrated and rationalised at district level in order to optimise resources. The multi-grade classes in these farm schools also present a logistical nightmare for the department, which has a constitutional responsibility to provide in the educational needs of all learners. As result of these factors, the Review Committee contended that it would be preferable for arrangements to be made to effect the transfer of the land and assets of farm schools to the state (Sayed 1997, 95).
The above-mentioned challenges were underplayed by the Government of National Unity, when it came into power in 1994, in an attempt to deny their importance. At that time, the country was divided into nine provinces and the Limpopo Province was one of them, then known as the Northern Province. The South African Schools Act was promulgated during this time when farm schools received public school status. In contrast with the previous apartheid acts, section 20 of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996a:14), gave the governing bodies of all schools, including farm schools, more power and responsibilities.

Another special feature of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996a:34), is its support of the expropriation of the land upon which farm schools have been erected, which will guarantee the control, access to and use of farm schools for educational purposes. Negotiations between the property owner and the department of education involved, must be carried out when the state wants to acquire a farm school.

The land that might be needed for public use such as the construction of a public school or a new thoroughfare can be taken from the owners by expropriation whether the owner wants to sell it or not. Nonetheless, they are usually paid compensation. In the sake of public interest, the MEC, in terms of section 58 of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996a:34), may announce that the state may expropriate the land for any purpose relating to school education in a particular province (Mothata 2000:134).

2.5.5 Summary

Section 2.5 explains how farm schools came into being in South Africa. Gordon (1991:1) highlights the fact that the farm school system was formerly primarily under the control of the church. This system; originated during an era of struggle between the independent black peasants farmers and the largely poverty-stricken white rural community for dominance in agricultural production.
The purpose of farm schools in South Africa according to Gordon (1991:3) was to control the flow of black youth to the towns, which was in accordance with the apartheid ideology at that time. The apartheid system of education was aimed at creating an opportunity for learners who wished to follow an agricultural career to acquire skills that would improve the agricultural production capacity of the country.

2.6 INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN FARM SCHOOLS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Stakeholder involvement in farm schools in the Limpopo Province is indispensable because of the value of its contribution to the education of learners in the community and the welfare of the school. For the successful running of a school, it is essential that it should be a joint venture between the school and all the stakeholders. The Constitution, Act No. 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996b:25), explains the importance of the principle of cooperative governance clearly.

This act encourages the involvement of stakeholders in the education of learners in a school (Sayed and Carrim 1995:95). In the following section, the stakeholders that are part of or closely involved with the school, will be discussed. A number of primary stakeholders have been identified, namely, parents, educators, support staff, learners, the property owner, community, business and non-governmental organisations.

2.6.1 Parents

A “parent” according to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:4), refers to the following:

- The parent or guardian of a learner.
• The person legally entitled to custody of learner.
• The person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a parent regarding the learner's education at school.

Section 3(1) of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:4), expects parents to play a central role in the education of their children. Parents as key role-players have widespread responsibilities to:

• Make sure that their children attend school regularly.
• Provide for the educational needs of the child.
• Pay school fees.
• Attend parents' meetings and evenings, amongst others.
• Choose the best and most suitable educational institution for the child.

According to the above prescriptions, a parent lawfully carries the responsibility of making sure that the child goes to school and performs all the duties expected of him/her. Amongst other duties, Visser (1997: 628), points out that the parent has an obligation to ensure that a child attends school from the first day when he/she reaches school-going age. The ages for compulsory schooling range between six when the child starts grade one and fifteen years when the child is in grade nine. Any parent, who has no reasonable grounds and after written notice from the Head of Department in a particular province has been delivered to him, fails to comply with the abovementioned duty, is guilty of an offence.

The involvement of a parent in the governing body is one of the roles he/she can fulfil. The South African Schools Act encourages parents to participate in school governing body activities. The parents as role-players in the education of their children need to make meaningful contributions and make the right decisions in the best interests of the child. In order to attain this objective, proper parents’ meetings need to be arranged with the assistance of the principal. These meetings will help to
ensure that valuable and constructive input is solicited from parents (Visser 1997:633).

2.6.2 Educators

Mothata (2000:59) defines an educator as any person who teaches, educates or trains persons at an educational institution or assists in offering educational services like the auxiliary or support services provided in an education department. According to him, the term 'educator' is often used interchangeably with the term 'teacher.' It refers to someone who works within a parameter where his/her role is to offer advice to the parents on school matters and other related issues focussed on the learning experiences of learners entrusted to him/her.

It is therefore, the obligation of parents to protect the interests of the child and nurture his/her potential with the assistance of the educator who has the necessary professional skills and expertise. Matalatsi (2000:67) explains how difficult it is in practice, for parents to meet these obligations, because most of them are tired when they return home late from work. The educators are therefore, mainly responsible for taking care of the learners. Some parents ignore their obligatory tasks since they feel too inadequate to deal with educational matters, because of their low educational levels. Consequently, they hope and trust that the educators will do everything on their behalf (Sallis 1995:11).

2.6.3 Support staff

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a:4), defines a support staff member explicitly as a member of staff who is not an educator and is elected to sit in on the SGB meetings. Support staff according to the act, can be administrative personnel member/s or general assistant/s in the school. Only one democratically elected member from the support staff, who is elected by other support staff members, will represent them as part of the SGB. In contrast with what happened the
past, members of the support staff now have a democratic right to participate in school governing body activities. They also have the responsibility of contributing to the welfare of the school just as their teaching counterparts do, even though only one delegate within the governing body represents them (Potgieter 1997:24).

Most farm schools in the specific circuits of the Limpopo Province do not have support staff. As discussed in the preceding paragraph, one delegate will represent these members of the support staff on the governing body. With regard to the majority of farm schools in these specific circuits, where support staff are not available, this aspect will not apply to them, and they will therefore, not be represented (Northern Province Department of Education 2000:8).

### 2.6.4 Learners

Mothata (2000: 94) defines a learner as any person, ranging from early childhood development to the adult phases, that is involved in any kind of formal or non-formal education and training activity, and who receives or is obliged to receive education. According to the Snap Survey of 2003 in the Nylstroom Circuit in the Limpopo Province, only two farm schools have grades above grade seven and therefore qualify to have a representative council for learners (RCL) which has a stake in matters pertaining to their own education. However, the enrolment in these schools is low. It is expected of these learners to participate in the democratic process of having representative council of learners’ elections.

The elected learners will form part of the school governing body. It is of concern, however, to note that the level of parent participation is low in general, in most schools. A principal from one of the two schools (mentioned in the first paragraph of sub-section 3.4), indicated that his school has not had a proper school governing body for many years. At one stage, the principal and two members of the representative council for learners (RCL) supported this school governing body.
Ndlazi, (1999:73) explains how parents in the rural areas, recently began to share the governing body meetings with learners. Ndlazi, (1999:74), indicates that according to the Black (Xhosa) culture, parents feel that a child is supposed to accept as correct what a parent tells him/her. Conservative parents find it difficult to abide by the principles of democracy and transformation within the governing body's activities in this regard.

It is clear that the type of parents referred to above by Ndlazi (1999:74), need empowerment and capacity-building workshops. At those workshops, parents will receive training in the formulation and the adoption of the learners' codes of conduct, which include the limitation of the RCL's participation within the governing body (Beckman 1999:157). Section 32 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:22), sets a number of limitations regarding the learners’ participation in governing body meetings and also outlines the duties of a minor in a governing body.

It states that for a learner to become part of the governing body, he/she must be elected democratically and must be in the eighth grade or higher. In terms of the act, a minor is a person under the age of eighteen. It makes it clear that a minor cannot conclude a contract on behalf of the school, or vote on motions that can be a liability to a third party or the school. Finally, a minor cannot be held personally liable for any consequences that may result from his or her membership of the governing body.

2.6.5 The property owner

The South African Schools Act (RSA 1996a:14), states that the property owner or his nominated representative may be co-opted to the school governing body. The property owner is the one who is the best-positioned to contribute to the provision of education to children on his property. He can provide much-needed resource materials to make teaching and learning in his school successful (Oosthuizen
He can also assist with the provision of basic services to the school, such as water and electricity.

Most of the owners of the farms on which the farm schools in this study situated in the Limpopo Province, find it tiresome and too demanding to provide these basic services and blame the Department of Education for not taking care of these farm schools. In terms of Section 58 of SASA (Act No. 84 of 1996), the state may expropriate the land that the school occupies. These farm owners have so far avoided the expropriation of the school premises by the Department of Education.

When farm school principals and property owners of these farm schools are interviewed on the expropriation of the land occupied by the school, fears such the following are raised:

“If the school land is expropriated for public use, it means that the property owner will have less control over people coming into the school. The school will admit ‘bad’ learners from townships that will later cause trouble on the farm.”

The above statement makes it clear how challenging it is for farm schools in the Limpopo Province to have effective and functional school governing bodies. In many instances, the property owner merely assists with minor issues such as offering the principal his/her telephone to call the circuit office or make an emergency call, collecting post when he (the property owner) goes to town, to cite only a few examples. (A discussion with a farm school principal from a specific farm school in the Limpopo Province 2004/02/13).

2.6.6 Community

A community includes every individual, irrespective of religion, colour or creed, in the same residential area (Hornby 1998: 233). The responsibility of the community is to give the school governing body a mandate to propagate the values and norms it
cherishes. With regard to these devastated farm communities, such mandates are in vain, as the school is isolated from the community. In these instances, learners are liable to experience social problems because of their isolation. Sayed and Carrim (1997:95) state that the community is defined in diverse ways (territorial, religious, ethnic and political) and people in South Africa accept the challenges that have been identified in the field of community education axiomatically. The community must therefore participate in education. The term ‘community’ in this regard signifies common and shared aspects of human interaction, thus the notion of community participation has both emotional and popular appeal.

This appeal is the outcome of society’s fragmentation along the lines of class, race, gender and emotionality. Therefore, it is difficult to sustain an unqualified commitment to community participation in the education system. It is for this reason that Sayed and Carrim (1997:95) recommend that school governance structures should ensure that the school should reflect the community in which it is located and serves.

Lamola, (1996:22), concurs with the above by indicating that the governing body is accountable to the community it serves. It is therefore essential for the governing body to co-opt members of the community with special expertise to serve on the governing body. The South African Schools Act (RSA 1996a:14) clearly indicates that co-opted members do not need to have children in the school in order to qualify to serve on the school governing body, but they do not have voting rights.

The school governing body has an obligation to draw up a constitution for the school in which community values and norms are reflected. Potgieter (1997:29), points out that the governing body and its constituents must be in line with the Constitution of South Africa, the Schools Act and any other applicable law in the province. Of importance is the fact that there are fundamental values within the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that should not be compromised when drafting the school's constitution. These fundamental values are as follows:
• Respect for human dignity
• Non-racialism and non-sexism
• Applicability of the rule of law
• A multi-party system of democratic government, accountability and openness.

2.6.7 Business and non-governmental organisations

The business sector contributes substantially to the upliftment of education in the previously disadvantaged communities. Companies identify schools in these communities, which they then sponsor. Amongst others, they donate resources based on the needs of such schools (Mabasa 2002: 112).

Farm schools in the Limpopo Province, cannot attract such sponsors since companies are not willing to invest in schools on private property. The Limpopo Province is mainly a rural area; whilst most large companies are situated far away in the cities. Undoubtedly, many schools in the townships will benefit from the sponsorships they receive from these companies in the cities.

2.6.8 Summary

This section reflected on the reason for the establishment of farm schools and the importance of stakeholder participation, which is fundamental for the success of schools and the education of the learners. The focus was on how the farm schools tried to curb the migration of black youth in particular, to towns in order to receive a better education. The separate development policies promoted the farm school education system and legislation in this regard ensured high quality education for the white minority; while the majority of blacks received education of an inferior quality.
Stakeholders who can also be referred to as role-players, continue to be engaged in different roles at different levels and in different ways. The term ‘role-player’ is more appropriate in the sense that it puts greater emphasis on participation. The various stakeholders have to contribute according to their various areas of competency. In this regard, the role of the parent in the family is to ensure that his/her child gets a proper education and to provide in his/her the primary needs. Parents and educators alike impart knowledge and skills to the learner.

Learners are at the centre of the teaching and learning situation. It is in this situation where formal education takes place. For this reason, learner participation in their own learning must take place. Learners should therefore participate in school governing activities; hence the need for the existence of the Representative Council of Learners. Learner support may take various forms, for instance, the business community may provide sponsorships, the support staff can provide safety and security for the premises, the property owner's responsibility is to ensure the availability of much needed resources, while the government’s role is to provide basic education to all learners.

2.7 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

With reference to the duties of the school governing bodies, Mabasa and Themane (2002: 112) maintain that stakeholder participation in the governance of schools in the Limpopo Province still poses daunting challenges. School governing bodies face challenges such as the lack of preparation for the new SGBs before they assumed their roles, unfamiliarity with meeting procedures, the use of English in meetings, managing the large volumes of paperwork, lack of knowledge of the appropriate legislation, not knowing how to make a contribution, to name only a few. A compounding problem which Frasen (1994:17) points out, is the fact that because males are often in the majority on school boards, they generally play a dominant role at board meetings.
Mabasa and Themane (2002:115) reveal in their research that decisions were taken undemocratically at meetings. Furthermore, the principal and teachers dominated all the other participants. In addition, there were also differences and contradictions in the acceptance and application of government policy by various school governors that can be attributed to negative attitudes towards the policy, inaccessibility of documents due to the illiteracy of stakeholders and the policy materials, which are written in a unfamiliar language to them (Matalasi 2000: 62).

In the rural schools, the SGBs are constituted in accordance with policy stipulations, but Matalasi, (2000: 67), indicates that parents are constrained as far as time is concerned. They do not have enough time to participate in school issues. An interviewee in Matalasi (2000: 67) voiced the following complaints:

“My boss needs to be informed in time with a formal letter, containing the signature of the chairperson together with that of the secretary of the SGB. Then I can attend and join others at the SGB meetings and activities, but I will lose my salary for that period.”

The South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:18), recommends that the property owner or his representative should participate actively in school governing body activities. The reason for his/her participation is that he/she is a co-opted member of the governing body who must support the school in its general needs and interest. The citation in the preceding paragraph highlights that there is no cooperation between the school and the property owner. If the property owner were an active participant in the activities of the governing body, he/she would have a good understanding of the activities of the governing body. The following paragraph discusses the factors influencing the performance of governing bodies in the Limpopo Province.
2.8 POSSIBLE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

2.8.1 Introduction

Section 20 of SASA No.84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:14), lists a number of duties to be performed by the governing bodies of schools. However, it must be noted that there are a number of factors influencing the performance of school governing bodies. Some of the factors affecting the extent to which participation in school governance takes place, particularly in selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province, are the socio-economic status of the parents, the educational background and the political environment in the province, (Mabasa and Themane 2000: 113)

2.8.2 Distance

Matalasi (2000:61) explains how distance has a negative influence on the performance of the governing body. He emphasises the fact that the school depends on learners to deliver invitations inviting their parents/ guardians to the school governing body meetings. Only those who are near the school have the advantage of receiving invitations in time and are able to attend meetings as scheduled.

Invitations cannot reach members in time because the school is under resourced, while the school governing body members are incapacitated (Matalasi 2000:62). Baloyi (2002:69) agrees with Matalasi (2000:67) regarding the statement made about the lack of commitment amongst the governing bodies of rural schools.

The long distances the school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province have to travel to meetings makes it difficult for parents to attend meetings and deal with other matters affecting their children's education. Baloyi (2002:72), goes on to state that because of the long distances to be covered, the
department of education officials also find it difficult to visit all the schools in their respective circuits in the rural areas to provide the necessary training.

