

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY
PARENTS IN DEMOCRATISING SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
IN THE TRENANCE PARK REGION OF THE VERULAM AREA**

By

Purnachandra Maharaj

A dissertation submitted in partial compliance

with the requirements for the

Master's Degree in Technology : Education (Management)

At Technikon Natal

Durban, January 2001

APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION

NAME

DATE

SUPERVISOR

Mrs J.J. Prosser

Reference declaration in respect of a Master's Dissertation.

I, PURNACHANDRA MAHARAJ

(full name of student)

and, Julia Judith Rossen.

(full name of supervisor)

do hereby declare that in respect of the following dissertation:

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY
PARENTS IN DEMOCRATISING SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
IN THE TRENANCE PARK REGION OF THE VERULAM AREA.

(1) as far as we know and can ascertain :

- (a) no other similar dissertation exists ;
- ~~(b) the only similar dissertation (s) that exist (s) is/ are referenced in my dissertation as follows:~~

(2) all references as detailed in the dissertation are complete in terms of all personal communications engaged in and published works consulted.

Signature of student

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date

DEDICATION

To my late father, Mr L.G. Maharaj for his immense support and guidance throughout my career.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank the Lord for giving me the strength to complete this arduous task and I should also like to thank the following people:

Mrs J.J.Prosser, the supervisor of this dissertation, for her interest, expertise and guidance;

the principals and chairpersons of the school governing bodies for their co-operation;

Miss D.E. Vinden and Mrs J. Singh for their expertise;

my colleagues and friends for their encouragement; and

my wife, Shamilla, and children, Uleesha and Rahul for their patience, kind understanding and moral support in enabling me to complete this study.

ABSTRACT

This study focussed on the problems experienced by parents in the democratisation process of school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area. The desegregation of public schools has led to increased enrolment of African learners at the three schools in the Trenance Park area. School governing bodies, consisting of only Indian parent governors at these schools, have continued to function as they did in the past. Parent governors are incapable of handling culturally diverse issues and they also lack the expertise to manage school finances to accommodate the needs of all learners. The researcher explored possible reasons for the lack of African parental involvement. The absence of African parents on school governing bodies adversely affects schools when resolving issues of a cultural or racial nature. In fact the increase of racial incidents at schools has created a tense situation for both learners and educators.

A literature survey of governance structures exposed the need for a training programme for governors. Previous governance structures had advisory powers but the Department of Education was responsible for a large majority of their functions. The *South African Schools Act of 1996* accorded school governing bodies duties and functions for which they were not trained. Moreover the lack of a training programme created confusion amongst governors and the principal relating to their respective role functions.

Research for this dissertation was conducted by means of structured interviews directed at the chairperson of governing bodies and school principals in the Trenance Park area.

The subjects of the research at all three schools were Indian. The research analysed specific problems encountered by principals and parent governors in the area.

Results revealed that meetings to elect school governors were poorly attended. There was a conspicuous absence of African parents at these meetings and this was attributed to a number of reasons.

Many elected governors felt that they were not sufficiently equipped to handle and resolve multicultural problems: parent governors require training to be able to deal with cultural issues.

The principals felt that their roles on school governing bodies were undermined by some parent governors who used their newly acquired powers to interfere with the professional management of the school. It is essential that a clear distinction between role functions was made to ensure teamwork by respective role players in resolving problems at schools.

School governing bodies in the Trenance Park area should, through a structured programme, be trained to resolve problems at schools. Every effort should be made to democratise school governing bodies by investigating various ways and means to enlist African parents and involve them in the governance of those schools attended by their children.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Dedication	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Abbreviations	ix
CHAPTER ONE	
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Democratisation of School Governing Bodies	5
1.3. The Background of the Problem	7
1.4. The Direction of the Research	12
1.5. Summary	14
References	15
CHAPTER TWO	
2.1. Introduction	16
2.2. Governance Structures in the Trenance Park area	16
2.2.1. Parent – Teacher Associations (PTAs)	17
2.2.1.1. Problems experienced by PTAs in the Trenance Park area	17
2.3. The South African Schools Act of 1996	19
2.3.1. Nature and Functions of a Governing Body	20
2.4. Personal Problems experienced by Parent Governors	25
2.4.1. Workload of Parent Governors	25

2.4.2. Lack of Training	26
2.5. School Problems experienced by Parent Governors	28
2.5.1. Non – payment of School Fees	28
2.5.2. Racial Clashes	29
2.5.3. Vandalism	31
2.5.4. Medium of Instruction	32
2.5.5. Absenteeism and Truancy	32
2.5.6. Role Functions	34
2.6. Some Views on Parental Involvement	36
2.7. Conclusion	39
2.8. Summary	40
References	41

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Introduction	43
3.2. Methodology and Collection of Data	43
3.3. Findings	45
3.3.1. Data Analysis (Appendices 2 and 3)	45
3.3.2. Question 1 (Appendices 2 and 3)	
Problems encountered in the Election of Parent Governors	45
3.3.3. Question 2 (Appendices 2 and 3)	
Reasons for Poor Parent Attendance	47
3.3.4. Tables	49
3.3.4.1. Table 1	49
Figure 1 – Learner Population	51

Figure 2 – Attendance of Parents	52
Figure 3 – Parents declining nominations	53
3.3.4.2. Table 2	54
Figure 4 – Training of Parent Governors	55
3.3.5. Question 3 (Appendices 2 and 3)	56
3.3.6. Question 4 (Appendix 2) and Question 7 (Appendix3)	
Multicultural Problems	56
3.3.7. Question 5 (Appendix 2) and Question 8 (Appendix3)	
The Absence of African Parents	57
3.3.8. Question 6 (Appendix 2) and Question 9 (Appendix3)	
Management of School Finances	59
3.4. Summary	60
References	61
 CHAPTER FOUR	
4.1. Introduction	62
4.2. The Involvement of African Parents	63
4.3. Representation of Minority Ethnic Communities on Governing Bodies	66
4.4. Training of Parent Governors	67
4.5. Training Programme on School Fees	70
4.5.1. Preamble to Workshop	70
4.5.2.1. Legislation on School Fees	70
4.5.2.2. Workshop on School Fees	72
4.6. Training Programme for Parent Governors and School Principals	74

4.6.1. Preamble to Workshop	74
4.6.2. Group Functions	75
4.7. Conclusion	78
4.8. Summary	80
References	81
Bibliography	82
Appendices	
Appendix 1	
Letter to Principals and Chairpersons of SGBs	
Request for an interview	87
Appendix 2	
Structured Interview: Chairperson of School Governing Body	88
Appendix 3	
Structured Interview: Principal	89

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
APEK	Association of Professional Educators in KwaZulu - Natal
DEC	Department of Education and Culture
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DET	Department of Education and Training
HoA	House of Assembly
HoD	House of Delegates
HoR	House of Representatives
KDEC	KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture
KZNDEC	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture
LEA	Local Education Authority
NAGM	National Association of Governors and Managers
NED	Natal Education Department
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTSA	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SGB	School Governing Body
SRC	Student Representative Council
TES	Times Education Supplement

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the collapse of Communism and national struggles for freedom have spurred efforts by nations around the globe to develop democratic governance. As this Century begins, more than ever before of the world's people live in democratic states.

Democracy continues to grow in practice and as a global ideal because it offers the most powerful means for civil society to prosper and for former dispossessed and oppressed people to shape policies which will address their needs. Democratic participation also remains the surest route for communities to enlarge their moral and civic agency (The Natal Mercury: June1 2000).

In achieving democracy in South Africa after the 1994 elections, we consigned to history the previous system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation. The Government, following the principles of democracy, equity and redress, is determined to ensure that all structures in South African society should reflect these principles. It is imperative that a new national system for our schools be implemented, one which will correct past injustices and provide a high quality education to lay the foundation for the development of all our people's talents and abilities. This new system must seek to uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators and also promote their responsibility, in partnership with the State, in the organising, governing and funding of schools. Hence the governance of schools has been restructured in keeping

with these principles and ensures representation, participation and ownership by all stakeholders in the school community. Accordingly the majority of South African schools are still undergoing profound changes.

Parental involvement is pivotal to the new, democratic model of organisation, governance and funding of schools, as set down in the *South African Schools Act of 1996*. This Act introduces governing bodies by which parents are to participate in the running of all South African public schools. These governing bodies are different from parent – teacher associations, which had only limited parental power. The active and innovative participation of educators, parents, learners and the community, former Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, believed would transform schools so that they rendered an improved service to communities (Daily News: May 11 2000).

Parental involvement in school governance in the Trenance Park area has been problematic. The one secondary and two primary schools in this area have struggled to involve parents in school governing bodies. All three principals have supported participation by parents and were involved in conducting the election of parent governors in 1997 along guidelines suggested by the KwaZulu – Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC). There was a general apathy shown by parents in attending meetings to elect parent governors (exact figures shown in Chapter Three, p.49). In all three schools, a second meeting had to be rescheduled to elect parent governors. Only Indian parents were nominated and elected to school governing bodies. Therefore school governing bodies in Trenance Park do not reflect the composition of the learner

population because African pupils comprise 34% of the learner population.

The absence of African parents on school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area can be traced back to the history of education in KwaZulu – Natal. This province had separate education departments for the respective races in the province. Schools in KwaZulu – Natal were administered by the House of Assembly (HoA), House of Representatives (HoR), House of Delegates (HoD) and the territory of KwaZulu (McPherson and Dlamini, 1998:3). Each department had its own system of school governance and funding but norms and standards of governance were determined by the Department of National Education (DNE). The DNE fell under the control of the Minister of Education, who was a member of the State President's Cabinet.

At present there are no African parents serving on governing bodies in schools in the Trenance Park area. The absence of African parents has handicapped school governing bodies in resolving cultural issues and financial matters relating to the African child, as only Indian parents serve on the governing bodies and they lack the expertise and experience in dealing with problems and issues relating to African culture. Interviews with school principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies, reported in Chapter Three, clearly indicate the need to elect or co-opt African parents onto school governing bodies. Moreover parent governors have become increasingly frustrated with the heavy workload and the assistance of the African parents will reduce the workload particularly in the collection of school fees and resolution of racial problems. The frustration of parent governors at all three schools can be attributed to a lack of support and training by

the KwaZulu – Natal Department of Education and Culture. According to Section 19 of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* provincial departments of education and culture must initiate and facilitate programmes of introductory and sustained training for governing bodies. Members of the Executive Councils have been provided with funds for the implementation of training programmes to assist parent governors. The National Director – General of Education, Mr Thami Mseleku, told Daily News that an assessment of governing bodies showed that the majority were not functioning effectively and this was largely due to problems of training (Daily News: May 11 2000).

The purpose of this investigation is to identify the problems experienced by parents in the democratisation process of school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area of the Verulam region and to develop a training programme for parent members of the school governing body, which will empower them to acquire skills and expertise to effectively carry out their functions.

Hence the specific aims of this study may be summarised as follows:

- to examine the role of parent governors in dealing with problems in past and present governance structures in schools in the Trenance Park area of the Verulam region;
- to establish the need for the democratisation of school governing bodies in this area in order to accommodate a racially and culturally diverse school population;
- to outline a well structured training programme for school governors which will be able to accommodate the needs of pupils from different cultures by involving African parents on the governing body.

1.2. DEMOCRATISATION OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Democratisation of education refers to a process in which decision – making is guided by equity, freedom and justice - the essential values of mankind. Accordingly, a school governing body should be representative of the entire learner population. This can be achieved through democratic elections by which parents, educators, learner representatives and non – educators are elected.

Democratic school governance emphasises that decisions must be made on the basis of consultation, collaboration, co-operation, partnership, mutual trust and participation of all interested parties in the school community. Participation by African parents will assist in involving the surrounding African communities in school related activities, for example, African parent governors involved in the annual school concert will assist in the sale of tickets to the community. Since the essence of democracy is the principle of equality, all participants in democratic school governance should have equal status and take part on an equal footing in policy making affecting the school. African parents will therefore contribute, on an equal basis, to all issues involving their children within the confines of the school.

Democratisation of the school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area will allow all parties to be treated equally and there will be no reason to restrict participation of any group. African parents elected onto the governing body will not be seen as junior partners but as equals deliberating on all policy decisions.

A representative democratic school governance structure should:

- remove suspicion and unnecessary antagonism among the different stakeholders, thus improving the credibility and legitimacy of school governance structures and their decisions by fostering greater co-operation and mutual respect between and among parents, teachers, students, principals and the broader community;
- strengthen the unique, innovational and creative experiences of existing models of democratic school governance;
- significantly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of school governance, as well as school management and, as a consequence, improve the “culture of teaching and learning” at school. This is based on the perspective that if a school is well managed and well governed, this brings about an environment conducive to learning and teaching, which has a positive impact on learners’ behaviour;
- ensure that all parent governors are afforded an opportunity to participate collectively with teachers and learners in the process of transforming our educational institutions. This process of transformation should include parent governors of all races so that the needs of all learners are studied in a holistic manner (Sithole, 1995 : 107-111).

