ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECENTRALIZATION POLICY IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: CASE OF MONZE DISTRICT.

By

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A Dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master** of **Education** in **Educational Management**

The University of Zambia, Lusaka

2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work that has been presented in this dissertation is my effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. However, where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Signature: .....

Date: .....2ND AUGUST, 2016.....

APPROVAL

This Dissertation by Beatrice Miyoba is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Educational Management by the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University.

Examiners' Signatures

Signed.....

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Mr. Simon Miyoba who had always wanted me to excel to greater heights. Dad, thirteen years down the line yet your death is unbearable. Thank you for all you did to make me who I am. -M.Y.S.R.I.E.P.

ABSTRACT

Despite various arguments which have been advanced in favour of educational decentralization, there is no ideal version of decentralization. This explains why success or failure in implementation tends to be context based and mostly influenced by a number of factors such as the availability of financial resources. By applying the qualitative study approach, this study purported to assess how the implementation of the decentralization policy was done in Monze District, specifically at the District Education Board and Monze Boarding Secondary School. This was necessitated by the existing gap between the policy and its implementation. On one hand, primary qualitative data was collected through the use of structured, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and on the other hand, official policy documents and reports were also used as important secondary data sources. One key informant from the District Board (the District Education Board Secretary) and the head teacher of the named school were drawn for interviews. Two focus group discussions involving ten teachers, five P.T.A. members and five school Board members were organized in order to solicit for views on the implementation of the policy from the primary beneficiary's point of view.

The major findings were drawn from the objectives of the study which were (i) assessing the implementation of the decentralization policy at the level of the District Education Board, (ii) establishing how the policy is being implemented in the school, (iii) assessing community participation by the school Board and P.T.A. in the school and (iv) determining the problems faced by District Board, the school, PTA and the School Board in the implementation of the policy).

Firstly, this study established that the decentralization policy is not fully implemented at district level due to challenges like inadequate human, financial and material resources, lack of political commitment and interference of tight control from the top officials. In the case of teacher recruitment and financial matters, for example, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has delegated authority to the DEBs, but in practice this authority is largely reclaimed. This board has, therefore, not been able to efficiently make decisions that could support effective implementation of the policy.

However, it was revealed that adoption of educational decentralization has led to positive changes in the school, especially through community and teacher participation which have resulted in the transparency of school activities. This has been made possible through the P.T.A., teachers, and school Board. Nevertheless, the school is facing a challenge of limited resources for developmental projects, resulting from the government's regulation of the school fees and dormancy of some members.

This study concluded that although the decentralization policy is lowly implemented at the district office, it is moderately implemented at the school level.

Recommendations of the study, therefore, were that there was need for the government to strengthen institutional capacity by increasing political commitment and a clear and strong regulatory framework that will support the implementation of the policy. Additionally, there is need for the Ministry of Education to ensure that there is enough competent personnel to operate the decentralization activities and the District Board should promptly approve and give feedback on school projects proposed by P.T.A. Finally, the government should provide an alternative

measure for financial mobilization in schools for continuity of developmental projects.
Lastly, it was suggested that an investigation based on mixed methods involving more than two education boards and schools would yield more robust findings and recommendation for improving implementation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DEB	District Education Board
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
EFA	Education for All
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
MoE	Ministry of Education
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SSA	Sub- Saharan Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Zambia's educational development is guided by the principles of liberalization, decentralization, equality, equity, partnership and accountability because the Zambian government realizes that education is a human right that should be enjoyed by each Zambian by way of creating, promoting and supporting favorable conditions under which education can thrive (Ministry of Education, 1996). Zambia has recently embraced the educational decentralization policy which states that local-level structures at the district and institutional levels shall be vested with authority for decision-making and expenditure of funds, in order to enhance stakeholders' participation in planning and implementation. Educational decentralization is not a new concept per se but an old one except it only differs in terms of its implementation and impact (World Bank, 2007). Since the 1980s, there has been a paradigm shift in public management which has transformed our perception of the processes of decentralization and its functions (Work, 2002).The Zambian government, in the National Development Plan of 2009 perceived a lot of benefits from decentralizing the national governance system in that it was anticipated that the implementation of decentralization would lead to improved efficiency in decision- making, better co-ordination of developmental activities at the local level, enhanced community participation in development, and improved transparency and accountability (GRZ, 2008). Decentralization, therefore, is a complex set of policies, which has an impact on a number of actors. Different governments have implemented different models of decentralization, but mainly with the focus of increasing management autonomy for local governments, local education offices and schools (De Grauwe and Lugaz, 2010). Additionally, the main function of decentralization is to facilitate for a change in the role of the state and not simply abandonment by the state. There is a rising need to understand the process of decentralization with a focus on its implementation. Decentralization of responsibilities in its various forms is advocated as a means of achieving public service effectiveness and ensuring that public administrations are more responsive to citizens' needs. Further, it improves the quality of decision making through better information flow and participation of all stakeholders at the local level. In order to strengthen the capacity of decentralized agencies, there should be delegation of

authority in respect of finance and personnel management to managers at lower levels within the framework of broad guidelines from the centre to strengthen field administration, and literally from policy making units to implementing organs, empowerment of communities by strengthening local governments through the revitalization of local authorities and municipal governments, mechanisms for full participation of the private sector and Civil Society Organizations(C.S.O.s) in public policy formulation and decision-making be established in order to improve local democracy, accountability, efficiency, equity, effectiveness and sustainability in the provision of social services countrywide and providing civic training on rights and obligations (in local languages) (World Bank, 2009).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Decentralization is highly beneficial to the Ministry of Education and particularly in schools as it brings about participative decision-making needed for effective running, organization and development of any school (Khan, 2002). Despite the Zambian government perceiving a lot of benefits from the decentralization policy, the implementation of the policy is still farfetched from reality. Studies done by Sikayile (2011), Mtonga (2012), Okitsu (2011), Kambilombilo and Banda (2015) established that there was still a gap between the policy and its implementation in named District Education Boards, community and Basic schools of Zambia as well as some public colleges of education. This study, therefore, intended to establish why this gap has persisted so as to help narrow the gap between the decentralization policy and its practice or else one of the objectives of the EFA goals of 2000 which states that "Educational decentralization is to contribute towards increased access to and quality of education" would be defeated. Consequently, the policy may become a 'white elephant'.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which the decentralization policy was being implemented in Monze district.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- To assess how decentralization is being implemented in Monze district.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

This study was guided by the following objectives:-

i) To ascertain the implementation of the decentralization policy at the level of the District Education Board

ii) To establish how the policy is being implemented in the school

iii) To assess community participation by the school Board and P.T.A. in the school

iv) To determine the problems faced by District Board, the school, PTA and the School Board in the implementation of the policy.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions study guided the study:-

i) How has the decentralization policy been implemented at the level of the District Education Board?

ii) How has the decentralization policy been implemented at school level?

iii) To what extent is the community participating (through the school Board and P.T.A.) in the implementation of the decentralization policy?

iv) What are the main problems faced by the District Board, the school, the school Board and P.T.A. in the implementation of the decentralization policy?