### 2.8.3 Socio-economic status of parents

The parents in the farming areas of the Limpopo Province are mainly labourers with low-income jobs. Ndlazi (1999: 84), considers the socio-economic status of parents, amongst other factors, to be the prime reason for their non- involvement in their children's education. Furthermore, she adds that these parents feel intimidated by educators because of their lack of finance, which will affect the way the governing bodies function.

Ndlazi (1999:71), also associates poor participation in school governing body activities with a lack of finance by parents. It is felt that the monetary contributions demanded by the school are beyond the reach of most parents. Whenever a meeting is called, it involves extra costs, therefore, the majority of parents will not attend because of the various reasons that Baloyi (2002:75) has given. In addition, no financial report is given to the parents by the school governing body of the farm schools in the Limpopo Province, as it cannot draw up a financial policy for the school and lacks a formal budget. Baloyi (2002:76) emphasises that this situation is far worse in the rural or farm areas where the level of illiteracy is high.

### 2.8.4 Low learner enrolment.

Most farm schools experience low enrolment figures, particularly certain farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The Department of Education is initiating a move to merge some schools with low enrolment figures; while schools close to the town will be relocated to the townships. In one instance, it was recommended that two of these schools situated on neighbouring farms, should be merged because of low enrolment figures. It was an attempt to merge a “white” school, and a “black” school.
However, the merger failed because the resistance it received was based on racial differences. The low learner enrolment signifies that there are few families on farms. This factor has a negative impact on the formation of properly constituted school governing bodies. If school governing bodies are not properly constituted in terms of the conditions laid out in the South African Schools Act, it will be difficult for that governing body to exercise its powers and fulfil its functions effectively and efficiently (Potgieter 1997:4)

2.8.5 Educational background of parents on farms.

According to Beckman, (1999: 168), parents have an obligation to carry out their responsibilities successfully without any exceptions. Failure by the parents to carry out this obligation will have a negative impact on the child's learning. However, in practice, it is difficult for parents to meet these obligations because of their extremely limited educational qualifications as Matalasi (2000: 67) points out.

As mentioned before, the parents in the farming areas who are labourers with low-incomes are not well educated and are poorly skilled. Ndlazi (1999: 63) postulates that the illiteracy of parents is one of the prime negative factors contributing to parental non-involvement in school governance. She asserts further that because the educators are better educated, they believe they can contribute the most to meetings. Ndlazi (1993: 63) reports that in an interview with one of the parents, the following was revealed:

Jack's perception is that some parents and guardians have not gone beyond grade four or five at school. He believes that some teachers are prisoners of their own thinking, and think only the educated can make a valid suggestion or solve a problem. As a result of this thinking, teachers do not involve parents because they think that it is only they (the teachers) who are knowledgeable enough to govern the school. When parents come to school, they are made aware of their illiteracy. Consequently, the parents are not willing to participate in school matters. (Ndlazi 1999: 63)
Mabasa and Themane (2002:114) discovered the same challenges in the farm schools in the Limpopo Province where he conducted his research. It was found that parents had difficulties coping with the paperwork, as well as with the interpretation and implementation of the policies. On the whole, these challenges pertaining to school governance impact negatively on the participation of stakeholders in the school governing body's activities, and this results in the non-compliance with the provisions of the national policy (Mabasa and Themane 2002:114).

2.8.6 Political environment in the farming communities

Transformation at farm schools in most of the farm school circuits in the greater part of the Limpopo Province is still far from satisfactory. In some instances, discrimination and resistance to change still prevails in most farm schools within the province. Black parents, who are primarily labourers, are prevented from participating in governing body matters because of their irregular and abnormally long working hours and conditions. This factor makes it extremely difficult for parents to take responsibility for the education of their children. Ndlazi (1999:62) alludes to the vicious circle in which parents find themselves, in this manner: “The parents find themselves in a catch-twenty-two situation, where they have to choose between work that would yield a salary to meet the needs of their families and attending school activities.”

Ndlazi (1999:96) concludes by remarking that parents (though not by choice) will always put their work first and become uninvolved parents.

2.8.7 Financial management

Section 37 (1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:24) states that the governors of a public school must establish a school fund and administer it in accordance with the directions the Head of the Department. Ndlazi (1999:95) shows
that the lack of finance is a serious obstacle that impedes the progress of the school. Parents working on the farms earn meagre salaries and this inhibits their participation.

It is important to point out that it is difficult to build up the adequate school funds envisaged by the South African Schools Act. The responsibility for managing the extremely limited school funds is left in the hands of the school principal. (Gordon 1991:1) acknowledges that this situation is the outcome of the Bantu Education Act of 1953. The state's per capita expenditure on farm schools per pupil was less than half the amount spent on their peers in the townships and a tenth of the amount spent on white state pupils (Gordon 1991:1).

2.8.8 Development of governance

Baloyi (2002:69) insists that the Department of Education should provide personnel to provide training for the school governing bodies' members of farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The education department's inability to make adequate training opportunities and workshops available for school governing bodies remains a major obstacle in the development of governance in schools. Mabasa and Themane (2000:112) also feel that the training of the school governing bodies is crucial.

This training is necessary to acquaint school governing bodies with meeting procedures, to manage paperwork and to make a positive contribution to the meeting with confidence, to mention only a few of the aspects that they need to know more about. Research conducted by Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004: 274), reveals that there is a correlation between parental participation in governing body activities and the poor of provision of training by the Department of Training. The Department of Education provides brief training for the school governing body, which usually consists of a one-day workshop.
The Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (DoE 1995:98), recommends that school governing bodies need clear information regarding their basic powers and functions. The workshops are necessary to inform them about the implications of these powers and functions, procedures of meetings and some aspects of the regular administrative procedures like record-keeping, budgeting, financial control and staff selection and recommendations for the appointment of educators.

2.8.9 Working conditions

Ndlazi (1995:75) illustrates the difficulties and frustrations faced by parent-labourers regarding participation in school activities. For parent-labourers, serving on the school governing bodies is practically impossible due to their abnormal working hours. This challenge has a negative effect on parental participation in the education of their children, as well as their much-needed support. If the parents of learners at these farm schools in the Limpopo Province cannot attend to the educational issues of their children because of adverse working conditions, then the school could face problems with the discipline and attendance of learners, amongst others (Creese 1995:14).

The report of the committee reviewing the organisation, governance and funding of schools (RSA1995:20) indicates that amongst other things, that unsupportive farmers or farm managers exacerbate these unfavourable situations. The South African Schools Act stipulates that the farm owner or manager or a nominated delegate forms part of the school governing body as a co-opted member. This implies that the farm owner or his delegate should cooperate with school governing bodies in all matters related to education. Therefore, it is imperative for farmers with schools on their property to take a leading role in this regard. However, in practice some farm owners are reluctant to assume this essential role.
The working conditions on farms in the Limpopo Province make it very difficult, if not impossible for farm workers (and even farm owners to a certain extent) to participate in school affairs (Ndlazi, 1999:96). Elected parents cannot participate fully in school governing body activities due to work-related commitments and the long distances they have to travel to the school in order to attend meetings.

Matalatsi (2000: 67) also agrees that farm parents have a demanding work schedule, particularly in summer. The principal will therefore run the risk of running the school without a proper mandate from the parents of learners in the school. Mabasa and Themane (2000: 115) declare that there should be a strong personal relationships with parents, because this could ensure a positive attitude towards the school and the development of a productive school governing body.

2.8.10 Summary

The factors mentioned in this section have a negative effect on the performance of school governing bodies.. Although there are other unfavourable factors that affect the performance of school governing bodies, they are not mentioned in this section. The identified factors are the ones that are relevant to the situation in farm schools, in particular.

It is clear that the long distances travelled to school by the school governing body members have a negative influence on parental involvement in school governing bodies. The fact that farm parents live far from the school, hampers their attendance of SGB meetings, because they cannot afford to pay for public transport and the school with its meagre funds cannot reimburse their travelling expenses.

Other logistical reasons include the educational background of the school governing body members, which makes it difficult for these members to cope with the numerous documents they are expected to read, understand and implement the contents. The
majority of the members are labourers on the farms that are under the control of farm owners or property owners and/or their representatives.

Under such circumstances, parents may not be able to participate wholeheartedly in the school governing body because of the fact that for the farm owner productivity is extremely important, which implies the application of the “no work no pay” principle. Therefore, it is realised that these factors can definitely have an adverse effect on the performance of school governing bodies.

2.9 CONCLUSION

Inclusive parental participation proved to be necessary in the apartheid era. Structures such as management councils or school committees governed schools and in the process they excluded other stakeholders such as educators, learners, and co-opted members of the community, to name only a few. In contrast, the SASA recommends that each public school should have a governing body that is representative of all the role-players.

During the political riots of the 1980s, initiatives were started that were aimed at moving towards an inclusive and participatory system when PTSAs were established. This initiative led to the passing of the South African Schools Act of 1996 that resulted in an inclusive system of governance (Mabasa and Themane 2002:112).

The post-apartheid institutions, in particular, certain farm schools in the Limpopo Province, still face challenges in school governance areas. Amongst other challenges faced by these institutions, parental non-involvement in school governance matters is one of the most-pressing problems. There are, of course, a number of factors influencing parental non-involvement such as the low socio-economic status of parents, the educational background of parents on the farms and other work-related commitments (Matalasi 2000:62).
Hendricks, (2000:61) calls attention to the impact of a long history of apartheid and other forms of unfair discrimination on education, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs. In the past, different forms of unequal schooling and education based on ethnicity, race and colour were the norm. As part of the democratic process set in motion after the 1994 elections and the institution of an all-inclusive system of governance, the purpose of the democratic election of the governing bodies is to transform school governance. Consequently, the task of school governing bodies is to:

- Perform all the specific functions set out by the South African Schools Act, pertaining to governing bodies
- Develop policies for the school, oversee and maintain control over the development of the institution.
- Bring about development based on trust and respect between role-players.

However, this does not mean that the governing body must run the school on a day-to-day basis. Its task is to govern and not to manage the school. In order to describe how this research was carried out, the next chapter will focus on the empirical research design and the methods used in this research to obtain the data needed to answer the research questions.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

The previous chapter dealt with the literature review. In this chapter, the focus will be on the empirical research design and methodology. Mothata (2000:145) and White (2003:42) both describe the research design as a plan for selecting subjects, sites for research and the data collection strategies in order to enable the researcher to answer the research question(s). This plan can be referred to as the structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to find a solution to the research problem.

According to White (2003:42), “design” is a concept that describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained. In other words, the design indicates how the research is set up: what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used.

This research made use of qualitative research methodology. As part of the qualitative research methodology, the following data collection techniques were used, namely, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This chapter describes the observation of the meeting procedures of the school governing bodies, the interviews with selected participants on the general governance of schools, as well as the results of scrutinising their documents and record keeping procedures.
3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

3.2.1 Introduction

A qualitative approach is used in this study as a preferred research method. Hoberg (1999:25) clearly characterises qualitative research design as a procedure which is a part of the investigation used to obtain evidence to solve the research problem. This design should describe the methods for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data is gathered.

The research problem in this study pertains to the assessment of the performance of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The participants were therefore members of school governing bodies specifically from the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. There are only a few farm schools in the Limpopo Province and some are becoming non-functional as most of the farm labourers move to the informal settlements in the townships where they are offered low cost houses. As there is a lack of literature about the governing bodies of farm schools and the Waterberg District has a number of schools of this type; this district was therefore identified for this research.

3.2.2 Ethical accountability

Ethical accountability is an essential component of all research. Strydom (2000, in White 2003: 84) defines the concept “ethics” as:

Ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.
Mestry (2006:30) points out that behavioural expectations include ethical standards such as confidentiality, participants’ anonymity, voluntary participation as well as honesty in reporting.

In this study, permission was obtained from all the participants as well as from the various stakeholders. All parties were informed of the aims of the research project, the research methods that were to be used and the possible publication of results. In addition, they were given a guarantee regarding the confidentiality of any information divulged by them and they were assured that their anonymity would be respected. The participants were also given an option to withdraw from participating in the research project whenever they felt uncomfortable during the process.

The participants in this research project were predominantly parents from disadvantaged communities that are relevant for this research. Because of their background, they had to be reassured regarding their safety and that the outcome of this research would not lead to their victimisation by the farm owners or managers. Every effort was made to clarify details about which there were any uncertainties. Therefore, Wax (1971, in McMillan and Schumacher 1993:383) recommends that the researcher must establish rapport, trust and reciprocal relations with the individuals and groups to be observed.

3.2.3 Sampling procedures

The type of sampling design followed in this study is purposeful. Accordingly, the respondents that were selected for this project were the school governing body members who were currently serving on the structure. Members of the school governing body came from schools in the Nylstroom Circuit under the Waterberg District.
White (2003:58) distinguishes between single stage sampling design and multiple stage sampling design. The single-stage sampling design is applied when the researcher has access to names in the population and can sample the people directly. In multi-stage sampling design, the researcher first samples groups or organisations (or clusters), obtains names of individuals within each group or cluster and then samples within the cluster.

Ten of these selected farm schools are situated in the Waterberg District in the Nylstroom Circuit. The research techniques followed entailed the observation of certain aspects pertaining to the participants in their various settings such as meeting procedures, attendance of meetings and the nature and extent of their participation during meetings. Observations and document analysis were conducted in five randomly selected schools from the group of schools on which the focus fell. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the members of the school governing body irrespective of whether they were illiterate or semi-literate.

The Nylstroom Circuit has about twenty schools but the sample was limited to ten of those schools. The respondents in this study represented the respective groups of school governing members, educators and principals from the selected schools. Support staff component was not included since these farm schools did not have this component. The broader parents’ body in the various school governing bodies was included in the research. This ensured that the research is more representative as it covers a reasonable area in the circuit. The topic itself clearly indicates that the specific area covered is the farming area.

White (2003:58) describes a sample as a group of subjects or situations selected from a larger population. When writing the research proposal or dissertation, the researcher is supposed to specify the characteristics of the population and the sampling procedure.
3.2.4 Research participants

Since it had been planned that ten farm schools would be included in the study and at least five respondents from each school were expected to take part, this meant that the total number of participants would be a maximum of fifty people.

The participants in this research were the educators, parents of learners in the schools and the principals who acted as *ex officio* members on the school governing bodies of the farm schools or the rural schools. The participants from the ten schools were selected in the following manner: one principal per school, a chairperson per school, a secretary or a treasurer per school and at least two volunteer parents from each school were selected.

3.2.5 Participant observations

Five farm schools were observed during their meeting sessions, in the natural settings of the school. It was important to observe these meetings since they could give a clear understanding and valid assessment of how meeting procedures and protocol were observed. A further area of concentration was the natural setting of the school and the other parties involved, namely, the learners and parents.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 419) point out that participant observations enable the researcher to determine people’s perceptions of reality as revealed by their actions and expressed as feelings, thoughts and beliefs. This method is generally regarded as one of the principal data collection techniques of qualitative research. White (2003:80) agrees with them by indicating that participant observers believe that human behaviour is influenced in many ways by the natural settings in which they occur.
Paragraph 2.3 of chapter 2 of this study explains the composition of the school governing body. A school governing body consists of the parents of learners in the school, the educators in the school, support staff where applicable, learners in grade eight or higher and the principal who is the *ex-officio* member. The size of the school governing body is determined by the enrolment of learners in the school, with parents forming the greater majority (Mabasa and Themane 2002: 113).