In schools, where the entire learner population and the parent members of the governing body are homogeneous, there is no tension over culture, language or religion. However when the learner population is ethnically diverse and the parents on the governing body are ethnically alike, misunderstandings and problems can be expected. Schools in the Trenance Park area are in a period of transformation but parents on the school governing bodies have not kept abreast of these changes. It is therefore imperative that parents on

school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area in the Verulam region receive training that will assist them in acquiring the knowledge of and skills in dealing with the needs of African pupils. A training programme should provide guidance and support in assisting parents to acquire skills to enable them to develop realistic strategies to fulfil their functions as school governors in a changing environment.

1.3. THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

This study will focus on the area of Trenance Park in the Verulam region. This area lies approximately thirty-two kilometres from Durban. The suburb of Trenance Park was planned and constructed by the former Borough of Verulam and is mainly inhabited by Indian families. The area was developed in three phases. Coloured families inhabit Phase Two while the African areas of Amoati, Amoatana and Inanda form the borders of Trenance Park. The informal settlements of Tombe, Ndlela and Ameer Kaloos are also situated in close proximity to Trenance Park.

The writer, in his capacity as a head of department at a Trenance Park school, has observed that there is a high unemployment rate among parents in this area. Those parents, who are employed, work in nearby factories situated in the Verulam central business district. The average monthly income per household ranges from R650,00 to R1200,00. The literacy level of parents varies from a junior secondary level to post matric. Most of the parents have basic senior secondary education. This area has one secondary school and two primary schools, formerly controlled by the, now defunct,

House of Delegates, Department of Education and Culture. Prior to the *South African Schools Act of 1996*, parent - teacher associations (PTAs) and parent - teacher - student associations (PTSAs) were part of the compulsory governance structures at these schools. These bodies served to bring parents into school governance but their powers were limited to advisory only. These non - statutory governance structures reflected the, then popular, demand for the democratisation of schools and this has been incorporated in legislation through the *South African Schools Act of 1996*, which has provided the major stakeholders with participatory and representative governance at schools.

The House of Delegates Department of Education and Culture had constructed the three schools in Trenance Park area to cater for the Indian community. Indian learners made up 94% of the learners in the secondary school and 90% in the primary schools in the years between 1992 to 1995. A small minority of African learners from the Inanda area attended schools in the Trenance Park area. Many of the African learners' parents worked on the farms owned by Indians. These learners had been bussed to schools with Indian learners from the area. All three schools had been entirely subsidised by the House of Delegates Department of Education and Culture. Learners, transported by bus, had received an allowance from the Department. Parent – teacher – student associations existed at all three schools but Indian parents had made up the entire parent component of these associations.

The desegregation of schools in the Trenance Park area resulted in many African learners being admitted to them. Based on information received from a school principal (Chapter

Three), one of the Trenance Park schools investigated has a learner population of 1088 with an educator staff of 36. All educators are Indian and of the 1088 learners, 348 learners are African. The parents serving on the school governing body are all Indian. Another Trenance Park school has a learner population of 890 and a staff complement of 23. African learners comprise 338 of the total learner population. All educators and parent governors are Indian. A third school has 711 learners; of which 235 are African. There are 20 Indian educators on the staff and the 5 parent governors are Indian.

The writer has observed that school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area have experienced numerous problems since their inception. Interviews conducted with school principals have shown that approximately 35% of working elected parents resigned because of time - consuming meetings held either on a monthly or quarterly basis. Parent governors are also frequently called to school during a crisis, for example the teachers' strike and the withdrawal of cleaning services by the KZNDEC. The presence of African parents on the school governing body may ease the burden on the present Indian governors. Communication with African households on issues such as school fees, the code of conduct, school uniform, disciplinary procedures and fund raising could be better undertaken by African parent governors. This would assist in developing an understanding of the school's important needs.

School governing bodies in the Trenance Park area have continued to function unchanged, despite the changes and problems experienced at schools. School governors have introduced minimal changes to meet the new situation in schools.

A matter in question is schools' admission policy, which has remained unchanged. This policy had been designed to meet the needs of Indian pupils. Little has been done to incorporate the needs of the African pupil. For example, many African parents and their children do not understand the contents of schools' admission forms because they are written in English. African parents from informal settlements communicate mainly in Zulu. At one school the African caretaker was used as a translator and this proved to be of great assistance to both African parents and the management of the school. Admission forms, which presently appear in English and Afrikaans, should be written in both English and Zulu to assist African parents and pupils.

School governing bodies in the Trenance Park area have recently completed the appointment of principals and deputy principals. In all three schools Indian educators were selected to fill these vacant positions. At present there are no African teachers on the staff at any of the three schools: in fact the racial composition of staff has remained unchanged. Indian educators, affected by the rationalisation and redeployment process, have been moved to schools in other areas. No vacancies exist for African educators to be redeployed to schools in this area.

African pupils experience difficulty in discussing problems or issues with Indian teachers because many Indian teachers do not understand or speak Zulu and this inability to communicate has caused frustration for both teachers and pupils. Also many educators lack the skills and expertise to teach in a multicultural school. In African areas, because of the language barrier and safety reasons, Indian principals and teachers do not make

house calls to speak to parents about learners' problems. Moreover many African parents live in informal settlements and so cannot be reached by car. Informal settlements do not have street lighting and this makes it difficult to locate learners' dwellings. African teachers and governors could assist in contacting parents in these areas to discuss problems concerning poor academic performance or frequent absenteeism.

Indian parents on the governing body know very little about African culture and traditions. Certain decisions and policies implemented at schools often conflict with the culture of African pupils. An example concerns the code of conduct: an African male pupil may hug a female pupil as a form of greeting or affection, but educators at school may regard this as breaking school rules. Another example that frequently occurs is when an educator confronts an African learner because of misconduct. An African learner, when questioned, will not make eye contact with an educator whom, according to his culture, he regards as an elder and respects. Many educators become irritated by this behaviour and interpret it as arrogance. Misunderstandings could be resolved if African parent governors or educators, employed at the school, hold regular workshops to assist all roleplayers to develop a greater understanding of African culture.

Many African pupils at all three schools come from impoverished homes and so they are unable to pay school fees. Chairpersons of governing bodies said in their interviews that, although school fees at all three schools range from R200, 00 to R350, 00 per annum, there exists a need to supplement the school's income. The annual recovery rate of school fees is approximately 52%. African parent governors could greatly assist in addressing

their communities on the importance of paying school fees by those who can afford to do so. School governing bodies' priorities are to ensure that there are sufficient funds available for important services such as water, electricity, telephone and cleaning services.

At all three Trenance Park schools the withdrawal of cleaning services and security, previously paid for by the Department of Education, has led to a deterioration of conditions and parent governors are at a loss to know how to raise funds and so their only alternative is to increase fees paid by parents. The withdrawal of funding by the KZNDEC has placed additional responsibility on parent governors. These parent governors face the extra responsibility of collecting and raising school funds from communities who themselves face financial difficulties. Moreover Indian parents on governing bodies are incapable of utilising the available funds effectively, as they possess little knowledge of the needs of African learners.

1.4. THE DIRECTION OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter One was concerned with the introduction of the topic. This Chapter included the background, the motivation for and the aims of this study. This was followed by the definition and clarification of the term "democratisation" and its relevance to school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area.

Chapter Two will focus on problems experienced by parent governors working within past and present governance structures. Previous governance structures will be studied to

gain an insight into past parental participation and representation. The *South African Schools Act of 1996* will be discussed to obtain an insight into the present powers of the school governing body. Various writers' viewpoints on parental involvement will be discussed with the aim of encouraging African parents' involvement in African culturally related problems and the collection of school fees from African parents.

Chapter Three will focus on the qualitative research methodology within which the writer worked. Personal interviews with the principals and chairpersons of governing bodies of the three schools in the Trenance Park area were conducted. This Chapter will also focus on the findings and analysis of data collected. The composition of the learner population in all three schools will be studied and analysed to highlight the need for governing bodies in the Trenance Park area to democratise and become representative of the learner population.

Chapter Four will look at various ways and means to expedite the involvement of African parents. This Chapter will also concentrate on findings by the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) relating to the representation of minority ethnic communities on school governing bodies in England and Wales. The relevance of these findings may be significant to the involvement of African parents on governing bodies in the Trenance Park area. Training programmes, together with various strategies, will be analysed and relevant information utilised so that African parents can acquire skills and expertise that will assist them to become fully functional within the school community. A training programme that will be suggested is one focussing on the key areas of school fees and the

role functions of parent governors. African parents elected or co – opted onto school governing bodies must be aware of their duties as school governors.

1.5. SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the context within which school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area in the Verulam region function, was outlined. Various problems, predominantly of a multicultural nature, have surfaced due to a lack of representation of African parents on school governing bodies. Furthermore the motivation and aim of this study was also discussed. The analysis of the concept democratisation was included. Finally, we have, in a brief description of each chapter, outlined the entire programme to be followed.

Chapter Two will focus on past and present governance structures to highlight problems presently facing school governors in the Trenance Park area.

REFERENCES

1. Daily News. May 11, 2000. "Teaching the governors." Durban.
2. McPherson, G. and Dlamini, M. 1998. Democratic School Governing Bodies in the Province of KwaZulu – Natal. The First Elections. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
3. Republic of South Africa. 1996. South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.
4. Sithole, S. 1995. "The Participation of Students in Democratic School Governance" in Democratic Governance of Public Schooling in South Africa. 1998. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
5. The Natal Mercury. June 1, 2000. "Democratisation." Durban.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this Chapter is to examine problems experienced by parent governors on governing bodies in public schools in the Trenance Park area. Many issues relating to African learners can be resolved through the democratisation of governing bodies in which African parents are represented in proportion to the percentage of African learners in a school.

Past governance structures, in the form of parent – teacher associations, accorded minimal powers to parents but, following the introduction of the *South African Schools Act of 1996*, greater responsibility was placed on the shoulders of parents who were now to be elected to school governing bodies.

2.2. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES IN THE TRENANCE PARK AREA

The ex - House of Delegates Department of Education and Culture (HoD) administered the schools in the Trenance Park area. These schools were designed to serve the Indian community of Trenance Park. From the outset governance structures at all three schools involved only Indian parents.

2.2.1. PARENT – TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS (PTAs)

Within the framework of the Indian Education Act of 1965, PTAs were legislated in 1991 as compulsory governance structures for every HoD state and state - aided school. These PTAs comprised two teachers and three to nine members elected by parents, with the principal in an *ex-officio* position. The number of parents elected depended on the learner enrolment. This governance structure functioned mainly as a link between the community and the school and promoted the school as a community, educational and cultural centre. A PTA had advisory powers concerning admissions, use of school property, uniforms, duration of the school day, calendar, codes of conduct, extra - mural activities and adult education. It was responsible for submitting annual reports to the head of the education department, raising funds and assisting in disciplinary cases (McPherson and Dlamini, 1998: 4-6).

2.2.1.1. PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY PTAs IN THE TRENANCE PARK AREA

The writer has observed that the problems, discussed below, have had a harmful effect on the smooth organisation and operation of PTAs even when a high level of racial homogeneity existed. It is important to note that many of the problems that appeared in PTAs have also surfaced in present-day school governing bodies. The problems experienced by PTAs may be summarised as follows:

- meetings were poorly and inconsistently attended. Meetings had to be rescheduled due to poor attendance of parents. Many teachers were also reluctant to attend meetings after school hours;
- parents, who lacked relevant skills, were often influenced and manipulated into accepting positions on a PTA;
- parents, with skills, lacked the enthusiasm to participate as they felt it was the duty of teachers and principals to educate their children;
- lack of skills and expertise, affected the efficient and effective running of PTAs;
- matters discussed related only to the needs of the Indian community and there was no effort made to reach out to African communities;
- teachers were reluctant to involve parents in school related matters as they believed that these parents lacked the ability to find solutions to problems;
- PTAs were under-resourced and most operated without funding;
- there was a lack of clarity about the rights, powers and functions of PTAs. Many parents felt that belonging to a PTA permitted them to make regular visits to schools and many teachers felt intimidated by such visits;
- school principals saw PTAs as eroding their administrative control;
- teacher and community organisations often did not actively support the development of PTAs even when they paid lip service to the concept of a PTA. PTA members were often involved in other community organisations and thus did not give PTAs sufficient attention: for example, the chairperson of the Civic Association was also a member of a PTA;

- collective responsibility and democratic decision making were undermined as PTA members often tended to promote their own selfish interests: for example, the pastor served as a PTA member for the sole purpose of obtaining classrooms for bible studies (Sithole, 1994: 42 – 43).