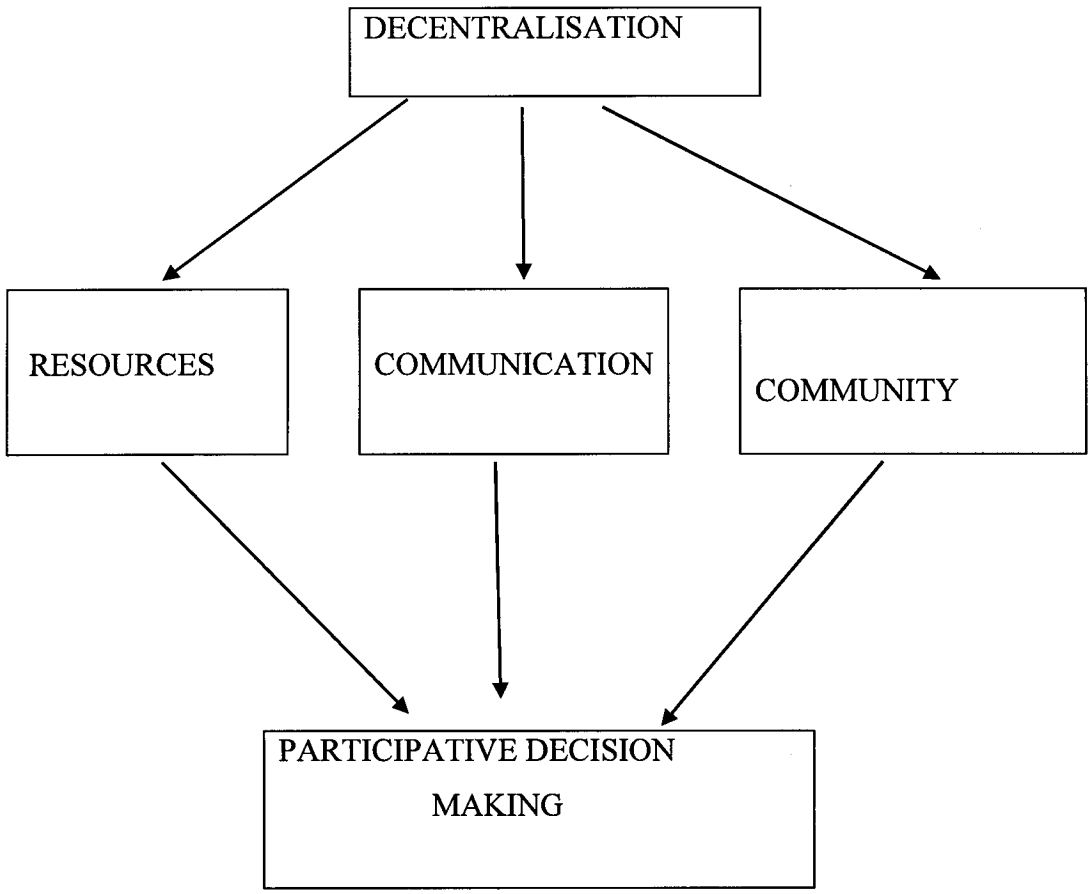
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was done with a view to narrowing the gap between the decentralization policy and its practice or else one of the objectives of the EFA goals of 2000 which states that "Educational decentralization is to contribute towards increased access to and quality of education" would be defeated. Consequently, the policy may become a 'white elephant'. Further, this study would add to the already existing body of knowledge for policy makers' interventions.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is a model of how one makes logical sense out of the relationships among the several factors that have been identified as important to the problem and it inter-relates the concepts involved in the problem (Sekaran, 2004).

The conceptual framework enabled the researcher develop the awareness and understanding of the situation under study and communicate the meaning of subsequent findings to whether resources, communication and community affect the implementation of educational decentralization policy or not. Data collection was based on the following conceptual framework, which demonstrated the theory of the sequence of cause and effect that ultimately leads to a particular problem and of the ultimate result.



Source: Adopted and modified from zvobgo (1986)

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Assertions in favour of decentralization are founded on the participative democratic theory. This theory, which was advocated for by John Dewey, asserts that genuine democracy requires intelligent and active participation in the formulation of values that regulate the living of people (Westbrook, 1991).

The theory advocates that stakeholders in social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them. The principles of this theory that underpin this study are liberalization, decentralization, partnership and accountability.

It is believed and asserted that a more decentralized state will be more exposed, hence more responsive to the local needs and aspirations of people (Crook and Sverrisson, 2001)

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.9.1 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to Monze district. Respondents were also limited to the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), the Head teacher for Monze secondary school, ten (10) teachers, five (5) Board members and five (5) PTA members from the same school. These were expected to give the needed information.

1.9.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the study was conducted at only one district Education Board Office and one school specifically, the results of the findings may be generalized to other parts of the country beyond Monze district. This may not reflect a true picture of what is happening in other parts of the country.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Implementation - putting into effect

Decentralization - to distribute the administrative powers or functions of a central authority over a less concentrated area. It also means the process of de- concentration of authority to make decisions in terms of committing and utilizing resources and services from the top or central authority to the bottom or lower authorities to enhance efficiency and fair distribution of resources.

Decentralization policy- this is the Government policy to decentralize education delivery from national and provincial headquarters to points of delivery (districts, colleges and schools).

District Education Boards- basic education management units at District level through which local communities have been enabled to participate in decision making and to allow for rapid reaction and action to problems and opportunities that occur at points of delivery in order to improve the learning environment and quality of education provided.

Management - the process of planning, organizing, implementing and controlling an organization's operations in order to achieve a co-ordination of human and material resources essential in the effective and efficient attainment of goals.

Effectiveness - the degree to which someone produces the expected result.

Delegation - the process of assigning authority or accountability from one level down to the next.

School - a formal place for learning and education.

Deconcentration - giving additional responsibilities to lower levels. In this case, we refer to schools, colleges and the District Education Office.

Devolution - this is another form of decentralization that entails transferring powers to lower levels of Government.

Delegation - this is the transfer of functions and resources to a subordinate authority with the capacity to act on behalf of the super ordinate without a formal transfer of authority in the same structure.

Privatization - this is the diversification of state interest in public enterprise and the subsequent sell of such to the private sector.

Parents - Teachers Association - this is a formal organization that comprises of parents, teachers and staff which is intended to facilitate parental participation in a school.

1.11 – ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because Educational research deals with human beings, the rights and welfare of subjects or respondents must be protected to avoid any legal action. To achieve this, the researcher had to assure the respondents of confidentiality before the interviews and focus group discussions. She also indicated that the study was purely academic and not for other purpose. Additionally, the researcher made sure that the respondents showed consent and willingness to participate. Finally, the names of the respondents were not recorded in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter was to acknowledge and make known some existing information and other study findings in relation to this study. Among other issues, the review discussed the wide gap that exists in the implementation of the decentralization policy, especially in developing countries like Zambia and highlighted the concept and background of decentralization. This literature review was discussed under the following themes: the concept of decentralization, decentralization of education: concept, form and dimension, overview of decentralization, rationales for decentralization and local participation, challenges and dilemma in decentralization of education, decentralization and school quality in Argentina, decentralization in Ethiopia and the background of the decentralization reform process in Zambia,

THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization refers to when the organizational authority commits its resources (human money and material) to be widely diffused throughout every level of the organizational structure (Cole, 2002). There are five major forms of decentralization namely devolution, delegation, deconcentration, privatization as well as participation (Fiszbein, 2001). According to Cole, some of the advantages of decentralization include; it relieves the top management of overload by freeing them from many decisions so they can concentrate on their strategic responsibilities. It quickens operational decisions by enabling line units to take actions without necessarily making references to other bodies hence enabling local management to be flexible in their approach to decisions in the light of local conditions. Last but not the least; it triggers motivation to the staff by enabling middle and junior management get a feel of responsibility. Finally, decentralization encourages the use of initiative by the employees. The Ministry of education (1996) agrees with Cole on the advantages of decentralization when it says that; it relieves the Ministry of the burden of day- to- day business, thereby enabling senior officers attend to their principal functions. It also allows for greater responsiveness to local needs as decisions will be made closer to the points of delivery where action is taking place. Further, decentralization promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility for educational institutions by entrusting greater power and

authority to education managers at all levels. This, therefore, improves the capacity building at national and local levels.

On the other hand, Grauwe et al, (2005) opine that decentralization does not always bring a positive influence on education quality especially where decentralization of education finance is concerned. They feel the differences in fiscal capacity at the local level may generate increased disparities in spending which may cause conflicts in education management and failure to carry out school functions. Further, Cole (2002) seems to agree with the previous speakers when he outlines that decentralization has its own demerits which include; it requires a team of capable and well-motivated managers who are able to respond positively to the increased responsibility that comes with decentralization. Further, it can lead to inconsistency treatment of customers, especially in service industries and it requires a lot of co-ordination, control and communication by senior management in ensuring individual units in the organization do not work against the objectives of the organization.

DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION: CONCEPT, FORM AND DIMENSION

During the past decades a number of developing countries have undergone decentralization within the existing organizational structure with the expectations of increased local participation in decisions and improved system efficiency (Conyers, 2006; McGinn & Street, 1986; Saito, 2008). The argument is local governments are closer and more in touch with the community and this is hypothesized to be a better position to deliver basic services more efficiently and effectively according to the local needs and priorities than the central government (Chapman et al., 2002; Saito, 2008). This is embedded in the principle that claims the central governments should not undertake those activities, which are at the reach and capacity of individual, private or local government. This is called the principle of subsidiary (Saito, 2008).

The interest in this principle has changed the old pattern of educational provision and control and local governance has been sought to be an enviable mechanism for local democracy and development (Saito, 2008). Almost in all countries educational decentralization reforms are introduced like a universal fashion (Mukundan, 2003) but many argue that there are confusions in the concept (Lauglo, 1995; McGinn & Street, 1986). In this regard, Lauglo (1995) argues that

the concept of decentralization becomes more perplexing when it is used in the context of the distribution of authority as in the national education systems. Indeed, the forms, rationale, extent and level of power transfer and implementation strategies of decentralization vary within and across countries.

This study, therefore, is of the view that a decentralized form of management is better as compared to centralized form of management because stakeholders like teachers, the community and pupils develop a sense of ownership because of the power entrusted in them. This increases their motivation and in turn increases efficiency which benefits the stakeholders.

