

The Degree of Community Participation in Managing School Finances in Selected  
Schools in Mansa District

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Mulenga Martin Chituma

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear wife who encouraged and supported me to take these studies even in very difficult times.

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## DECLARATION

I, Mulenga Martin Chituma, do hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it is a true copy that has not been submitted for a degree at this University or any other University.

Signed:..... *mt* .....

Date:..... *28<sup>th</sup> May* .....2005

This dissertation of Mulenga Martin Chituma is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education by the University of Zambia.

Signed: *B. G. Mwanza* ..... Date: *May 12, 05* .....

Signed: *M. Mulenga* ..... Date: *16/5/05* .....

Signed: *MAT* ..... Date: *31/5/2005* .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

## ABSTRACT

Title: The Degree of Community Participation in Managing School Finances  
in Selected Schools in Mansa District.

The Purpose of the Study The purpose of this study was to look at school improvement. This was seen in terms of enhancing efficiency in dispensing and managing school finances. What was realized was that schools experienced a lot of problems most of which were finance related. To solve these problems, two approaches were envisaged.

1. To establish and promote a sense of community ownership of schools located in their areas.
2. To see school improvement as a combined effort of communities and staff in schools.

Methodology Data were collected from six categories of respondents as follows: pupils, school bursars, teachers, head teachers, the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) and community members. The study was approached from the combined method of quantitative and qualitative designs.

Findings The main findings of the study were that schools' finances were mostly controlled and spent by heads of school with very little involvement of local communities. This was despite the fact that most parents of the children who attended the schools that were under study were economically constrained.

Conclusions The major conclusions were that the staff in schools showed reluctance to incorporate local communities in the financial operations of their schools. Largely, this was encouraged by heads of school who in fact were

in charge of funds. But on the general level, parents expressed willingness to participate in the management of finances.

Recommendations The offices of the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) and the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) should impress upon heads of school to cultivate good working relationships with the communities where schools are located. The two offices should help school staff to build closer links with local communities in the implementation of school activities so as to lessen mistrust between them.

Suggestions for further Research

1. Since this study covered very few schools, more studies need to be conducted in other schools in other areas in order to compare the findings.
2. Other studies in other school aspects e.g., school discipline, academic achievements of pupils, school administration, etc., which call for the participation of communities would contribute positively to the improvement of schools.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The Zambian government acknowledges that education is a basic human right which should be given to every child (MOE, 1996). It believes that through the pursuit of the principles of equity, education can be used to eradicate poverty and to improve human welfare. Thus, much effort has to be made to put in place resources required to develop and improve education.

Finances are cardinal in the operations of schools. When we talk about resources, what comes to mind are three categories - human, financial and material (Halliday, 1995). Although the human resource is said to be the most important, school operations, by and large, depend heavily on the financial resource. It is the financial resource which defines the quality of teachers to be employed and sets their morale in educational provision. Further, it defines what materials are brought into the education system which go to bring about quality. This study therefore is an attempt to find out how the financial resource in schools is managed and what role local communities play in its management.

In the provision of education, we also have to recognize that government has been confronted with numerous problems. Foremost is the fact that Zambia's population has grown to a level with which existing schools cannot contend.

In 2001, it was estimated that 30% of children in the School-going age were not enrolled, which translated nearly to 620 000 children. (MOE 2003: 22).

This situation has had a lot of negative effects. Mainly, it has resulted in the introduction of double and triple sessions in primary schools. This has been in an

effort by government to try to enroll as many children as it can in the few places that are available. On face value, one would view double and triple sessions in educational provision as solutions to Zambia's rising school-age population. But this has given way to other problems in the education system such as loss of learning hours and the subsequent low achievement levels. Apart from this, the education system also faces the problem of trust and confidence. When talking about the education system in Zambia, we note the fact that the country has been facing economic problems which have affected the provision of social services.

Since the establishment of schools in the country, communities have related with them in two main ways. There has been community labour support to carry out self-help projects for schools. In fact, the Ministry of Education credits this support as having contributed a lot to upgrading of many primary schools to include provision for grades 8 and 9 (MOE, 1996). The other relationship has been through direct financial contributions to schools in the form of user fees which parents pay for their children who attend schools. Parents have also been contributing towards the education of their children through the provision of books, pens and uniforms. In some communities, they have even built or provided fully-fledged "community schools" that are run and managed by communities themselves. However, this relationship has wavered and many parents including their children have lost confidence and interest in schools. Kelly (1999: 197) refers to this as the loss of the "superstitious" faith in the magic of knowledge in "itself" and in the education's role in liberating them from their grinding poverty (MOE, 1995). They have begun to view education as just a waste that gives them no returns.

However, as noted earlier, since education is a basic human right, Zambia has ratified a number of UN conventions that support universal education. In pursuit of this goal, the National Policy on Education articulates that all children should attend Basic School by 2015 (MOE, 1996). Thus, despite these constraints, we can say that Zambia is poised to move forward and restore the principles of "Education For All" and uphold "the human rights to education." At the same time, the government has responded by inviting beneficiaries and other interest groups into the education system to give government a helping hand. Specifically, government has shed off the responsibility of educating children to parents and that it can only assist them where they are failing (Maliyamkono and Ogbu, 1999).

However, in the context of the country's failing economy and the prevailing HIV/AIDS pandemic which has left many children orphans, this has had its own negative effects. Principally, it appears like an indirect reversal of the government's goal of achieving universal access to education by the year 2015. The resulting situation is that while most parents would like to enroll their children in school and give them a chance to get some education, they have ended up withdrawing their children from school due to either failure to pay their user fees or failure to see what to pay for in what they see as poor educational provision (Boesen, 2000; Kelly, 1999).

The government recognises that it is difficult for all parents to educate their children. It has therefore revisited its policy for beneficiaries to pay for basic social services and reintroduced free education for grades 1 to 7 (MOE, 2000). While this provides some alleviation of the financial burden for the parents, real answers may lie in restoring parents' confidence in the education system and involving communities fully

in managing school finances. Indeed, communities' ability to pay and how much they should pay need to be seriously looked into by communities themselves rather than someone else. They themselves need to look into the prospects of the school to which they send their children rather than allowing this to be done by someone else.

If ever we have to have good education, the community as a whole must recognize and accept its responsibility, define goals, plan a comprehensive programme, experiment boldly and constantly appraise progress. (Olsen 1963: 342).

On one hand, this instills a sense of responsibility to what parents are preparing their children for, while on the other hand it helps parents to cultivate a sense of community ownership of schools located in their areas. In this way, it enhances what has been said that community involvement in educational provision should be the rule and not the exception (Kelly, 1999; MOE, 1996).

Parents, guardians and indeed the wider community can play very important roles in the improvement of education. By education, we mean all the circumstances and actions leading to the child's intellectual, social, moral and physical development (Macbeth, 1989). Their participation may also include increasing levels of access, retention and completion rates among girls and vulnerable children (MOE, 1996). Community involvement therefore means building linkages that narrow gaps between what exists in schools and communities.

Community involvement is also encouraged by the concept of liberal democracy that Zambia pursues. The principle is generally accepted in the Western democracies that those with a stake in an enterprise should have the opportunity to influence decisions in proportion to their stake in it (Macbeth, 1989). Accordingly, government has

decentralized the educational provision as a way of making improvements to it and allow broad based participation in its management.

By allowing various stakeholders to share in decision making and to take responsibility for education at local level, decentralization fosters local ownership and promotes better management of education services. (MOE 1996: 3).

Among the many advantages enshrined in this are that it removes from government the burden to carry out day-to-day affairs of schools and promotes a better degree of democracy in the management and administration of the education system. In this way, local communities are given impetus to make their own decisions aimed at improving efficiency in educational delivery.

Communities need to be encouraged to develop a strong commitment to partnership in the education provision. This would require improved co-operation among various interest groups, coupled with better co-ordination and planning of education provision (MOE, 1996). Communities have to be given opportunities to provide educational services or take part in improving on what is being offered. There are various ways in which this is done. The starting point is to encourage the communities to attend Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings in which school programmes are introduced. This will enable communities to contribute to the development of the schools by coming up with strong and sustainable strategies on how programmes can continue running (MOE, 2002). As Berger (1983: 39) observes:

The local community cannot be expected to take a keen interest in the schools if people know little about them.

Therefore, they should be brought to the center stage of educational provision. The aim of all this is to bridge the gap between the school and the community in which it is found.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

While government wishes that the communities in which schools are located become more involved in the school processes, it has to be realized that there are as many ways of community involvement as there are degrees of involvement. Thus the question which this study investigates is: what degree of involvement operates in selected schools in Mansa District at the level of Financial Management?

## OBJECTIVES

The study postulated the following objectives,

- i. To find out the willingness of communities to participate in managing school finances.
- ii. To find out the extent of community participation in managing school finances.
- iii. To find out the extent of teachers' willingness to accept community participation in managing school finances.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions that this study endeavoured to answer.