PTAs in Trenance Park worked in isolation. No attempt was made to network with PTAs from African schools in the surrounding areas and informal settlements. Democratisation of school governing bodies in Trenance Park, after 1996, was difficult to achieve as the idea of segregated governance structures continued in schools even after integration was firmly entrenched. The *South African Schools Act of 1996* opened the way to change this but has had little effect to date on the Trenance Park schools.

2.3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT OF 1996

Following the achievement of democracy in South Africa, a new system of high quality education, which would lay the foundation for the development of the talents and abilities of all the Country's peoples was needed. It was essential that education would ensure the following:

- the advancement of a democratic transformation in society;
- the combating of racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance;
- a contribution towards the eradication of poverty and the economic well being of society;

- the protection and development of different cultures and languages.

The South African Schools Act of 1996, by introducing uniform standards and norms for the education of all learners, is a move towards equality. This Act also sets uniform standards for the organisation, governance and funding of all schools. All schools are subject to the Act, which involves all stakeholders in meeting those norms and standards which will ensure that the needs of all learners are met. School governing bodies, are expected to represent the needs of all learners. This will mean in the Trenance Park area involving African parents as equal partners as 34% of the learner population in Trenance Park schools is African.

2.3.1. NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF A GOVERNING BODY

The general purpose of a governing body is to perform its functions efficiently on behalf of the school and for the benefit of the community in terms of the *South African Schools Act of 1996*. A governing body is, therefore, placed in a position of trust and is expected to act in good faith in carrying out all its duties and functions on behalf of a school and to be accountable for its actions.

All school governors, including African parent governors, must know what their duties and functions are and how these fit in with the duties of the principal. The community has placed a great deal of trust in their school governors and therefore Indian and African

parents, elected to the position of school governors, must function as a team to uplift the institution.

School governing bodies have been given a great deal of power. It is important for parent governors to be aware of the parameters within which they can function. Democratisation will require parent governors to be aware of their newly acquired power and to use it judiciously.

According to the *South African Schools Act of 1996* a governing body has the following powers:

- it may, by a process of law, enforce the payment of school fees by parents who are liable to pay such fees (section 41);
- it may determine the language policy of the school in consultation with the Minister (section 6{2} and 5{1});
- it may issue rules for the conduct of religious observances at the school in accordance with the provisions of section 7 of the Act;
- it may suspend a learner from attending school –
 - (i). as a correctional measure for a period not longer than a week;
 - (ii). pending a decision as to whether a learner is to be expelled from the school by the Head of Department (section 9{1});
- it may join a voluntary association representing governing bodies of public schools (section 20{3}); and

- it may apply to the Head of Department to be allocated increased functions in terms of section 21(1) of the Act.

The powers, functions, duties and actions which a governing body must take in the interest of a school and which involve the development of documents, support of staff, and dealing with administrative issues at school are clearly stipulated in section 20(1) of the *South African Schools Act of 1996*. The Act stipulates that a governing body must do the following -

- promote the best interests of the school and ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school;
- adopt a constitution;
- develop the mission statement of the school, which sets out the goals of the school and is based on shared values and beliefs;
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;
- administer and control the school's property and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including the school's hostels;
- encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school;

- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators for the school, subject to the Educators Employment Act of 1994 and the Labour Relations Act of 1995;
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, subject to the Public Service Act of 1994 and the Labour Relations Act of 1995;
- at the request of the Head of Department, allow the reasonable use, under fair conditions, of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school;
- discharge all other functions imposed upon the governing body by or under this Act; and
- discharge other functions consistent with this Act as determined by the Minister by notice in the *Government Gazette*, or by the Member of the Executive Council by notice in the *Provincial Gazette*.

There are a number of other functions that may be given to a school governing body to carry out. If the school governing body wants to be responsible for these additional functions, it must apply to the Head of Department, who may allocate these functions in writing to the governing body if he or she is satisfied that the governing body can perform the functions. Any of the following functions in terms of section 21 of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* may be allocated:

- to maintain and improve the school's property and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including the school's hostel, if applicable;

- to determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy;
- to purchase text books, educational materials or equipment for the school;
- to pay for services to the school; or
- other functions consistent with this Act and any applicable provincial law.

The need for co-operation at school level is reflected in the partnership principle set out in the preamble of the *South African Schools Act of 1996*. Not only must the school and the education authorities work together, but also parents, learners, educators and non-educator staff must all accept and share the responsibility for the governance of the school. Representation of various stakeholders on the governing body, including learners and educators, is a positive effort to achieve this aim.

Representivity on the school governing body is also crucial in promoting harmony in the educational community of Trenance Park. Involving the African parent as an active partner will also serve to strengthen links between the African communities and the school. This will enable the whole community, African as well as Indian, to identify and align itself with the school's goals, aspirations and activities. It is hoped that the African community will also support, for example, fund raising campaigns, organised by the school.

2.4. PERSONAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY PARENT GOVERNORS

Many parent governors have become increasingly disillusioned as they lack the expertise and experience to deal with current problems. Some of the major problems experienced by parent governors at the three schools in the Trenance Park area may be divided into those concerning their workload and lack of training.

2.4.1. Workload of Parent Governors

Interviews conducted with school principals have shown that 35% of parents elected to school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area resigned because of the heavy workload, which consisted of attending time - consuming meetings on a monthly basis, engaging in fund raising activities on a quarterly basis, making home visits, attending interviews for the selection of educators and management personnel and sitting on various sub – committees. Parent governors, as indicated in Chapter One (p. 9) were also frequently called to school during a crisis, for example, the teachers' strike.

A possible solution for overworked governors could be the co – option of African parents from the immediate and surrounding communities. This would also afford the governing body an ideal opportunity to include African parents in their structures. Their involvement would assist the school governing body in gaining credibility in African communities. For this reason school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area should

endeavour to either elect or co - opt at least 30% of African parents as governors, a percentage commensurate with the African learner population.

2.4.2. Lack of Training

According to Andrea Meeson in The Teacher, "Building capacity is not a one - off miracle... Since the elections of school governing bodies there has been a lull. These bodies were promised training in their roles and responsibilities. To date they have not received any training. The majority feel disillusioned, and some have resigned out of frustration" (1998: June 4).

Many parents elected to school governing bodies have little or no experience of school governance. It will be an exercise in futility if elected or co -opted parents are passive and inactive partners. All need to be supported by structured training programmes organised on an ongoing basis by the KZNDEC. Of the twenty-one parents serving at present on governing bodies at the three Trenance Park schools, only seven have experience, having served previously on PTAs. Training will be particularly important for African parent governors as even fewer have any knowledge of what is expected from them.

The KZNDEC "School Governance - Training Unit," headed by Dr. Mike Lotter, has embarked on introductory training programmes that cover aspects such as:

- meeting procedures;
- role functions of school managers and governors;

- promotion and selection procedures for educators;
- school fees.

The programmes on school fees and role functions will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

An effective governing body in the Trenance Park area should also require its members to be knowledgeable in the key area of cultural diversity. Governors should be educated in the culture and traditions of the African child but apart from the training programmes organised by the KZNDEC, African parent governors could also teach Indian parent governors about African cultural traditions. School governing bodies could also identify parents with specific skills to assist them with this.

A democratised governing body can only be effective and efficient by ensuring that its members receive training. Governing bodies for this reason should also find the money to send members to workshops that would assist them in achieving real integration in schools.

Davies and Anderson (1992: 88) believe that if governor training is not properly organised, it may lead to a worsening of relationship, rather than an improvement of relationship, between the principal and parent governors. Friction between the parent governors and educators may also appear and this can adversely affect the day – to – day running of the school and long term planning.

2.5. SCHOOL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY PARENT GOVERNORS

2.5.1. Non – payment of school fees

African learners in Trenance Park schools comprise 67% of the total learners with outstanding school fees. Trenance Park schools have adopted various strategies to obtain school fees such as:

- the withholding of progress reports of all learners whose fees are outstanding. This proved to be rather effective but school principals of the three schools had to stop because of pressure exerted by the KZNDEC;
- the use of debt collecting agencies and attorneys;
- house visits by parent governors for the collection of school fees;
- parents were called to school to sign letters of undertaking indicating the period and method of payment.

Schools in the Trenance Park area are struggling to survive because the annual fee recovery rate is 23% percent in the secondary school and 37% in the primary schools. These figures were obtained from the principals. All were hopeful that school subsidies would be increased to meet the increased demand on their resources (textbooks, stationery, water and electricity) created by the influx of African learners.

Parent governors do not know how to recover outstanding school fees effectively. Schools in the Trenance Park area have introduced registration fees, which cover half of

the year's school fees and are paid before admission. The involvement of African parent governors will assist in educating African parents on the payment of school fees. These governors will have to ensure that African parents develop a culture of paying for their children's education. African parent governors can also play a pivotal role in ensuring that school fees cater for the needs of the African learner.

2.5.2. Racial Clashes

These types of clashes have occurred in all Trenance Park schools, but the intensity has reached alarming proportions in the secondary school. Stabbings, muggings and fights after school have all been associated with racism. African learners believe that they are being unfairly treated because of their race. While this may be true to a limited extent, the writer has observed that the majority of African learners use racism as an excuse for all punishment of wrongdoing: for example, the school policy of detention for late arrival has been labelled a "racist action" because many of the latecomers are African learners.

African learners, coming from impoverished homes, have ganged up to intimidate Indian learners. A system of "payments for protection" has led to threats and fights during the breaks and at the end of the school day. Educators and parent governors serving on disciplinary committees at the three schools, have suspended African learners, in terms of the school's code of conduct. Their actions against African learners have been criticised by African parents. These parents fail to view this action in terms of a school's code of conduct, which rests on the fundamental principle of equal treatment of all learners

irrespective of race, creed or colour. School discipline may be more acceptable to African parents and learners if the school governing body includes African members.

A report, released by the South African Department of National Health and Population Development, found that problems experienced by African learners may be attributed to the adverse conditions under which many African children in South Africa live. It is important for a school governing body to know about these conditions before decisions about punishment are made. Some of the conditions learners are exposed to are the following:

- family breakups;
- poor family relationships;
- lack of parental control and supervision;
- clashing values of parents and children;
- unemployment;
- financial problems and illiteracy;
- alcohol and drug abuse;
- physical and sexual abuse of children;
- orphanhood due to imprisonment of parents;
- parents who leave home;
- collapse of family structures due to resettlement of families in alternative residential areas;
- family violence and collapse of the traditional family unit.

Other factors include:

- unrest in black residential areas;
- lack of employment opportunities;
- political factors (political instability);
- unequal distribution of resources (poor housing and schooling conditions);
- the high cost of living;
- lack of recreational facilities for youth;
- inadequate implementation of compulsory education; and
- poor community support systems (Le Roux, 1994: 99-100).

2.5.3. Vandalism

Class and subject teachers have detected an increase in the vandalism of school furniture and school buildings. Slogans painted on walls, chairs and desks have cost school governing bodies thousands of rands to obliterate, repair and restore damaged items.

Sometimes African learners deface walls and break windowpanes, their reasons being that educators have treated them “unfairly” for not completing their homework or holiday projects. They maintain that they lack resources in their community and educators should understand their circumstances.

African parents co – opted onto governing bodies could help educators to understand the plight and needs of some African children and find ways and means to resolve these issues.

2.5.4. Medium of Instruction

The writer, in his capacity as a school Head of Department of Languages, has observed that learners admitted to the three Trenance Park schools experience numerous difficulties in understanding subject matter. The medium of instruction at all three schools is English (First Language) and the Second Language is Afrikaans. African learners admitted to these schools come from schools where the medium of instruction is Zulu. Tests and examination results show that there is a high failure rate among African learners and the primary reason may be their inability to read English and understand the subject matter. African parent governors, if elected or co – opted to governing bodies, could perhaps encourage the employment of educators to teach Zulu. These educators could assist non – Zulu speaking educators and African learners to overcome language problems by scheduling regular bridging classes and assisting in general communication classes.

2.5.5. Absenteeism and Truancy

There is a high rate of absenteeism among African learners. At all three schools every learner is required to produce a note giving reasons for absence. Some of the reasons

given by African learners are the following:

- “I could not afford the bus fare” ;
- “on a Friday I work part time in the local shops and supermarkets” ;
- non – payment of school fees;
- inclement weather forces learners to stay away as they have to walk long distances and over difficult footpaths.