The decentralization policy in the Ministry of Education in Zambia was adopted by the Government of Zambia under the Ministry of Education National Policy (1996) by establishing Education Boards at school, college and district levels. This was done with the realization that Boards would relieve the Ministry of the burden of day- to- day business thereby enabling senior officers give attention to their principal functions. Additionally, the implementation of decentralization would embody active community participation in the delivery of educational services and in decisions on the use and management of resources for schools and colleges. It would also promote a sense of ownership and responsibility in educational institutions because of the authority vested to the education managers at all levels hence gaining improvement in capacity building at national and local levels.

According to Ministry of Education (1996), decentralization in Zambia is being effected through the establishment of Educational Boards at district, college and school levels. This entails granting legal and financial powers over education to local units, entrusting local units with administrative responsibility and discretion to plan and implement programmes, transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined education functions to organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure of the education system and Government relieving itself from some responsibility of ownership, power and control over education.

From the above perceived merits, it is vivid that the policy makers were mainly interested in the child hence bringing on board the community from where the child comes. Surely, if all the stakeholders are rightly involved, the quality of education in Zambia will improve.

OVERVIEW OF DECENTRALIZATION

There is a worldwide trend to move decision making in the education system from a centralized government to schools. In the United States of America, local governments already have much decision making power. Thus decentralization in the United States of America means giving school teachers and administrators more decision making authority (Winkler, 1993). Since the 1990s, many countries have been decentralizing the education system. This proceeded fastest in Latin and Eastern Europe, but several countries in Asia and Africa also began initiating decentralized policies. Fiszbein (2001) postulates that education is also highly decentralized in countries like Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, South Africa (to mention but a few) with the influence of democratic processes.

RATIONALES FOR DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION.

Decentralization is seen as a means of achieving political, economic and administrative goals that could be publicly stated and unstated (Conyers, 1986; Lauglo, 1995). The rationales differ depending on interest groups involved in decentralization - government, international agencies, academics and others (Conyers, 2006). Nonetheless, these interest groups view decentralization as a means to improve the planning and implementation of national development programs and to facilitate effective popular participation in the process of development. With reference to the former rationale, in education, decentralization is viewed a means to increase education resources, efficiency, accountability and effectiveness (Winkler, 1993). As to the latter, decentralization is viewed as a means of improving the relevance of local decisions, as a means of encouraging local support in implementation of development programs and thereby helping to improve basic service provision (Conyers, 2006).

Community participation in (support for) education is one element of decentralization of power and responsibility to the local levels (Watt, 2001). In one of his chapters, Watt (2001) had identified five key rationales for which governments in sub-Saharan Africa (S.S.A.) demand community support in their endeavors to provide basic education. These are:

Limit of state effectiveness: The multifaceted nature and complex processes in education places limitation on how well governments alone can achieve educational goals with the available

resources and management capacity. A highly centralized educational system neglects the demand side constraints to development of education and lets distortion into the education system. The argument is decentralization and local participation in management and finance of education serve as a means to respond to government resource and management constraints, and address demand side constraints for education development. This is meant to make the education system more effective.

Ownership and demand: National education systems have traditionally been developed based on government needs and financing. Such a system likely suffers from inefficiency and chronic resource constraints as well as low private demand for education. Under such circumstances: first, low effective demand could occur because sending a child to school has direct and indirect costs which poor people cannot afford. Second, weak social demand could happen when the education offered is low quality or is seen as inappropriate by parents. Third, low demand probably happens when communities do not participate in education as well as when schools have deaf concerns for parents. When they do not participate in one way or another, it is unlikely that communities see schools as something that belongs to them, send their children to schools and have concerns on how the schools run effectively. Thus, the argument is participating communities in management and financing of schools promotes sense of ownership and increases their commitment for educational improvement (Cole, 2002). *Democratization and accountability:* Participation in provision of basic services is often considered as an important building block in the democratization of societies. The argument is that through participation citizens would be heartened to hold government accountable for meeting its responsibilities, to provide forum where weak and strong voices can be heard and to legitimize collective local decision-making process. Likewise, the argument for community support in education is related to the assumption that when communities contribute directly towards the cost of education, they are likely to demand a greater say in the form and content of educational service, and want to ensure that the services are delivered efficiently i.e. increase in accountability.

Efficiency: Centralized and rigidly hierarchical systems often produce good educational outcomes at high unit costs. According to Winkler (1993, as cited in Baganda, 2008) this is related to: First, in a centralized education system the central government lacks the ability to administer education at the local level. Second, the cost of decision-making in a system in which every education matter has to be decided by the central decision-makers and this leads to high

cost. Third, frequent application by nationwide standards to the entire country is possible at high cost. Decentralizing decision-making closer to service users and making the beneficiaries to participate in management and finance of education are maintained as a means to respond to these problems. With reference to this, Watt (2001) argues that community involvement in education develops appreciation and understanding of the different roles and potentials of education and strengthens the community capacity to organize itself. This consequently helps to ensure that educational needs are accurately identified, accountability structures are enhanced, teachers attend school on time and teach the curriculum, school participation rates increase, and pupil achievement improves. Consequently, efficiency in education is improved.

Choice and competition: The rationales for offering parents and children educational alternatives are based on two distinct but related arguments. The first argument is that parents have a basic right to choose what form of education their child should take. The second argument is that subjecting education providers to market discipline by forcing them to compete for service users raises standards and improves efficiency. Watt maintains these arguments are subject of controversy as they raise the major issue of equity.

CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS IN DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION

The rationales and outcomes of decentralization are tantalizing and conflicting (Saito, 2008; USAID, 2005; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). It is widely argued that efficiency and effectiveness are more likely to be achieved when decision-making is placed at the local level. But localization of decision alone should not be considered as a panacea rather as a means to the ends provided that fundamental requirements that enhance the implementation process are fulfilled at the local level. Otherwise devolving decisions and function to the local authority will not have advantage (Welsh & McGinn, 1999). The requisites to be available at the local level include effective local authority and autonomy, sufficient resource for localities, effective institutions of collective actions, accountability and transparency in operations (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). These requisites are imperatives for the success of decentralization reform. However, they tend to be conflicting in practice (Saito, 2008).

Quality of local decisions depends on local units that are able to process and use information, and representation of interests of individuals and groups affected by the decisions (Hurst, 1985; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). Sometimes this is not available at the local level. In Karnataka, India,

localization of decision-making was not able to produce the intended outcome because of lack of skilled personnel to formulate plan (Saito & Kato, 2008). In Ethiopia during the regional devolution, educational decentralization had not achieved the intended objectives because the local governments lacked the basic knowledge and experience to perform effectively (Garcia & Rajkumar, 2008; Tadesse, 2007). Recent studies also note acute shortage of skilled manpower as a critical challenge of the implementation of Ethiopian local governance policy (Ayele, 2009). However, when the required level of decision-making power is absent at the local level it affects the performance of the local governments (USAID, 2005). During the regional devolution in Ethiopia, woreda and sub-woreda governments had lacked the necessary power required for their local operations (Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). This had constrained the local governments to perform their functions effectively and the implementation of decentralization had consumed higher than the expected level of government expenditure (BBO, 2006; Gebre-Egziabher & Berhanu, 2007). According to a study conducted by Saito and Kato (2008), in India, in Karnataka state the local level decentralization failed to achieve the intended outcomes due to lack of adequate resource and necessary power at the local level.

Likewise, in many African countries, educational decentralization failed to yield the intended outcomes due to absence of real decision-making power and resource at the local levels (Winkler, 1993). Some note that in many African countries decentralization was not able to promote local participation and achieve the intended goals because the reforms were little more than de-concentration of functions (Coppola et al., 2003). However, realization of improved local participation, efficiency and effectiveness in education needs led to devolution of fiscal, political and administrative power and functions to the local governments and their institution. In other countries like Indonesia, due to the imbalance of these dimensions at the local level, the decentralization reform became a costly reform and exceeded the financing capacity of the country (Tikson, 2008). Galshberg and Winkler (2003), in their study of educational decentralization in certain African countries including Ethiopia, observed local features like parents' illiteracy, fragile democracy, and less well developed banking system, to affect the success of educational decentralization.

There are other claims for which decentralization becomes more costly. This could happen when there exists complete local autonomy that likely separates localities (McGinn, 1997). According to the argument of McGinn (1997) the separations of localities hinder the advantage of exploiting

economy of scale because such conditions increase the cost of information production and dissemination. Some scholars doubt if local autonomy leads to representation of local interest because local autonomy could leads to re-emergence of elites at the local level and 'recentralized' of decision making power (Hurst, 1985; McGinn, 1997; Taal, 1993). In Indonesia, local leaders and officials considered themselves as champions of decentralization misinterpreting the local autonomy and became unilateral local rulers (Tikson, 2008). This has consequently affected the realization of intended goal of the reform.