- i. Are local communities involved in managing financial affairs of schools?
- ii. Are teachers and school administrations ready to involve local communities in managing school finances?
- iii. Are local communities willing to work side by side with teachers and thus get involved in the management of school finances?
- iv. Do local communities in urban and peri-urban areas have a higher level of participation in managing school finances than those in rural areas?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As we mentioned in the introduction, children in schools first belong to their parents and the communities in which they live before they belong to government or schools. This makes parents and communities first-line clients of the school (Macbeth, 1989). The significance of this study therefore lies in the fact that it seeks to assess and reawaken communities' responsibility to their children's school welfare.

Parents and communities have to bear in mind that it is within their basic rights to participate in the management of finances of their children's education so as to contribute to improve educational delivery. Therefore, this study is aimed at helping parents, guardians and the local community to show genuine concern for their children and the type of future they are mapping out for them. This is what natural responsibility demands and it is in line with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1975) that states:

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance. That responsibility lies in the first place with his parents. (Macbeth 1989: 4).

As they take part in the management of school finances, it would also help them to realize that education is not cheap more especially in the present age when there has been drastic reduction in public resources for education.

The study shall also reassert the fact that it is the parents who give life to their children and should therefore be the ones with the serious obligations of educating their children. It is important then that parents are recognized as the first and foremost educators of their children (Macbeth, 1989). This then places their involvement in the financial management of schools in the center stage for the improvement and

expansion of education. The issue of finance cannot be divorced from the provision of education as no school can run without finances.

The study shall also contribute to the realization of the meaning and benefits of community participation in educational provision for all interest groups. Among the various interest groups are pupils and their parents, teachers and the government, and the wider community in which the school environment fits. Houghton and Tregear (1969: 17) state that:

The school should be recognized as having a relationship to two quite distinct communities. The first is the local community which it directly serves, and secondly the national community represented by a widespread, often complex and frequently authoritarian administration. Both of these communities should be able to derive a gain from its existence.

Local community participation in educational provision is the best opportunity people have to improve levels of school access, retention, and completion rates especially among vulnerable children and girls. This is important because education is a tool for development used to conquer poverty and ignorance. Besides, local communities have to realize that education is not only key to individual success but to national development as well.

It is through the community school approach, involving as it does in the co-ordination of related activities, that communities can bring about improvement in the character of community life. (Olsen 1963: 317).

The study is also intended to help school administrations to understand that the schools in which they serve are community institutions that are meant to serve the interests and aspirations of local communities in which they are found. Society is diverse and this makes local communities experience different problems peculiar only

to their areas. Schools should therefore aim at responding to the particular needs of local communities and make educational provision acquire meaning to them. This can only be so if children of the local community are given opportunities to attend school and are prepared to live a rewarding and satisfying life in the community (MOE, 1996).

The study will further help school administrations and teachers to understand that community involvement in managing school finances directly leads to stronger bonds between teachers and pupils. This is so in that community involvement brings parents close to the school where they share problems faced in the education of their children with teachers and teachers too are given a chance to share problems experienced at school with parents. Bond (1973: 2) says:

There will be real improvements in the academic attainments of boys and girls where the parents take an active interest in the progress and development of their children.

This is because parental interest in the academic affairs of their children entails improved teacher behaviours and attitudes in shaping their pupils' personalities as they would be teaching children whose background they would understand.

Lastly, the creation of boards at both district and school levels means that government has decentralized the management of education to local units. This has been in line with the liberal and democratic philosophy that Zambia has pursued since 1991. Local units have been entrusted with responsibility and discretion to plan and implement programmes and projects that are subject to local conditions in which these units are found (MOE, 1996). As Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 115) observe:

Decentralization aims at improving the management of education and contributes towards the more efficient provision of education.

This allows decisions to be made at points of delivery, and hence be more responsive to local needs. This study will help assess the implementation of decentralization in educational provision and the ability of rural and poor families to pay so that their children are not denied access to school on account of failure to pay school fees.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to the World Bank, the education sector in Zambia has been experiencing a continuing decline in public funding since 1990 (Kelly, 1999). This has been happening in the context of so many other problems such as increased numbers of school children, deteriorating physical infrastructures, diminishing teaching and learning materials, etc. These factors have all had serious negative effects on the quality of education offered in Zambia.

The issue of reduced funding to the education sector is one of the results of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which dates as far back as the mid 1970s (Kelly,1999; Boesen, 2000). Up until 1991 when the MMD government came to power, the UNIP government which was in power then resisted the full implementation of SAP. During that time, the government was not fully committed to the dictates of SAP and the implementation of the reforms was half hearted and opportunistic with programmes being suspended whenever they were not politically expedient (Kelly, 1999). After 1991, the MMD government embraced SAP making it fully-fledged and the government has since adopted a cash budget.

The basic underlying notion is that the market is to play a supreme role in the development process with a consequent need to undertake privatisations, trade liberalizations, monetary reforms, as well as scaling down of the state to an absolute minimum. (Buchert 1998: 113).

While this curtails deficits and helps control inflation, it results in cutbacks in real public spending and affects the delivery of public services. The vacuum which results cannot just be left unattended to. Public expenditures are passed on to private hands to pay for various social services.

#### DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Only one district and four schools were used in this study. Of the schools that were used, two were upper basic while the other two were high schools. Further, the researcher was well aware of other school disciplines that demand parental involvement but only the subject under study was investigated.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher encountered many problems in the study. Foremost was the reluctance of teachers and pupils to participate in the study without withholding names due to fears of victimization. They felt the subject was too sensitive and prone to raise a lot of eyebrows from school authorities. Heads of school also might not have submitted true reflections of the financial management in their schools because the subject bordered on their reputation. Parents too were watching over their shoulders when expressing their views on the subject. Thus, the researcher agreed with all respondents not to give their names apart from the titles they are identified with in order to make them more revealing.

The researcher was also well aware that the issue of school fees is critical to most households. The study would have been more representative if it had covered many schools and perhaps many provinces. However, time and expense were impediments. Hence the findings could be restrictive to the areas that were studied.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Community - A group of people living together and united by shared interests. In this, Study, the community is taken as people surrounding the school who may or may not be sending their children to such a school but have embedded interests in it.

Decentralisation - The redistribution of roles and responsibilities from the center to the periphery.

Fees - Money paid to schools as demanded from time to time.

Finances - Amount of money owned by schools.

Management - The art of being in control or in charge.

Participation - Taking part in an activity.

Partnerships - Sharing and helping in the same stated activity.

Rural Area - Areas which exhibit village life.

Urban Area - Areas that exhibit town/city life.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Ministry of Education, its fundamental goal is to ensure that every eligible individual can have access to education of good quality (MOE, 1996). This goal however depends on the availability of adequate resources, i.e., human material and financial. Lewis and Loveridge (1965) point out that it should be clear that the degree of education a country can afford depends upon the total wealth of that country. This is usually expressed by giving a money value to its total production or “national product.”

The World Bank and other UN related agencies also note that the sub-Saharan region to which Zambia belongs is witnessing an economic crisis (Buchert, 1998). This has been seen in terms of economic growth, debt, trade and production figures all of which show trends of macro-economic imbalance. Bray and others (1986) note the fact that in the first half of the 1970s, growth of modern sector employment in Zambia was almost negligible and it actually fell after 1975 when declining copper revenues and transport problems in foreign trade depressed the economy. Thus we can say the inadequacy of funds has stood in the way of the ministry’s efforts to reach its projected goal of good quality education.

The ministry itself acknowledges that as a proportion of the GDP and of the total public budget, public spending on education in Zambia ranks among the lowest in Africa and in the World (MOE, 1996). Boesen (2000) reports that the share of national budget allocated to education fell from 13% in the 1970s to 8.4% in 1989

which is very low compared to average spending on education of about 15% in low-income countries. This severe public under-funding of education is at the root of most of the problems in the sector. As a result of this under-funding, it has not been possible to take meaningful steps for the improvement and performance of education. “This has led to educational backwardness and social under-development coupled with economic stagnation in Zambia” (MOE 1995: 12). Adding to the problem of under-funding to the sector has been the problem of demographic growth which has exacerbated the quality provision of education especially in the urban schools resulting in multiple teaching sessions, very large classes and diminishing learning time (Boesen, 2000).

This situation however is not indicative of the lack of importance of the education sector. Indeed, education has been referred to as a panacea to development in a number of World Bank publications. Its benefits to the individual household as well as society at large have been thoroughly analysed. "Education is considered to influence health and fertility directly and indirectly, to contribute to a reduction of poverty and to increase the productive capacity" (Buchert 1998: 115; MOE 1996: 136).