In the secondary school female learners stay away at the end of the month to look after their younger brothers and sisters so that their parents can collect their State grants. Many African learners visit clinics regularly for check-ups and treatment for ailments. There are also cases where some male learners appearing on criminal charges have to attend a law court. Some also stay away to visit parole officers and social workers or to do community service, as court ordered punishment.

Some learners play truant for the following reasons:

- incomplete homework;
- inadequate study for tests and examinations;
- criminal reasons – certain learners are caught playing truant and engaging in criminal activities such as stealing and mugging.

Absenteeism and truancy of African learners is a major problem at all three schools and singling out these learners at morning assembly will also result in charges of racism. It is therefore important for a school governing body to include African parents so that they

investigate the high rate of absenteeism and truancy. They will be able to make house visits to assist and advise parents and learners on remedial action. This type of concern will improve the relationship between the community and schools in the Trenance Park area.

2.5.6. Role Functions

Involving African parents as equal partners in governing bodies can be beneficial for the school in its quest to build stronger ties with surrounding communities. However, school governing bodies should guard against placing too much of power in elected or co-opted African parent governors. Parent governors should know exactly what their functions are in ensuring progress for the school.

Parent involvement in the form of school governing bodies has been legislated and it is important that a mutual relationship exists between educators and governors so that the learner benefits. However, this partnership can be problematic and Macpherson, warns that mutual trust, respect and clarification of roles are essential to bring benefits to the school but the absence of a well designed training programme can lead to "Governors exercising their accountability role, and particularly interpreting it to include intervention in the day - to - day management, are likely to provoke conflict between themselves and the head teacher" (1996: 65).

Many parent governors, in trying to become involved in every aspect of school affairs,

anger principals and educators. Principals in the Trenance Park area have noticed that they are not consulted when parent governors visit educators in the classroom to discuss issues of a professional nature. Parent governors are of the opinion that they are within their rights to visit educators when they are responding to complaints from the community.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 (section 16{3}) clearly indicates that the professional management of the school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department. This means that the principal has been delegated powers to effectively organise and control teaching and learning at his school. Only the Head of Department has the power to enforce co-operation and compliance from principals in matters pertaining to schools.

Although Gann views the headteacher as the single most influential figure in the success of a school and "the key figure in education" (1998:102), a similar problem appeared in England and Wales when the autonomy of the headteacher came under scrutiny from parent governors. Between 1992 and 1996, a number of headteachers in Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were suspended by school governing bodies for reasons ranging from poor inspection reports, financial irregularities and other administrative matters. Professional associations became agitated and wanted clear guidance on policymaking and daily management. The National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM) believed that the joint training of headteachers and governors would resolve a lot of problems. "Lessons in Teamwork" published by the Office for Standards in Education

(Ofsted) in Gann (1998:105) emphasised the need for a partnership, admitting that there is no one formula for the division of responsibility which is right for every school. A survey carried out by the Times Education Supplement (TES) in September 1996 found that only 30% of headteachers believed that "Government attempts to put more power in the hands of governors has improved management" (Gann, 1998: 105). Fear of the governors' role had led to further calls for a clearer separation of powers. A working party of headteachers and governors was established to devise a set of guidelines for defining their respective roles and responsibilities.

2.6. SOME VIEWS ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Democratisation requires the involvement of parents representing learners of all racial groups in schools in the Trenance Park area. Statistics, obtained from principals of schools, in this area indicate that the present African learner population is approximately 34% and therefore it is important to involve African parents in governing bodies so that they can ensure that the welfare of African children is also considered when a governing body makes decisions.

Schools aiming to be effective, efficient and relevant are under increasing pressure to develop strategies for securing greater parental involvement. Traditionally, education has been regarded as the exclusive domain of teachers and parent participation has been very limited. Edwards and Redfern in Squelch and Lemmer reflect the traditional viewpoint on parent participation:

"Ever since Plato there's been a strong belief that education should be carried out far from the interference of parents and there was no challenge to the view that teaching should be carried out behind closed doors. Gates were shut after the register had been called, visitors were actively discouraged and very few people other than officials were allowed to enter when school was in progress. The division between home and school was a very clear one, marked symbolically by the white line in the playground which parents were not expected to cross" (1994: 91 - 92).

During the 1960's the importance of parents, in England and Wales was recognised more and more and the 1970's saw a considerable increase in the number of schools establishing parent-teacher associations or involving parents in more active participation. During the 1980's parents acquired more legal rights to choose a child's school and receive information about his progress. Studies in Britain show that parents' attitudes to education are crucial. Irrespective of social class, if parents strongly support their children, they do much better at school than if they show no interest (Wragg and Partington, 1995: 127). Squelch and Lemmer also strongly advocate parental participation for successfully administered schools (1994: 91 - 93).

Nowadays parents are regarded as equal partners in education and they are beginning to play an increasingly important role. The time when parents' only link with the school was to attend the annual parents' evening is over, not only because family life has changed, but also because schools need and require parental support. Green sees parents as "key people in the home school partnership" (1995: 203). It is critical that parental

involvement be encouraged, including that of African parent governors who can help parent governors of other groups to understand African cultural traditions and the needs of the African learner.

In general schools today are under increasing pressure to show initiative and innovation in developing strategies for securing parental involvement. Teachers and parents realise that effective education requires close co-operation between teachers and parents. Schools have thus become far more "parent friendly" and many welcome parental involvement. Moreover, in the light of changes that have taken place in education in South Africa during the past few years, parents are expected, more than ever before, to assume greater responsibility for the governance of schools. In terms of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* changes in education have accorded parent governors greater responsibility in shaping the destiny of learners at school. Home and schools are no longer separated by the "white line" on the playground.

The *South African Schools Act of 1996* makes provision for the governance of public schools to be vested in governing bodies which stand in a position of trust towards schools (16{2}). A governing body provides an opportunity for all members of the school community to exercise their democratic rights and to become actively involved in their school. School governors are expected to assist a principal in organising and managing a school's activities in an effective and efficient way on behalf of the school community and in the interests of the learners. The more parents, learners, teachers and non-teaching staff

at schools know how school governance works, the more they will be able to contribute to productive and competent school governing bodies.

At present schools in the Trenance Park area have a multicultural learner population and this will require school governing bodies to become multicultural too. African parents, elected to the governing body, will greatly assist the school in understanding and resolving problems relating to the African learner because school governors are required to treat all learners equally and handle problems with skill and tact.

2.7. CONCLUSION

Transforming education at school level is a new challenge that involves the active participation of all major stakeholders. Our Constitution was drawn up to protect the values and principles of democracy. Democratising governing bodies in the Trenance Park area is the key to solving racial and cultural problems currently experienced at schools.

Wragg and Partington (1995: 64 - 65) are of the firm belief that teamwork is the key in this process of transformation. An effective governing body must function as a team and set out to work for the good of its school and the community it serves. Effectiveness and efficiency require a school governing body to be seen as a "critical friend - that is, one who hopes to identify what is wrong with a school, and then helps to make it better" (Gann, 1998: 44).

2.8. SUMMARY

The writer's aim in Chapter 2 was to study previous and present governance structures and to highlight problems experienced by present parent governors in the Trenance Park area.

The *South African Schools Act of 1996* was studied to obtain an insight into and understanding of the duties, functions and powers of elected school governing bodies.

It was suggested that the involvement of African parents in educational matters would assist the school governing body in resolving contentious issues involving African learners, for example African parent governors could assist with the collection of outstanding school fees from African parents. Various viewpoints on parental involvement were also discussed.

Chapter 3 will focus on the material and methods used in the research.

REFERENCES

1. Davies, B. and Anderson, L. 1992. Opting for self – management: the early experience of grant – maintained schools. London: Routledge.
2. Department of National Education. 1965. Indian Education Act (No.61 of 1965).
3. Edwards and Redfern, 1988. “Beyond the School Gate: Involving parents in Education” in Squelch, J. and Lemmer, E. 1994. Eight keys to effective school management in South Africa. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.
4. Gann, N. 1998. Improving school governors: how better governors make better schools. London: Falmer.
5. Green, H. (ed.) 1995. The School management handbook, 4th edition. London: Kogan Page.
6. Le Roux, J. (ed.) 1994. The Black child in crisis: a socio – educational perspective. Volume 2. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
7. Macpherson, R.J.S. (ed.) 1996. Educative accountability: theory, practice, policy and research in educational administration. Oxford: Pergamon.
8. McPherson, G. and Dlamini, M. 1998. Democratic School Governing Bodies in the Province of KwaZulu – Natal. The First Elections. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
9. Meeson, A. 1998. “Democracy needs a hand.” The Teacher. June, 4. Braamfontein.
10. Republic of South Africa. 1996. South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.

11. Sithole, S. 1994. "Parent – Teacher – Student Associations (PTSAs) : Present State and Future Prospects" in Democratic Governance of Public Schooling in South Africa. 1998. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
12. Squelch, J and Lemmer, E. 1994. Eight keys to effective school management in South Africa. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.
13. Wragg, E. C. and Partington, J. A. 1995. The school governors' handbook. 3rd edition. London: Routledge.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

School governing bodies are a new model of school governance and hence there have been problems in the Trenance Park area relating to certain aspects of this new governance structure. The focus of this Chapter will be to describe the instrument the writer used to collect data and to analyse the findings.

3.2. METHODOLOGY AND COLLECTION OF DATA

The materials and methods to be used in this study were qualitatively based on the writer's observation, face-to-face interviews, anecdotal material and a review of relevant literature.

The writer conducted the formally structured interviews in the Trenance Park area of the Verulam region and the sample comprised three schools in the area, that is two primary schools and a secondary school. Only one respondent was interviewed at a time. To interview more than one respondent at any given time would have prevented the writer from obtaining independent responses. The interview allowed the writer more interaction with his participants and this assisted in clarifying certain questions not understood by the respondent. The writer was also in a position to follow up ambiguous or interesting responses. The writer is also of the opinion that the personal touch created by the

interview increased his response rate (Mitchell and Jolley, 1992: 458 – 459). The sample took cognisance of the interviewee's gender, previous experience in governance structures, size of the school with regards to the learner population, the composition of the school governing body and learner population and the socio-economic status of the community.

The structured interviews (Appendices 2, 3) were conducted in two phases. A letter (Appendix 1) was sent one month in advance to principals and chairpersons of governing bodies requesting interviews. In the first phase three principals of the three schools in the area participated in the interview. In the second phase all three chairpersons of governing bodies were interviewed. The structured interview consisted of eleven questions for principals of schools and eight questions for the chairpersons of the governing bodies. The duration of the interview was approximately 35 minutes for principals and 25 minutes for chairpersons. Follow-up and probing questions were added as needed, and written records were compiled while the interview was in progress, with the anonymity of participants assured.

Open - ended questions used in the structured interviews (Appendices 2, 3) were administered to determine to what extent subjects of school governing bodies were equipped to deal with problems and to investigate the development of a training programme for parent governors dealing with multicultural and financial issues. Questions of this type allowed the respondents the freedom to answer in their own words. The flexibility of the open – ended questions gave the writer a useful exploratory device

because it allowed for unexpected and important responses. This type of question also allowed the writer to determine how many participants knew about the topic (Mitchell and Jolley, 1992: 459 - 466).

3.3. FINDINGS

3.3.1. DATA ANALYSIS (APPENDICES 2 AND 3)

Governing bodies in the selected three schools were elected according to Departmental regulations as prescribed in the *South African Schools Act of 1996*. In each school, parents in the community were informed by written notices and school handbills. Pupils conveyed the principal's invitation to the annual general meeting to their parents. The principal was the electoral officer in the elections for parent governors and educator representatives. At all three schools, separate meetings were held for the election of parents and educators.

3.3.2. QUESTION 1 : (APPENDICES 2 AND 3)

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

The initial problem encountered at schools in the Trenance Park area was the poor attendance of parents at the election of parent governors' meetings. This was a common problem encountered at all three schools. Parents, who were nominated as governors,

declined in most cases. At all three schools all African parents present at the meeting were nominated for seats on the governing bodies, but refused the nominations. They cited heavy workloads and long hours of employment as their main reasons. The poor attendance at these meetings could also be ascribed to a general apathy and reluctance by all parents to participate in and take responsibility for their children's schooling. Many parents felt that financial problems they were currently experiencing through unemployment, would not enable them to become committed to the school's governing body activities. 30% of Indian parents had to be persuaded into accepting nominations. The lack of interest shown by all parents forced each school principal to constantly remind parents of the importance of forming a school governing body and that the KZNDEC had laid down a deadline for its establishment.