Under normal circumstances, the composition of a farm school’s governing body generally does not exceed six members in total. This is attributed to the low enrolment of learners typical of this category of schools. The Limpopo Provincial Gazette provides guidelines regarding the number of school governing body members per school in relation to the learner enrolment in that particular type of school. According to the Northern Province Department of Education Notice 141 of 2000 (2000:17), most farm schools fall within this described category:

**Schools with low enrolment figures**

**Table 1: Primary schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of learners</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Support staff</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Northern Province Department of Education (Notice 141 of 2000:17)
Table 2: Middle and secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of learners</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Support staff</th>
<th>Learner</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>720+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Northern Province Department of Education (Notice 141 of 2000:17)

There are only two middle schools in the circuit. The two tables above give a rational representation of the different components. In terms of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:14), parents are supposed to take responsibility for their children’s learning to a large degree.

A number of responsibilities that are prescribed by this act and which parents must fulfil are highlighted in chapter 2 of this study. The parents’ participation within the school governing body ranks must be guided by these responsibilities (Ndlazi 1999:73).

The school governing body members were requested to participate in the research project in their different portfolios. De Wizem and Combrink (2004:56) support the fact that parental participation in educational matters is essential and for that reason, it needs to be improved by means of research.

3.2.6 Semi-structured interviews

3.2.6.1 Introduction

White (2003:78) as well as Mouton (2001:105), describes various types of interviews, amongst which are a structured interview and an unstructured interview.
A structured interview means that the sequence and questions are determined by means of a schedule and the interviewer is left little freedom to make modifications. Therefore, it is characterised as a closed situation. It was expected that a maximum of 50 participants would be interviewed in this study as indicated above. The participants were drawn from selected farm schools’ governing bodies.

The unstructured or semi-structured as opposed to the structured interview, is an open situation because of the interviewer having greater flexibility and freedom. An interview schedule of 14 questions was compiled for this purpose. For this study, a semi-structured interview was the best option as it could accommodate the parents in the school governing body who were not literate (Matalasi 2000:9). A tape-recorder was used to record the proceedings, which were subsequently transcribed and translated accordingly for proper analysis.

3.2.6.2 Interviews with nominated principals

In this study, interviews were conducted with the ten selected farm school principals as is explained in the introduction in paragraph 3.1 of this chapter. As anticipated, this was a literate group that was able to participate spontaneously in the semi-structured interviews (Van Wyk 2004:50). The principals from the district; namely; the Waterberg, were interviewed in their original settings, namely at the farm schools where they taught.

3.2.6.3 Interviews with nominated chairpersons

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a: 18 and 20) states that the chairperson of a school governing body occupies the most central position in the governing body and must be a parent of a learner in the school irrespective of gender, race, or religion. This position gives the chairperson a certain status and power in the sense that he can be influential in the decision-making process of the school governing body.
Most of the chairpersons were not sufficiently literate to handle the questionnaires. The logical option was to select semi-structured interviews for this study. In this regard, the interview questions were adjusted to suit the level of literacy of this group of participants. The adjustment of questions included what has already been highlighted in chapter 1, and in certain cases, the questionnaires were translated into the participant’s home language. This made the research more comprehensive since the participants were able to participate fully in the study.

3.2.6.4 Interviews with nominated parents

A ‘parent’ in terms of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:4) is defined as the person responsible for the education of the child. This is explained in chapter 1 of this study. The parents on farms cannot cope with the prescriptions regarding their required responsibilities as stipulated in the South African Schools Act.

It was advisable that at least three parents per school should be interviewed, while other school governing body components were excluded. This means that 30 parents were interviewed. As was the case with the chairpersons, the semi-structured interview was the appropriate choice, because they too were not literate and depended on the translated version of the interview schedule to be able understand the questions. This made the interviews more comprehensible and easy to understand for them.

3.2.6.5 Summary

It was necessary for the above-mentioned category of respondents to be involved in the study since they were key figures in the governance of the school. It must be realised that most of the parent were at work during the day. This situation meant that the researcher had to make appointments with parents in advance. As a result, the
appointments were made with them for those times when the parents were not at work, for instance, over the weekends.

The appointments with the principals fell during the day when the times did not clash with their school schedules. The principals as the professional heads of the schools, were able to adjust their schedules accordingly. It must be noted that it was important for the researcher not to disturb the teaching and learning activities of schools while conducting this research.

3.2.7 Document analysis

3.2.7.1 Introduction

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:445), documents may be written or printed materials, which may be official or unofficial, public or private, published or unpublished, prepared intentionally to preserve a historical record or prepared to serve an immediate practical purpose. For the purposes of this study, documents included attendance registers, minutes of the meetings, financial records, invitations to meetings and the constitution of the school governing body. Permission was requested from the participating schools to peruse the documents. The documents that were analysed will be discussed next.

3.2.7.2 Attendance registers

Obtaining permission to visit a few chosen sites to scrutinise the documents and determine the effectiveness of the record keeping procedures, was part of this study as explained in chapter 1 of this research. For this reason, the attendance registers of five selected schools were accessed in order to ascertain the attendance figures of the individual school governing body members of these schools.
The frequency of the school governing body meetings was determined by going through the meeting attendance registers. The attendance registers form part of the minutes of the meetings. In many instances, attendance registers were not kept to record which learners were present.

3.2.7.3 Minutes of meetings

The minutes of a meeting form an integral part of every committee as they provide a record of important discussions undertaken and decisions agreed upon for their implementation. The minutes of school governing body meetings were requested for perusal; subsequently, the minutes from five participating farm schools were drawn and studied. The minutes are a reflection of every committee meeting but are kept confidential to a large extent. Therefore, special arrangements were made to access the minutes. They were studied in the presence of the chairperson, as some schools would not allow their minutes to be copied or removed from the premises.

3.2.7.4 Financial records

Section 37 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:24) emphasises that the school governing body is responsible for all the money collected by the school. The school governing body must therefore establish a school fund intended for opening and maintaining a bank account. Mothata (2000:151) defines a school fund as all the money collected by the school through school fees or voluntary contributions. The school fund is then deposited in a bank account that is opened in the name of the school and not in the name of any person associated with the school.

The financial records of the schools visited were kept in strict confidentiality. The access to financial records was arranged with the chairperson and the treasurer of the school governing body of the participating schools. The financial records were perused and discussed with the treasurer and the chairperson or the financial
committee where it existed. The discussion focused on how school fees were collected and recorded, for what purpose and how the money was used and also on the school governing body’s role with regard to control of the finances of the school.

3.2.7.5 Invitations to meetings

As highlighted in paragraph 3.3.5.2, the schools issue invitations to parents to attend meetings as a procedure to call for meetings. The secretaries were consulted to ascertain how the invitations were dispatched to members of the school governing body. Furthermore, the kinds of invitations issued to members were noted in terms of whether they were to ascertain whether they were verbal, written or telephonic invitations.

3.2.7.6 School governing body’s constitution

In terms of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:14), it is necessary that the school governing body draws up and adopts a constitution which must not be in conflict with provincial or national legislation. The school governing body constitution was also requested for examination from each school in this study. For this purpose, arrangements were made with the chairpersons of the school governing body.

The study focused on how the mission and vision of the school was determined. In addition, clarity was sought on why policies pertaining to admission, language, and religion were drawn up the way they were. The implementation of the various policies in the participating schools were also examined.

3.2.7.7 Code of conduct for learners

Section 8 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a: 8) emphasises that all public schools must adopt a code of conduct for learners in
consultation with the learners, parents and the educators of the school. The purpose of the code of learners in terms of this act (RSA 1996:8) is to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, which is committed to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process.

Access to this document was arranged with the chairpersons of the school governing bodies taking part in the research project. In addition, information was obtained on the drawing up and implementation of the code of conduct.

3.2.7.8 School funds and fund raising

All the public schools are required to establish a school fund in terms of Section 37 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. All the monies collected by a school in the form of donations, including school fees, are called a school fund. This school fund is paid into the school’s bank account opened in the name of the school only (Mothata 2000: 151).

An enquiry was made with the treasurers and the chairpersons of the schools taking part into how the schools were raising funds and collecting school fees. The methods used to raise school fund were also scrutinised.

3.2.7.9 Summary

Certain documents as the primary sources of information had to be scrutinised and analysed, for which purpose the researcher accessed confidential documents from five schools. The researcher had to obtain permission from the school governing body concerned beforehand.
It was necessary to give a clear explanation to the school governing bodies that these documents had to be analysed to supplement the interviews to ensure that objective findings for the study could be obtained. Finally, the researcher compiled a report based on the information obtained from the analysed documents.

3.3 TIME FRAME OF THE STUDY

The research was conducted over a period of more than a year. The reason for this is that the research area was spread over an extended area that fell within the circuit. It took the researcher a considerable amount of time to obtain feedback from the district as well as the province regarding the focus of the study. The participants in the circuit came from different backgrounds, which slowed the research process down to some extent. The interviews took up even more time since the semi-structured interviews required a great deal of flexibility (White 2003:75).

Since it was not possible to anticipate all the possible problems that could arise when doing research, allowances for the unexpected situations, such as delays in obtaining access to certain school premises could be a setback and hinder the progress of the research project. In addition, personal circumstances also hampered the progress of this research. Undoubtedly, all these aspects could have played a role in the project under discussion.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In this research, qualitative data was collected by means of participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis to determine the attitudes and perceptions of parents and educators serving on school governing bodies regarding their responsibilities as members of school governing bodies. The participants were chosen from a group whose opinions and ideas were of specific interest to this
investigation (Hoberg 1999:77). The semi-structured interviews included questions based on the performance of the school governing bodies.

The responses obtained from the interviews were analysed for the relevant information, after which the data obtained was highlighted and grouped under themes. These were finally clustered into categories. Extracts selected from the raw data were either paraphrased or quoted to illustrate tendencies.

**3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH**

Validity according to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:391-394) is sub-divided into two categories, namely, internal and external validity. Internal validity is realised when the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world.

In order to ensure that observations had been carried out properly, the researcher as part of the participant observation scheme, arranged to observe real life situations in which school governing bodies activities were carried out.

These included activities such as attending school governing body meetings with the aim of assessing the school governing body’s performance and interviewing various members of the governing bodies; namely parents, educators and principals. The language used in the interviews was the language used and best understood by the participants. A previous paragraph explains how the participants’ language partiality was taken into consideration and was provided for (see section 3.2.6.1 in this regard). White (2003:25) explains that reliability relates to the consistency, or the repeatability, of a measure.

In order to ensure reliability and consistency during the data collection process, different components of the school governing body were interviewed by means of the
same interview schedule. Semi-structured interviews were used as was explained above.

This type of interview (the semi-structured interview) allows flexibility in phrasing questions in order to make sure that the participants understand the questions and answer appropriately. It did not compromise the reliability of the data collection process. The aim of using this method was to ensure that the research results were reliable and valid.

3.6 VERIFYING AND VALIDATING DATA

White (2003: 3) recommends designing and presenting a study in such a way that it allows verification, so that the results can be confirmed or revised in follow-up research.

Qualitative research is not verified in the same manner as quantitative research. In this study, care was taken to ensure that the research focussed on the objective of the project, namely the main research question as stated in paragraph 1.3 of this study. Therefore, the study can be revised in follow-up research and further testing with other groups in different settings could confirm or lead to revision of the research (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:11).

3.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

White (2003:40) states that delimitation of the research refers to how the scope of the study will be narrowed. This study limited its focus to the assessment of the school

1 The main focus of this study is to assess whether the school governing bodies in the Nylstroom (Modimolle) Farm Schools Circuit in the Limpopo Province are able to perform their functions as set out in terms of Section 20-1 of the South African School’s Act No.84 of 1996.
governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The respondents in this project were school governing body members of the selected schools only and not did include any member of a school governing body of another type of school.

As there were only a few farm schools in the Limpopo Province, the focus was on a district with a substantial number of farm schools, namely the Waterberg. Schools that participated in this study and were therefore primarily farm schools in the Waterberg District. This classification assisted in making this research reliable and valid.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

As far as this study is concerned, the data collection design was divided into three main sections; namely; semi-structured interviews, participant observations and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used for all the participants, and educators, principals and other co-opted members were interviewed to obtain answers to the research questions (Mouton 2001:105).

The parent component of the school governing body was also interviewed, as the parents were mostly semi-literate or illiterate. This slowed the research progress down as the interview questions had to be translated and adjusted to match their comprehension levels. At times, the respondents exhibited a lack of confidence to participate in the interviews because of their perceived low status as farm workers. This lack of confidence was caused by the fact that if the farmer or his delegate was a member of the school governing body, this intimidated his employees who also served on the governing body.
3.9 CONCLUSION

Only ten farm school governing bodies in the area were selected for this study. The qualitative research design is relevant for this research. In order to do proper research to assess the performance of the school governing bodies of farm schools, data collection techniques such as participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were employed to answer the research questions in the natural setting of the participants.

For this purpose, the qualitative research approach method was applied and entailed making certain adjustments to accommodate the differences between the various components of respondents, namely, the parent and educator components of school governing bodies. The main difference between the various respondents lay in the fact that some were literate while others were not. This distinction contributed greatly to the limitations of the study.

The focus of this chapter is on the empirical research design and methodology of this study. The research was designed to reach all the respondents necessary for the study, namely, the parent component of the school governing bodies, the educators, co-opted members and principals as *ex-officio* members. The respondents were grouped into two separate groups; the first group consisted of the parents, who were either semi-literate or illiterate; while the second group consisted of the educators who were literate.

A qualitative research design was the logical option for this research project. As part of the data collection instruments, the following strategies were selected; participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Certain procedures such as monitoring the attendance of meetings, analysing school governing body documents and records, document analysis and the necessary data collection strategies were followed.
To ensure data reliability and consistency, the interview questions were the same for all the respondents. The fact that semi-structured interviews were used introduced a measure of flexibility into the study, but at the same time, it did not affect the consistency and reliability of this study negatively. The consistency and reliability of the research was ensured by the fact that the questionnaires for both the literate and the illiterate groups in the project contained similar questions for the semi-structured interviews.

This research had unique limitations such as the lack of confidence and the accompanying disinclination of certain of the participants to play an active role in the research, despite the fact that confidentiality of the results was assured to them. Despite these limitations, the research project was carried out successfully. In the next chapter, the findings that resulted from these research procedures will be discussed in detail.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concentrates on the findings of the research project. The previous chapter explains why the qualitative research methodology was selected for this study. The outcomes or the findings of this research are based on the procedures outlined with regard to the qualitative research methodology.

Three methods of collecting data were used primarily in this research; namely, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The purpose of choosing these data collection methods was to give a broad picture of how the research was conducted in this chapter and to make the research more reliable and valid.

Chapter 3 of this study points out that the above–mentioned data collection methods form an integral part of this study, since these methods explore the real-life situation in which the farm school governing body functions. It also explains the various roles played by the participants; namely, the parent component, the educators and the principals. It must be noted that these schools do not qualify for support staff because of their size, therefore, they were not part of this research.

The participants were observed in their natural settings. For instance, the schools were visited in order to inspect the meeting venues and to attend school governing body meetings. The schools visited gave the researcher an opportunity to analyse documents pertaining to the governing body meetings and to conduct interviews with the relevant participants.
The schools were visited after hours during the week and during the day over the weekends, particularly on Sundays. Sundays was the most convenient day of the week because most of the parents were at home on that day in contrast with Saturdays, when many people were at work or preferred to go to town to do their shopping.

4.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

4.2.1 Introduction

The researcher utilised the participant observation method when he visited sites in order to observe the meeting procedures of these school governing bodies. Hoberg (1999: 28) states that the participant observation method is both an overall approach to enquiry and a data-gathering method.