#### THE NEED FOR COST SHARING

It is in recognition of this fact and given the limited extent of public resources and the legitimate competing demands of other sectors of the economy that the ministry has acknowledged that government budgetary allocations alone will not be sufficient to ensure the provision of quality education for every person (MOE, 1996). The provision of quality education is an aspect that covers many areas such as motivated

teaching staff, availability of text-books and other teaching-learning materials, consumable materials in laboratories, good school infrastructures, well-fed children and many more. All this demands the participation of other partners in the education system. The World Bank also encourages diversification of funding, including increased involvement of non-governmental organizations and a cost sharing component relying on community resources (Buchert, 1998). Government saw the problem of reduced funding to education as a need requiring immediate attention and has therefore called for partnerships with other government ministries and alliances with councils, communities, private providers of education, voluntary organizations, and even beneficiaries (MOE, 1996).

Community and family participation in education cost however is limited by the widespread poverty in the country. The World Bank assessment in 1994 indicates that more than half of Zambia's total population (54%) were found to live below the core poverty line, and between 68% and 69% of population are living in absolute poverty (Boesen, 2000). According to the report, poverty was even found to be more severe in rural areas where about 80% of the population was unable to satisfy its basic needs as early as 1988. As the government introduced cost-sharing, therefore, it outlined that it was to take into account the participation of the poor, handicapped, girls and other vulnerable groups especially at the foundation levels of the school system (MOE, 1996). This was with a view that unregulated payment of tuition fees was going to threaten the development of education as a universally accepted human right (Buchert, 1998).

## ROLE OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Despite the inequality it has caused, cost sharing by parents has created participation in their children's education (MOE, 2003). Through cost sharing, parents are brought closer to schools and are able to identify areas of concern which are improved upon in order to smoothen the teaching-learning atmosphere of their children. Fullan (1991) notes that only one thing is clear; the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement. As a result of this understanding, the ministry affirms its will to continue to encourage communities to maintain strong involvement in schools through developments of "social contracts" detailing different support mechanisms (MOE, 2003). In this effort, parents with school-going children have most to gain from initiatives to improve the way in which day to day work of schools is carried out (Levacic, 1989). This in itself entails openness in the manner of dispensing school administration and especially the management of school finances. Harrison and Gill (1992) note that the more parents know about a particular institution, the happier they are with it and hence are more willing to help it. In other words, parents would find it difficult to help a system whose operations they do not know or know little about.

There is also the aspect of the community's sense of ownership of its school. More often than not, communities regard education as the government's responsibility and the school as the government's property. This feeling comes from old days when the education system was provided and controlled by the state without influence and participation by the local communities (Boesen, 2000). Partly, this has led to low involvement of communities in the management of schools built in their localities as they view education as government responsibility. This perception has to change so

that communities can begin identifying themselves with schools in their areas. According to government (MOE, 1996), one of the challenges facing educational provision today, particularly in impoverished rural areas, is to reawaken an awareness that the first responsibility for the education of children rests with families and with the wider communities in which families live.

In this sense, Communities need to have a strong sense of ownership of the local school and should also cultivate keen interest in the way it is maintained. This is because the local school is there to serve their interests. It is the school that children in the area attend. After all it is recognized that individual earnings increase relative to educational level and that education contributes substantially to economic growth of the nation (Buchert, 1998).

#### THE MEANING OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

However, it is important to note that a school cannot operate effectively without funds. In some countries, funds are still wholly drawn from government while in other countries, schools depend heavily on funds obtained from other sources (Commonwealth Secretariat, Module 5 1993). The views of government in introducing local financial management (cost sharing) are to improve the quality of learning and teaching in schools (Levacic, 1989). Quality in Levacic is understood as pupils' progress with their reading, mathematics and so on, and success on associated tests of achievement. The starting point in restoring quality to the education system is financial management by which Levecic (1989) means functional areas in business management known as management accounting and management control concerned with providing information and systems which enable managers to plan and control

the organisation's activities. Apart from this, he further explains that accounting also serves the purpose of stewardship, i.e., it serves the needs of users outside the organization. This means fulfilling the legal requirements that annual accounts are published and that the organizations transactions are audited to ensure the probity of its managers and employees.

Financial management is one of the major tasks of the school head and the success of any school programmes depends very much on this which in turn affects the overall programme of each school (Commonwealth secretariat, module 5 1993). To do this, a school head needs to involve various stakeholders.

A stakeholder is someone who has a legitimate interest in the organization and in its activities, and as a result, may have some right to influence the direction of the organization through its planning. (Tuohy 1997: 32).

Examples of stakeholders may be parents and their children, teachers, etc. But apart from being stakeholders, parents and their children are clients and teachers are therefore responsible and accountable to them (Harrison and Gill, 1992).

Progressive leadership should always be accountable. Leadership should seek and require from its supporters consistent evaluations of how it is performing ([www.inclusion.com/artleadership.html](http://www.inclusion.com/artleadership.html)). Evaluations are very important for the purpose of making adjustments to actions being pursued. Accountability can also be personal, a period in one's time to stand back, reflect and learn from experience. Other than this, accountability refers to transparent, effective and efficient use of school resources, that financial and other material resources be used for the purposes for which they are intended (MOE, 1996). According to the Ministry of Education,

“the democratic principle of accountability is one of the pillars on which Zambia’s educational policy rests” (MOE1996: 168). Thus the Ministry of Education stresses that resources from whatever source be properly accounted for and that they obtain good educational value for the learners in school. Regrettably, the Ministry of Education admits that accountability in schools has not been impressive.

Past accountability systems and procedures have not been fully satisfactory. Public funds have been misspent in the ministry and its institutions; donor funds have been misapplied; private funds raised by Parent-Teacher Associations and in other ways have been misused by school authorities. (MOE 1996: 168).

This situation is unfortunate and frustrates community participation in improving schools. Schools should pay particular attention to the accomplishment of educational goals so that they can win parents’ confidence.

#### BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Fullan (1991) also puts it on record that the establishments of more collaborative links with the community bring concrete benefits to schools and their staff. There are instances where local communities have built teachers' houses, supplied classroom desks for their children, provided variant ideas to improve schools and even supplied their own labour to schools. But the knowledge and involvement in financial management is the starting point in many instances. Levacic (1989) identifies a number of distinct stages in financial management which form a coherent and interrelated cycle of activities. The first stage is the acquiring of the financial resource. This is followed by the stage of making decisions about how to allocate resources, i.e., converting the financial resource acquired into real educational

resources. This is usually guided by the educational activities schools intend to provide. The third stage is putting the budget plan into operation. This may entail adjusting certain expenditure plans or implementing better financial control in order to regulate spending as required. The last stage in the resource management cycle is evaluation. This means relating the value of the resources used to the resulting educational outcomes. In all these stages, parents as interested parties can make immense contributions and subsequently to the running of schools, let alone the smooth learning of their children. As Harrison and Gill (1992) put it, the more parents know about a particular institution, the happier they are with it.

Tuohy (1997) advises that it is also important to scan the environment in order to understand the contexts in which schools development is taking place. As open systems, schools tend to be affected by trends outside themselves. He adds that on the economic front, there are factors that affect the level of funding to schools, the optimism of pupils in the school system with regard to their own future employment, their aspirations for qualifications and further education, etc. As a result of this, schools must embrace ideas of marketing in their daily routines. Harrison and Gill (1992) define marketing as everything to do with focusing on client needs and their satisfaction.

But while doing this, school managers should not think that all parents are able to make the same contributions, whether financial, in kind or in time to the school (Commonwealth Secretariat, Module 5 1993). There are always these variations in income whether in town or rural areas, as the size of each family. There should thus be a sensitive approach as to differentiate between families and to make provisions

for children and their parents who are facing difficulties with payments. As Hawes and others (1986: 19) note:

Parents, communities and local authorities have different economic capacities, and a policy of devolution of financial responsibility for education without counterbalancing measures would make a bleak situation even more inequitable.

This situation can be avoided when schools take meaningful steps in drawing parents in financial management. Parents may fail to see real needs of their financial obligations to schools when they are ignored. On one hand, they may become suspicious that their money is just squandered by teachers while on the other they may fail to see real school needs that demand funds.

Heads as managers of schools are instrumental in defining the successes of schools and the way they are managed (MOE, 1996). For this reason, they should gain clear understanding of all the forces and factors which contribute to the governance of schools while still keeping in focus reasons of their existence. As public institutions, schools have a number of interest groups which may not allow paid staff to run them according to their own inclinations.

The influence of the community in which the school is situated is becoming increasingly important in the way a school is operated. (Commonwealth Secretariat, Module 7 1993: 5).

The larger community is made up of different components such as businessmen, religious and traditional leaders, etc., all of whom may play important roles in supporting schools. It is just important therefore that they bear a part in the decision-making processes.