Common problems encountered by the principals of the three schools in the Trenance Park area were as follows:

- there was a poor turnout at the parent election meeting, although all parents were informed in good time. Pupils were reminded daily at morning assembly to inform their parents of this important meeting. Notices in English were also sent to every home in the area. The latter could have contributed to the poor turnout of African parents because many of them could not read English;
- parents, who were nominated during the elections, were reluctant to stand for office or declined nomination. These parents were of the opinion that they would not be able to devote sufficient time to the school governing body's activities.

The three principals attributed parents' reluctance to a lack of appreciation regarding the importance of parental involvement in education. One principal expressed frustration at the lack of interest shown by parents:

"I was unable to persuade people of suitable calibre to stand for elections. Only 34 parents of a learner population in the excess of 800 voted and there were 3 spoilt papers. It was alarming to note that very little interest was shown by the parents. They do not seem to realise the importance of a school governing body."

At the three schools 80% of Indian parents and all of the African parents believed this election meeting was one where they could find out about their children's progress at school. During the year the school had scheduled special parents' evenings for this purpose. The principal, with teachers present, had to explain again the reasons for the meeting and its importance. At the meetings, 90% of the governors elected were former members of the pre - 1996 school associations (PTAs and PTSAs). The same people were elected because parents felt that they had the necessary experience to occupy positions in the new governance structure. African parents had not formed part of the original PTAs and PTSAs as only Indian parents had served on these governance structures.

3.3.3. QUESTION 2 : (APPENDICES 2 AND 3)

REASONS FOR POOR PARENT ATTENDANCE

In studying the racial profile of elected governors, the writer found that in all three

schools there was very little evidence of racial representivity. In the three schools all parents elected to the school governing body were Indian. The poor attendance of African parents (14% attended) at the annual general meeting could have contributed to the fact that African governors were not chosen. When the attendance of parents was low, the three principals in the Trenance Park area were forced to reschedule meetings. Concerned principals looked at possible factors that could have been responsible for the poor attendance:

- transport : public transport to and from Trenance Park is by minibus taxis. These taxis stop operating after 18h00 on a weekday and 15h00 on a weekend. Meetings at schools were scheduled for 19h00 on weekdays and 16h00 on weekends. This meant that African parents could not attend school annual general meetings. Most African parents use minibus taxis. Those that were present had come in their own vehicles;
- business hours : African parents working in factories, supermarkets and other businesses found it difficult to attend meetings because of their hours of employment;
- religious convictions : prayers on several evenings made it difficult to arrange a school meeting;
- safety reasons : the lack of streetlights and tarred roads are deterrents to public transport (bus and taxi) in the area after 18h00. Also parents have a long walk to the taxi ranks and are often victims of local thieves. These are factors which discourage attendance at school meetings;
- many parents see the school as an "overpowering" institution and educators are seen as superior. This causes feelings of inadequacy and discourages parents from becoming involved in school matters;

- some parents are simply slack about exercising their democratic rights by becoming parent governors;
- the majority of parents are ignorant about the importance and functions of school governing bodies.

3.3.4. TABLES

3.3.4.1. Table 1

Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of the learner population at the three Trenance Park schools, attendance of parents at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and number of parents declining nominations at the AGM.

<u>School</u>	<u>Total no. of learners</u>	<u>No. of African Learners</u>		<u>No. of Parents Attended</u>		<u>No. of Parents Declined</u>	
		<u>Indian</u>	<u>African</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>African</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>African</u>
Secondary School	1088	740	348	31	03	09	03
Primary School One	890	552	338	38	05	14	05
Primary School Two	711	476	235	42	08	15	08

Table 1 (p.49) and Figure 1 (p. 51) illustrates the breakdown of the learner population, which is important in establishing the need for representivity at governing body level. For example, the secondary school has a learner population of 1088 of which 348 are African learners. This statistic highlights the need to democratise the school governing body by involving African parents.

Table 1 and Figure 2 (p.52) illustrate the attendance of parents at the AGM to elect a school governing body. The information reveals that poor attendance was the common problem encountered at all three schools.

Table 1 and Figure 3 (p.53) also indicates the number of parents declining nominations at the AGM. It is disappointing to note that a high percentage of Indian parents declined their nominations and all African parents present also declined their nominations.

FIGURE 1 : Learner Population

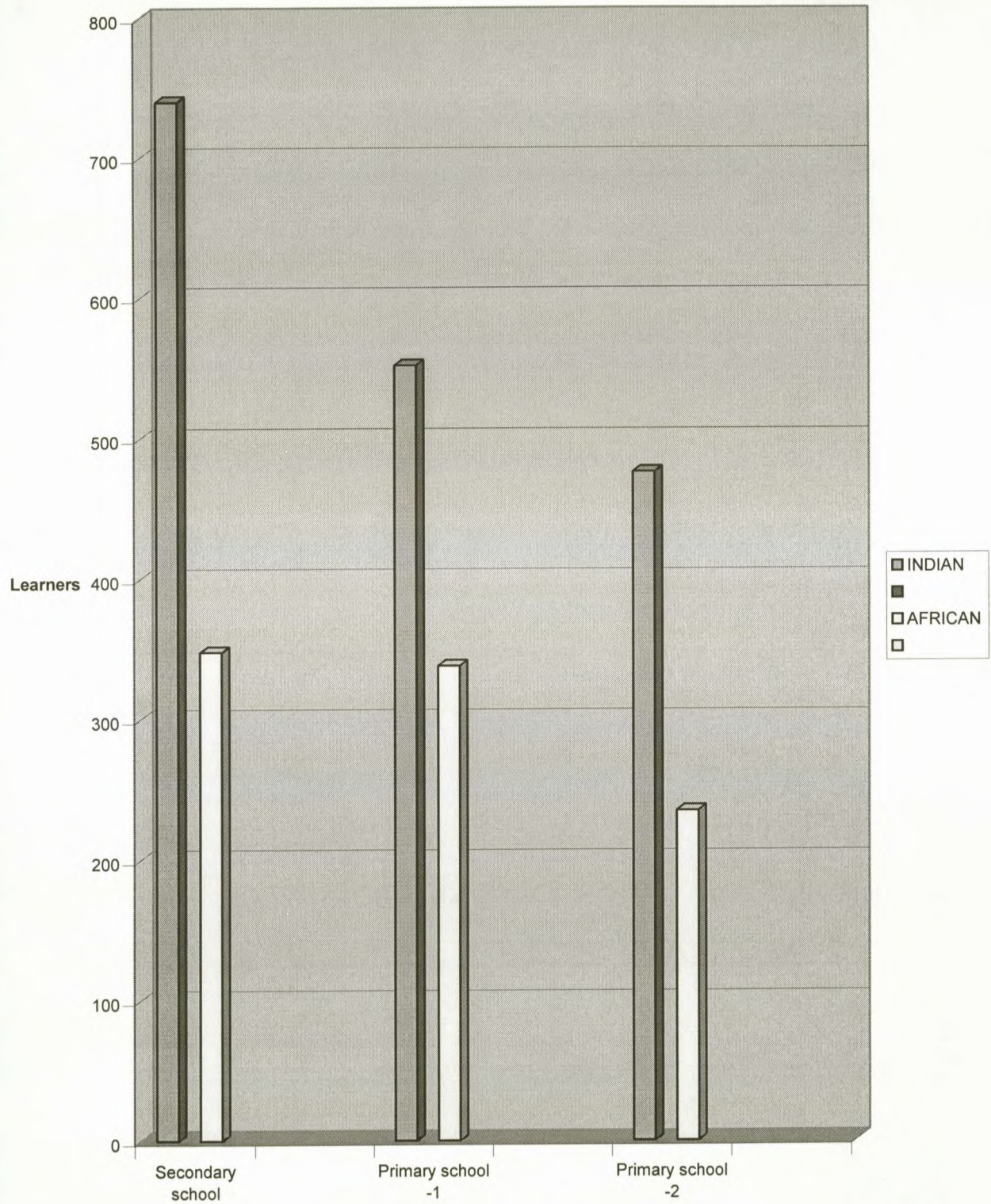


FIGURE 2 : Attendance of Parents

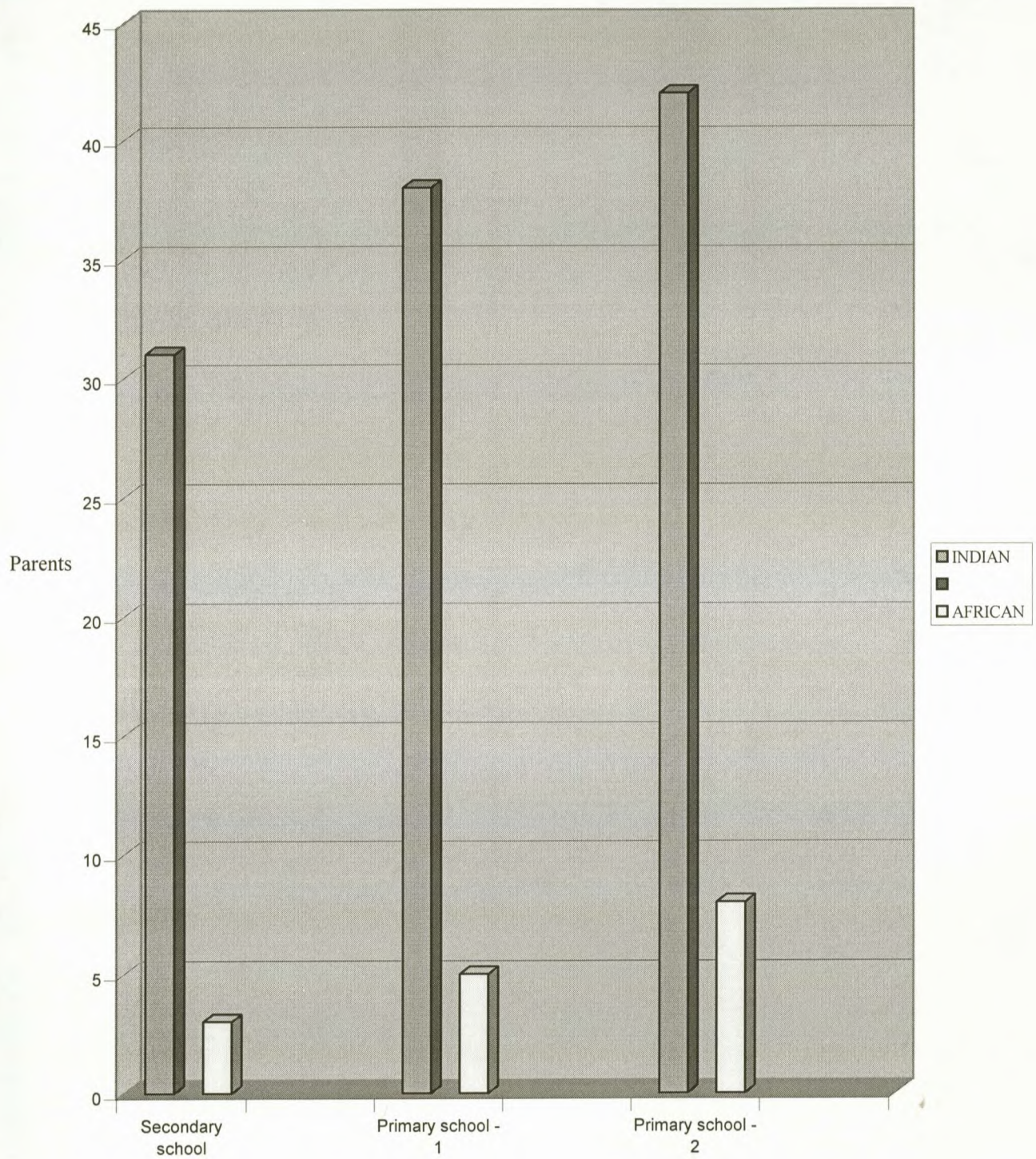
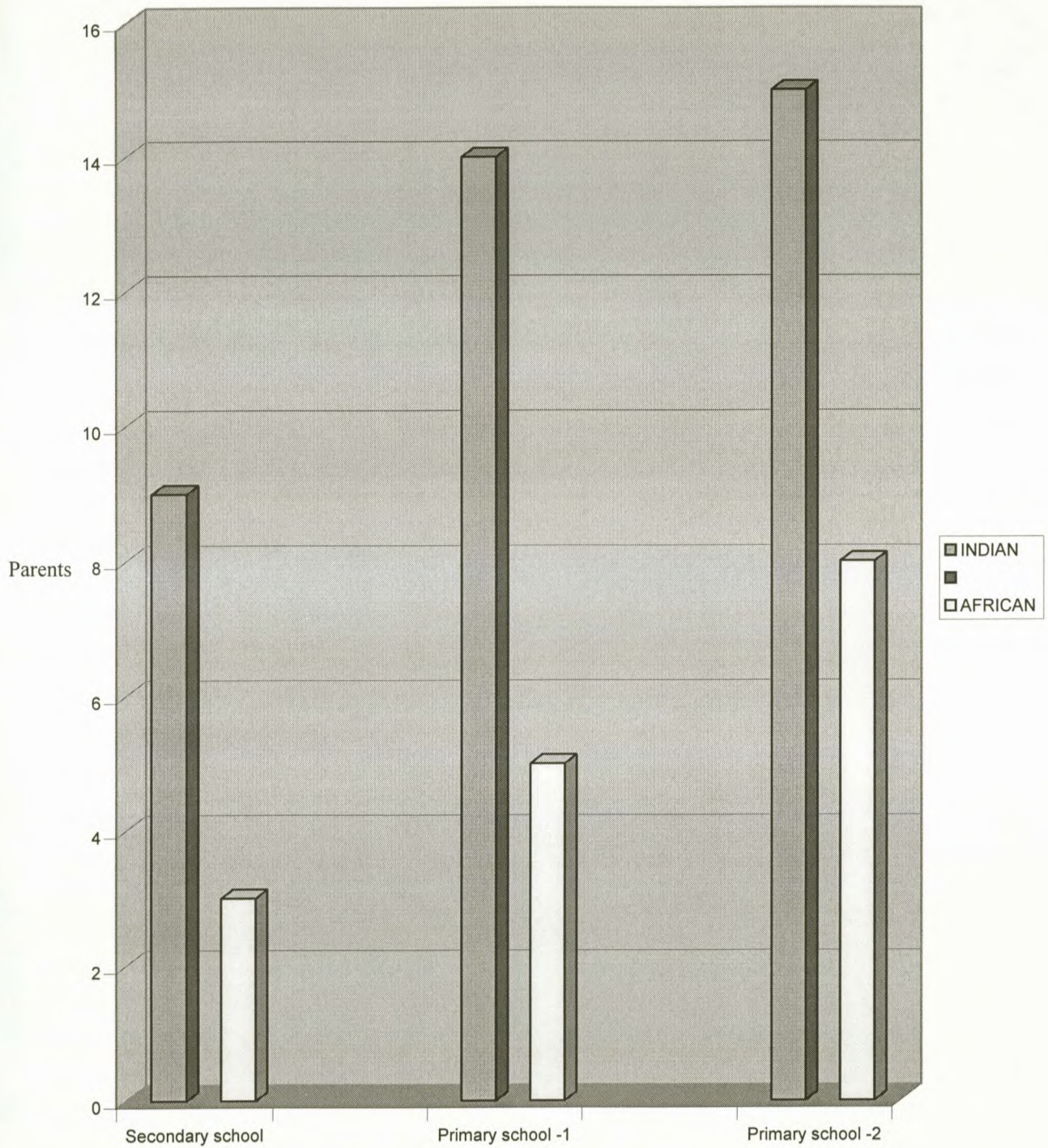