Participant observations are one of the central elements of the qualitative research methodology that was employed in this research. The reason for the selection of this method is that it demands first hand involvement in the social world of the participants. The researcher was able to see, hear and experience the reality that the participants saw, heard and experienced.

4.2.2 Observation of participants

Five farm school governing body meetings were observed. It was vital to attend these meetings because an understanding and valid assessment of meeting procedures and protocol observations regarding the farm school governing bodies was necessary. A further area on which the focus fell, was the natural setting of the school and the parties involved such as parents, educators and principal. It is important to point out that a school day was not observed, as the focus of this study is on the assessment of
the performance of farm school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province.

Meetings that were observed showed a lack of confidence by parents. The parent component in particular, was generally uncertain of its roles. Although there was a willingness amongst parents to make a positive contribution towards the upliftment of the school in general, it was evident that the necessary expertise was lacking. The parents were hesitant when they were expected to give their input or express their opinions at the meeting as they were intimidated by the presence of the principals. Van Wyk (2004:490) who confirms this finding, indicates that the educators are concerned that the principals dominate and influence the school governing body in terms of decision-making.

It is important to point out that these farm school governing bodies did not observe the correct meeting procedures. Some members of the farm school governing bodies observed, arrived late for meetings. In addition, the meetings could not start on time, as there was no quorum.

The chairpersons were not given the recognition they deserved. In addition, the members of the school governing bodies found it difficult to follow the set agendas. Lastly, male members came to meetings under the influence of alcohol particularly when meetings were held on Sundays.

It was discovered that the fact that male members come to meetings under the influence of alcohol cannot be ascribed to disrespect for school governing bodies. Instead, this type of behaviour can be ascribed to the fact that many parent members of farm school governing bodies were illiterate and did not understand the meeting procedures, nor what type of behaviour was expected of them at meetings. In fact, they were impatient during meetings and the procedures irritated them.
In all the selected farm schools, the chairpersons of school governing bodies were parents. The parents on the farm school governing bodies appeared to be incapable of running meetings according to a stipulated agenda. In this situation, the principals felt obliged to intervene and ended up taking the lead by running the meetings themselves. Mabasa and Themane (2002:112) sketch a similar situation, when they indicate that the governors are unfamiliar with meeting procedures and are inhibited in the presence of some colleagues who like to give the impression that they know more about meetings than certain other members do. In this case, it appears that the function of the school governing body is merely to support the decisions already taken by the educators and principal.

Another shortcoming that became apparent during the observations of meetings was that the chairpersons appeared to be incompetent and were not able to give a proper report on the meetings or workshops they had attended, for example. Consequently, the principals and the educators took advantage of the situation and controlled the meetings by dominating all the discussions. Regarding this situation, Ndlazi (1999:100) expresses the view that some of the illiterate parents regard educated people as the ones who have the monopoly on truth and knowledge. Respondent C (3) raised this concern:

"Some educators were selfish, the prisoners of their own thinking, and they thought that only the ‘educated’ could make valid suggestions or solve problems."

The above-mentioned perception reveals a serious problem regarding the educators and the principals. When parents came to school, they were made aware of their illiteracy, and as a result, they felt intimidated and were diffident about participating in school matters (Ndlazi 1999:63).

Farm school governing bodies are not capable of raising resources for their schools. In this respect, the condition and appearance of the farm schools indicated that farmers do not support the schools in terms of much-needed resources. Out of the ten
schools that were visited by the researcher, eight of these schools needed to be renovated completely. These conditions do not create a conducive teaching and learning environment.

4.2.3 Summary

In this section, the findings reveal that farm school governing bodies are not capable of running meetings effectively. They lack the necessary skills and capacity because of a number of negative factors such as poverty, a poor educational background and challenging working conditions on farms, to mention only a few. Furthermore, it was found that farm school governing bodies were unable to raise the funds that were badly needed for the school buildings that were neglected and in a dilapidated condition.

4.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

4.3.1 Introduction

Interviews are an integral part of qualitative research. White (2003:78) regards a semi-structured interview as an interaction because the interviewer has a great deal of flexibility and freedom to adapt questions as the need may arise. In this study, a semi-structured interview was the most appropriate option to accommodate parents on farm school governing bodies who were illiterate. A tape recorder was used to record the proceedings, which were later transcribed and translated accordingly for proper analysis. An interview schedule of 15 questions that are included in appendix 1 was compiled.

The nature of the semi-structured interviews made it possible to adjust questions for the parents who did not understand English and consequently, they were interviewed in their own languages. The participants found the approach user-friendly and
participated extremely well. However, they did consider certain governance acts to be complicated, which limited the participation of some members.

The participants were categorised into four groups, namely, the principals, the chairpersons, the parents and educators serving on farm school governing bodies. The participants were asked the same questions, individually and in private. Each respondent was asked 15 questions in a semi-structured manner in order to adjust to the individual’s comprehension of the questions. The questions were the same for all the respondents. The reason for conducting private and individual interviews was that no participant should influence anyone else. That is why the responses and viewpoints of the participants regarding the interview questions revealed both differences and similarities in their perceptions. During the interviews, the participants felt at ease and were able to express their feelings freely.

The following section provides a brief overview of the interviews that were conducted in selected school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. Ten principals, seven educators, eight chairpersons and one secretary were interviewed from the ten schools that were visited,

4.3.2 Principals

The interviews with the ten principals in this study revealed that many mistakes were being made regarding the governance of small schools and the conducting of meetings. Van Wyk (2004:51) stresses that principals tend to use their professional powers and expertise to influence decisions made by school governing bodies. The confidence expressed by this group of respondents gave the impression that they were reasonably knowledgeable about school governance matters.

Undoubtedly, the principal, as an ex-officio member of the school governing body, has considerable influence regarding decision-making and the taking of resolutions.
Ndlazi (1999:97) maintains that the educators feel that they are the best qualified to make a constructive contribution to the finalisation of issues and therefore, they openly disregard the parents’ contributions.

Some principals felt that school governing bodies are given too much power and too many responsibilities, which they are perceived to be incapable of executing properly. Respondent P (2) stated the following in this regard:

“The farm school governing bodies have little or no education at all. The government seem to ignore that. It continues to overburden the poor school governing bodies with more responsibilities and powers. These farm school governing bodies are unable to cope with the demands of the day-to-day tasks within the school governing bodies.”

Van Wyk (2004:52) asserts that the principals of the schools that fall within the low socio-economic group take advantage of the situation and do as they wish because most school governing body members are poorly educated, and they submit to their perceived higher status and level of knowledge.

4.3.3 Chairpersons

Only eight chairpersons and one treasurer were interviewed. The chairpersons interviewed admitted that they deferred to the position and status of the principal. The above statement confirms what Van Wyk (2004:52) regards as the principals’ high-minded attitude towards the less educated parent component of school governing bodies.

The relevant education department did not provide chairpersons with the proper training and guidance that would enable them to perform their duties adequately. The chairpersons acknowledged their shortcomings and expressed a wish to receive extensive training that should be organised by the Department of Education. Participant C (3) expressed the following opinion:
“We, as school governing bodies of the farm schools are not educated. We depend on the skills and the expertise of the educators. The principal understands the policies of the government better than we do. He is therefore in a better position to lead and guide us because as far these many of the acts are concerned, we are in the dark.”

Respondent C (5) concurred with respondent C (3) as follows:

“We need to be trained in governance procedures and policies. Working conditions on farms make it difficult for farm school governing bodies to attend this kind of training.”

Based on the above statement, it is apparent that training is necessary but it would be virtually impossible for farm workers to attend such training workshops, as that would mean that they had to take leave from their jobs especially during the summer months that are the busiest time of the year on the farms.

The previous chapter outlined the challenges faced by farm workers who wished to become actively involved in their children’s schools. The chairpersons were eager to serve their schools in various ways, but the general working conditions on the farms were frustrating, not least of all the fact that they were scheduled to work on Sundays.

Respondent C (7) raised the following concern with regard to their commitment to farm school governance:

“Due to the hard labour that we find ourselves in, particularly during the summer season, we come home dead tired and cannot even attend to our children’s homework, let alone attending school governing body meetings which at that time of the year is just not feasible. The principal will therefore shoulder the responsibility of running the school governing body activities alone with the minimum input from parents; of course, this has a negative impact on the governance of the school.”

As has already been mentioned, the level of education of the parents is low. Baloyi (2002:23) declares that illiteracy has a negative impact on education provision, and it
also impacts negatively on the performance of parents within the school governing bodies. If parents cannot read and write, they have a serious problem concerning the implementation of various policies. They also have a major problem with reading and understanding documents before appending their signatures to them.

The majority of farm parents from these selected farm schools did not go beyond grade three (the former standard one) at school. They appeared to have only a vague idea concerning what happened to their children when they were at school; according to the parents, the educators took “care” of their children when they were at work. In addition, they were doubtful whether their children would acquire the necessary literacy and numeracy skills at school.

A positive aspect about these interviews is that the parents participated well during the interviews and gave their full cooperation. At all the schools at which the interviews were conducted, the parents showed considerable interest in participating in school governing body matters, but working conditions on the farms made it impossible to do so. They felt that most farm owners did not participate actively in school governing body activities such as fund raising and attending meetings. However, the majority of farmers on whose farms these farm schools were situated, provided them with basic resources such as water and electricity, for which they had to pay. Respondent T (10) alleged the following:

“Our farm owner does not contribute satisfactorily to the governance matters of the school. He only provides basic resources like water and electricity for which the school is charged a nominal amount for the service rendered. With the meagre funds that the school is able to raise, it often fails to pay for service provision by farm owner.”

Because the poorer farm schools could only afford to pay for water, they had to do without electricity. However, parents were in no position to contribute financially to solve this problem. In one case, a neighbour who was also a businessperson assisted
the farm school by paying for its electricity supply. This case underlines the fact that the survival and sustainability of farm schools are at the mercy of the farmers.

It needs to be stressed once again, that the lack of commitment by farm school parents is problematic. Their perception is that educators are trained to take care of their children while they are at work during the day. This type of perception reveals that parents regard the school more as a place of safety for their children than as an educational institution. A case in point is the observation by one of the parents who indicated that the children were safe from possible dangers at school (Mabasa and Themane 2002:114).

4.3.4 Educators

Appointments with ten educators were made but only seven educators were available for the interviews. From the interviews it transpired that they played key roles in the governing bodies; they were usually elected as secretaries or treasurers. From their feedback, it transpired that the educators were an influential group in the selected farm schools. An interesting fact that emerged was that they said that they often disagreed with the views expressed by their principals. Respondent E (7) gave the following example:

“Our school governing body does not have a firm backbone. They agree to any suggestion or contribution made in the meeting, particularly when the principal gives an input, it is accepted unconditionally. It is frustrating because even when a contradiction occurs, it is carried.”

The educators faced different challenges to those experienced by the parents. Of special importance is the fact that they had no problem with attending meetings as the majority of them lived on the school premises and only went home over weekends. Because some had cars, travelling to the meetings was no problem. Consequently, the educators attended meetings regularly and in some instances, even when the governing body meeting did not have a quorum, they took certain decisions in the
absence of the parent component. Respondent E (5) made the following comment in this regard:

“On many occasions when the school governing members (particularly the parent component) are invited to a meeting, they cannot attend due to the difficult working situations they are in. Sometimes we feel that we cannot postpone one meeting more than twice. We therefore continue with the meeting even when a quorum is not reached. The other members of the school governing body will get feedback of the same meeting at a later stage.”

A contributory factor to the making of such decisions is the fact that in certain cases, the farm owner was unwilling to release workers to attend school governing body meetings. The educators could not re-schedule the meeting for another time because of time constraints, extra journeys for which they would have to pay and in any case, they were uncertain about the willingness on the part of the farmer to release workers to attend future school governing body meetings. This confirms what Matalasi (2000:67) also reports in his research.

The parents assumed that educators possessed a good understanding of the dynamics of legislation and were therefore in a good position to advise the school governing body. The parents expected the educators to explain the contents of various acts to them so that they could understand them. It is for this reason that educators were given central positions on school governing bodies.

Mabasa and Themane (2002:112) give a similar report; in their research they found that parents on the school governing body felt intimidated by the educators who seemed to be more knowledgeable than they were... It is no wonder then that they accepted that their role as parents was to support the decisions taken by the educators.
4.3.5 Important issues covered during the semi-structured interviews.

The following section provides a brief overview of the important issues that were discussed during the interviews conducted with selected school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province.

**Question 1**

**Election of school governing bodies**

This question dealt with the election process and sought to find out whether the school governing bodies from these selected schools had been elected democratically. Respondent C (10) responded as follows to this question:

“Yes, our school governing body was democratically elected. All the parents who have learners in our school were invited to the meeting. We elected our school governing body in that meeting. Names were proposed and seconded and thereafter voted for the names in different school governing body positions.”

The general response to this question from various respondents from these farm schools was that their school governing bodies had been elected democratically. In this regard, the parents reported that they had been invited to a general meeting at which the elections took place..

**Question 2**

**Composition of school governing bodies**

The composition and size of the school governing bodies and whether they were balanced in terms of gender, was the focus of this question. It transpired that the size of these school governing bodies ranged from four to eight members, whereas the majority of the farm schools had four or five members. Respondent P (6) answered in this manner:
“Our school governing body is composed of five members. There are three parent members, one educator and myself as the ex-officio member of the school governing body. In terms of gender, there are three women and two men. The women are in the majority because they are more consistent than men.”

In all the selected farm schools in the Nylstroom Circuit there was a good gender balance in the school governing bodies. The reason for this balance is that these farm schools are primary schools and the principals are females, therefore potential male domination is neutralised by the fact that most schools are run by females.

**Question 3**

**The roles of the educators**

The respondents were asked to discuss the roles performed by the educators. The position and status that the educators occupied within the ranks of the school governing bodies were also looked into. It became clear that the educators acted as advisors to the school governing bodies since the parents were illiterate. The parents assumed that the educators had a good understanding of the applicable legislation and were therefore in a good position to advise the school governing bodies in this regard.

Respondent C (5) gave this response:

> “On our school governing body there is one educator and the principal. They cooperate well with us and are knowledgeable about the government policies as they are educated than we are. The principal in particular, is giving us direction when we are in the dark. I think it is part of her duty. She knows almost everything and we do not crack our heads unnecessarily.”

The educators were able to explain the legal contents of various documents to the parents so that they could understand their meanings. It is for this reason that the educators are generally given positions such as secretary or treasurer of the school governing bodies. As a result, parents become passive onlookers while the rest of the members play an active role in school governing body matters.
**Question 4**

**Co-opted members**

This question sought to find out whether the school governing bodies had co-opted members on their boards and if so, how these members had been utilised.

Respondent E (6) answered as follows:

“It is not possible to have co-opted members in our school governing body. Our parents are few and they do not have time to attend to governing body matters apart from the literacy constraints that they have.”

It was found that nine out of the ten schools did not have co-opted members on their school governing bodies. This shortcoming can be ascribed to the fact that the farm communities were small; therefore, there were no extra members available to co-opt.

**Question 5**

**Participation by farm owners or their delegated representatives**

Participation by the farm owners or their delegated representatives was assessed in this question. At all the schools visited, neither the farm owner nor his delegate participated in school governing body activities such as attending meetings, fund raising and other related initiatives. In reply to this question, Respondent C (4) and Respondent P (9) had the following to say:

“The farm owner does not participate in school governing body activities. He is a busy man. He provides the basic resources like water and electricity but the school must pay for service provided. If the school runs out of funds, it stops paying for electricity and only pays for water.”