## CHAPTER THREE

This chapter gives an outline of the methodology that was used in the study.

### METHODOLOGY

Since the study was investigative in nature, the primary purpose of the research questions was to explore community involvement in managing school finances. The respondents that were involved were those with direct interest in school finances. These were pupils, Bursars, Teachers, Heads and Deputy Heads, the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) and Parents. Their contribution to the study was based on the following.

1. As direct beneficiaries of education provision in school, pupils were involved as the ones who feel the impact of good or poor financial management. They were therefore expected to have a good understanding of school attendance for which they pay school fees against their own socio-economic background.
2. Teachers are managers of schools in whose hands government and parents entrust the children. While in school, teachers take the role of parents in looking after children. Since Teaching has a spectrum of children from diverse backgrounds, they are therefore expected to show sympathy and care for all children placed in their hands regardless of their socio-economic status. Apart from this, their relationships with children should go out of school to the parents of the children they teach.

3. The Bursar is a focal point in school in as far as financial management is concerned. As one with first hand information about school financial status, one is expected to play an advisory role in cultivating a sound relationship with parents.
4. The Head and Deputy head of a school are reflections of the school that provide a link between the outside community and the school. In implementing government policy, these are key in the way issues are articulated. Above all, they define the relationship that the school cultivates with the outside world.
5. The DEBS, apart from being government's focal point in policy implementation, co-ordinates schools' welfare in the district and regulates excesses in the way they are managed. It is to this office that parents can appeal and from where teachers draw their support.
6. Parents are indirect beneficiaries of education provision and make the major part of the community. They have embedded interests in school improvement and are expected to work with school staff.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook (1976) define a research design as the arrangement of conditions for collections and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Following this, a research design will differ depending on the purpose of the research. In this study, the perspective of the combined method of qualitative and quantitative designs was used. By combined method, we mean one in which the researcher uses multiple methods drawn from "within methods" approaches, for instance, a survey and an experiment



both of which belong to the quantitative data collection strategies or it may involve "between methods" drawing on quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures such as a survey and in-depth interviews (Creswell 1994: 174). The combined qualitative and quantitative design was employed because two ways of gathering data, questionnaires and interviews, were used. Selltiz and others (1976: 299) observe that "in both questionnaire and interview, information is obtained by asking questions --- particularly suited to obtaining information about what people know, believe or expect, feel or want, intend to do or have done, and about their expectations or reasons for any of the preceding." Interviews were administered to parents because they were in the local language as the researcher needed to avoid language and writing barriers. But most importantly, they assisted the researcher to gather in-depth data on parental involvement in managing financial affairs of schools. The interview is the more appropriate technique for revealing information about complex, emotionally laden subjects or for probing the sentiments that may underlie an expressed opinion (Selltiz and others 1976: 297).

In both cases however, standard questions were used for all respondents. The reason for standardization was to ensure that all respondents replied to the same questions. Questions were open thereby giving respondents freedom to answer in their own terms. This was to keep in line with the explorative nature of the study.

## STUDY POPULATION

The study was conducted in Mansa District. It was based on Upper Basic and High Schools. Two schools from each sector were selected.

## STUDY SAMPLE

20 pupils and 10 teachers per school were selected by random sampling. The purpose of this procedure was to ensure that each individual had equal probability of being selected from the population and that the sample would be representative of the population (Creswell, 1994). Pupils were selected by the use of random numbers whereas teachers were selected by the use of the lottery method. Head teachers, their Deputies and School Bursars also fell under the study. These were included on purposive selection by virtue of their positions in schools. The same method applied at the district level where the DEBS was selected. In addition, 10 parents per school were selected. Parents were selected on the basis of having a child who attended either Upper Basic or High school education. In total, this gave a sample number of 173.

## SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The schools were drawn into the study by way of purposive selection. Two of these were Upper Basic Schools and the other two were High Schools. Both basic schools were peri-urban based while both high schools were rural based. The selection of schools was guided by the following criteria.

1. The researcher wanted to assess and compare the level of involvement in managing school financial affairs from communities which were in peri-urban areas and those in typical rural areas, that is, outside the provincial headquarters, Mansa.
2. The arrangement of two upper basic schools and two high schools arose from the view that most parents regard high schools as being more important than upper basic schools because a child who was in high school was just a step away from what they would regard as a world of work. The researcher then

was interested to see whether this view went with community participation especially in managing school finances.

## DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

As noted, the study made use of questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were administered to 133 respondents and interviews were conducted to 40 parents. Questionnaires were intended to get a general survey on the topic while interviews were used to collect more profound data on the topic. In upper basic schools, only grade 9 pupils were selected. This is because grade 9 was the highest grade in upper basic school and pupils were therefore expected to be more acquainted with school experiences than those in grade 8. Of the 20 pupils that were selected, 10 were girls while 10 were boys. In high schools, only grade 11 and 12 pupils were selected. The rationale behind this selection was the same as the one that applied in upper basic schools. In each school, the questionnaire was answered at the same time from one room in the presence of the researcher who explained the purpose of the study. The next category was composed of bursars as school personnel that was in charge of collection and handling of funds. These in each school answered a questionnaire of their own at their own time. Teachers, like pupils, also answered their own questionnaire at the same time. This was so in order to ensure their independent answers. The Head and Deputy head of each respective school answered the same questionnaire. The essence of having the same questionnaire was to get and analyse their individual views on the subject. The DEBS had a separate questionnaire. The main reason behind this questionnaire was to incorporate and gauge views regarding finances in all schools in the district. Lastly, there were interviews with parents. Parents that were involved had children in the particular school and were selected

using names of pupils in the school by random sampling. The children who were involved were those who had not taken part in answering the questionnaire for pupils.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data was thematically grouped by arranging responses into themes. It was then analysed and interpreted in line with the research questions. The research questions acted as themes around which data was grouped. Quantitative questions were reported in percentages according to the information that respondents gave. In order to verify responses from the respondents, questions that applied to all categories of respondents were asked to all of them. This was aimed at enhancing the validity and the reliability of responses from the respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the findings from the study with detailed interpretation. Interpretation of the results hinge on the background given in Chapter 3 regarding the respondents that were involved in the study. The results are presented thematically in line with the research questions. As indicated in the first chapter, the study emanated from the desire to investigate the degree of community participation in school financial management.

Arising from the stated objective, the following Research Questions were formulated to achieve it.

- i. Are local communities involved in managing financial affairs of schools?
- ii. Are teachers and school administrations ready to involve local communities in managing school finances?
- iii. Are local communities willing to work side by side with teachers and thus get involved in the management of school finances?
- iv. Do local communities in urban and peri-urban areas have a high level of participation in managing school finances than those in rural areas?

#### *SECTION 1: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN MANAGING FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF SCHOOLS*

This section addresses the first research question of the study. Are local communities involved in managing financial affairs of schools?

As already indicated in this study, children are a natural responsibility of parents. They belong to communities where their parents stay before they belong anywhere else. Thus it is incumbent upon particular communities to educate their children before they can look elsewhere. Therefore, we should start from the children of various communities that attend the schools under study. The essence of looking at the children is to examine the socio-economic situation in which they attend school. This will provide a basis from which to evaluate community involvement in managing financial affairs of schools as it will help us to understand the significance attached to education by particular communities. West-Burnham (1974) indicates that the commitment of parents will be a direct function of the significance attached to education.

The first question that was put before pupils pertained to their academic aspirations in their school life. In order to assess the commitment levels of parents to their children's education, the same question was asked to them. This was with a view that community involvement would be seen by a clear aspiration of what they were preparing their children for. As Bond (1973: 4) notes: "Parents of all kinds, classes and groups are genuinely concerned about their children and their futures." In all schools, parents joined their children in their desire to enter paid employment. This indicated that parents and their children had clear aims in their desire for education and were committed to school.

However, the majority of parents expressed disappointment with schools because they felt teachers did not go far enough to make their children attain their aspirations. From the two basic schools, 60% of the parents at Mutende Upper Basic School and 70% of

the parents at Mansa Upper Basic School felt there was little seriousness devoted to teaching and learning of their children. A parent at Mansa Upper Basic School observed that:

Teachers have too many excuses for not teaching and staying away from their classes. It's like each day they are attending either a workshop or a funeral.

Parents also observed that teachers at Upper Basic level were not trained to teach at those sections. They said they were just old teachers at primary section who were told to begin teaching the upper section. According to this researcher, this view is correct and applies to many other basic schools in the country (MOE, 1996).

At the two high schools, the situation regarding parents' trust in the teachers was the same. Parents complained about lack of seriousness by teachers as one cause that was making their children not to do well. 60% of the parents at Mabumba and Kabunda High Schools were not pleased with the teachers' manner of work. They also pointed out that their schools lacked qualified staff to teach at high schools. One parent at Mabumba High School had this to say:

I can say that pupils are possibly helped up to some extent. At this school, most teachers are on secondment.