FIGURE 3 : Parents Declining Nominations

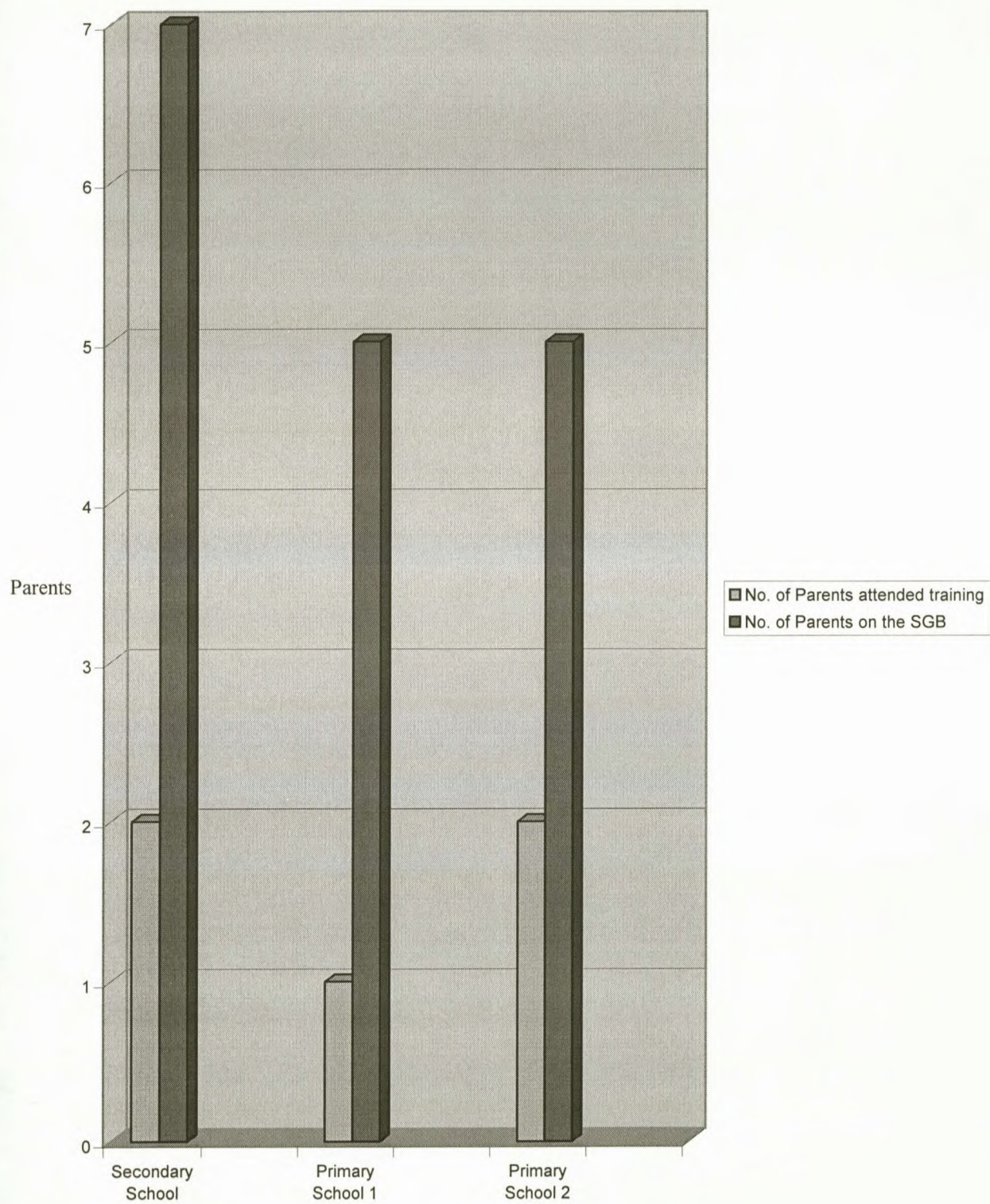


3.3.4.2. Table 2

Table 2 and Figure 4 (p.55) illustrate the training received by parent governors elected to the SGB. Many parent governors serving on school governing bodies in the Trenance Park schools have received minimal or no training at all. A democratised governing body will require its members to be empowered through training to actively involve themselves at school to resolve sensitive issues.

<u>School</u>	<u>No. of parents on the SGB</u>	<u>No. of parents attended training Workshops</u>
SECONDARY SCHOOL	07	02
PRIMARY SCHOOL ONE	05	01
PRIMARY SCHOOL TWO	05	02

FIGURE 4 : Training of Parent Governors



3.3.5. QUESTION 3 : (APPENDICES 2 AND 3)

The poor attendance at all three schools has forced principals to reschedule meetings. The three principals in the area have to work together in determining dates for their respective schools as many parents have children in both primary and secondary schools. Bilingual notices in Zulu and English should be sent to parents.

3.3.6. QUESTION 4 : (APPENDIX 2) AND QUESTION 7 : (APPENDIX 3)

MULTICULTURAL PROBLEMS

Many Indian parents feel that they are not sufficiently equipped to handle and resolve multicultural problems at school. In the past Indian parents had little or no contact with parents from neighbouring African schools. Most of the parents elected to serve on governing bodies at these schools had served on PTAs and PTSAs, which had been wholly Indian and which had only advisory powers.

Indian parent governors, who are generally conservative, are unable to deal with culture and values different from their own. This includes African culture and values. Yet children of all races and cultures have to be treated equally and fairly. This is the duty of school governors. Co-opting or electing African parent governors would be valuable in ensuring that the requirements of African learners are properly catered for at Trenance Park schools.

The three principals agreed that parent governors do not possess the capacity to handle multicultural matters. One principal strongly advocated training programmes for this because he felt that:

"Parent governors are not equipped to deal with multicultural problems at school. They must learn to be tolerant with fellow human beings."

3.3.7. QUESTION 5 : (APPENDIX 2) AND QUESTION 8 : (APPENDIX 3)

THE ABSENCE OF AFRICAN PARENTS

Indian parent governors, who are chairpersons of governing bodies at the three schools in the Trenance Park area, were unanimous in their views that African parents, if elected as parent governors, would be able to provide information on African cultural values and traditions. Despite the reasons for the absence of African parents at school meetings (as explained above) it was important that they be either co - opted or elected for the reasons outlined in 3.3.6.

The chairpersons of school governing bodies in the Trenance Park area felt there was a need for members serving on governing bodies to show a greater understanding of African culture and traditions. This would decrease and even eliminate tensions over culture, language and religious differences. If reconciliation and tolerance are not part of a programme at school, problems between learners at schools in the Trenance Park area will increase.

Misunderstandings and problems concerning race surface frequently. One governor expressed his concern about racial problems:

"What causes racial problems, among others is the fact of prejudice (often learned outside school) and the fact one group's needs are ignored by the school governing body."

Two chairpersons believed that proportional representation of racial groups on the governing body might be the way forward. They felt that if 34% of the learners at school were African, then the same percentage of African parents should be on the school governing body. However, if African parents elected an African parent for the sake of representation, this would be counter productive in resolving racial issues, especially if the elected parent lacked expertise. The writer is of the opinion that in time, African parents will be elected because they have the required abilities for successful governorship of schools.

All three principals believed that the absence of African parents handicapped the governing body in resolving multicultural issues. Although they believed the school governing body to be legitimate, democratic and transparent, the principals felt there was a need to include African parents on the governing body to ensure greater harmony and racial tolerance at schools. One principal was of the opinion that current homogeneous governing bodies must not only "preach racial tolerance but they needed to practice it as well."

3.3.8. QUESTION 6 : (APPENDIX 2) AND QUESTION 9 : (APPENDIX 3)

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FINANCES

The three parent governors, at all three schools, expressed the desire to run their schools along business lines. The governors also felt that if African learners were paying school fees, their parents should be represented on the school governing body. African parent governors would be able to ensure that the school budget also catered for African learners' needs.

The *South African Schools Act of 1996* (section 37{6}) clearly stipulates how funds should be used. Funds at school should be utilised for:

- educational purposes at, or in connection with, the school;
- educational purposes at, or in connection with another school, by agreement with such other public school, and with the consent of the Secretary;
- carrying out the duties of the governing body;
- any other educational purpose which has been agreed between the governing body and the Secretary (37{6}).

3.4. SUMMARY

This Chapter focussed on the analysis of research results. The election of parent governors was problematic because of poor attendance by Indian and African parents. The community needs to be educated on important aspects of school governance. Transformation can only be effective if parents of all learners are committed to a school's goals and objectives. The resolving of multicultural problems at school is a sensitive issue and it is important that conservative Indian parent governors embark on a process to involve African parents.

Chapter 4 will focus on the involvement of African parents on the SGB and the training of parent governors.

REFERENCES

1. Republic of South Africa. 1996. South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.
Pretoria: Government Printer.
2. Mitchell, M. and Jolley, J. 1992. Research Design Explained. 2nd edition. Orlando:
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Coombe and Godden realise the need for the training of governors in view of the challenging functions facing the governing body:

“It takes time and training to build the capacity of governors to enable them to sustain or challenge practices and influence policy matters. This is particularly so where local government of schools is contemplated in areas which were previously marginalised and underprivileged” (1996: 22).

An effective governing body has to be representative of the learner population of the school it serves. It is vital that the governing bodies in Trenance Park pursue all available options to involve African parents. Involving African parents in school activities is the first step in the democratisation process. Subsequent steps will allow African parents to empower themselves through training programmes. Empowering African parents will allow them to become active and equal partners in education. Their input will assist in understanding racial, cultural and financial problems.

This Chapter will initially focus on strategies to involve the African parent. The democratisation of the school governing bodies in Trenance Park can only be effective when all learners are treated equally and fairly. The needs of learners from the

disadvantaged communities cannot be ignored, it is therefore imperative that a school incorporates the needs of all learners at school through an effective programme aimed at involving parent governors from the disadvantaged communities.