In most cases, the farm owner only provided basic resources such as water and electricity. On very rare occasions, the farm owner provided transport for the learners.
In addition, some schools indicated that they paid for the electricity they used. What this meant in practice is that the educators had to pay for the electricity themselves, since the income generated by the school fees of these small farm schools was too low to meet the schools’ needs.

**Question 6**

**The use of sub-committees**

The question regarding the use of sub-committees was asked to ascertain how the sub-committees were used at the farm schools. This question relates directly to question four of the interview schedule.

Respondent E (2) responded as follows to this question:

“This school does not have enough parents to form sub-committees. We struggle to constitute a proper school governing body.”

Consequently, there are virtually no sub-committees at these farm schools owing to the size of the communities on the farms. Therefore, sub-committees cannot be implemented properly at these farm schools.

**Question 7**

**Frequency of meetings**

This question sought to find out how frequently meetings were held. The participants stated that their schools held at least one school governing body meeting per term. The general parents’ meetings were arranged towards the end of the term when learners’ reports were issued. Respondent P (4) highlighted the following:

“The only way to get hold of parents is to call meetings towards the end of the term when reports are issued. That is when you can at least arrange a short meeting with them to discuss only crucial issues.”
This offered an opportunity to get the parents together at that time of the year, as they would then be available to form a quorum, because they were collecting their children’s reports. Therefore, without some form of pressure, the parents’ meetings would not have taken place. Parents complained about the long distances they had to travel to meetings on foot. A further problem was that the farm owners would not give them time off for the meetings since it was harvest time.

**Question 8**

**Issuing of invitations**

The manner in which invitations were issued to parents was also a cause for concern. The respondents indicated that most of their farm schools in this area issued invitations to parents by giving the learners the invitation letters. Half of the schools indicated that they sent out meeting notices seven days prior to the day of the meeting. Respondent S (10) indicated that:

“The only practical manner of issuing invitations to parents is giving the letters to the learners to give to their parents. We try to send the letters seven days in advance.”

Due to the financial constraints the farm schools faced, schools were not able to invite parents to the school governing body meetings telephonically. In the event of extraordinary circumstances, the secretary (in the case of many farm schools it was an educator) was compelled to make such calls. Overall, the farm schools’ governing bodies face serious challenges concerning the issuing of invitations.

**Question 9**

**Quorums**

This question centred on the forming of quorums. The respondents pointed out that owing to the constraining factors raised in reply to question eight; it was difficult to form a quorum at many meetings. Respondent C (8) voiced the following complaint:
“It is not simple to reach a quorum at farm schools governing body meetings. Parents have serious work commitments and do not have adequate time to come to meetings.”

At all the farm schools, reaching a quorum was problematic and this ultimately compromised the decisions taken in the interest of the school.

**Question 10**

**Motivating members to attend meetings**

In eight out of the ten schools, the respondents admitted that they had no strategies in place to motivate school governing body members to attend meetings. Some of the factors they mentioned that had led to the non-attendance of meetings, were the weather, long travelling distances and work commitments. The above-mentioned factors are beyond the control of the school governing bodies of those schools. Respondent P (6) disclosed his frustration in this regard as follows:

“The farm school governing bodies have inherent challenges that affect the participation of parents in the school governing body activities. It is a difficult task to motivate parents to participate in the governing body activities. These negative factors discourage also the willing parents to contribute in the school activities.”

Only two farm schools indicated that they had strategies to motivate their school governing members to attend meetings. They motivated members by providing light meals for members before meetings as they travelled long distances to the meetings. The second school took advantage of the police station nearby, and requested the station commissioner to assist with transporting school governing members to meetings.

However, the issue of attaining a quorum remained a challenge since the farm workers worked long hours. Generally, all the farm schools preferred to hold their school governing body meetings over weekends particularly on Sundays when no parents were at work.
Question 11

Availability of school policies

A question regarding the availability of different school policies was asked. Many respondents were not honest when answering this question. The principals in particular, were defensive and alleged that all the policies were available. When the educators were asked the same question, they revealed that not all the policies were available, particularly the financial policy. The reason given for the lack of a financial policy was that they had very little money to spend. In the opinion of the educators, it was therefore not necessary to draw up a budget or make financial statements available to the parents.

There was also a problem with the drawing up of a code of conduct for learners. Where it existed, the educators indicated that it had little value regarding good discipline in the school since the enrolment figures were low, therefore they did not have to contend with the disciplinary problems that the big schools in the nearby townships and town schools faced. According to the educators at these farm schools, it was impractical and unreasonable to implement a code of conduct in their schools. Most principals and chairpersons interviewed were reluctant to draw up a code of conduct for learners. Respondent C’s (2) cautious reply was:

“There are many policies that the principal always refers to when we discuss issues. I may not be able to say exactly what those are for. Maybe the principal is in a better position to highlight some for you.”

As the parent component of the governing bodies of these farm schools was illiterate, they were not familiar with the contents of these documents. When they were questioned about the documents, some indicated that these documents were meant for the educators because they understood them better.


**Question 12**

**Filling casual vacancies**

The filling of casual vacancies was also explored. The responses from the schools divided the respondents into three significant groups. The first group preferred to make nominations whenever a vacancy arose. The second group favoured the implementation of by-elections. This option was problematic for these farm school governing bodies because of the small size of the community. Responses to questions seven and nine highlight the serious constraints that the farm school governing bodies face when a quorum needs to be reached. Respondent C (1) revealed that:

“In terms of the size of the farm school parents’ community, replacement of a member of school governing body member is not easy. The vacancy may continue to exist until the next school governing body elections.”

The third group chose to continue with the vacancy until the end of the school governing body office term. It should be realised that when the school governing body term lapses, the school governing body might not be properly constituted in terms of the constitution requirement. In fact, the school governing body will be left with the educator component only.

**Question 13**

**Comparison of the roles and functions**

The roles and functions of school governing bodies and those of school committees needed to be compared in this question. The majority of the respondents in all the participating schools did not understand this question entirely. The researcher stopped asking this question since the replies were not helpful with the attainment of the research objectives. Respondent C (9) defined the roles in this way:

“I actually find no difference between the two. What I think the schools in previous years were stricter and children were more disciplined than today.”
The participants who attempted to answer this question showed that the school governing bodies were more representative than the school committees were. In terms of the dispensation to which this structure of the school committees belonged, they were not challenged or requested to account for the decisions they had taken. They hold the view that the school committees were instrumental in implementing the governments’ instructions.

**Question 14**

**Challenges faced by the farm school governing bodies**

The challenges faced by farm school governing bodies were explored in this question. The participants responded differently in the sense that their perceptions regarding farm school challenges were based on the individual backgrounds of the various respondents.

In fact, the replies to this question were a summary of all the interview questions together. The main challenge that the farm school governing body faced was the literacy levels of its members. However, it should not be assumed that the challenge of illiteracy necessarily meant that those school governing bodies to which it applied, were all non-functional.

Other daunting problems facing some school governing bodies, were expressed as follows by respondent C (7):

“To mention the frustrations of the farm school governing body is just not beneficial at all. For instance, many farm schools are closing down around here because of declining enrolment figures. There are many challenges that will not be solved by individuals, but maybe over a period of time the situation will unfold for the better.”

The various participants mentioned a number of other challenges too, such as the poor attendance of meetings, small farming communities, long travelling distances, large volumes of documents to read and no time off to attend meetings. These
challenges created an adverse situation for farm school governing bodies, which in most instances, was beyond the control of school governing bodies.

**Question 15**

**The role of the Department of Education**

The Department of Education is expected to play a major role in capacitating school governing bodies in general. When the respondents were asked whether the Department of Education was playing an active role in the capacity building and training of school governing bodies, the overwhelming response was “no!” Respondent C (3) stated that:

“The Department of Education is able to provide brief pre-election workshops and school governing body inductions only. It will not provide a comprehensive capacity building workshop for new school governing body members.”

The respondents were generally of the opinion that the Department of Education was only active when it was time for election advocacies and the training of electoral officers. Immediately after the school governing bodies had been elected and were in office, the Department of Education ceased to play an active role in their functioning. The illiterate parents, especially, urgently needed training and capacity building, which was supposed to be provided by the Department of Education.

**4.3.6 Summary**

One of the fundamental data collection methods used was semi-structured interviews. Four groups of participants were interviewed, namely, the principals, the chairpersons, the parents and the educators who served on the farm school governing bodies. All participants were asked exactly the same questions privately and individually so that no single participant could influence anyone else. This contributed to the fact that the responses to and viewpoints expressed about the topics
of the interview questions were frank and open and revealed their true opinions as they felt at ease and were able to express their feelings freely.

From the interviews, it was possible to isolate a number of factors that hamper the effective performance of school governing bodies of farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The following factors were identified in this regard:

- **Distance travelled by parents to meetings.**
  One of the major challenges that school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province face, is the long distances between their schools and their places of residence. Some school governing body members live on farms that are adjacent to the schools. Therefore, they have to leave by means of the farm gate and not jump the fences, which is an offence.

- **Lack of transport.**
  Because of the socio-economic status of these school governing body members, they cannot afford to buy their own vehicles. Some males make use of bicycles to get to meetings while the female members usually walk. Public transport is not available in these farming communities.

- **Failure to obtain permission to attend meetings.**
  The working conditions on the farms are not beneficial for the farm workers. It was discovered that farm workers in the area where this research was conducted still work abnormally long hours. Furthermore, it was found that it is extremely difficult for the school governing body members of these selected farm schools to obtain permission to leave their jobs to attend school governing body meetings.

- **Illiteracy of parents.**
  This research highlights that members of school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province are illiterate. In many instances, it was found that only the educators (including the principals) are
literate. This state of affairs compromises the performance of these school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province.

- **Reservations of parents regarding the participation in discussions due to the perceived superiority of educators.**
  
The preceding paragraph emphasises the literacy challenge faced by school governing members of the farm schools of these selected schools. They feel intimidated by the educators at meetings because of their lack of education. As a result, these school governing body members do not participate in the meetings or make any positive contributions to the proceedings.

- **Farmers’ attitudes towards the farm schools**
  
The farmers or their delegates, who are supposed to be co-opted as school governing body members of the schools on their farms by law, find this task burdensome. This research reveals that these farmers are not interested in becoming involved in the governance of the schools on their farms.

- **Lack of commitment by parents to school governing body matters.**
  
The performance of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province is poor. The reason for their poor performance is a lack of commitment by parents and the fact that they are not willing to participate in school governing body activities.

### 4.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

#### 4.4. Introduction

Documents were analysed with the permission of the authorities, particularly the chairpersons and the principals. Only five selected farm school governing bodies participated in this part of the research. The documents that were perused were the:

- Attendance registers
- Minutes of the meetings.
- Financial records.
• Invitations to meetings.
• Records regarding the development of the constitution.
• Records of the formulation of the code of conduct for learners.
• Records regarding the establishment of the school fund.
• Records regarding fundraising.

All the schools had minutes of the school governing body meetings even though the minutes were not all up to standard. For instance, some of the minutes were only in the form of notes. Some important school governing records that were missing at many farms schools were the financial records. It was apparently assumed that since the schools had no money, they had nothing to record regarding the financial expenditure of their schools.

4.4.2 Attendance registers

Section 4.2 of this chapter indicated that parents could not meet their commitments as school governing body members because of their heavy work schedules on the farms. Consequently, they could not make the school governing body meetings their first priority. Van Wyk (2004:50) ascribes this unfortunate attitude to certain specific socio-economic factors affecting them.

The attendance registers of the farm school governing body meetings were not up to date either. However, the poorly controlled attendance registers did reveal that meetings were poorly attended. The school governing body meetings were held at irregular intervals, despite the fact that the participants in the interviews indicated that they held these meetings once a term. It appeared that urgent meetings received preferential treatment.

The filing of documents was also not up to standard, even though the secretary of the school governing body was usually an educator since other members could not cope with the high volume of records. In addition, the language used in certain
departmental directives was foreign to the parents who were supposed to participate in the deliberations and meeting proceedings.

4.4.3 Minutes of meetings

In the schools that were studied, the books in which the minutes had been written, were not properly maintained and controlled. In some schools, they were not available at all and even where they were available, the minutes were not kept in an acceptable manner. Where the minutes were unavailable, it was alleged that the minutes had been taken on a loose sheet of paper, which usually got lost over time.

Some schools argued that they did not have many school governing body meetings and therefore it was easy to implement their decisions, thus making it unnecessary to refer to the minutes. Where the minutes were kept, there was a clear indication that many meetings had failed because a quorum could not be reached. The major reason for the lack of a quorum in many school governing body meetings was that farm school governing body members were not motivated enough to attend meetings because of the many challenging hurdles faced by parents working on the farms.

A further problem that this research uncovered is that the minutes were not kept in the correct manner. In some cases, the minutes did not record the date, venue or time of the meeting. In addition, the chairperson had not signed the minutes of the school governing body meetings; there was therefore no proof that the minutes could be regarded as a true record of what had been discussed at a particular meeting, nor was there proof that the minutes had been read. The general attitude that was perceived was that keeping minutes was an unnecessary burden on the secretary who, in certain instances, was not fully aware of what his/her role as a secretary entailed.

There was evidence of general neglect regarding the keeping of the minutes of school governing body meetings. For the most part, the understanding of the roles of the
various members was vague and confused, with the exception of certain capable educators who performed practically all the functions, while the rest of the members contributed very little to the effective functioning of the school governing bodies. Consequently, the educators tended to dominate the scene as they were better informed regarding these matters than their non-educator colleagues were.

### 4.4.4 Financial registers

In this research, it was revealed that in general, few farm schools had a bank account because of the lack of school funds, as the parents living on the farms were generally impoverished. In certain cases, the farm owners assisted with the construction of the school buildings after consultation with the provincial education department. One principal, who was interviewed by the researcher, reported that farm owners usually ensured that the school was built, while the provincial education department provided the necessary resources.

The researcher analysed the financial records at the schools where these were kept. These financial records showed that the parents’ contributions were minimal as a very small amount of money was generated through the payment of school fees, because the learner enrolment figures of the farm schools were low. Another reason for their minimal contributions was that the parents of learners at farm schools could not afford to pay school fees. Consequently, it was difficult for the schools to collect school fees from them. Parents frequently owed school fees for more than a year and in some cases, even for many years. Because of this negative situation, schools were disinclined to keep financial records, such as audited financial statements or records of budgets that had been drawn up.

This research discovered further that the parents of learners in this category of schools did not realise the necessity of paying school fees. They assumed that the provincial government had to take sole responsibility for all school expenses.
Following the introduction of the recent funding procedures by the Department of Education, the majority of farm schools will fall within quintile 1 or 2 and will undoubtedly benefit from the new system.

The above-mentioned groups of schools fall into the category of “no fee schools.” In terms of this classification, these schools do not receive school fees except when a parent makes a voluntary monetary donation. However, in the case of farm schools, the parents earn too little to donate any money whatsoever. In all cases, the recent financial policy compels all schools irrespective of classification, to adhere to financial management policies.

4.4.5 Invitations to meetings

This research established that learners are supposed to deliver invitations to their parents when they return home after school. One of the interviewed parents complained that the children usually forgot the letters in their school bags, consequently, parents often failed to receive invitations to the planned meetings. This research found that this challenging situation exists on many farm schools because parents cannot afford resources such as telephones or cell phones. In this regard, respondent C (5) had the following to say:

“I do not like to miss meetings as they give us information and feedback. The problem is that I cannot afford a cell phone or a telephone. The invitations are given to my child who always forgets to give it to me or gives it late.”