There are other criticisms forwarded toward decentralization in education. It is claimed to serve as a means through which governments transfer the burden of educational finance and provision to parents and other local community (Bray, 2001; Châu, 1985; Taal, 1993; Welsh & McGinn, 1999). But it is imperative for a decentralization reform not only to be applied for increasing education resources and lessen state obligation, but should also be carried out to enhance democracy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity in education. This requires not only the transfer of resources to the local level, but also the strengthening of community, school and school management technical capacity and collaboration with community organization (Shaffer, 1994). Furthermore, it is advocated that decentralization empowers community and increases participation in local decision. Nonetheless, low political bargaining power and economic capacity will affect the active participation of the poor and minority groups in local matters pertaining to their concerns (Chapman et al., 2002).

Another controversy involves the rationale of equity, choice and competition. In the rhetoric, decentralization is advocated for maintaining equity but this is not always true. Many scholars assert that decentralization is widening the inequality gap between rich and poor localities (Châu, 1985; Dunne et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2008; Winkler, 2005). As the literature shows, this challenge is associated with variation in local resource endowment, commitment of local government and community for educational development. On the other hand, the imperatives of choice and competition tend to jeopardize equity as richer localities devote more resource on education and get better education but this has high frustration in poor localities. Consequently, some urge centralized decision-making and control of education within a decentralized system for considerations of not only maintaining equity but also for national unity and efficiency in management (Lyons, 1985).

Indeed, government intervention could serve for maintaining equity. It could be employed in the form of "deliberate action to counteract the natural dynamics of the expansion of education system and reallocation of educational resources among the different regions and call for special effect in favor of deprived ones" (Châu, 1985). Bray (1996) on his part urges a shared responsibility (partnership) between community and the government for local initiatives to increase educational access, quality and equity. But government intervention sometimes complicates equity in education. In Papua New Guinea, government financial arrangements called "*minimum unconditional grants and divisions 284*" introduced with decentralization of education for disadvantaged provinces has complicated the existing equity problem among the autonomous provinces (Bray, 1996). According to the study, though the government intervention has prominence, there were other factors that have complicated the equity problem. These were qualitative provincial changes, difference in population growth rates, administrative shortcomings that affect how money is spent and injection of different amounts of provincial finance into the system.

Furthermore, in some places decentralization has worked out through centralization (McGinn, 1997) and in others decentralization has achieved results through local community initiatives to solve their own problems (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003). Regarding the former, McGinn (1997) cites studies conducted in Thailand and Sri Lanka where the educational decentralization had become successful through integration of local and central action. Nonetheless, it should be noted that, extreme centralization or decentralization is an impractical form of governance. Because extreme centralization leads to institutional congestion, inertia, low quality and high cost service while extreme decentralization leads to lose of coherence and raise issues of equity (Watt, 2001). A study based on analysis of three education policy reforms titled 'Power, participation and educational decentralization in South Africa' (Sayed, 1997) led to the conclusions: First, stronger commitment to individual freedom in the form of parents as consumers may actually limit the freedom of others and perhaps contradicts the principle of equality and justice which are central to the existence of democracy. Second, strong commitment to state control could not lead to the deepening of democracy. And third, commitment to strong central control and strong form of participation may lead to impractical and unmanageable system of governance.

The latter condition is best elaborated with the following quote, a condition that Galshberg & Winkler (2003) observed in some African societies:

> *"The most common and successful decentralization is not the result of government decentralization policy but, rather, the consequence of government failure to deliver the most basic services. The community school where local citizens finance and manage their own schools is a community response to the lack of access to education for its children. This phenomenon can be viewed as inequitable, since access is weakest where people are poorest, but it can also be viewed as an indicator of people's commitment to education as well as a demonstration that even poor, illiterate citizens can govern schools. (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003)"*

There were many practical circumstances where countries that have undergone decentralization reforms failed to achieve the intended outcome and/or produced the unintended ones. Faguet (2001) has reviewed educational decentralization reform in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, New Guinea and others and observed mixed results. The outcomes were moderate success in some, moderate failure in some, and both results in others. There are many conditions that vary the actual outcome of educational decentralization from the planned one. Conyers (2006) presented these conditions in three major categories:

First, in many cases the actual degree of decentralization seems to have been very limited either because the proposals were not implemented as intended or because the initial proposals did not provide for a significant decentralization. Second, there are claims that decentralization has done little to improve the planning and implementation of local development programs and therefore to contribute to local or national development. Lastly, there are complaints that power has been decentralized to the 'wrong' people, either central appoints or local elites so there has been no meaningful increase in the participation of the mass of the people (Rondinelli, 1999, as cited in Conyers, 2006).

In light of the above challenges and dilemmas, community-state partnership is thought to increase community participation and improve school performance. Lyons (1985) proposes a centralization in a decentralized planning system which he calls 'de-concentration' meaning that the center retains the main elements of strategic control of the system that are the subject of national interest, but widens the scope of planning, decision-making and control at the local and/or other sub-national levels of the system and at the same time improving the quality of

communication between center and periphery - that a combination of strategies is supposed to give positive outcomes.

From this discussion it can be understood that there is no single blue print for implementation of decentralization that will increase efficiency and effectiveness of education. Some urge best practices, anecdotal and evaluative, growing out of educational decentralization reforms, majorly from Latin American countries and Eastern European countries (Galshberg & Winkler, 2003). On the other hand, Welsh and McGinn (1999) urge "a strategic approach is to be preferred over 'best practices' approach. The number of effective combinations of decision is large; there are many ways to improve education. Consequently, decision-makers and managers do not maintain a single strategy over time, but instead can vary where decisions are made according to the current situation of the organization. A strategic approach would define the principle that guide choice in situations, rather than specify the fixed structural changes to be made."

DECENTRALISATION AND SCHOOL QUALITY IN ARGENTINA

A study done by Galiani and Schargrodsky's (2002), between 1992 and 1994, revealed that Argentina decentralized educational services by giving provincial government the authority to manage schools with the objective of increasing efficiency. This devolutionary decentralization included aspects like transferring budget, personnel and many other important decision making authorities from the national government to the provinces.

DECENTRALIZATION IN ETHIOPIA

In the early 1990s, Ethiopia was reorganized into a federation, and many education responsibilities devolved to regional governments (Gaynor, 1998). In so doing, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partly supported the government's decentralization reforms through the Basic Education Strategic Objective (BESO) program by stimulating parent and community involvement and by providing resources to schools for development and implementation of improvement strategies.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE DECENTRALIZATION REFORM PROCESS IN ZAMBIA

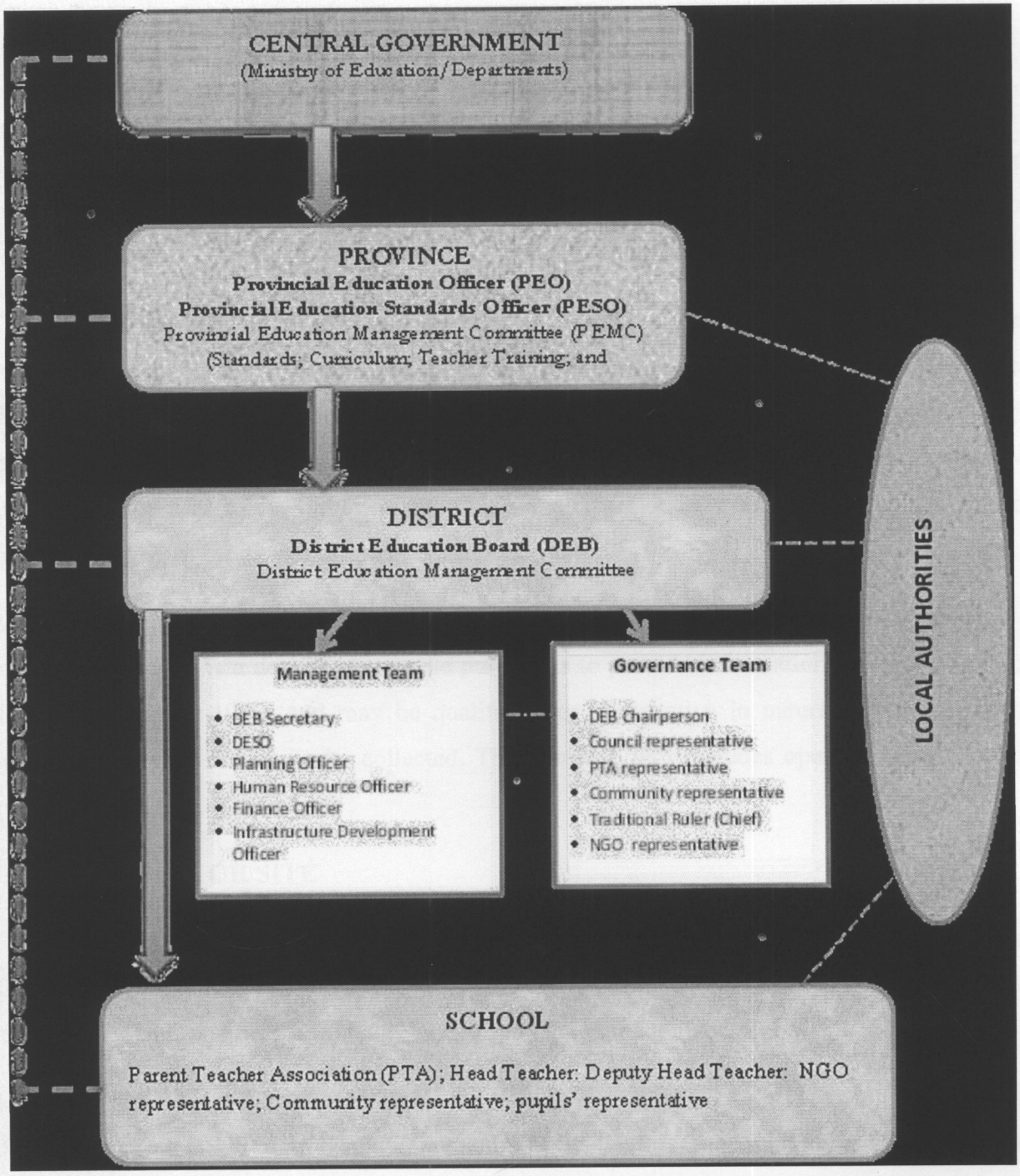
In Zambia, Christian missionaries took a leading role in introducing and funding schools although this was under the auspices of the indigenous citizens, mainly the traditional chiefs (Kelly, 1999). At this time, western models of education were dominant in schools that were funded by missionaries. At the time of Zambia's political independence in 1964, the education sector was faced with serious challenges many of which were transferred to the new administration (Kelly, 1999). The education system that was inherited by the United National Independence Party (U.N.I.P.) government was accordingly underdeveloped, this was evidenced by the fact that there were few Zambians who were educated enough to fill in the administrative positions left by the colonialists.