This Chapter will also focus on findings of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in England and Wales concerning the representation of minority ethnic communities on governing bodies. The strategies used by the DfEE to involve minority communities may assist the KZNDEC in dealing with the problem of representation of Africans on the SGBs of predominantly Indian schools.

4.2. THE INVOLVEMENT OF AFRICAN PARENTS

Banks maintains that “successful educational interventions with low-income students and students of colour are more likely to succeed if they have a parent-involvement component” (1997: 211). African parents from the outlying areas of Amoati, Amootana and Inanda experience financial hardships while the informal settlements of Tombe, Ndlela and Ameer Kaloos surrounding Trenance Park are enveloped by a poverty culture and their inhabitants are often ignorant, negative towards and uninvolved in school matters.

Every effort must be made by schools to involve African parents in school affairs. Research and practice indicate that schools, which work closely with parents and encourage their active involvement, are more effective than those that do not. Schools in

Trenance Park will benefit from African parent involvement and show improved school performance, reduced drop - out rates, decreased racial and delinquent problems and the development of a more positive attitude towards school.

Although all three schools in this area seem to embrace the idea of African parent involvement, few have translated their beliefs into positive plans of action. It is easy to say that African parents must become more involved but it is far more difficult to decide how to go about this. There are still many barriers to overcome before African parents can truly be regarded as equal partners.

The first step in engaging the participation of African parents in Trenance Park schools is to have a definite plan of action. High on the agenda of this plan of action will be communication with the African parent. This communication is the initial step in establishing links with the African parent. There are a few ways which schools in the Trenance Park area can explore communicating with African parents in the outlying areas and informal settlements:

- written communication - letters, circulars, newsletters, reports and school magazines are essential means of communication. Letters sent to African parents must be bilingual (English and Zulu) if necessary;
- personal notes - African parents should be kept informed of important meeting dates, such as the AGM and their children's progress and efforts throughout the year. There are many opportunities for educators to send personal notes (in Zulu if necessary) to keep parents informed. It is not necessary to wait for the end of the term when reports

are sent out or until a serious problem arises. Thank you notes should also be sent to parents, who have assisted in any way;

- classroom newsletters - parents seldom receive a newsletter informing them of events taking place in their children's classroom. This type of newsletter should inform parents about class activities, coming events, homework, class tests and achievements;
- telephone calls - most African parents do not possess a telephone at home. Those who do possess a telephone at work or at home can easily be contacted by the school when necessary. If the school telephones a parent, a suitable time must be selected and it is important to be positive and polite. Co-opted African parent governors can assist in telephoning African parents on behalf of the school. This will alleviate the language problem;
- travelling diary - the majority of African parents live great distances from the school. A travelling diary can be used to reach these parents. This is a special diary (not the homework diary) that the child carries around in which parents and educators can communicate on a regular basis (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994:97). It is important for educators to communicate in Zulu in order for the message to be understood by African parents. Indian educators can enlist the assistance of African parent governors or learners in the senior grades in sending messages to African parents.

The involvement of African parents is important in building an effective team that is capable of resolving problems and will ensure stability, harmony and progress at the school. African parents need representation on the school governing body if they are to

perform as equal partners in a team. Schools in Trenance Park will benefit from this involvement as many problems relating to African learners will be resolved thereby ensuring stability at governance level.

The involvement of minority communities in LEAs in England and Wales is significant for our own governing bodies, for example, in the Trenance Park area. Muslim parents were successfully co-opted by LEAs and they have made a valuable input to the needs of Muslim learners. Similarly if African parents are co-opted onto the governing body they will provide important information on the needs of the African learner.

4.3. REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ON GOVERNING BODIES

In England and Wales minority ethnic communities in local authorities were under – represented on school governing bodies. A survey carried out by the Department of Education and Science in 1992 found that 2% of school governors were from these communities. An earlier survey in 1990 had looked at the recruitment and training of minority ethnic community governors. This survey also showed that only five local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales translated recruitment leaflets into minority languages, while a further three took other actions to identify target groups and individuals from minority communities. Six LEAs made a concerted effort to tailor training programmes to meet the needs of governors from minority ethnic communities and seven other LEAs monitored ethnic minority representation in some way.

Since these surveys in 1990 and 1992, the Muslim community has become more established in school governance, publishing its own information for increasing Muslim participation in school governance structures. Muslim parent governors made vital input on the school uniform and prayer observance of Muslim learners. In the 1992 recruitment campaign, local education authorities, such as Birmingham, recruited parents from minority communities as governors. The concerted effort by LEAs ensured successful participation and involvement by minority communities.

The DfEE and LEAs have provided adequate funding for training programmes to assist governors from the minority ethnic communities. The training of governors has evolved into an area of educational management with full-time officers in most authorities, because the tone of governor training has changed from “ Tell us what to do” to “ We know what to do, tell us how to do it” (Gann, 1998:99).

Educational management authorities have trained governors from minority communities in various aspects of school governance. The duration of the training programmes ranged from a one-day seminar to a weeklong workshop.

4.4. TRAINING OF PARENT GOVERNORS

In KwaZulu - Natal there are eight regions. These regions are divided into district and circuit areas. Training programmes should reach every school governing body in every circuit. Many district and circuit offices have been running workshops for school

governors for several years, some lasting a half or a whole day, others spread over a residential weekend, or comprising a series of sessions spread over a long period. Courses are sometimes put on for all the school governors in a region, or mounted specifically for one or two school governing bodies. Democratised school governing bodies can become effective if all school governors attend these training programmes. It is important for the KZNDEC to schedule these programmes to involve as many school governors as possible.

Wragg and Partington strongly advocate a precise policy on school governor training which they suggest should incorporate the following basic principles:

- involve the profession - principals or educators may occasionally be hostile to training programmes if they are not consulted or included in such programmes. If one involves principals and other education personnel in the training programme, they would be able to give realistic and first hand information on problems present in schools;
- make it practical - it is important for school governors to simulate imaginary meetings. Use case studies and where possible use good video material from media or tertiary institution libraries;
- bring in as many as possible - training courses, which allow one person to attend from each school governing body will take too long to reach most people. If possible, regional courses should be mounted for two or three representatives from each school governing body and circuit courses for a larger group of people from each school. School governing bodies should allow African parents an opportunity to attend these

workshops. If African parent governors are unable to attend, school principals must schedule separate workshops that are convenient to all school governors;

- provide back-up material - often people go to training courses and then find they cannot recall the details. A small resource booklet or pamphlet summarising the contents of the workshop, a set of guidelines, letters of information or news sheets will give people a useful record of proceedings to which they can refer at their leisure. Such material must be translated into Zulu and this will allow elected or co – opted African parent governors to develop at their own pace and confidence in contributing to deliberations and activities of the school governing body;
- follow through - often courses are put on and then forgotten about. School governors, who have been to an induction course in the early stages of their governorship, may require something more exacting after a year or two. Furthermore, it should be remembered that in Trenance Park new school governors are elected every year, in many cases for the first time. Thus a course may have to be repeated every year or two to cater for all newcomers (1995:72).

School governor development and training, both formal and informal, has an important role to play in shaping the future of a school as a progressive institution. A trained parent governor is an asset to a school and therefore it is important that sufficient attention is devoted by a school governing body to parent governor training.

4.5. TRAINING PROGRAMME ON SCHOOL FEES

The writer has included a training programme conducted at a workshop in June 2000 by the School Financial Training Unit of the KZNDEC. School principals and parent governors were expected to attend.

4.5.1. Preamble to Workshop

TARGET GROUP	:	Parent governors and Principals
COURSE DURATION	:	One day
LEGISLATION AND POLICY	:	1.South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996. 2. KwaZulu – Natal Schools Education Act No.3 of 1996.
PURPOSE	:	To empower all roleplayers on legislation that governs school fees thus enabling them to resolve related issues.

4.5.2.1. Legislation on School Fees

1. The amount of school fees to be levied per learner for the ensuing year will be determined by the majority of parents at a meeting of parents convened by the SGB and held during the 4th quarter of the current year.

2. At least 30 days written notice of the meeting must be given in a manner deemed appropriate by the SGB.
3. The following items must be placed before the meeting for approval-
 - (a) the proposed budget of the school for the ensuing year;
 - (b) the amount of school fees to be paid by parents of learners; and
 - (c) equitable criteria and procedures in compliance with regulations made in terms of section 39(4) of the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 for the total, partial or conditional exemption of parents who are unable to pay school fees.
4. Decisions by the SGB, for the approval of the budget, school fees to be charged and exemptions from payment must be made in accordance with decisions taken by the majority of parents present and voting at the meeting.
5. The proceedings at the meeting must be recorded in minutes and the number of votes of those in favour, those against and those abstaining on each motion must be recorded.
6. A parent is liable to pay the school fees determined by the SGB in accordance with sub – regulation (4) unless he or she has been exempted from the payment in full or in part.
7. A parent may appeal to the Secretary against a decision of the SGB regarding the non - exemption of such parent from payment of school fees.
8. An appeal in terms of sub – regulation (7) must be in writing and must be made within 30 days of the parent concerned being informed of the amount of school fees payable by him or her.

9. The SGB may by process of law enforce the payment of fees by parents who are liable to pay.

4.5.2.2. Workshop on School Fees

A democratised school governing body will require school governors to assist in collecting and utilising school fees for the benefit of all learners. The above programme will not empower school governors as it fails to take cognisance of the realities that presently exist at schools:

- meetings to determine school fees are poorly attended as discussed in Chapter Three;
- parent governors do not possess the expertise to draw up a school budget;
- many parents are ignorant of legislation and procedures on school fees;
- the large majority of schools cannot afford to employ finance officers;
- workshops are held during weekdays when most parent governors are not available.

The writer recommends that workshops conducted by officials of the KZNDEC are properly planned and organised. Consideration should be given to the following factors:

- these workshops involve school principals and parent governors as organisers and presenters as they are aware of the realities at schools;
- materials and resources provided at these workshops are bilingual (English and Zulu);
- workshops need to be scheduled at a time that is suitable for parent governors;

- workshops are decentralised as problems differ from area to area. Decentralisation will also assist organisers to work with a smaller group of principals and school governors.

School principals can also play an active role in empowering their school governing bodies. They must ensure that:

- they conduct workshops and training programmes for their school governors. This will help parent governors who are not able to attend workshops organised by the KZNDEC. Schools in the Trenance Park area are in close proximity. School principals can work together in planning workshops common to the school governing bodies of all three schools;
- parents with expertise are identified to assist parent governors, for example, a bookkeeper could assist the SGB in drawing up the school budget;
- the community is informed on important issues, for example, the non – payment of school fees will result in the termination of essential services, such as water, telephone and electricity;
- all communication is in both English and Zulu;
- African educators are either selected or employed by SGBs of Trenance Park schools. These educators will assist the school in communicating with African learners and parents;
- house-calls at the convenience of parents are made;
- groups of parents are called to school to discuss common issues.

4.6. TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR PARENT GOVERNORS AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Involving African parents as equal partners in governing bodies of the Trenance Park area can be beneficial for the school in its quest to build stronger ties with surrounding communities. It is important for parent governors in terms of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* to know exactly what their powers are.

In order to assist and support governing bodies and school management teams in the KwaZulu Natal region, the KZNDEC School Governance Training Unit held a workshop in July 1998 to demarcate leadership and management functions thereby separating the professional component and the school governing body. Management personnel and parent governors attended this workshop. The writer will reproduce a copy of the training programme issued at this workshop.

4.6.1. Preamble to Workshop

TARGET GROUP	:	1. Parent governors. 2. Principals representing the school management team.
COURSE DURATION	:	One day
LEGISLATION AND POLICY	:	1. South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996.

PURPOSE : To assist all roleplayers in demarcating functions between the professional component and the governing body.