Parents also believed that schools were not helping their children much because they never met with them to discuss the academic progress of their children in schools. In all the schools, this researcher found that 85% of parents had never visited schools to check on the academic atmosphere in which their children learnt. A few parents however blamed their own laziness for not doing this. A parent who had three children at Mutende Upper Basic School noted:

Parents leave all matters in the hands of teachers.  
As parents, we are responsible for our children's  
education.

Some parents however said they failed to visit schools on account of high levels of poverty. According to these parents, it was difficult for them to spare time during the periods their children attended school as they spent most of their time looking for means of sustaining their livelihood. A female parent at Mansa Upper Basic School said:

I have never been to the school my child attends due to lack of time. I leave my home early before my child goes to school to buy merchandise for sale at the market. I come back home late in the evening.

However, the researcher feels part of the reason for parents' failure to visit schools may be historical. The phenomenon of decentralization is new in the country and is not well grasped by a lot of people especially those in rural areas. Up until 1991 when liberal democracy was introduced, the education system was highly centralized. The state provided all educational matters with little influence and participation from the public (Boesen, 2000). This made people build a culture of looking to the state for free provision of social services which has little changed up to now. Not much awareness has taken place to stimulate community involvement in managing schools located in their areas. As a result many do not still identify themselves with schools built in their communities.

It is as result of this that this researcher feels that although parents could have a share of blame, the major part of it lies on the schools. Most of the parents are illiterate and perhaps could inhibit fear to visit schools and talk to people they see as very educated

and unquestionable. The starting point therefore needed to be made and this could not be from better people than teachers. As Bond (1973: 11) notes:

Any head, teacher, or school who argued, 'well we are quite willing to develop relations and co-operations with parents, but we are waiting for parents to request this,' will probably have to wait a very long while.

In all the schools, pupils indicated that they are sent away when they fail to pay school fees. According to them, they find the practice very disturbing of their academic progress. The problem is acute in basic schools where head teachers insist on cash payments. At the two high schools, head teachers indicated that their pupils are also allowed to pay in kind. According to this researcher, probably this is because the two schools are rural based and the head teachers take into consideration the difficulty that children and their parents face in procuring money.

However, head teachers in all schools indicated that there are children who could neither pay in cash form nor in kind form. They said it is very difficult to provide education to such children. Although they recommend a few to the DEBS for bursary, most of these children stop school as not all of them are given bursary. The head teacher of Mabumba High School noted that:

There are so many children who fail to pay school fees.  
Even if we have to recommend all of them to the DEBS,  
they cannot all be offered bursary.

45% of children who faced financial problems were orphans. Most of them were in the hands of grandparents or in people who were not in gainful employment or leading gainful livelihoods. 15% of the children at Mansa Basic School and Mabumba High School paid their own school fees. They did odd jobs after school or during holidays in order to procure money for school.

At Kabunda High School, 80% of children had parents and most of them were in gainful employment. These paid their school fees more readily than their counterparts at Mabumba High School. 60% of children at Mabumba High School had their parents but they were poor subsistent farmers with heavy economic strain.

The situation at Mubumba High School was somewhat similar to the one at Mansa Upper Basic School. In this school, a lot of pupils face financial problems and this is a problem that emanates from the fact that 45% of children are orphans. Only 20% of the pupils had parents and all of these parents were not in gainful employment. 25% of pupils have also lost their male parents while another 10% came from broken homes. So the only school that presented pupils with fewer financial problems is Mutende Upper Basic School. This is because half of the pupils at the school have parents and even single parents are in gainful employment.

School fees although charged on each child, in more instances than not, are paid by the parents and guardians of the children. Thus when children fail to pay, it is parents who fail to pay. However, a question was asked to children to find out whether they afford to pay school fees. The table on the next page illustrates their response in percentages.

Kind of Ability	MUTENDE	MANSA	KABUNDA	MABUMBA
Not Afford	55%	70%	45%	80%
Afford.	45%	30%	55%	20%

Table 1 Pupils' capacity to pay fees in each School

From the table, we can see that the percentage of children who are unable to afford school fees at Mabumba High School is higher than in any other school. This is followed by Mansa Upper Basic School and this situation correlates with other problems pointed out earlier on. It is only Kabunda High School which has a higher percentage of children who are able to afford school fees. According to the Head of the school, 95% of children are able to pay without major problems. In all other schools however, the Heads and their Deputies indicated that pupils who faced financial problems were in the majority. But whether children face difficulties or not, all the teachers in the schools stressed that they get this money from most of them. The Deputy Head of Mutende Upper Basic School said: "We insist that they pay." Thus, this indicates how much parents treasure the education of their children and the major sacrifices they make in procuring money in order to send them to school. In my view as researcher, what remains is to harness this commitment and make it work for the betterment of schools by involving parents fully in the management of schools' financial affairs. In their commitment to their children's education, they confirm that parents of all kinds worry about the future of their children (Bond, 1973). It appears then that if parents do not take part in the management of schools' finances, it may not

be as a result of lack of trust and confidence in the education system as Kelly (1999) and Boesen (2000) observe. Rather other factors other than these may be responsible for their low participation in educational provision. It is these factors which demoralize their confidence and interest in schools.

The researcher identified two situations in the study. One situation applied to parents of children at Mutende Upper Basic School and Kabunda High School who were all in gainful employment and readily pay their children's school fees. The other situation applied to parents of children at Mansa Upper Basic School and Mabumba High School most of whom were not in gainful employment and preferred to pay fees in installments due to financial constraints. In either case, schools ignore their concerns and do not give them any hearing. 80% of the parents in all schools suggested that:

School fees be paid in installments by parents who cannot afford to pay at once. Those parents who cannot afford to pay in monetary terms be allowed to pay the fees in kind.

Head Teachers at Mansa and Mutende Upper Basic Schools were not in favour of paying school fees in kind. They insisted on getting cash rather than anything else. No particular reason was given for their dislike to have fees paid in kind. Head teachers at Kabunda and Mabumba High Schools however allowed parents to pay school fees in kind. The head of Kabunda High School gave the following answer: "Pupils who cannot afford to pay in cash form are allowed to pay in kind." However, Kabunda High School, unlike all other schools, objected strongly to having these payments made in installments. They too gave no reasons to explain why they were not in favour of this arrangement. But perhaps they exploited the idea that the school was boarding to which most parents in employment wanted to send their children. Given

the demand for school places, it was the parents who had much to lose if their child was sent out of school for failure to pay fees in full at once.

All the schools charged their school fees per term and were expected to be paid at the beginning of each term. There were a lot of variations in the fees charged from school to school. The table below gives the amount of money charged in each school per term.

	MUTENDE	MANSA	KABUNDA	MABUMBA
Amount of Money per Term	K35 000 00	K25 000 00	K110 000 00	K50 000 00

Table 2 Fees charged in each school

Mansa and Mutende were both basic schools but Mutende Basic School charged higher fees than Mansa Basic School. The head teacher at Mutende Basic School said school fees were determined by budget estimates. But probably, they exploited the fact that most parents of the children at the school were in gainful employment and could thus afford to pay.

Kabunda and Mabumba were the two high schools under study. But whereas Kabunda was well established as a boarding school, Mabumba was a new high school that had been up-graded from the primary and upper basic school levels. Although a few

pupils were in the boarding, Mabumba basically was a day school and the fees indicated do not cover for the boarding. Pupils who stayed in the boarding funded for themselves and the boarding structures were constructed out of the initiative of parents themselves. Thus, Kabunda could charge higher fees than Mabumba and still expect more pupils to pay than Mabumba would. Annually, Mutende and Mansa Basic Schools charged K105 000 00 and K75 000 00 respectively while Kabunda and Mabumba High Schools charged K330 000 00 and K150 000 00 respectively.

All schools gave deadlines in which they expected their pupils to pay the fees. These deadlines were fixed without any dialogue with parents who were supposed to pay them. Rather parents were just informed by their children about them. After deadlines, children who fail to pay school fees are sent away from schools.

In all schools, teachers and head teachers indicated that paying school fees was a good thing and was supposed to be maintained for it helped in the running of their schools. However, a number of teachers expressed ignorance as to what fees were charged in their schools and it was only Head Teachers and their Deputy Head Teachers who were able to state this. Of the fees charged, K1000 00 was government statutory fee called General Purpose Fund (GPF) while other amounts were charged under various names. The most common fee was Parents'-Teachers' Association (PTA) to which Kabunda High School added boarding fee.

The immediate person in handling financial affairs of schools is the Bursar. In usual circumstances, pupils pay to the bursar and it is the bursar who may keep a proper

record of the number of pupils who pay and who do not. Thus, let us gain the perspectives of the school bursars in the schools under study.