It was discovered by this study that in many situations it is only the principal who possesses a cell phone, as other school governing body members usually cannot afford their own cell phones. In any event, the principal is reluctant to utilise his /her cell phone airtime for school governing body matters because the school does not have enough money to reimburse him/her.
Another parent raised the concern that poverty in the families of learners in farm schools is high. Because of their poverty, the parents cannot get to meetings after work because they cannot afford to pay for transport. It is clear that the distances that school governing members live from farm schools, create a logistical problem. This challenge is most certainly a factor that contributes to the poor turnout for school governing body meetings. Even the willing parents are unable to get to the meetings. Respondent C (2) raised this concern:

"We work hard on the farms and come from work being very tired. You will need to rest and prepare yourself for the next day. My child attends school far away from home. Without transport I cannot arrive on time for the meetings."

4.4.6 Development of the constitution

This research also revealed that school governing body constitutions are not available at many of these farm schools. Even where the constitution is available, it is not drawn up properly, and is therefore not implemented. Furthermore, it became apparent during this study that in some cases, even the educators do not regard the constitution of the school governing body as being vitally important. In two schools, the researcher became aware that the drawing up of the school governing constitution document is a mere formality and will not be implemented in practice.

In one of the schools referred to in the preceding paragraph, one educator confirmed that their school does not have a school governing body constitution because they can still refer to the act. This educator added that the majority of the school governing body members are illiterate and therefore the Department of Education could not expect those parents to draw up a governing body constitution.

At one school where the researcher analysed certain documents, the principal did not even remember holding a meeting to draw up a constitution for the school governing body. The school governing body of the same farm school also acknowledged the fact
that it had never considered the constitution to be an important document as far as school governance is concerned.

Respondent C (9) who was a member of the school governing body of the above-mentioned school expressed his views as follows:

“We are a farm school governing body. The state must know that we are not educated. We are unable to read and write but some of our members can write a bit but do not understand many things about how the government works.”

The above citation gives an indication of how ill equipped certain farm school governing body members are to draw up a constitution for the school. This highlights the feelings of inferiority experienced by these members, as they feel too inadequate and incompetent to hold school governing body positions. They feel overwhelmed by and ineffective in their positions. The principal of this farm school indicated that he felt he had to provide training for the school governing body because of the failure by the provincial department of education to provide the much-needed training.

4.4.7 Formulation of code of conduct for learners

Another problem that this study highlighted was that school governing bodies do not realise the necessity of adopting a code of conduct for learners, specifically at the farm schools that were observed. The educators, who were interviewed, explained that discipline is not a problem in these schools.

However, research conducted at these schools proved that discipline should, in fact, be a priority in primary schools so that learners get used to discipline in their early years of schooling. During the interviews with the educators, it was discovered that they do not realise the necessity of adopting a code of conduct for learners in primary schools. Respondent E (5) remarked as follows:
“It is not necessary to draw up a code of conduct for a small school like this one. We are able to control and discipline these learners without these many documents like the code of conduct.”

It appeared that there were mixed feelings regarding the code of conduct as some school governing bodies agreed that adopting a code of conduct was necessary because it was realised that it would be too late to instil discipline in learners in the later years of schooling. In contrast, the above excerpt expresses the view that small schools did not need a constitution to instil discipline.

The observations revealed that a code of conduct is necessary despite any perceptions to the contrary that farm school governing bodies might have. The reason for this is that learners at farm schools start school later than what the regulations may recommend, considering the long distances they have to travel. It was evident that dealing with discipline problems of the older learners was difficult.

4.4.8 Establishing school funds and fund raising

This study established that even though the school governing body of a farm school might wish to open a bank account for the school, this was not easy to achieve. It was found that many farm school governing body members have opened school bank accounts in the names of their respective schools notwithstanding the fact that they are illiterate. In this case, this study found that it was extremely difficult to control the funds in a bank account efficiently. The literature proved that illiterate farm school governing members are dependent on the expertise of the educators, predominantly the principal, who might be manipulating and have his/her own private agenda for spending the funds.

The educators kept the financial records and the parents served as signatories. When the researcher analysed the financial records of one of the selected farm schools, it became apparent that parents on school governing bodies who were signatories just
signed out of loyalty to the principal whom they did not wish to disappoint. In this regard, chairpersons C(1) and C(5) both expressed similar views during interviews with them:

“Since we know that our weak point is illiteracy, we trust our educators, particularly the principal, who is enlightened in these matters to guide us.”

Another serious challenge uncovered in this research that faces farm school governing body members, is the fact that members do not have easy access to transport and the only person who can get to town is the principal because he has his own car. The second problem is that members cannot get away from work to attend meetings and this makes it very difficult for the financial committee members, for example, to get together for a meeting to discuss the financial matters of the school.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs is apparent if one inspects the environment in which farm schools operate, the appearance of the school environment is very bad. With reference to the conditions under which these farm schools operate, the researcher asked respondents P (7) and the C (7) why their school governing body did not seek sponsors. The response was that:

“It is difficult to attract a sponsor on private property. The businesses we approached were not willing to sponsor on private property and at the same time [the school is] far away from the big communities who might also benefit from the initiative.”

Some of the constraints that became clear in this research regarding obtaining sponsorships are not related to discrimination, but arise from the nature of the farm school background, for instance, a game farm that poses unique challenges, like constructing high fences for game, avoiding disturbing the game habitat and finally the observation of the strict nature conservation rules. The interviews with farm school governing bodies confirm that the sponsors are influenced negatively by these challenging aspects.
In fact, the interviews conducted revealed that the school governing bodies of these selected farm schools believe that they are generally at a disadvantage regarding sponsors. The interviews further highlight that they feel discriminated against because of the environment in which they find themselves. The chairperson from one of the farm schools argued that, for example, the big dealers from whom they purchase goods were not even willing to donate cheap soccer equipment to the school. The respondent C (4) said:

“The only fund-raising method we can resort to is to organise a concert, but the attendance by the public is usually low, as many people have moved to informal settlements in the townships.”

4.4.9 Summary

This research discovered that there are various challenges and constraints faced by all the governing bodies of farm school governing bodies. It revealed that school governing bodies find themselves caught up in a vicious circle in the sense that they do not have the necessary expertise to perform their roles and functions. They are dependant on the educators and the principals for assistance. Furthermore, the working conditions on farms make it difficult for school governing bodies to perform their functions.

In addition, this study highlighted that the level of literacy among the school governing body members of the farm schools is generally low. It also became apparent that many members lack the necessary confidence and experience to participate meaningfully in school governing body meetings and tend to shy away from making decisions at school governing body meetings. They appear to be conscious of their lack of education and literacy skills as well as their lack of knowledge regarding meetings; therefore, they also tend to delegate most of the
responsibilities to the educators, as they regard them as being more educated than they are.

4.5 DISCUSSION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

4.5.1 Introduction

This section will discuss the level of performance that farm school governing bodies should reach for executing their tasks effectively. Data collection methods used in this research such as participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to investigate the performance of selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province that they possessed in order to perform their required tasks.

Serious factors affecting the performance of the school governing bodies of these selected farm schools have been highlighted in this chapter. In this section, the focus will be on the performance of these selected farm schools in terms of their participation in school governing body activities, their membership and the social class to which they belong in the community.

4.5.2 Participation in school governing body activities

Interviews with chairpersons of the selected farm schools governing bodies revealed that the summer months are the busiest time of the year on a farm. These chairpersons explained that farm workers returned home dead tired in the evenings, due to the hard labour in which they engaged at work. Consequently, they did not have the energy to not assist their children with their homework, let alone attend parents’ meetings, as this was just not possible. As a result, they could not assist and support the principal. What then happens, in reality is that the principal has to shoulder most of the
responsibilities for running the school governing body with minimum input from the parents, which certainly has a negative impact on school governing body meetings.

This research also revealed that school governing members of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province are not able to exercise their powers and carry their responsibilities out fully because of the strict control to which they are subjected by the farm owners or their delegates. Matalasi (2000:67) sketched a similar scenario in his research where he emphasises the fact that farm school governing bodies experience serious pressure as far as the execution of their responsibilities is concerned. From the interviews with the parent component of the farm school governing bodies, it was deduced that one of the major obstacles they experience is their struggle to receive time off from work to attend school governing body meetings.

Respondent C (9) from one of the farm schools remarked:

“I do not have time to attend school governing body meetings. My boss will not grant me time to attend these meetings.”

This disclosed that the selected farm school governing bodies are mostly ineffective as far as school governance is concerned. Ndlazi’s (1999:95) research points out that in general, the incompetence of the farm school governing bodies can be attributed to their lack of training and expertise because of the previous disadvantaged black school education system. In this regard, Hendricks (2000:61) refers to the speech delivered by Dr Verwoerd on the 1953 Bantu Education Act in which he promoted racial divisions in the South African Education system.
4.5.3 The farm school governing body membership

Section 23 (2) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:18) states that elected members of the governing body must consist of a member or members who must include parents of learners at the school. This act (RSA 1996a:20) indicates that parents have the majority of seats on the school governing body.

Although the governing bodies supported the stipulation regarding the inclusion of parents on the governing body; in practice, this does not happen. This study revealed that the selected farm school governing bodies found it difficult to adhere to this stipulation of the act due to the size of the community on the farms.

The interviews revealed that the majority of the parents who had been elected during the elections held in the past, declined the positions for which they had been elected. As a result, most of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools have no parents that serve on them. This situation is attributed mainly to the fact that the parents lack the confidence required for these positions.

4.5.4 The social class category of the school governing bodies

It was observed that parents connected to the selected farm schools, belong to a low socioeconomic class. The parents in this social class are vulnerable and are dominated by the educators in terms of decision making in the school governing body. Their low level of education is evident in the fact that many have not proceeded further than grade three (the former std one) and their poor financial backgrounds make them victims of their circumstances.

Van Wyk (2004:52) sketches a similar picture when she asserts that these parents are intimidated by the position and status of the educators, particularly the principal. If one considers the lack of preparedness of the parent component of the school
governing body, the fact remains that these members are in urgent need of training which the Department of Education does not provide.

4.5.5 The gender class category of school governing bodies

This study focussed on the assessment of the performance of selected farm school governing bodies. These schools are mostly primary schools and the older learners leave as soon as they reach grade seven as these school leavers seek work either in the same or in another town.

It was discovered in this study that most principals of farm schools are females. Another factor that leads to the majority of females becoming school governing body members is the fact that the attendance of meetings by their male counterparts is poor and sometimes they come to meetings under the influence of alcohol. The male school governing body members, and this even included the chairpersons of many schools, failed to attend school governing body meetings held over the weekends. Respondent C (9) from one of these selected farm schools complained as follows:

“Our male school governing bodies come to meetings being not sober because the only good time to hold meetings is during the week-ends. In many instances they absent themselves from meetings without valid reasons.”

Baloyi (2002:68) in his study on school governance asserts that the reason given for attending meetings under the influence of alcohol is that they need to have enough time to relax with friends and drink liquor. Therefore, they even drink before meetings, because they regard the weekend as a time for drinking (Baloyi 2002:68).
4.5.6 Co-option of school governing body members

Section 23 (1 and 5) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a:18) gives the school governing body of a public school permission to co-opt members from the community with the necessary expertise to assist with the activities of the school governing body. The act (RSA 1996a:18) states further that a property owner can be a co-opted member of the school governing body.

This study revealed that the selected farm schools are generally small. Because of the small size of farm communities, the school governing bodies of these schools do not have co-opted members. It was also found during the interviews with the principals of these farm schools that the farm owners are not willing to participate in school governing body activities, even though the farm owners are in a good position to make a positive contribution to and exert a positive influence on the school governing bodies.

4.5.7 Election of parents to school governing bodies

From the interviews, it was found that all the selected farm schools conducted proper school governing body elections in terms of the provisions of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996a: 20). It was further established that these schools had problems with forming quorums because of the low numbers of parents together with the high level of absenteeism by members at school governing body meetings.

As mentioned in paragraph 4.4.5 of this chapter, the invitations are given to the learners to deliver to their parents at home; however, the learners often forget to give these invitations to their parents. Paragraph 4.5.5 of this chapter also explains that male members are often absent from the meetings because of personal reasons.
4.5.8 Conflict within school governing bodies

While the selected farm school governing bodies face many challenges as has already been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, interviews with the respective members proved that they were united and worked together as a unit. Conflicts and confrontations were never a major challenge since the size of the school governing body was small and misunderstandings could easily be resolved. The principal was in a good position to assist in resolving a conflict if it should arise.

Respondent E (6) from one of the selected farm schools commended the conduct of the members of the school governing body in this manner:

“Our school governing body members are respectful to us as educators”

The interviews with this group showed that conflicts that are common amongst farm school governing bodies are not related to the members’ commitment but is more about relationships. If one member of the school governing body is not on good terms with another member, the aggrieved member will just stop attending school governing meetings.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter concentrated on the findings and discussions of findings regarding the research. In order to arrive at the findings, the following data collection techniques were utilised; namely, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and examination of the relevant documents. After this, the performance of the selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province was analysed by means of these methods.

Participant observations were carried out in five schools during their school
governing body meeting sessions and before the semi-structured interviews were conducted, to determine how they interacted with each other. It was observed that educators received preferential treatment, particularly the principals.

During the meetings of the selected farm schools as was indicated in paragraph 4.2 of this chapter, the correct procedures were not followed. The school governing body members were a sizeable number but could not cope with the meeting procedures. An example of this state of affairs is that some members started a new discussion on an item on which an agreement had already been reached.

During semi-structured interviews with members of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools, only the educators in the school governing bodies were able to answer the interview questions in English. The parents struggled with English and the greater part of the interview proceedings with them was in Sepedi, since in this area, the greater part of the people in this area are Sepedi speaking people.

The following categories of people from the selected farm schools were interviewed, namely the principals, parents (predominantly the chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers) and the educators. In many schools, the position of the secretary or the treasurers is reserved for the educators while the position of the chairperson is assigned to the parents. That is why the educators dominated the farm school governing bodies of these selected farm schools.

Documents were also analysed when schools were visited, in order to conduct semi-structured interviews with the school governing board members. The documents of five school governing bodies were analysed having obtained prior permission from the school authorities, the principal and the chairperson to do so. The study revealed that the documents were not standardised. Paragraph 4.4 of this chapter discussed this aspect in detail.
The skills and capacity of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools were found to be low. The farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools reported that they faced considerable challenges regarding differences in the academic and socio-economic status of members. This study discovered that the parents of these farm schools were unskilled and incapacitated as far as school governance is concerned.

The next chapter is the final chapter of this research. This last chapter (chapter 5) will focus on the discussions, conclusions and recommendations of this research.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Whereas the previous chapter reported the findings of the study, this chapter will contain a summary of the preceding chapters, the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further study.

The purpose of the study was to assess the performance of school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The farm schools in this province are disadvantaged in various ways, particularly in terms of resources, management, organisation and governance. However, this study focussed primarily on the governance of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. In this research, school governance is regarded as the central area of school support.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The literature study in this research has indicated, amongst others, the factors influencing the performance of school governing bodies, their roles and how they were established. In chapter 2, it was explained clearly why farm schools exist and the type of governance structure suitable for these kinds of schools. According to the literature study, these schools are found in farming areas in the proximity of the country towns in South Africa. There are few or no farm schools in rural areas in the former homelands.

As discussed in chapter 2 of this research, the major aim of establishing farm schools was to benefit white farmers for agricultural purposes. The primary data
collection strategies employed in this study were participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This is in accordance with the qualitative research methodology used in this research.