4.6.2. Group Functions

Training was conducted in groups and the “x” in the training manual denoted the group that was responsible for the specific function. These functions were demarcated according to the following groups:

A : School Management Team

B : Co – operation between the Management Team and the School Governing Body

C : School Governing Body

D : KZNDEC

<u>LIST OF MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS</u>	A	B	C	D
Determination of the school curriculum.		x		
Supervision and control of educator's work.	x			
Welfare matters concerning learners.	x			
Compilation of school's mission statement.		x		
Identification and definition of school's aims and objectives.			x	
Compilation of school's instructional timetable.	x			
Allocation of subject and classes to educators.	x			

Allocation of educators involved in co-curricular duties.	x			
Selection of school's representative teams/groups.	x			
Determination of criteria for awards to learners.	x			
Guidance and control over state employed non-teaching staff.		x		
Allocation of use of school's facilities by outsiders.		x		
Fund-raising.			x	
On-going (in-service) training of educators.		x		
Utilisation of facilities for the benefit of learners.		x		
Drawing up of the school budget.		x		
Monitoring of instructional effectiveness of educators.	x			x
Appraisal of the school management team.				x
Allocation of funds to the school.				x
Adoption of code of conduct for learners.			x	
Maintaining learner discipline.		x		
Investigation of allegations of misconduct by educator.	x			
Suspension and/or expulsion of a learner.		x		x
Monitoring of academic standards of the school.	x			x
Monitoring of academic progress of the learners.	x			
Determination of the system of examination/testing at the school.	x			
Interviewing of applicants for level one post at school.			x	
Identification of promotion post to be filled at school.	x			
Recruitment of educators.		x		

Legal action against parents owing school fees.			X	
Public relations/marketing of the school.		X		
Decision to request an evaluation of the school's performance.			X	
Communication with the Superintendent of Education.	X			
Involvement in the pastoral care programme for educators.		X		
Action against an inefficient educator.	X			
Appraisal of work performance of educator.	X			
Admission of learner to school.		X		
Setting criteria for the use of school facilities by outside organisations.			X	
Recommendation on the expulsion of a learner.			X	
Identification of level one post.	X			
Communication with parents: general and specific.	X			X
Determination of starting and closing time for school.				X
Confirmation of permanent appointments.				X
Motivation of parents to become involved in school activities.		X		
The arrangement of visits by subject advisers.	X			
The planning of the school's annual programme.		X		
The daily management of the school.	X			
Recommendation on the appointment of educators to post at the school.			X	
Recommendation on the appointment of state funded non-educator staff.			X	

(Lotter, 1998: 1-4).

The writer is of the opinion that aspects of this programme confused parent governors, for example, they believed that drawing up the school budget in terms of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* was their function. The programme suggests that this function be shared between the school management team and the school governing body. In terms of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* certain powers and functions have been allocated to parent governors (Chapter Two). This confusion can result in conflict between the SGB and the school management team.

The KZNDEC School Governance Training Unit should authenticate information before it is presented at workshops. Training documents are not effective if there are ambiguities. School principals should ensure that parent governors have in their possession a copy of the *South African Schools Act of 1996*. Principals must have internal workshops to discuss the powers and functions of parent governors. It is important for all parties to understand the exact nature of their functions to promote efficiency within the school.

4.7. CONCLUSION

“We have in South Africa an emerging and evolving core culture to which all South Africans contribute.... by drawing from the cultural streams in which they originated. The flowing together of... traditions in South Africa has created a huge river without eliminating the contours of the original tributaries” (Eyber et al,1997:8).

Our society in South Africa is a composition of people from different religions, cultures and languages and is characterised as much by its diversity as by its homogeneity. South Africa has moved away from a policy of racial segregation. Following the changing political situation and a movement towards a united, non - racial and democratic future, new policies and approaches must be developed to confront the millenium. In terms of the *South African Schools Act of 1996* school governing bodies are important to the new model of organisation and governance in schools.

Representivity is vital for the realisation of a democratised governance structure. Therefore it is imperative that every avenue be explored by all the relevant stakeholders to make this a reality. The increased enrolment of African learners at the three schools in the Trenance Park area necessitates the involvement of African parents to transform the school into an effective entity. For schools in the Trenance Park area to assume relevance, the objective of involving African parents must be realised as soon as possible.

A democratised school governing body will ensure that a school remains progressive and committed to the concerns of the community.

“ I feel the school governing body’s essential purpose is to enable us all to work together for the benefit of the child in the classroom. We all have the same objectives and that is to see our children excelling at the end of the day. We also want to see a happy and committed bunch of teachers. Eventually this wonderful atmosphere will extend to the whole community.” (Principal of a school in Trenance Park).

4.8. SUMMARY

This Chapter focused initially on the involvement of African parents in school activities. Their insight and guidance on cultural matters is invaluable and it is imperative that every effort is made by the school governing body and management to encourage the participation of African parents. The efforts of the DfEE to involve minority ethnic communities on school governing bodies also received consideration.

Certain aspects of governor training were studied and appropriate sections were selected for the use of developing a training programme for governors in the Trenance Park area of KwaZulu - Natal. Joint training of governors and principals was suggested to develop parents into effective school governors.

REFERENCES

1. Banks, J.A. 1997. Teaching Strategies for ethnic students. 6th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
2. Coombe, C. and Godden, J. (eds.) 1996. Local / district governance in education : lessons for South Africa. Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management.
3. Eyber, C., Dyer, D. and Versveld, R. 1997. Resisting Racism: a teacher's guide to equality in education. Rondebosch: Idasa.
4. Gann, N. 1998. Improving school governors: how better governors make better schools. London: Falmer.
5. Lotter, M. 1998. Leadership and Management Functions. KwaZulu - Natal School Governance Training Unit. Department of Education: Durban.
6. Lotter, M. 2000. School Fund Financial Training. KwaZulu - Natal School Governance Training Unit. Department of Education: Durban.
7. Squelch, J. and Lemmer, E. 1994. Eight keys to effective school management in South Africa. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.
8. Wragg, E.C. and Partington, J.A. 1995. The school governors' handbook. 3rd edition. London: Routledge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Armstrong, M. 1999. How to be an even better manager. 5th edition. London: Kogan Page.
2. Badenhorst, J. and Scheepers, L. 1995. School Management Training. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers.
3. Banks, J.A. 1997. Teaching Strategies for ethnic students. 6th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
4. Bennett, C.I. 1995. Comprehensive multicultural education: theory and practice. 3rd edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
5. Buckland, P. and Hofmeyr, J. 1993. Education governance in South Africa. Education Policy and System Change Unit. Johannesburg: Urban Foundation.
6. Coleman, M., Bush, T. and Glover, D. 1994. Managing finance and external relations. Harlow: Longman Information and Reference.
7. Coombe, C. and Godden, J. (eds.) 1996. Local/district governance in education: lessons for South Africa. Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management.
8. Dalin, P. and Rust, V.D. 1996. Toward schooling for the Twenty - First Century. London: Cassel.
9. Davies, B. and Anderson, L. 1992. Opting for self-management: the early experience of grant-maintained schools. London: Routledge.
10. Department of National Education. 1965. Indian Education Act (No.61 of 1965).

11. Edwards and Redfern, 1988. " Beyond the School Gate: Involving parents in Education" in Squelch, J. and Lemmer, E. 1994. Eight keys to effective school management in South Africa. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.
12. Eyber, C., Dyer, D. and Versveld, R. 1997. Resisting Racism: a teacher's guide to equality in education. Rondebosch: Idasa.
13. Gann, N. 1998. Improving school governors: how better governors make better schools. London: Falmer.
14. Glatter, R. (ed.) 1988. Understanding school management. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
15. Green, H. (ed.) 1995. The School management handbook. 4th edition. London: Kogan Page.
16. Heugh, K., Siegruhn, A. and Pluddemann, P. (eds.) 1995. Multilingual education for South Africa. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
17. Le Roux J. (ed.) 1994. The Black child in crisis: a socio-educational perspective. Volume 2. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
18. Leedy, P.D. 1997. Practical research: planning and design. 6th edition. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
19. Lemmer, E.M. and Badenhorst, D.C. 1997. Introduction to education for South African Teachers: an orientation to teaching practice. Cape Town: Juta.
20. Lotter, M. 1998. Leadership and Management Functions. KwaZulu - Natal School Governance Training Unit. Department of Education: Durban.
21. Lotter, M. 2000. School Fund Financial Training. KwaZulu - Natal School Governance Training Unit. Department of Education: Durban.

22. Lynch, J. 1983. The multicultural curriculum. London: Batsford Academic and Educational.
23. Macpherson, R.J.S. (ed.) 1996. Educative accountability: theory, practice, policy and research in educational administration. Oxford: Pergamon.
24. McPherson, G. and Dlamini, M. 1998: Democratic School Governing Bodies in the Province of KwaZulu - Natal. The First Elections. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
25. Mitchell, M. and Jolley, J. 1992. Research Design Explained. 2nd edition. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.
26. Moon, B. 1994. A guide to the national curriculum. 2nd edition. Oxford: University Press.
27. Preedy, M., Glatter, R. and Levacic, R. 1997. Educational management: strategy, quality and resources. Buckingham: Open University Press.
28. Province of KwaZulu – Natal. 1996. KwaZulu – Natal Schools Education Act No.3 of 1996. Durban: Government Printer.
29. Ramsey, P.G. 1987. Teaching and learning in a diverse world: multicultural education for young children. New York: Teachers College Press.
30. Raven, J. 1980. Parents, Teachers and Children. A study of an educational home visiting scheme. Oxford: University Press.
31. Republic of South Africa. 1996. South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.

32. Sithole, S. 1994. "Parent – Teacher – Student Associations (PTSAs): Present State and Future Prospects" in Democratic Governance of Public Schooling in South Africa. 1998. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
33. Sithole, S. 1995. "The Participation of Students in Democratic School Governance" in Democratic Governance of Public Schooling in South Africa. 1998. Education Policy Unit. Durban: Natal University Press.
34. Squelch, J. and Lemmer, E. 1994. Eight keys to effective school management in South Africa. Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.
35. Van der Westhuizen, P.C. (ed.) 1991. Effective educational management. Pretoria: HAUM.
36. West, S. 1993. Educational values for school leadership. London: Kogan Page.
37. Wragg, E.C. and Partington, J.A. 1995. The school governors' handbook. 3rd edition. London: Routledge.

PERIODICAL ARTICLES

1. Lemmer, E.M. 1997. "Parent Involvement: Caring for the Children we Share." The Educator's Link Volume 2, Issue 1, 19.
2. Nxesi, T. 1998. "The Education Crisis – a way forward." The New Teacher Journal. Volume 5, No 1, 4-7.
3. O'Reilly, J. 1997. "Profitability, Security, Convenience – Vending has it all!" The Educator's Link Volume 2, Issue 1, 36.

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

1. Daily News. May 11, 2000. "Teaching the governors." Durban.
2. Meeson, A. 1998. "Democracy needs a hand." The Teacher. June, 4. Braamfontein.
3. The Natal Mercury. June 1, 2000. "Democratisation." Durban.

APPENDIX 1

Sir / Madam

Request for an interview

Please be informed that I am in the process of completing my dissertation. I have chosen the three schools in the Trenance Park region as my area of study. It would be greatly appreciated if you could allocate me a time slot to conduct an interview. Names would be kept strictly confidential. Your participation will assist me in designing a training programme that will assist parent governors in handling culturally diverse issues as well as problematic issues on finance.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Mr. P. Maharaj (HOD – Trenance Park Secondary)

Telephone: 5785761 (W)

5334993 (H)

APPENDIX 2

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW - CHAIRPERSON – SGB

AIM : *To investigate problems experienced by parents in the election of the school governing body.*

1. What problems did you notice in electing the school governing body?
2. What were some of the reasons for the poor attendance of parents?
3. How were these problems overcome?
4. Do you feel that you are adequately equipped to handle and resolve multicultural problems at school?
5. Do you feel that the absence of African parents on your governing body has handicapped the governing body in dealing with multicultural problems?
6. Have you or the other parent governors experienced any problems in managing finances at school? If so, what are the problems experienced?
7. Has any training been done? If so, by whom and were the areas covered? If not, in which areas do you think training is required?
8. Do you feel parents have a meaningful role to play on the school governing body?
9. Can you supply a breakdown of the parent component of the governing body?

No. of Parents	* Race (W/B/I/C)	Un-/Self-/Employed
1.		
2		
CO – OPTED PARENTS		
3.		
4		

*Race classification is required only for measuring progress towards **representivity***

APPENDIX 3

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: PRINCIPAL

AIM: *To investigate the problems experienced by the school principal with regard to the school governing body elections.*

1. What problems did you encounter in electing the school governing body?
2. What were some of the reasons for the poor attendance of parents?
3. How were these problems overcome?
4. How do you view the role of the governing body at your school?
5. Do you feel that the principal / parent has a meaningful role to play on the school governing body?
6. Do you feel that governing body members require training for their roles on the governing body?
7. Do you feel that parents are adequately equipped to deal with multicultural problems at school?
8. Do you feel that the absence of African parents on the governing body has handicapped parent governors in handling multicultural problems?
9. Have you or the parent governors experienced problems in managing finances at school? If so, what are the problems experienced?
10. Has any training being done? If so, by whom and what areas were covered? If not, in which areas do you think training is required?
11. Can you supply a breakdown of the learner component at your school?

Number of learners :		
Number of *Indians :		
Number of *Blacks :		

**Race classification is required for measuring the changing composition of the pupil population.*