The current form of educational decentralization in Zambia is closely associated with the 1996 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (P.R.S.P.) process which coincided with the education national policy of 1996. The main objective of this policy was to re- structure the Ministry of Education as a way of correcting the ills of a centralized system that was characterized by inefficiency and sidelining of communities in planning and decision making (MoE, 2010). The country (Zambia) went on to adopt the policy in 2002 but it has avoided to overhaul the entire education system (G.R.Z., 2009). This is, however, contrary to the Ugandan approach which sought to monopolize power and entrench the ruling party at the expense of its competitors in ways that mirror the conduct of its political predecessors whose politics of exclusion led the country into decades of political instability (Namukas and Buye, 2009). It can, therefore, be concluded that the Zambian approach to educational decentralization is related to the Lindblom's incremental model of policy where the existing policy serves as the building blocks for initiating change rather than crafting a new policy or system from the scratch under high levels of uncertainties (Haddad and Demsky, 1995).

Further, the Fifth National Development Plan (F.N.D.P.) of 2006 reinforced the need for decentralization in the education sector by emphasizing the need for a multi- faceted participatory approach to planning and decision making as a way of improving the education delivery at local levels (GRZ, 2008). This saw the creation of, for example, the Provincial and

District Education Management Committees at provincial and district levels respectively in order to facilitate the deconcentration and devolvement of educational responsibilities.

Figure 1: Governance structure showing different actors at District level



Source: Sikayile, (2011).

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter purported to explain how the study was carried out. It provides such information as the Research design, study area, study population, study sample, sampling technique, data collection techniques, procedure for data collection and data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Bless and Achola, (1990) define a research design as the planning of any scientific research from the beginning up to the end. Further, it is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis under given condition.

This research was qualitative in nature which is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field or participant observer research (Jacob, 1988). Further, qualitative research emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found and it produces more in- depth and comprehensive information and uses subjective information and participant observation to describe the context, or natural setting of the variables under consideration.

Although there are a number of qualitative modes of enquiry, this study implored a descriptive survey design. This is a design whose sole purpose is to provide information on a specific issue (Bless and Achola, 1990) and may be qualitative or quantitative in nature depending on the nature and purpose of data to be collected. This research tool includes open and closed ended questions (Trochim, 2000).

3.3 STUDY AREA OR SITE

The study was conducted in Monze district which is in the Southern province of Zambia. Monze district has six secondary schools, two of which are mission schools, three are newly upgraded secondary schools and only one (under study) is a Government aided school.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION

Bless and Achola (1990) define study population as being all members of any well-defined class of people, events or objects who have been designed as being the focus of an investigation. In

this study, the study population included the District Education Board Secretary, head teachers, teachers, P.T.A. and Board members of secondary schools of Monze district

3.5 STUDY SAMPLE

This included one (1) District Education Board Secretary, one (1) head teacher, ten (10) teachers, five (5) PTA members and five (5) Board members.

Table 1: Summary of sample size

S/N	CATEGORY	TARGET POPULATION
1.	DEBS	1
2.	HEADTEACHERS	1
3.	TEACHERS	10
4.	P.T.A. MEMBERS	5
5.	BOARD MEMBERS	5
TOTAL		**22**

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling simply refers to the way of selecting the subjects that make up a population. Although there are various ways of doing this, this study employed the non- random sampling. Precisely, it used the judgmental/ purposive sampling design. In this type of sampling, subjects are chosen to be part of the sample with a specific purpose in mind (White, 2005). With this type of sampling, the researcher believed that some respondents were fit for the research as compared to others. White (2005) explains that the key element in sampling is representativeness. It was appropriate for this study to use non random sampling in the sense that the researcher handpicked the cases to be included in the case which would be determined by the researcher's specific needs. Additionally, the selection of the sample size was determined by the availability of funds and time.

The research used purposeful sampling technique which is a non- probability sampling method (Ghosh, 1992) in the selection of the District Education Board Secretary of Monze district, the head teacher , ten (10) teachers, five (5) PTA members and five (5) members of the school board

– from Monze secondary school. Purposeful sampling was used in order to select specific officials that were involved in the planning, implementation and management of services at District and school levels.

3.7 INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Because the study used the qualitative research method, the research employed multiple instruments and techniques within the qualitative approach of data collection. In the context of the study, the following research instruments were used:

3.7.1 Interviews

Cannel & Kahn (1968) define a research interview as a two- person or dialogue that is initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant research information and focused by him or her on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation. Cohen & Manion (1994) explain that interviews provide access to the mind of the interviewee and make it possible to understand the perceptions, opinions and thoughts of the interviewee. This entails that since the interviewer cannot observe situations and behaviors that took place in the past, interviews allow an interviewer to 'enter' into the interviewees' perspective.

The research used both structured and semi-structured interviews for the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) and the head teacher while Focus group discussions were used for the teachers, Board and PTA members.

Structured interviews were implored because they are easy and quick to administer and may be of particular use if clarification of certain questions are required (Silverman, 2000). They were also used because they only allow for limited participant responses that are relevant to the discussion

Semi- structured interviews were implored in the study as they consist of several key questions that help define the areas to be explored and also allow both the interviewer and interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Kvale, 1996). This helped the study because the respondents expressed themselves freely and in an interactive manner.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions

On the other hand, a focus group discussion (FDG) is a group discussion on a particular topic organized for research purposes and it is guided by, monitored and recorded by the researcher who is also called a moderator or facilitator (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Such a discussion was ideal in this research as it generated information on collective views of the participants. The questions that were contained in the interviews and focus group discussion guide were both open and closed ended.

3.7.3 Document analysis

Official documents were also analyzed as a way of collecting both primary and secondary data. Lincoln & Guba (1985) are of the view that document analysis is important as it gives the researcher a general background of the subject under study.

3.8 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

In order to validate and test the efficiency of the data collection instruments, a pilot study was carried out at Keemba Hill secondary school in Monze district before the commencement of the actual research. This pilot study helped to provide useful information for improving the main research.

Before starting to collect data, the researcher obtained permission from the District Education Board Secretary and the school after which she visited the school and interacted with the head teacher as well as made an appointment as to when to visit the school to collect data. On the appointment day, the researcher created rapport with the teachers by explaining the purpose of her study and how important their involvement in the study would be important. She later sampled ten (10) teachers and engaged them in the focus group discussion. A separate interview was done with the head teacher. Two other appointments were made with the DEBS and board/PTA members respectively. On the appointment dates, an interview was conducted with the DEBS and a focus group discussion with the board/PTA members. All responses of the interviews and focus group discussions were recorded in a notebook by the researcher.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to impose some order on a large body of information so that some conclusions can be reached and communicated in a report (Polit and Hungler, 1999). Because this study was purely qualitative, the data analysis was done by analyzing questions thematically and presented in direct quotes according to the emerging themes.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the presentation of how data was organized and displayed, the study will now focus on the findings of the study. The presentation unfolds with the analysis of the data itself and the findings will be guided by the four specific objectives of the study (i.e. assessing the implementation of the decentralization policy at the level of the District Education Board, establishing how the policy is being implemented in the school, assessing community participation by the school Board and P.T.A. in the school and also determining the problems faced by District Board, the school, PTA and the School Board in the implementation of the policy).