All the schools but Kabunda High School had no bursars falling in that designation per se but teachers served in this position administratively. In the structures of basic schools, there is no designation for school bursar. Rather teachers are elected to this position by the PTA and are to serve for a period of one year in order to instill transparency in the financial management. At the end of each period, the financial management is supposed to be evaluated and new teachers elected to the position.

But these teachers at Mutende Upper Basic School and Mabumba High School had been in this position for 12 years and 7 years respectively while the one for Mansa had served 3 years. In all the three schools, parents said there were no elections called or any evaluation of the financial management. This made parents feel strongly that:

Head teachers manipulate the management of school finances so as to gain from them. They ignore procedure because they are comfortable with the teachers who are in the position.

The view taken by this researcher is that serving in this position for more than five years for a teacher is far too long taking into account that these teachers only serve in this position for administrative convenience. Money matters are always thorny and suspicious and therefore require changing hands in order to instill transparency. A case as the one at Mutende Upper Basic School was extremely awkward more so when one considers that most parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school financial management. A parent at the same school resignedly described the financial management of the school as follows: "Nothing will change and we are even tired of

talking about it." Generally, even teachers in all schools expressed dissatisfaction with financial activities of schools.

This far, we have given an account of various financial activities that take place in the schools. All these activities are planned and implemented by schools alone without giving communities which send children to schools much learning. The only input that communities render and which schools invite from them is the aspect of paying fees which when compared to all other activities in financial management is very low involvement. In each school, fees are charged uniformly and parents are expected to respond along the same lines. But as we indicated in Chapter One, Hawes and others (1986) rightly point out that communities cannot be branded with the same label. There are many things which are different within the same community which can create a variance amongst its members. Thus while some could pay school fees without problems, others could face a lot of difficulties in meeting the school fees. The more reason then that all parents must be involved in the management of school finances

In all schools, the methods of paying fees proposed by communities were not taken into account. At Mansa and Mutende Upper Basic schools, stipulation to pay in cash form came from schools rather than parents who bear the burden of paying them. At Kabunda and Mabumba High Schools, parents were allowed to pay school fees either in kind or cash form, but Kabunda High School never allowed parents to pay in installments. In all these instances, no dialogue was invited nor were schools willing to listen to parents. There were parents whose ability could only allow them to pay fees in kind or installments but their concerns were ignored. Parents suggested the

method of paying school fees in installments because it gave their children chances to learn while they ~~were~~ looked for money.

Therefore taking the fact that cost-sharing is a way of broadening participation to people with a stake in education, this means communities are deprived of their legal right to participate at an equitable level in the provision of their children's education. Rather, they are branded the role of customers in which they have to sample schools and choose the one they see with the best conditions. This is contrary to what is expected of them as owners of the children attending schools. Munn in Townsend (1994) says parents as managers and partners probably hold greater prospects for school improvement than parents as customers.

Many pupils have no capacity to pay school fees. As pointed out, these fees are paid by their parents and their means of payment are dependent upon community activities that take place in their midst. Before sending children away from school then, school staff should seek a dialogue with communities so that together they define the future of their schools. At these meetings, school staff will even have chances to explain their objectives in line with the goals of government in the provision of education. According to government, cost sharing is not a means of exerting pressure upon communities but rather a way of openness in the organization and management of schools' affairs. It is a means of bringing communities close as partners to school management so that they can begin seeing schools as their own to protect and develop. Townsend (1994: 156) puts it as follows:

In order for appropriate decisions to be made about problems within the community, it must first be established what the needs, desires and problems within a given community might be. The greater the community involvement in the process the greater the input of

different groups within the community, then the more likely that what is generated will be an accurate reflection of that community.

Thus, in conclusion of this section, we can say that local community involvement in managing financial affairs of schools is at a very low level. It begins at a point where schools inform parents the amount of fees to be paid and ends at the point where parents settle these fees. Beyond this, there is very little involvement. Schools themselves determine the fees and stipulate modes of payment and ensure that parents abide by them. Moreover, these fees are only communicated to parents through letters or through their children thereby providing no forum for discussion and compromise with schools.

## *SECTION 2: READINESS OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS' ADMINISTRATION TO INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT*

In this section, we address ourselves to the second research question of the study. Are teachers and school administrations ready to involve local communities in managing school finances?

A school has a lot of interest groups. Some of these are internal and while others are external. Those who immediately come to mind are pupils and their parents as directly interested groups, teachers and government as indirectly interested groups. To all of them, the essence of financial management is to improve upon the provision of education. Parents pay school fees in order to have their children educated in the best possible way. Pupils need to understand this as a way of helping them to steer their interest to school and meet their goals and aspirations. Parents too need to understand

that with the harsh economic realities of our country, they have to expend for the learning of their children who are their natural responsibilities. They cannot expect their responsibilities to be borne in total by their government.

Teachers as government workers represent government in realizing national goals and aspirations. They should always have it at the back of their minds that when they ask for school fees, they are doing so with intentions to improve and smoothen the teaching-learning atmosphere of their pupils. They should therefore do this with love, care and responsibility that monies collected is not expended on other things but academic life of their pupils. Thus they need to consult parents on anything that pertain to their children's education because it is parents who bear the legal right to educate them (Macbeth, 1989).

In all schools, head teachers indicated that expenditures were planned by the finance committees and all schools had a similar set up of the finance committee. They were composed of teachers specially selected by the school heads who were chairpersons. All the school bursars were members of these finance committees and fully participated in the planning of activities. Thus we can say activities of the finance committees ended within the school structures. No parent was a member of any finance committee. This is despite the regulation of the PTA which stipulates that parents must be represented in the finance committee.

Apart from Mansa Upper Basic School where the head teacher said all their budgets are managed well, all head teachers indicated that they are unable to meet their school plans as a result of insufficient funds. Therefore in order to sustain their schools, they

resort to getting their school requisites on credit. This means that schools at all times place themselves in positions of servitude. But while head teachers make all these arrangements, the major surprise was that parents and other teachers outside the finance committees are not consulted nor informed about them. In all schools, these activities were only known by the members of the finance committee and were not divulged to any other. Thus when asked how the money in schools was used, other teachers outside the finance committee expressed ignorance and gave variant answers. One of the teachers at Mutende Upper Basic School said: "I do not know, I am not a member of the finance committee." Another teacher at Mansa Upper Basic school gave the following answer: "I am not old enough in this school to know the system that works."

What this may imply is that there is lack of transparency by school administrations in the way financial matters of schools are handled. We may even say that it is lack of transparency which makes head teachers unwilling to consult or involve parents and other teachers outside the finance committees in handling school finances. Further, we may add that it is lack of transparency that spells a failure of the finance committees to plan appropriately and adequately. One would be given to understand that if schools know their pupil numbers well, then they would estimate their earnings well and thereby plan well for their schools given that most pupils generally pay their school fees. Thus, arising from the finance committees' failure to execute their schools' budgets well, this researcher finds it odd that a school can maintain one in the position of bursar, who is senior advisor on money matters, for as long as 12 years.

As pointed out, no parent was a member of the finance committee in all the schools. This means that community involvement in financial affairs of schools was still minimal. Parents had no means of getting any information or any opportunity to participate in planning school budgets. Similarly, they were not even provided with any information as to what things schools expended their money on. As such they had limited means of participating in planning and controlling schools' activities which Levecic (1989) in chapter two refers to as the starting point in financial management.

And as Townsend (1994: 156) notes:

The capacity of schools to solve educational problems  
is enhanced if parents and community members are part  
of the problem solving.

In fact, this is the cornerstone of decentralization. According to government (MOE, 1996), decentralization fosters a sense of local ownership and promotes better management if various stakeholders are allowed to share in decision making and to take responsibility for education at the local level.

We may refer to the setting of school fees again. To understand this better, we need to analyse the status of the four schools under study. As we pointed out, there were two basic schools and two high schools. Both basic schools were grade one schools. All classes of the two basic schools were over-enrolled with the number in each class well over 50. The two high schools were both grade two schools, and apart from Mabumba, Kabunda was quite over-enrolled. Pupils per class were not less than 50. According to the DEBS, upper basic schools and high schools received termly grants of Three Million Kwacha (K3 000 000 00) and Five Hundred Kwacha (K500 00) respectively. The purpose of these grants was a fulfillment of government's commitment that it was going to be partners with local communities and beneficiaries

in educational provision. Thus these grants go to supplement what parents pay for the education of their children. In all schools, head teachers said the money was insufficient to meet the needs of their schools. But all parents talked to expressed ignorance about the money from government. They equally did not know what it was expended on. A parent at Mansa Upper Basic School said:

Personally, I don't know whether there is any money from government and I doubt if any of my fellow parents can say so.

Another parent at Kabunda High School said:

Some other people may know about this but I know nothing.