In order to assess the performance of selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province accurately, the factors affecting their governance as outlined in chapter 2 of this research, need to be taken into consideration. The factors that became apparent in this regard are the distance lived from the school, the socio-economic status of parents working on the farms, low learner enrolment and the low educational levels of the parents. Undoubtedly, these factors affect the performance of school governing bodies.

Paragraph 4.3.6 of this research has revealed that farm school governing bodies face immense challenges in this democratic era. The study identified some pertinent challenges such as the:

- Lack of participation of certain stakeholders.
- Lack of a school governing body constitution.
- Members’ lack of participation in governance matters.
- Conflicting interests served by school governing bodies.
- Governing bodies’ lack of proper decision-making skills.
- Lack of time off for governing body members to attend meetings.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS REACHED IN THIS STUDY

5.3.1 Introduction

The key aim of this research is to assess the performance of selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province. The findings of the research have revealed that the level of performance of the farm school governing bodies is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, it was found that farm school governing bodies are enmeshed in all sorts of problems that inhibit their performance.
The training that the Department of Education offers to public school governing bodies does not meet the challenges that farm school governing bodies face. These school governing bodies are disadvantaged in many ways; for instance, they face problems such as illiteracy, poverty, no time off for attending meetings, long travelling distances to the schools, absenteeism and other social factors that might affect their ability to govern.

The state also lacks the necessary means to capacitate these “unique” school governing bodies. This study shows that farm school governing bodies cannot be handled homogeneously as is the case with public school governing bodies. The study further focusses on the fact that they are farm school governing bodies and not public school governing bodies. Therefore, special “democratic” provisions should be made for them within the South African Schools Act.

As a point of departure, the majority of those interviewed accept that training should be fundamental in order to capacitate all farm school governing bodies. Since the members of the farm school governing body of these selected schools in the Limpopo Province are illiterate, as has already been pointed out in this study, the farm school governing bodies should receive special programmes to boost their skills. The participants also complained about the fact that policy documents printed in their own language do not always reach them and they are usually sent the English versions, which they struggle to understand.

The following are the main conclusions reached in this study:

5.3.2 The service rendered by the school governing bodies of these farm schools

It is apparent that the farm school governing bodies are not acquainted with the stipulations of the legislation governing their functioning. The results of this research prove that the farm school governing bodies do not put the interest of
the school first. In most farm schools, the mission and vision statements might be available but the people who were interviewed did not identify with them.

It appears that the lack of capacity might be one of the reasons why farm school governing bodies do not have the interests of the school at heart. The results of this research have shown that the educators, particularly the principals, are manipulating the farm school governing bodies. The participant observations used in this research revealed that the farm school governing bodies defer to the recommendations and decisions made by the principals and educators because of their superior education and socio-economic backgrounds.

Paragraphs 4.3.3 and 4.5.4 respectively, refer to the fact that the level of education and the socio-economic background of the principals and educators, amongst other factors, have serious repercussions regarding the farm school governing bodies’ performance in these selected schools in the Limpopo Province.

Furthermore, it was observed that decisions were taken undemocratically at meetings. It was apparent that some groups such as the principals and the educators dominated the meetings. For example, when an issue was raised by the principals and/or teachers, the expectation was that it had to be accepted, no matter what their opinions might be on the issues being discussed. However, during the interviews, both the educators and the principals claimed that democratic participation took place in decision-making, despite the observations that proved the opposite. Therefore, it can be said that the farm school governing bodies do not serve the broader interests of the school exclusively, but rather those of certain individuals, namely, the educators and the principals.

It is shown in this paragraph that the service rendered by the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo province is inadequate.
Consequently, this leads to the poor performance of rural school governing bodies.

**5.3.3 The powers and functions of school governing bodies**

The previous section has shown how these selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province are expected to further the interests of the educators and/or the principals and not the interests of the school, because of the various factors mentioned above.

Paragraph 4.2 of this research is about participant observations. Through this data collection method, it was discovered that the school governing body members do not understand meeting procedures; furthermore, they are intimidated by the educators and the principals who give the impression that they know more than they do and male members may arrive at meetings under the influence of alcohol. Owing to the above factors, the farm school governing bodies cannot execute their functions optimally.

Paragraph 4.3.2 confirms the finding that in the communities with a low socio-economic status, the principals do as they please. In this situation, because the parents are poorly qualified, they defer to the perceived superior status and knowledge of the educators. As a result, certain school governing members’ participation in school governance matters is limited and consequently, they are unable to perform their functions adequately.

Another important aspect that emerged was the fact that farm school governing bodies showed a lack of commitment regarding the attendance of meetings. The cause for this lack of attendance can be found in the working environment in the farming areas. The results of the interviews revealed that farm parents cannot cope with the demands made on them concerning their participation in
governance issues. They surrender their roles and functions to the educators whom they perceive to be better qualified to perform these roles and functions.

This paragraph can be concluded with the observation that the educators and the principals on the school governing bodies of these selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province, abuse their powers and functions by dominating the school governing body meetings.

5.3.4 Sub-committees on the school governing bodies

The results in chapter 4 made it evident that the farm school governing bodies did not have co-opted members. It appears that it is practically impossible to establish sub-committees in spite of the fact that all the school governing body members agreed that there is a need for the establishment of sub-committees as they form an integral part of the greater school governing body. Paragraph 4.3.5 highlights that parents in the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province are unable to establish sub-committees.

Farm school governing bodies should realise the need for the formation of sub-committees; in addition, they should realise how these committees can contribute to the effective functioning of school governing bodies. The unavailability of sub-committees on farm school governing bodies severely limits the contributions parents can make to the farm school governing bodies.

This section points out that the school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo province are unable to form sub-committees.
5.3.5 The extent to which the working conditions on farms influence the performance of the farm school governing bodies of these schools

The performance of the farm school governing bodies is affected negatively by the bad working conditions under which they work. Respondent C (7) in paragraph 4.3.3 refers to the hard labour that is expected of them as farm workers. In the same paragraph, it is stressed that farm labourers work abnormally long hours, particularly during the summer months.

Because of the challenging working conditions to which the farm workers are subjected, they are unable to attend school governing body meetings as parents of learners at the school, neither can they participate in certain other activities organised by the governing body of a particular farm school. As these parents are unable to perform their expected functions on the school governing bodies, the principals will be responsible for carrying out most of the school governing body activities himself with minimal parental participation, which has a negative effect on the governance of the farm schools.

It is stressed in this section that the performance of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province is adversely affected by the unfavourable working conditions to which the parent component of the governing bodies is exposed.

5.3.6 The literacy levels of members of farm school governing bodies

This research has revealed that the literacy levels of the farm school governing bodies of these selected schools in the Limpopo Province are low. Paragraph 2.7.5 of this study postulates that the illiteracy of parents is one of the negative factors contributing to parental non-involvement in school governance. The findings of this study revealed that when the department of education promulgated and disseminated new policies for implementation by school
governing bodies, it was a source of frustration, since the governing bodies were unable to read, interpret and implement the new policies.

Paragraph 4.3.3 of this research reflects the feelings of participant C (3), who remarked that the school governing bodies of the farm schools were not educated and relied extensively on the skills and the expertise of the educators. The principal is viewed as the one who understands the government policies better than the school governing body does. That is why the principals of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province are in a good position to provide leadership regarding government policies to the members of the school governing bodies, who are uninformed in this regard.

In addition, this research shows that the selected farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province find it difficult to cope with the paperwork and the interpretation and implementation of the policies. On the whole, these challenges pertaining to school governance impact negatively on the participation of stakeholders in the school governing body's activities, and this results in non-compliance with the stipulations of the educational policies. This section highlights the fact that the low literacy levels of the school governing body members of the selected schools in the Limpopo Province have a negative affect on the performance of the structures.

5.3.7 The distances travelled by the farm school governing body members

Because of the geographical remoteness of the farms, the school governing body members are faced with the problem of long travelling distances. In this research, the long distances travelled by the school governing body members of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province, proved to be a major obstacle for these individuals, as no transport to meetings is available for them on the farms. Furthermore, this research revealed that because the farms are fenced, the members of the school governing bodies must go around the fences instead of
taking the shortest route to the school, as it is illegal to climb over fences. Meeting attendance is affected by this challenge as well as by the other challenges such as the unavailability of transport; consequently, this has a negative affect on the overall performance of the farm school governing bodies of these institutions.

This section discussed the long distances travelled by the members of the school governing bodies, which compromises their performance with regard to governance matters.

**5.3.8 The economic situation of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province**

It has been reported in this research that the low socio-economic status of the region in which the farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province function, impacts negatively on the performance of these school governing bodies. Therefore, it can be stated that one important reason for the poor performance of these farm school governing bodies, is a critical lack of finance.

Paragraph 4.3.1 of this research reveals that farm owners do not participate satisfactorily in the governance of the school. This paragraph mentions that the farm owners only provide basic resources such as water and electricity for which the school is charged a nominal amount. However, because of the meagre funds that the schools have at their disposal, they are often unable to pay for the services provided by the farm owners.

As the poorer farm schools cannot afford to pay for both the above types of services, they choose to pay for electricity only as they cannot afford to pay for water as well. This is a difficult choice for the members of the farm school governing bodies of the selected schools in the Limpopo Province. As highlighted in the preceding
paragraphs, the poor financial situation of these selected farm schools undoubtedly also contributes to the poor performance of school governing

5.3.9 Outdated and unavailable records pertaining to the selected farm schools

Document analysis was one of the data collection techniques used in this research. In this regard, the following school governing body documents were analysed: attendance registers, minutes of meetings, financial records, invitations to meetings, records regarding the development of the constitution, documentation regarding the formulation of the code of conduct for learners, fund raising documentation and school funds.

This researcher determined that the documents mentioned in the preceding paragraph were either not up-to-date or unavailable at these selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. The reason for the poor performance in terms of managing information can probably be attributed to the illiteracy of the school governing body members.

Paragraph 4.3.3 illustrates that there are many policies that the principals always refer to when issues are discussed during school governing body meetings, which may serve to confuse the school governing body members of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. Consequently, the performance of these farm school governing bodies in the Limpopo Province is affected negatively by the outdated and unavailable documents as well as the way documents and policies are utilised.

5.3.10 Summary

It cannot be stressed strongly enough that the farm school governing bodies are not capable of performing their functions satisfactorily. After assessing the performance of the selected farm school governing bodies, which is the primary
aim of this study, the conclusion was reached that the performance of these school governing bodies was below standard.

The inadequacies and weaknesses exposed by this study were the long distances travelled to meetings, the low socio-economic status of the farm school governing bodies, high levels of illiteracy, the challenging working conditions on the farms and the low socio-economic status of the feeder district. Furthermore, this study revealed that farm school governing bodies lacked the necessary skills and knowledge regarding meeting procedures, active participation in meetings and managing their finances. Consequently, all these factors affect the performance of the farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Introduction

This section will attempt to address the problems connected with the underperformance of farm school governing bodies and recommendations will be made with regard to how members can improve their performance and where and how they can get the relevant assistance in order to improve their skills and knowledge. The governing body members must be able to involve other stakeholders apart from the government, for contributions in the form of sponsorships and donations. Furthermore, they need advice on how to market their schools in an appealing manner. Briefly, these farm school governing bodies should be able to define their roles, powers and functions properly in order to be strong and focussed school governing bodies, which lead their schools into the 21st century.

It will be meaningful to sub-divide the recommendations into specific sub-categories. This research will also look at whether the research questions have been answered.
In order to improve the performance of the school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province, the following recommendations are made in this study:

5.4.2 The service rendered by the school governing bodies of these farm schools

In terms of the findings, the selected farm school governing body members cannot participate fully in governance matters because they are mainly labourers. Paragraph 4.3.5 indicates that the parent component of the farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province perform hard physical labour on the farms where they work and are very tired when they return home after work. As a result, they need to rest at night to recover sufficiently for the next day’s tasks.

In addition, as the children of these farm school governing body members often need to attend meetings far from their homes, the parents have to travel long distances to get to the meetings. What makes it extremely difficult for these members to attend the meetings is the lack of transport. Because of the poor attendance of governing body meetings by parents, the principal will have to carry the major responsibility for governing the school with minimum input from the parents. Inevitably, this has a negative impact on the way the school is governed. It is therefore recommended that the minister should make legal provision for the granting of reasonable leave for the members of farm school governing bodies in particular to attend meetings.

In addition, special training for farm school body members is necessary, because it has been proved by the findings that the lack of knowledge and skills affects not only their engagement with, the school governing body, but also their performance as school governing body members.

Therefore, the Department of Education should develop a comprehensive skills development programme, specifically designed for the illiterate farm school governing bodies. This programme should include training in basic literacy and
numeracy, budgeting and procurement procedures, meeting procedures, fund raising and the completion and maintenance of school governing body records. The kind of training mentioned above should be in the form of tutorial modules for a period determined by the Department of Education. A further recommendation in this regard is that if it is not feasible for the Department of Education to carry out this task, it should make funds available and outsource this responsibility to relevant service providers.

This paragraph underlines the fact that the farm school governing bodies of these selected farm schools need the Department of Education to provide comprehensive skills development programmes and that farm workers should receive sufficient time off to attend meetings.

5.4.3 The powers and functions of the school governing bodies

Membership of the selected farm schools governing bodies in the Limpopo Province is low because of the small size of the farm communities. In this regard, there is a need to minimise and control the abuse of power on the school governing bodies of these institutions. The parent component of the school governing bodies should be empowered through training and dissemination of information so that they can stand up to the educators and the principals especially. They should develop enough confidence so that they stop regarding the educators as the sole custodians of the truth and feel too intimidated to make any active contributions to the meeting or to oppose any proposed motions.

It therefore suggested that the parent component should be given enough time during meetings to discuss issues of interest before a motion can be passed within the same governing body sitting. The observations revealed that educators caucus sensitive issues before the sittings of the school governing body meetings. This strategy gives the educators an unfair advantage over the parents who are expected to support a proposal that is neither beneficial for nor in the interest of the school as a whole.
A further recommendation to prevent the abuse of power is that the various farm school governing bodies should merge to form one strong school governing body in a given area. This recommendation is based on paragraph 1.8 of this research. This step is probably necessitated by the fact that rural school governing bodies cannot co-opt members as the pool of available parents is too small. Added to this problem is the fact that literacy, time, distance, travel and energy constraints make it virtually impossible for parents to attend and make meaningful contributions to school governing body meetings.

These united farm school governing bodies are further advised to form a “farm school governing body forum” that will help to boost the morale of other weak farm school governing bodies. The main function of the farm school governing body forum will be to discuss common issues that affect them on a daily basis.

The formation of farm school governing body forums for the selected farm school governing bodies is recommended in this section to minimise the abuse of power by certain members of the school governing bodies of these schools.

5.4.4 Sub-committees of school governing bodies

It was found in the previous chapter that the farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools are unable to form sub-committees to boost their school governing bodies’ performance. In order for the selected farm school governing bodies of the Limpopo Province to be able to form sub-committees, it is therefore recommended that special election procedures be considered for the farm school governing bodies. The numbers of farm parents are so small that the normal, conventional election process need not be followed; instead, nominations will be sufficient. For the sake of consistency, parents who wish to continue serving on the school governing body for more than one school governing body term should be allowed to continue. In terms of the size of the farm school parents’
community, replacement of a school governing body member is not easy. The vacancy may continue to exist until the next school governing body elections.

This recommendation should not be seen as negating the authenticity of election procedures as laid out in the Provincial Gazette of the Limpopo Province Department of Education. The aim of this proposal is to create a favourable electoral environment, which will maximise the farm school governing bodies’ commitment and performance. In short, this provision should be tailored specifically to the needs of the farm school governing bodies.