4.2 The implementation of the decentralization policy at the level of the District Education Board

The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) is fully committed towards achieving the Education for All Goals. Hence, educational decentralization under MoE is seen as a vehicle through which access to and quality of education could be improved. Most critical was the need to accelerate access to basic education, given the huge backlog in enrolment since the early 1990s. Notwithstanding the limitations in institutional capacity, District Education Boards (DEBs) were established in order to implement the policy. In addressing this challenge, GRZ made attempts towards enhancing DEBs's capacity by addressing problems pertaining to planning and financial management, including personnel and infrastructural related needs (MoE, 2003).

The respondent at district level described coordination and information transfer as concerns which need adequate attention. The basis of this claim was that since the adoption of the policy in 2000, the MoE had put in place a number of policy measures aimed at addressing organizational related challenges, but there has been no political will to adequately implement them.

He had this to say;

"There are still gaps in implementation of the Decentralization policy at district level. The organizational capacity of this board is not up to standard. There are a number of factors but the most critical ones, in my view, are lack of skilled manpower, unclear policy guidelines and poor coordination".

He further indicated that;

"We are still experiencing some setbacks concerning the implementation of educational decentralization. The government has to strengthen the institutional capacity at the district level. The operational guidelines which affect decision making and coordination of activities are not clear. If MoE does not effectively re-organise these boards by streamlining coordination and structural mechanisms, this whole idea of district education boards will vanish in thin air."

On the other hand, certain aspects of organizational support, like communication and information exchange between the Board and the Provincial office as well as schools were not so much of a challenge as they were of low concern.

"Our proximity to the provincial office and being along the line of rail makes communication a lot easier. The provincial office communicates to us easily about issues pertaining to the policy and we easily communicate to our various schools via workshops and newsletters about updates on various policies, including decentralization."

In theory, DEBs must be accountable to their constituencies for (a) the improvement of educational access, equity, relevance and quality and (b) the improvement of the performance of the education system in service delivery (MoE & SNV, 2008). However, the respondent was of the view that generally the board does not have discretion over such decisions. In real sense, Monze board reports to MoE headquarters through the PEO's office on almost all issues pertaining to the provision of basic education except on peripheral matters, such as monitoring of education standards in schools.

"..We are all aware of our roles in this board. All schools in this district are under our supervision and if we don't tackle their problems, then no one will do it. Previously, it took somebody from Lusaka (Headquarters) to come and tell you what to do. Since we know the problems our schools face, we normally meet in planning sessions as a team to

discuss ways of addressing them. This is why when it comes to constructing classroom blocks and teachers' houses, for instance, we are all united as a board including parents who contribute upfront materials. The main challenge however, is that we are still answerable to Headquarters and our decisions are often questioned even though communities are expected to be the judges of our works."

In line with the national policy, educational decentralization in Zambia implies increased "local control" through deregulation of government duties. This has been done through granting administrative, legal and financial powers to DEBs to enable them to make decisions concerning educational matters (MoE, 1996). Surprisingly, this study has revealed that top officials still exert supervisory control over boards. Further, the respondent indicated that the Board struggles in executing their responsibilities due to excessive administrative control from the center, insufficient funds to implement the demands of the policy and indeed lack of enough skilled manpower. On paper, boards have been entrusted with administrative responsibilities and discretion to administer education delivery as they see it fit. It emerged, however, during the interview that the board does not in practice, possess the ultimate authority on planning and implementing.

4.3 The implementation of the policy in the school

It was established that the role of the head teacher in the implementation of the decentralization policy was to implement and interpret the policy for the enlightenment of the various stakeholders who include the teachers, parents, pupils and the community at large.

"My role as the head teacher in as far as implementing the decentralization is to ensure that the policy is understood by the stakeholders who include the teachers, parents, pupils and the community at large. This happens through enlightening them at different levels for example, in staff briefings, student council meetings, P.T.A. executive meetings and Annual General Meetings. Above all, my role is to ensure that the school comes up with local policies which make the implementation of the decentralization policy successful."

Additionally, it was established that the community participates actively in the school's decision making through the involvement of the P.T.A. and the school Board. While the

Board is the overall body that oversees the smooth running of the school, the P.T.A. executive is a committee that is chosen by parents at the Annual General Meeting and spearheads developmental projects in the school.

Some of the benefits of decentralization policy in the school are that people are able to make decisions that are suitable to the environment and adaptable. Above all the decisions made are implemented without resistance because of the sense of responsibility and belonging by the stakeholders.

Teachers also have a role to play in the smooth delivery of the policy in the sense that since they understand the policy, they also understand the expectations of the community in delivering education and so they value the importance of their positions as people who impart knowledge to learners. Therefore, they exhibit professionalism and develop learners holistically. In other words, they are role models of good conduct to the pupils. This role is made known to the teachers through meetings like staff councils and Continuous Professional Development (C.P.D.) workshops.

> *"Teachers also have a role to perform in the smooth delivery of the decentralization policy. These are people who understand government policy and so they understand what the community expects from them in terms of delivering quality education to the pupils. Therefore, they value the importance of their positions thereby exhibiting a lot of professionalism in their duty. In short, teachers are role models of good conduct to the pupils. We sensitize the teachers about their role in the implementation of the decentralization policy in staff councils and C.P.D. workshops"*

Information about the policy flows from the District office to the school through circulars and interactive meetings that are organized by the District Education Board Secretary's office.

In this school, the decentralization policy is being implemented at an average pace due to challenges that will be discussed later.

On the other hand, eight (8) out of ten (10) teachers in the focus group discussion understood the decentralization as the devolvement of powers to local authority. Further, they indicated that the policy mandated the school administration to perform such tasks as recommending teachers for promotions and allocation of money at school level (budgeting).

All these respondents explained that teachers in the school were not actively involved in decision making as certain issues were still highly centralized by administration.

One teacher observed that,

> *"Teachers are not fully involved in decision making in this school because there are times when there is need for the head teacher to recommend names for teachers' promotions (especially with the upgrading and opening of new secondary schools in the district). What normally happens here is that instead of the head teacher sitting with the Heads of department so that they can recommend members in their various departments, he will simply submit names without an input from the Heads of department. We feel, as teachers, we are side lined in as far as decision making is concerned."*

Another one added that,

> *"Even in issues of financing, teachers are not fully involved in decision making. What we have been seeing is that we have been placed in various sub-committees in the school. Of course we come up with budgets to perform different tasks but the power to allocate funds to departments and committees is still highly centralized by the head teacher's office. Therefore, teacher participation in decision making in the school is not fully fledged."*

On the other hand, one respondent was of the view that pupils were involved in decision making through their representatives who sit on the Board and Student's council. These pupils are drawn from the boarding and academic sections of the school.

4.4 Community participation by the school Board/ P.T.A.

School Based Management through Boards and PTAs is one of the concepts central in the implementation of decentralization in Zambia. Therefore, the question of DEBs' autonomy and how that relates to responsibilities and power from the top has a direct bearing on the operations of schools since that is where policies are translated into actions. It is in fact, perceived in the policy that " entrusting greater power and authority to education and school managers at district and school levels respectively, in addition to promoting community participation, leads to a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for these units" (MoE,1996). Hence it was logical

for this study to explore the experiences by PTA and school Board members in as far as the implementation of the policy in concerned.

Appointment of the school Board members is done by the Honorable Minister of General Education after receiving recommendations from the head teacher of the school and the District Education Board Secretary. Further, these members are appointed on the basis of their performance and contributions to the community as well as their interest in the education system. On the other hand, election of P.T.A. executive members is done by the parents at the Annual General Meeting and one has to have a child/ward during that particular time for them to be elected. These chosen parents are the 'mouthpiece' of the other parents and the community at large.

The role of the Board is to assist the school management in implementing various policies of the Ministry of General Education. These policies are translated into action through the P.T.A. which reports to the Board on the development of school projects. Being the overseer of educational activities in the school, the Board advises school management and the P.T.A. on how to solve challenges in the school. Further, it performs such functions as helping the school management to run the school and approving school fees which are proposed by the P.T.A.

One of the Board members had this to say,

> *"Our role as a Board is to ensure that the school is running smoothly as we are the overseers of educational activities of the school. Of course the P.T.A. proposes the school fees but we (as a Board) have the right to approve or disapprove the fees."*

Community involvement, through P.T.A., has helped the school in the sense that skilled parents offer their services at affordable rates or even at no cost at all. The community, further, supports the school management through paying of school fees and in disciplining the pupils. Because the school belongs to the community, parents generate ideas on how the school should run or appear or even how they want their children to learn. These views are aired through the parent representatives of the P.T.A.