Although all the schools failed to balance their budgets, all of them indicated that they set their school fees by preparing budgets in relation to economic factors obtaining in their town. By this they meant to say that prices in the country were not uniform. Therefore, the economic factors were prices that were applicable to Mansa town. In all schools, the fees were called PTA fund and were charged in conjunction with the PTA executive committee. However, what the researcher established was that in all cases, the PTA committees were defunct and carried out affairs of schools without the participation of the general membership. For instance, parents and teachers in all schools indicated that schools had never called any meeting to discuss school affairs including fees for the last two years. At three schools, Mansa, Mutende and Mabumba, parents had even lost confidence in the PTA. One parent at Mabumba High School had this to say:

The last time we had a meeting was 2001 and the fees were okay. Since then, school fees have been increased twice without any input from parents and parents have been complaining but to no avail. The PTA fund is secretive and people get offended when you ask them, yet they can't call a meeting.

The office of the DEBS also distanced itself from having any role in the setting of school fees. Thus, more often than not, school fees were just affairs in the hands of schools' administrations and the PTA Chairpersons. Communities were not consulted in any way and since schools called no meetings, they had no forum to express their views.

According to this researcher, the weaknesses of the PTA operations are enshrined in its organization. In its structure, it gives the PTA chairperson absolute powers to represent local communities in all matters even without consulting them. For instance, if any matters are irregular in the school financial operations, the PTA chairperson alone could clear the head of school of any financial irregularity. This is because all audit queries are only subject to clarification by the PTA chairperson as the executive representative of the local community. All other views from the community would be rendered impotent regardless of the satisfactory or dissatisfactory nature of the financial records. Commenting on this kind of organization, one head teacher outside the schools under study who spoke in confidence to the researcher said:

The head of a school has little to lose but more to gain by drawing the PTA chairperson close. He\she is the only member of the PTA committee whom the head of school can rely upon because he\she speaks for the community. When the PTA chairperson denies all allegations, then matters have come to a close.

This kind of organization may explain why local communities are sidelined despite their complaints. This researcher found out that the loophole created in the organization of the PTA is so big that the head of a school and the PTA chairperson can function alone without the involvement of other members. An organization such as this cannot make the PTA effective. However, all head teachers mentioned that

they enjoyed sound financial relationships with parents. The head teacher for Mutende added that: "Parents have access to all financial books for the school."

In some instances, the school fees are arbitrarily increased when school administrations hear of increases elsewhere. School fee increases of this nature create very poor relationships between parents and teachers, the people who are expected to be partners in the provision of education. As a result of the poor relationships between the two groups, each group views the other with mistrust. For instance, although teachers in all schools felt parents could contribute positively to the development of schools, they indicated that parents did not contribute much to their schools' management. Teachers at Kabunda High School felt this was because there were no meetings in which parents' contributions could be asked but their counterparts at Mabumba felt parents were not showing co-operation with school staff in their attitudes. They indicated that:

Parents want to be paid for any work that they do for the school and since the school does not have enough money, it ignores them.

A teacher at the same school said the following regarding parents' attendance and contributions in meetings:

Attendance is not very good. These people are only interested in financial reports.

Another teacher at Mutende Upper Basic School had more or less a similar comment:

"Attendance is good but parents are full of criticism."

Comments like these in their own nature are not healthy. On one hand they spell doom because they marginalize potential partners in the development of schools while

on the other, they denote as coming from a person whose obligations and duties are not well understood. Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 155) point out that:

Parents and teachers are in pursuit of a common goal, namely effective educative teaching, and to achieve it they have to co-operate with one another on all levels in the school.

According to government, teachers should work with parents in educational provision and they must try to be of service to them whenever in need (MOE 1996: 136). One cannot therefore push them into the margins, they are supposed to consult them and have issues well explained and discussed with them. The two groups are expected to chart a way forward for the children's education. Sending a pupil away from school as is the practice in all schools is not a satisfactory way of involving parents in the financial management. Other than being retrogressive as it deprives a child of chances to be in school, it is just one way of keeping communities at bay on financial matters so that they only pay school fees on the terms set by schools' administration.

As we have indicated, there were many reasons that led to the failure of schools' administration and teachers to incorporate local communities in managing school finances. In the previous section we pointed out that heads of school maintained teachers in positions of bursar against the regulated periods of the PTA organization. Most parents felt this is done in bad faith. Secondly, it appeared that lack of willingness to appreciate new ideas has also much to do with this. Whereas the government encourages local community involvement in managing educational provision, the staff in school want to run them according to their own inclinations as in olden times. They appear to have little appreciated the principles of liberal democracy and the many benefits that lie in decentralization. Thus although

government would like to be more responsive to local communities in the discharge of social services, its intentions are demoralized by its staff at points of delivery.

### *SECTION 3: COMMUNITY WILLINGNESS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS' FINANCES*

This section addresses the third research question of the study. Are local communities willing to work side by side with teachers and thus get involved in the management of school finances?

As was stated in the introduction, the first thing to bear in mind as we address this section is that education is a cost. It is for this reason that government has invited other partners to share with it the cost of providing it. In chapter two, we also indicated that the participation of other partners in the provision of education has also another value of inculcating in participants a sense of responsibility for their children.

Whether in recognition of this or not, teachers in all schools were in agreement that school fees should be maintained. They felt communities should assist in the procurement of school requisites for the learning of their children through the payment of school fees. They said the termly grants that government sends to schools cannot alone cater for all the needs of the schools. It is to these that fees paid add which makes it possible for schools to provide for the academic life of their children's learning. 84% of the parents were also in agreement of this fact and were willing to continue supporting schools through the payment of fees. A parent who had a child at Kabunda High school observed that:

School fees are not bad as long as they facilitate the learning of children in school.

All the teachers in schools however indicated that money paid by parents was not enough to carry out their schools' plans. But the researcher was surprised to learn that despite teachers believing that the money they collected was insufficient to execute their schools' plans, they did not seem to know the uses to which this money is put. For instance, the majority of teachers at Mansa Upper Basic School said in earnest that they did not know what the money was spent on because their school was in perpetual need of school requirements. At Mutende Upper Basic School, some teachers said: "The school needed money to pay telephone and electricity bills." At the same school, one teacher said: "We need money in order to do sport." But the Head of School gave a different view altogether:

We need money to carry out rehabilitation and construction works at school.

Therefore, it appeared like it was not clear as to what schools expended their finances on as much as it was difficult to see whether priorities were set in the schools' expenditure.

But arising from the situation that money was not enough, the researcher was further surprised that no meetings were held in all the four schools with parents regarding school finances. As we said in Section One, once parents paid their school fees, whether the money collected was adequate to carry out school plans or not, this spelt the end of the relationship with teachers that term. Parents remained believing that the money they paid was adequate to carry out schools plans whereas teachers and their head teachers held that the money was inadequate to enable them work as planned.

On the other hand, in all schools, parents indicated that there had never been anything new or any sort of improvement in the last two years to which school fees could be attributed. At Mabumba High School, one parent said the following:

I can't mention anything. Sometimes, we help the School with our own labour. The new things in school are done by parents. We have not seen anything tangible from the school fees.

Despite this however, many parents at Mabumba were timid with the idea of completely shifting hands to parents to handle the school finances. But as already pointed out, Mabumba High School was one of the schools in the rural areas. Most of the people in the area are illiterate and thus could not bring themselves to think of managing school finances on their own.

This was in sharp contrast to their counterparts at Mansa and Mutende Upper Basic Schools who were very willing to get involved. According to them, the knowledge of expenditure could give them the inspiration to pay school fees. At Mutende Upper Basic School, a guardian of the child said:

We pay blanket fees in that we don't know how this money is used. All we have at the back of our minds is that at the beginning of every term we have to pay school fees. We go hungry whenever the term begins because there is no single term that we have not paid school fees.

At Mansa Upper Basic School, another parent who was among those who expressed willingness to get involved in the management of school finances gave the following views:

The management of school finances by parents can be the best thing for the school. This school lacks a lot of things which have not been forth coming from the teachers. That can be an opportunity for us to work with

them to improve this school.

The DEBS also felt there was nothing wrong in allowing communities to participate in the financial management of schools and indicated that they should even be encouraged to do so.

"They should be allowed to get involved as much as they are willing to go," he said.

Particularly, the DEBS felt parents could be involved in financial management through fund raising and sourcing of trust funds for schools. However, he indicated that the reports sent to him do not mention any community involvement. Thus, we may say that schools' administrations are thwarting good intentions of communities to help in the improvement of schools.

Community willingness to take part in managing financial affairs of schools came from the fact that they felt less convinced that their schools always fail to balance their budgets despite the school fees that they pay which seemingly are too high for them. Most of them felt their children get a raw deal in education because schools do not show any signs of improvement. They said failure of schools to balance their budgets translate into failure of schools to procure proper school requisites that they need for the learning of their children. As we mentioned in Chapter One, it could be on things such as these that schools corrode their trust and confidence to carry communities with them. For instance, 70% of parents felt strongly that school money is not justifiably used while 30% said they could not say whether the money is used justifiably or not because they had no information on which to base their judgment.