5.4.5 Adjustment of working conditions on the farms to influence the performance of the farm school governing bodies of these schools positively

The challenging working conditions on the farms affect the performance of school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. Consequently, the parents find it difficult to serve on the school governing bodies.

The Department of Education should create a conducive environment for parents on the farms to participate actively in the governance of farm schools. The Minister of Education should provide for paid leave for farm school governing body members to make it possible for these members to attend meetings. This leave can be in the form of a certain amount of time off per annum. Possibly, this time off might not include the emergency meetings of the school governing bodies. This provision must then be communicated to the farmers so that the “no work no pay policy” is not implemented any longer regarding these members. Paragraph 2.7.9 of this research reveals how difficult it can be to obtain permission from the farm owner in order to attend school governing body meetings.
5.4.6 Literacy levels of members of the farm school governing bodies

It is revealed in this research that the literacy level of farm school governing bodies of these selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province is low. This low literacy level contributes to the high incidence of parental non-involvement in and poor performance by the farm school governing bodies of these selected schools.

The process of improving the literacy levels of a community is challenging and should include the following stages:

- The first stage should involve running road shows in the farming communities.
- The second stage should involve the identification of interested individuals during the show and dividing them into groups.
- The third stage should then involve the clustering of these groups into central convenient training centres.
- Finally, at the end of the workshop, certificates should be issued and a database should be developed for the trained members.

These trained farm school members must be offered an opportunity to practise their skills and they should be deployed to serve where they are needed the most. This exercise requires the Department of Education to prepare a budget for this purpose.

5.4.7 The distance travelled by the school governing body members

This research discovered that the selected farm school governing body members of the Limpopo Province travel long distances to governing body meetings. It is important to point out that these distances are increased by the fact that the farms are fenced and the members are compelled to go through the gates and not jump the
fences. In order to avoid unnecessary travelling, these farm school governing body members are advised to consider the following recommendations:

- The transport of governing body members to meetings should be arranged.
- The Department of Education should provide funds for transporting these school governing body members to and from meetings.
- The executive committee members of these schools should be provided with mobile or conventional telephones in order to expedite communications.

The abovementioned recommendations are aimed at improving the performance of these school governing bodies.

5.4.8 The economic situation of the selected farm schools

The findings revealed that the farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools function in areas that fall into a low socio-economic class. It is therefore recommended that the selected farm school governing bodies should be assisted financially so that they can receive the necessary resources to improve their performance.

It is also recommended that the Department of Education should make funds available to pay a stipend to the members of such school governing bodies. The reason for this suggestion is that governing body members need to travel from one farm to another farm for school governing body meetings. In this case, their activities should be monitored by the Department of Education.
5.4.9 Keeping records and updating the available records of the selected farm schools

Paragraph 2.3.2 of this research describes the functions and allocated functions of farm school governing bodies respectively. The primary objective of this study is to assess the performance of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province.

After identifying the inadequacies in the performance of farm school governing bodies, it will be necessary to explore various avenues to improve the performance of these school governing bodies. In order to achieve this objective, updated information is needed by these farm schools. The Department of Education must provide training on record keeping and the management of information.

The findings reveal that farm school governing bodies are incapacitated and therefore it is suggested that farm school governing bodies should be given simplified versions of their functions and roles translated into their mother tongues.

It is recommended further that the Department of Education should utilise the mass media to assist with the education of farm school governing bodies in terms of the interpretation of their roles and functions.

5.4.10 Summary

This research has discovered that the farm school governing bodies studied are not capable of performing their roles and functions satisfactorily. According to this research, this poor performance can be attributed to a number of factors, such as the:

- Abuse of power by certain members.
- Lack of commitment to the community they serve.
• Low socio-economic status of farm communities.
• Geographical remoteness of the farm schools.
• Long travelling distances to the schools for meetings.
• Illiteracy of the parents and members of the school governing bodies.
• Unfavourable and challenging working conditions on the farms.
• Difficulties that the governing bodies face in filling the continual vacancies on them.

In terms of this research, it has been found that the performance of farm school governing bodies is poor. Consequent y, there is a lack of involvement by farm school governing bodies in governing matters. It is therefore recommended by this research that the Minister of Education should address the issue of improving the working conditions of farm workers by allowing farm school governing body members “time off” with full pay to attend school governing body meetings. In addition, neighbouring school governing bodies must consider merging to avoid the shortage of members on school governing bodies.

Briefly, the recommendations can be consolidated in this approach for the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province:

• Provision of adequate service to schools by farm school governing bodies:
  Farm school governing body members must be granted special paid leave with a limited number of days per annum determined by the Minister of Education to attend school governing body meetings. It will enable farm school governing bodies to provide good service to schools.

• Abuse of power by other members of farm school governing bodies.
  It was discovered in this research that the parent component is a vulnerable group since the educators and the principals manipulate them because of their inferior economic and literacy levels. In order to guard against this abuse of power, farm school governing bodies can merge in order to form
one strong governing body in a reasonable radius determined by them. The South African Schools Act of 1998 approves the merger of school governing bodies.

- Lack of sub-committees on farm school governing bodies.
  Special election procedures are recommended for farm school governing bodies to allow these governing bodies to form sub-committees. For instance, conventional elections need not be carried out; instead, nominations can be done. For the sake of consistency, parents who wish to continue into the next term, must be allowed to do so, irrespective of whether they have a child in the school or not.

- Difficult working conditions.
  The Minister of Education must recommend that farm school governing bodies be granted leave with full payment to attend governing body meetings in order to encourage good attendance of meetings.

- Low literacy level of parents on farm school governing bodies:
  Since the literacy level of these parents on the farms is low, the Department of Education must develop programmes that will address this challenge directly as recommended in paragraph 5.3.6.

- The long distances travelled by farm school governing body members
  These governing bodies travel long distances to get to governing body meetings. The Department of Education must provide transport for these parents on the farm school governing bodies.

- Outdated and unavailable records.
  Paragraph 5.3.9 indicates that these farm school governing bodies still resort to outdated methods and technology to keep their records. The Department
of Education must therefore make modern technology and updated information available to the farm schools.

The above recommendations are aimed at improving the farm school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As far as this study is concerned, three types of data collection methods were used namely, semi-structured interviews, participant observations and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used for all the participants, and in the process, educators, principals and other co-opted members were interviewed.

The parent component of the school governing body was also interviewed primarily as the parents were mostly semi-literate or illiterate. This slowed the research progress down as the interview questions had to be translated and adjusted to match their comprehension levels. It must be noted that in some cases, the respondents were hesitant about participating in the interviews because of the perceived low status and lack of self-confidence as farm workers.

The parents of the selected farm schools governing bodies worked during the day and this necessitated visiting the parents in the evenings after work. This exercise made heavy demands on the researcher as it involved travelling long distances at night to the different farms. Because some of the roads were bad, certain schools could not be reached.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research should attempt to address the education of parents of learners at the farm schools in governance matters, so that they can perform their roles
effectively. It should seek ways in which the Department of Education can increase parental participation in school governance by developing their skills.

In addition, there is a need to improve the literacy levels of farm school parents. Further research must be carried out to find strategies that will meet the needs of farm workers, while taking cognisance of the physical and economic constraints imposed by the challenging working conditions on the farms. The previously dysfunctional farm school governing bodies can be capacitated to perform their functions effectively.

5.7 FINAL CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research focussed on the assessment of the performance of school governing bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province. It was discovered that the performance of these farm schools in the Limpopo Province is not satisfactory. The assessment of the performance of the school governing bodies of selected farm schools revealed a number of serious obstacles that prevent them from functioning effectively.

Certain members of these school governing bodies are not educated and do not participate adequately in the activities of the school governing bodies. Consequently, the principals and the educators determine the direction that the school should take and this sometimes leads to the abuse of power and to many of the principals of these schools being overburdened by the responsibilities of governance.

In the light of the challenges highlighted in paragraph 5.4.8, that are faced by the farm school governing bodies of the selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province, the government must devise mechanisms to improve the quality of education in the farm schools. The government can achieve this by empowering
and capacitating the farm school governing bodies as it plays a vital role in the education system of the community.
5.8 BIBLIOGRAPHY


5.9 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. Was your governing body elected democratically?

2. Describe the composition of your school governing body in terms of size and gender.

3. What role do the educators play in the governing body?

4. Do you have co-opted members that play an active role in the school governing body?

5. Is the farm owner or his delegate an active member of the school governing body as a co-opted member?

6. If you have sub-committees, how are they utilised?

7. How often are school governing body meetings held?

8. How are invitations to meetings issued?

9. Is a quorum always reached?

10. What procedures do you follow when members are absent from meetings?

11. Do you have the following policies?

- A school governing body constitution?
12. How do you fill casual vacancies on your school governing body?

13. Compare the roles and functions of the current school governing bodies with those of the previous school committees.

14. How do you deal with any other challenges that may face farm school governing bodies?

15. Does the Department of Education provide capacity building workshops for the newly elected school governing bodies?
APPENDIX 2

Enquiries: Segwapa MP                                          P. O. Box 2498
Tel: 014 717 2829 (w)                                               Modimolle
Cell phone: 072 133 4973                                         0510
25 July 2007

Attention: Mokoka MB

The Head of Department
Limpopo Provincial Department: Department of Education
Private Bag X 9498
Polokwane
0700

Sir/Madam

Re: An application for permission to conduct research.

2. My research will be conducted in the following manner;
   • My research topic is as follows: “ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES OF SELECTED FARM SCHOOLS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE.” The farm schools in this research refers to schools on the farms (on private property)
   • With reference to the above study, the research project is based in the Waterberg District (particularly in the Nylstroom Circuit) where most farm schools are situated.
   • Ten schools in the circuit will participate. In this regard, the respondents will be any five individuals who are school governing body members; that is, the parent members, the educator component, RCL members when the school qualifies to be in this category, the support staff if it is available and the principal as an ex-officio member of the school governing body.
   • The qualitative research methodology is the relevant option for this study. The data collection strategies entail the following; semi-structured
interviews, participants’ observations (particularly SGB meeting procedures) and document analysis.

- The nature of this research dictates that the researcher must conduct his research after hours or over the weekends especially when the majority of the SGB members are back from work. This research will therefore not interfere with the normal smooth running of the schools involved. The researcher will need at least four weekends in the district.

3. As part of the research ethics, the confidentiality of both the participants and the institutions involved in the study will be protected.

4. The Waterberg District has already been made aware of this project.

5. It can be appreciated if the response is sent to the above-mentioned address.

6. Attached find the certified copies of my research project from the university.

Kind regards.

_____________________________
Segwapa MP (Researcher)
APPENDIX 3

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: Mokoka M B
Telephone: 015 290 7918
Fax: 015 297 2690

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Sir/Madam

The bearer, Segwapa MP, has been given permission by Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) to conduct research is “Assessing the performance of the School Governing Bodies of selected farm schools in the Limpopo Province.” The research will be conducted during the first three quarters of the calendar year.

The Department requests departmental officials, learners, managers and educators to cooperate with the researcher when research activities are conducted.

It is envisaged that the research report will assist LDoE in many ways.

Thank you.

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HEAD OF DEPARTMENT                             DATE
APPENDIX 4

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: Mokoka M B, Telephone: 015 290 7918, Fax 015 297 2690
Reference: 2/5/6/1 e-mail: mokoka@edu.norprov.gov.za

Segwapa M P
P.O. Box 2481
Modimolle
0510

Dear Researcher

Request For Permission To Conduct Research

1. Your letter of request bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that you are granted permission to conduct research at schools on the Waterberg District. The title of the research project is “Assessing the performance of School Governing Bodies of selected schools in the Limpopo Province”.
3. The following conditions should be observed:
   3.1 The research should not have any financial implication for Limpopo Department of Education.
   3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Office and the schools concerning the conduct of the study. Care should be taken not to disrupt the academic programme at the schools.
   3.3 The study should be conducted during the first three terms of the calendar year as schools would be preparing themselves for the end of the year examinations during the fourth term.
   3.4 The research is conducted in line with ethics in research. In particular, the principle of voluntary participation in this should be respected.
   3.5 You share with the Department, the final product of your study upon completion of the research assignment
4. You are expected to produce the accompanying letter at schools/offices where you will be conducting your research, as evidence that permission for this activity has been granted.
5. The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

____________________  __________________
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT DATE
APPENDIX 5

Enquiries: Segwapa MP                                          P.O. Box 2498
Tel: (014) 717 2829                                             Modimolle
Cell phone: 072 133 4973                                0510

11 July 2007

The District Senior Manager
Limpopo Department of Education
Waterberg District
Private Bag X1040
Modimolle
0510

Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct a research project in your district.

1. The above matter bears reference.

2. Kindly note that I am an educator in the Limpopo Province Department of Education.

3. I work at the Modimolle Primary School in the Waterberg District under the Nylstroom Circuit.

4. I am doing a research project with UNISA under the supervision of Prof RJ Botha and his contact details are as follows: (012) 429 4314; e-mail: botharj@unisa.ac.za

5. My research topic is “ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES OF SELECTED FARM SCHOOLS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE.”

6. The aim of this study is to add knowledge in the field of school governance particularly in the Limpopo Province.

Kind regards
Segwapa MP
Mr. Segwapa MP
P. O. Box 2498
Modimolle
0510

RE: APPLICATION TO DO RESEARCH WORK IN THE WATERBERG DISTRICT.


2. Permission is hereby granted to do research work at the schools in the Waterberg District on the following conditions:

3. The Circuit Manager must be informed beforehand.

4. You have to report to the Principal on arrival at a school.

5. Schools/period may not be interrupted in any way. Plan your research in coordination with the Principal/ Teacher.

6. We wish you all the best for your studies

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DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER
APPENDIX 7

Enquiries: Segwapa MP                                             P.O. Box 249
Tel: 014 717 2829                                                        Modimolle
Cell phone: 072 133 4973                                            0510
  13/08/2007

Attention: The SGB chairperson

Re: An application for permission to conduct research in your school.

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly note that I request permission to conduct research in your school.
3. My research topic is as follows: “ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES OF SELECTED FARM SCHOOLS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE.” The farm schools in this research refers to schools in the farms (on private property).
4. The respondents will be any five individuals who are school governing body members; that is, the parent members, the educator component, RCL members when the school qualifies to be in this category, the support staff if it is available and the principal as ex-officio of the school governing body.
5. Please identify five or available SGB members who will participate.
6. This research will be conducted mostly after hours or over the weekends especially when the majority of the SGB members are back from work. This research will therefore not interfere with the normal smooth running of the schools involved. The researcher will need at least four weeks in the district.
7. As part of the research ethics, the confidentiality of both the participants and the institutions involved in the study will be protected.
8. You will be contacted telephonically in order to make an appointment with the participants.

Kind regards.

________________________________________
Segwapa MP (Researcher
FIELDWORK SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEWS

TITLE: ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES OF SELECTED FARM SCHOOLS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

In consideration of the research ethics, the researcher protected the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals from different constituencies and institutions who participated in this research by developing a reference technique.

It is therefore indicated that ten schools were visited, ten principals, seven educators on the schools governing bodies and eight chairpersons and one treasurer were interviewed.

To understand the individual being referred to or quoted directly properly, the following pattern will be utilised: - all the schools will be numbered 1-10, all principals will be Ps, all educators Es and all chairpersons will be the Cs. Therefore, the principal of school 1 will be 1P; the chairperson of school 3 will be C(3), etc. In school 10 there in an extra parent labelled “T” who is a treasurer.