Another member of the Board observed that,

> *"Community involvement has made our work manageable as a Board because there are times when the school is in dare need of skilled manpower like plumbing or moulding blocks, so in such cases, we just request parents with these skills to assist the school at an*

affordable rate. In some cases, some parents actually offer themselves for such services at no cost at all. Additionally, if parents find or see a group of pupils outside the school bounds, they usually call the school to inform them and in some cases they even approach the pupils and find out why they are out of bounds. This is for a simple reason- parent's feel they are also part of the school."

The Board of this school helps in school management through the sub-committees that comprise members of staff who help the management to run the school. It also participates in the development of the school by sourcing for external funds from donors or bank overdrafts to begin or finish a project. It has the authority to influence government to release money for projects in the school and to carry out some fundraising ventures in collaboration with the P.T.A. In the teaching and learning activities of the school, the Board participates by ensuring that the school is properly staffed in all subjects and departments. In case of understaffing in a particular subject or department, the Board seeks audience with the relevant authorities (the District Education Board Officer or Provincial Education Officer). Further, it sees to it that teachers who are not accommodated in the school quarters are accommodated by way of renting houses in town for them. Further, it monitors the termly and yearly performance of the school and if the school does not perform to its satisfaction, management should account for that. Equally, if the school is performing very well, the Board has the mandate to reward the hard working teachers. It also ensures goods discipline is upheld among the pupils by reviewing the school rules and reinforcing them.

One of the Board members clarified that,

"We, as a Board, are mandated to make sure that the school has enough teachers in all departments and if there is a shortage of teachers, we talk to relevant people like the P.E.O. or the D.E.B.S. so that intervention measures can be taken. Additionally we ensure that our teachers are decently accommodated. Since we do not have enough houses in the school, we go an extra mile as a Board to rent houses for teachers in town."

The school has recorded a number of successes as a result of decentralization some of which include construction of staff houses, school hall, rehabilitation of boys' hostels and fencing the school.

Based on the Focus group discussions conducted with PTA members, it generally emerged that despite lack of technical capacity and inadequate funding, PTAs have a strong sense of ownership and responsibility towards education. One parent in the focus group discussion described the involvement of community members in managing the affairs of school as having led to improvements in education delivery. He cited, among other things, increased dialogue and transparency as some of the contributing factors adding that everyone feels "it is their own school". She added that since parents through the PTA make contributions in terms of upfront materials, they have the right to 'voice out' if something goes wrong.

On the contrary, another respondent felt that this perceived sense of responsibility and ownership was unfortunately not backed by necessary school based discretion in decision making since even minor issues such procurement of school requisites needed approval from the DEB's office, a process which was time consuming.

The school's P.T.A. chairperson lamented as follows;

> *"The school hall that we have is for our pupils to feed in. unfortunately, the same hall is being used for final exams as well other school functions. We have done all we can with the community to try and build another multi-purpose hall and have since raised enough money for the project but we have to wait for officials from the PEO and DEBs' offices just to come and survey where hall will be built. This is time consuming!"*

4.5 Problems faced by District Board, the school, PTA and the School Board in the implementation of the policy.

The respondent confirmed that the Monze education board was facing serious challenges in implementing the educational decentralization policy as it had limited capacity. This means that the implementation has not yielded good results in the district. Problems that were pinpointed include the lack of adequate human, financial, and material resources to live up to the new demands in quality monitoring visits planning (decision making), monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

> *"We are facing serious challenges in funding, inadequate trained manpower and material to do the monitoring, evaluation and reporting. As you are aware, we have a lot of schools in the district and we do not have enough trained people to go round all the schools in the district and monitor what is taking place there. The Standards officers we*

have are not enough. This is because our administrative tasks take precedence over the more important pedagogical work of monitoring."

Further, the respondent lamented that it was not possible to monitor performance in all the schools of the district due to financial constraints. He clarified that the funding which the district was receiving was not enough hence the monitoring of the schools was curtailed by a lack of financial and material resources. In the same regard, the Board also lacks funds for training and re- orientation of key local personnel in order for them to perform efficiently and effectively. This has resulted in some stakeholders being ignorant about the policy.

Further, the Board is still affected by the 'invisible hand' of centralization as a result of control from top officials. The study established that while the Board prepares an annual plan with its desired staff establishment, and indicates budget needs, the final decision on the recruitment and deployment of staff, as well as on budget amounts and use, remains decided by the central ministry. The Board only makes minor decisions, whereas the major ones are still made at the central level. In this case the Board appears to be 'a boss with less power'.

"There is low level of involvement of the Board in such issues as teacher management. Let us take a good example of recruiting and transferring of teachers. Because of the decentralization policy, the Board offices are given the authority to deploy and transfer teachers in their respective districts but in Monze district, it was observed that this process is disturbed by other actors in the system, especially from the political class. In many cases, top politicians who have relatives about to be deployed will sanction that they be sent to schools located right in town. Now, if , for example, this particular school in town needs only two teachers and say four politicians want all their four relatives to be sent to that school. What this means is that this school will be over staffed hence some teachers will have very few classes to teach."

Last but not the least, there is lack of well-defined roles among the actors. This is evident in the fact that the Board lacks authority over the school budgets, for which it plays mostly a monitoring role. Even when the decentralization policy demands that the Boards should monitor the school budgets, this is not practical because in many schools, especially government aided ones, the Head teachers do not like the idea of this monitoring and in most cases, no reports are

given to the DEB office about such. The office (DEB), therefore has little say on what the schools receive from the Government, nor any influence on how schools may spend the funds.

The school is facing a challenge in resource mobilization in the implementation of the decentralization policy. This has been necessitated by government's regulating of school fees without measures to cushion the difference. Normally, the school carries out projects using P.T.A. funds levied to parents but from the time the government regulated the school fees to K1, 000 per child, the school has not been able to carry out projects due to limited resources. This challenge was equally shared by the P.T.A. and board members that were interviewed.

The P.T.A. and school Board feel there is need to re- orient some members as some members seem to be passive (possibly because they are ignorant of what is obtaining). Further these bodies lack the 'financial muscle' to carry out tasks like fundraising ventures, training of teachers and other projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having outlined the findings of the study, this paper will proceed to the discussion of the findings which is guided by the two specific objectives of the study (implementation of the policy at the district level and community participation in the school) and on which the basis of the summary, conclusions and recommendations will be drawn from. The objective here is to try and interpret what the findings mean, not only in the narrow sense of answering the research questions, but also their implications on the wider assumptions about educational decentralization. Before this, it is imperative to show how the participative democratic theory guided the study.

Community participation is in line with the participative democratic theory which asserts that genuine democracy requires intelligent and active participation in the formulation of values that regulate the living of people (Westbrook, 1991).

The theory advocates that stakeholders in social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them. The community, therefore, is the largest stakeholder in producing and managing educational institutions.

Additionally, the establishment of DEBs entails promoting participative democracy because it has allowed stakeholders both at district and school levels to input their decisions pertaining to quality delivery of basic education, although the exercise of power by top officials may be seen as a counter to the will of those who are opposed to it.

5.2 The implementation of the decentralization policy at the level of the District Education Board

Findings of this study indicated that the Monze district education board has not been able to function as expected or produce desirable policy outcomes due to their weak institutional capacities including human, financial and material inadequacies, poor coordination, unclear rules and regulations, among others. These explain the low level of success of the decentralization policy in this district. Although these factors seem to be interlinked, they are independent of each

other making them hard to interpret although they do to a large extent, influence policy implementation.

This finding is related to other studies that have also shown that where institutional capacity is weak, chances of implementation failures are higher than in settings with relatively stronger institutional capacity (Hanson, 1998). Hanson's study produced results which highlighted institutional capacity as one of the influential factors affecting the operations of district education boards.

Additionally, McGinn & Welsh (1999) explained that most educational decentralization policy initiatives have not been achieved due to inadequate institutional arrangements. By and large, the depth and density of organizational capabilities determines the extent to which devolved units can be far away from the centre . Therefore, it is clear that the gap between policy and practice in terms of institutional capacities in Monze district is wide. These challenges from the district point to lack of sufficient political commitment. Besides, problems pertaining to weak institutional capacity such as manpower and funding requirements and poor coordination are not new. In fact, they existed in Zambia way before decentralization was conceived. For instance, inadequate skilled personnel and funding for regional units were challenges previously just as they have resurfaced under decentralization. We should then not be surprised by the low performance of this board when the "known" problems pertaining to institutional capacity were not adequately dealt with from the onset. As Hanson (1998) pointed out, sub-national structures inherited from central government in much of the SSA region are administratively weak, highly politicized and mostly characterized by corrupt practices - obstacles which are hard to deal with in a devolved system.

Clearly, the study observed that the invisible hand of centralization has far-reaching implications for the autonomy of the boards just as much as it compromises the flexibility for decision making freedom by the District Board members. Findings of this study revealed that in as much as the District Board have the freedom to decide what project they want to undertake, the final say comes from the Permanent Secretary. This is in line with the study done by Angus (1994) which argues that it is difficult to make a case that regional education officials have greater freedom and authority to make decisions which are truly responsive to their own setting. Angus further raises counter argument against those who advocate for decentralization on the basis of the liberal and populist localism traditions, in which, the idea public choice, individual's freedoms

and popular power are paramount in ensuring effective and efficient education service delivery at the local level. For this reason, the Monze board might well be seen as an agent of central government which is accountable for its actions in implementing the mandated policies and as such, expected to comply with MoE's externally-driven reforms and regulations.

5.3 Community participation and implementation of the policy in the school

On the other hand, this study established that community participation at school level is overwhelming despite a few challenges. This is in total agreement with other studies that have made strong claims that community participation can lead to improved school performance (Bray, 2001; Muskin, 1999; Shaffer, 1994; Watt, 2001). Many educators who have worked in the field of community participation have analyzed and illustrated increase in school performance from different settings. However, the strategies are not universally applicable because the practical outcomes are often particular to a specific context and conditions. Despite this fact, collaboration and partnership in education can lead to increased resource for education, more effective and relevant and relevant education, greater equity, demand and acceptability of education (Shaffer, 1994).

Further, Bray (2001) notes that community participation increases sense of ownership and a better understanding of the true nature of the educational problems facing a particular country. He goes on to say community participation contributes to improvement in education through improving student recruitment, retention and attendance, improving teachers' performance and conditions of their service and enhancing equity. Similarly, Uemura (1999) submits that community participation in education ensures optimization of the use of limited resources, development of relevant teaching material, identifying and addressing problems that hinder the development of education, realization of democracy and improvement of accountability.

The effect of community participation at Monze Boarding Secondary school is not different from these experiences. The Board improves pupil recruitment, retention and attendance as well teacher performance during the result analyses that are done periodically and awarding hard working teachers and pupils. Equally, it (Board) improves teachers' conditions of service by providing decent housing units for some teachers as well as renting houses in town for other teachers.

Because of community participation in this school, parents and members of the community have developed a sense of responsibility and ownership such that the community is on the lookout especially where pupil discipline and vandalism of school property is concerned.

However, the school Board and P.T.A. are facing a challenge of finances due to government's latest intervention on school fees. This has handicapped the school in performing tasks like fundraising ventures, training of teachers and carrying out many developmental projects. Additionally, the school Board and P.T.A. members need to be re-oriented on their roles as a few of them are dormant.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

As stated in the previous chapter, the District Board is not fully implementing the decentralization policy because of skilled human, financial and material support. Further, it is challenged by political interference (to a smaller extent though), lack of political commitment, unclear role definition and centralization from top officials in the execution or implementation of the policy. Additionally, communication does not affect the implementation of the policy in any way at district level. At school level, school board members, PTA and community members appear to be highly enthusiastic and committed in playing their role as manifested by their contribution to basic education. Some of the school board members even go as far as meeting certain running costs and spending their time for monitoring works in schools. Obviously, this enthusiasm and commitment is indispensable for effective operations of schools and the DEBs. If some school board and PTA members including the community show firm determination towards basic education provision, an enabling environment should be created to allow them play more important roles.

It can, therefore be concluded that the decentralization policy is not fully implemented at district and school level. Precisely, the school is implementing it at a more advanced level as compared to the district.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational decentralization is generally perceived as if it is an answer to problems of high centralization when in actual fact, it is merely a management strategy which may be adopted when and where a highly centralized education system is ineffective and inefficient. In light of the challenges associated with the implementation of the policy at district and school levels, the following policy measures are hereby recommended;

i) Strengthening institutional capacity in a decentralized education system cannot be done overnight given limited financial resources in developing countries such as Zambia but that does not mean it is totally unachievable. What it simply means is that finances alone cannot achieve success. Therefore, there is need for political commitment as well for setting up a clear and strong regulatory framework to support

implementation. Such a framework should clearly outline coordination arrangements. It should provide clear operational guidelines that specify power relations between and among key players by clarifying their different roles and responsibilities.

ii) Apart from setting up a strong regulatory (institutional) framework, the ministry of education should ensure that there is enough competent personnel to operate in the decentralization activities. Given the circumstances in Monze, it could be useful to also review the recruitment criteria and procedures in order to close the gap between actors' expected roles and their professional profiles. This measure can also be backed up by in-service training particularly among management team members in order to re-orient them with new knowledge and skills that match new demands since they may be too used to the old ways of doing things.

iii) The DEB should promptly approve and give feedback on school projects proposed by P.T.A. so as to keep the morale for community participation high.

iv) Government to provide an alternative measure for financial mobilization in schools so that the school can continue using money levied to parents for continuity of developmental projects.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since this study was only conducted in one district, widening the geographical scope by covering more districts and schools may in future provide in-depth insights which would add to the existing body of knowledge on experiences regarding DEBs in Zambia.

On the other hand, since this study employed qualitative study design involving smaller sample of respondents, further investigation with mixed method design of relatively larger sample may be necessary for achieving a much firmer basis for making policy recommendations

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for the District Education Board Secretary

Date:----------

Sex: ----------

Time: ----------

1. What is the role of your office in the implementation of the educational decentralization policy?

2. Does your office coordinate community participation at school level?

3. If the answer in question 2 is 'yes', how is this being done?

4. If the answer in question 2 is 'no', why is it not being done?

5. In your opinion, is it a good idea to implement the decentralization policy in Zambia?

Yes	No

Why?

6. How often does your office meet with the school management teams to ensure the smooth delivery of the decentralization policy?
7. In your opinion, who are the stakeholders in this policy?

8. How are these stakeholders participating in decision making at different levels?

9. What are the responsibilities of the staff under your supervision in the implementation of the policy?

10. Are they (your staff) aware of these responsibilities?

11. Are there any challenges your office is facing in the implementation of the decentralization policy? If so, explain.

12. In your own opinion, is decentralization being fully implemented in your district? justify

13. Do you think the decentralization policy is effective enough in your district? Justify.

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for the Head teacher

Date:----------

Sex: ----------

Time: ----------

1. What is the role of your office in implementing the decentralization policy in the school?

2. Does the community participate in decision making in your school?

3. If the answer is 'yes', how does this happen?

4. If the answer is 'no', why is it so?

5. What do you think are the benefits of decentralization to the school?

6. What roles should the teachers in this school play in the smooth delivery of the policy?

7. Are the teachers aware of these roles?

8. How does information about this policy flow from the District office to your school?

9. Are there any challenges your school is facing in implementing the decentralization policy?
10. In your own opinion, is decentralization being fully implemented in your school?

11. What is your comment on the effectiveness of the decentralization policy in your school?

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide for Focus group (Teachers)

Number of: Male----------

Female----------

Date----------

1. What does educational decentralization mean to you?

2. In what ways have you, as teachers, been involved in decision making to ensure the smooth delivery of the implementation of the decentralization policy?

3. How does your school participate in implementing the policy?

4. Do pupils participate in decision making in any way?

5. If the answer is 'yes', how do they participate?

6. How does the community participate in decision making in the school?

7. How beneficial is decentralization in your institution?

8. Do you think the decentralization policy is being fully implemented in the school? Justify.

9. Are there any challenges that you are facing as teachers in the implementation of the policy? Explain.

10. What is your comment on the effectiveness of the decentralization policy in your school?

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide for P.T.A/ Board members

Number of: Male----------

Female----------

Date----------

1. Who appoints the P.T.A/ Board members of the school?

2. What criterion is used in selecting these members?

3. What are the functions of the school P.T.A. / Board?

4. What does community participation in your school mean?

5. How does the community participate in helping run the school?

6. Is there any form of resistance from the community in participating in school affairs? Explain

7. To what extent is the community involved in decision making in this school?

8. How does your committee participate in the following?

   a. School management
   b. Development of the school
   c. Teaching and
   d. learning

9. What successes have you so far recorded as a result of community participation in the school?

10. What challenges have you experienced from community participation in the school?

11. In your view, how can community participation be fully implemented in the school?

12. Do you think community participation is effective in this school?

APPENDIX E

BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	ITEM	QTY	RATE(ZMK)	TOTAL(ZMK)
Transport (for collecting data)	days	5	60	300
Transport (for submission of proposal, draft and final report)	days	3	150	450
Lunch	days	5	50	250
Stationery	reams	2	75	150
Secretarial services				
Printing proposal	pages	30	3	90
Printing instruments (interview guides)	pages	10	3	30
Printing of draft report (dissertation)	pages	120	3	360
Printing of final report for submission	pages	120	3	360
TOTAL				**1, 990**