What the researcher could make out was that there was information gap, especially with the parents, as to the things on which schools expended their finances. Two things could be said about this: Like we pointed out in the previous section, the first is that schools' expenditures may be fictitious and could therefore not be revealed to other people other than those involved in making them. The second is that schools underrate the opinions of parents as to mind to tell them anything about schools' expenditure. Again much of this could be as a result of the shadow representation of the PTA chairpersons which we talked about earlier on. In either case, this is not healthy as parents cannot just be asked to pay fees and then be told it is not up to them to know how this money is expended especially that these schools are public.

In as far as parents were concerned, financial managements of schools were not conducted in the interests of their children. The biggest problem was that schools were working in isolation without the participation of parents. Moreover, the accountability levels were far less satisfactory in the minds of many parents. This was worsened by the fact that schools did not hold regular meetings with them contrary to the PTA regulations which stipulate that meetings be held with parents at least once every term. Further, the regulations stipulate that parents be called whenever there is to be a major expenditure in school in order to ask their participation in decisions being taken. But 80% of the parents had only remote recollections of when last the schools that their children attend ever held meetings. During these times, parents said the atmosphere that exists in these meetings is not good. Of the four schools, only Kabunda High School had 40% of parents that referred to the relationship in meetings between them and teachers as cordial. One parent who had a child at the school had this to say:



The relationship is friendly. As parents, we always want to encourage teachers.

But parents at Mabumba High School referred to their relationship with teachers as sour. They did not even trust their PTA representatives. One parent expressed himself as follows:

What we want are open meetings that involve all of us. Representatives of parents are usually a let down. We do not know about many of the things that they sanction.

At Mansa and Mutende Upper Basic Schools, 65% of parents said the relationship between them and teachers was not conducive. One parent said:

When we used to have PTA meetings, we could argue especially about money. In many instances, there were no conclusions as meetings ended in disputes.

What all this points to is that parents in general express a willingness to get involved in the financial management of schools. Their willingness to get involved arises from their dissatisfaction with the way the money they pay is spent. Beyond this, it is an illustration of their concern for the quality of education that is provided to their children.

#### *SECTION 4: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN MANAGING SCHOOLS'*

##### **FINANCIAL AFFAIRS IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS**

This section addresses the last research question of the study. Do local communities in urban and peri-urban areas have a high level of participation in managing school finances than those in rural areas?

In this section, we bear in mind that what has been established is that all schools under study fail to manage their termly budgets as planned due to shortage of money, despite the fact that almost all pupils in the schools pay their fees. As a result, they get some of their school requirements on credit payable in the next term when they come to levy pupils again. Thus they are always in debt and even Mansa Upper Basic school which claimed to meet its plans after money collections is no exception. The researcher thus could only discern a concealment of the truth.

From the researcher's point of view, this is a very precarious situation as it compromises standards in the provision of education. A school which is in perpetual debt would not prioritise its requirements and may fail to procure items when they are needed. It was strange then to learn that despite this financial situation, all the schools ignore the PTA regulation of holding regular meetings with parents and do not make any attempt to discuss with them any matters related to finance. If schools were poised to promote access and quality of education, then these discussions are paramount. The absence of such discussions means that parents are denied involvement in the management of schools' finances, and since parents generally express a willingness to be involved in the management of schools' finances, it implies that schools' administration avoid meetings with them for their own reasons.

In all the schools, there were some other means of raising school funds. At Mansa and Mutende Basic Schools, funds were raised through the School Tuck-Shop, rentals by churches which were using school classrooms for their church services, and also through what they called professional and civilian days when pupils were instructed to attend school in their own clothes rather than uniform at a fee. Again parents only

give money to their children to go and pay to schools without being furnished any reasons as to what the money is for. In a way, it could be said that parents just avoid having their children sent away from schools which would happen if they do not pay. In dislike of this manner of raising funds, a parent who had a child at Mutende commented as follows:

The budget should include everything that the school requires per term so that we can pay at once rather than asking for payments during civilian days.

At Kabunda and Mabumba High Schools, there were production units in which schools invested their money. The following table illustrates means of raising money for each particular school.

Type of Venture.	MUTENDE	MANSA	KABUNDA	MABUMBA
Tuck - Shop.	Yes	Yes	No	No
Church Rentals.	Yes	Yes	No	No
School Gardens.	No	No	Yes	Yes
Professional/ Civilian Days.	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 3 Means of raising money in each school

From these ventures, school bursars indicated that they raised substantial amounts of money. However, they also indicated that the money raised from these methods never related in any way to the school fees charged. Thus parents had no role to play in its use. To them, it mattered little whether schools had any other means of raising funds

or not because it changed nothing about their school fee obligation. Subsequently, no parent had any knowledge of any fund-raising venture that exist in schools. Even such ventures like civilian days did not appear to some of them as means of raising funds for schools.

According to the school heads, there were two systems of accountability in their financial management. The first was generic and involved only sending their financial reports to the office of the DEBS. Usually, these reports were more about government grants than PTA funds and according to the DEBS, they were sent occasionally. Apart from this, heads of school mentioned that schools were also answerable to the auditors from the Office of the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) about the same money. What this entails is that schools only make their financial reports available to their line supervisors in government. Other people below these including teachers in the schools who are outside the Finance Committees do not know anything about how money is expended. Parents have no means of accessing financial reports and no school ever feels obliged to give them any. The only time parents come to hear about these financial reports is during PTA Annual General Meetings (AGM) which parents and teachers said were held irregularly. Some parents at Mabumba High School summarized their AGMs as follows:

Meetings are only called when the school administration feels like it. During this time, fake financial reports are read out to parents. In many cases when these meetings are held, financial reports are read in haste and we do not easily follow what the teacher reads.

Besides, parents complained that AGMs usually had too many activities to be attended to thereby leaving no time to concentrate on any one activity. A parent at Mansa Upper Basic said:

We may go to school in the morning and spend the whole day there. So sometimes people would leave without even seeing these meetings to the end.

This type of financial report presentations leave no doubt in the minds of parents that school finances are not managed properly and lead to the mistrust of teachers as far as the handling of funds is concerned. Unfortunately, the mistrust also spreads to their teaching, as poor financial management directly translates to poor or no procurement of teaching-learning materials for the children in schools.

#### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Arising from the presented results and discussion, the following are the major findings of the study.

1. Most parents and guardians of the children who attend the selected schools under study, especially those in rural areas, are very poor and barely making ends meet for their survival. They struggle to meet their children's school fees but continue paying because they are committed to their children's education and they know it is their obligation. Above all, they want to improve their children's life through education. It is in this sense that they get involved in the schools' financial management and also because it is asked by government. As is well known, poverty can only be reduced when many people are given a chance to acquire knowledge and skills through education (MOE, 1996).
2. School finances in the four schools under study are, by and large, managed by Heads of school with very little knowledge by teachers,

parents and other interested parties. The head teachers plan and execute all activities regarding finances and hardly involve other parties with vital interest in schools in any meaningful way. In making these expenditures, they involve PTA chairpersons in order to purport community participation. Transparency therefore is weak and little effort is made to improve upon it.

3. School fees are increased arbitrarily without regard to any particular need. Whereas fees in themselves are good and parents are in agreement with this, Heads of School have taken advantage of this by increasing fees at will without necessarily basing them on anything or consulting parents as owners of children in schools. Although each school had other methods to help raise funds and supplement school fees, such as Church rentals, Tuck-Shops, School Gardens, etc., these methods never had any bearing on the fees charged. Even such things as school locations and poverty of the parents hardly had any bearing on the school fees.
4. The relationship between local communities and teachers in schools under study is poor. Each group views the other with mistrust and heads of school in most cases are to blame for this because they do not accord parents any avenues to participate in managing schools' finances and air their views. As Bond (1973: 11) says:

In school improvement, the teacher has all the natural advantages in the situation and he or she should be the prime mover. How do parents go about obtaining an open school situation or even the setting up of PTA if the school gives no lead?

That there are no meaningful relationships between the two groups, programmes from each side are implemented with misgivings from the other group.

5. Communities in schools show willingness to participate in managing schools' finances but are never allowed to do so by the schools' administration. Schools make very little effort to involve them in financial management and they just remain guessing how fees they pay or any other school funds are used. However, apart from government calling upon them to do so, they are not satisfied with the way school finances are expended.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

#### CONCLUSIONS

The importance of community participation in school improvement cannot be over-emphasized. Firstly, children do not belong to schools, rather they belong to their parents in communities. This is where they in fact begin their first learning. They only come to be school children when their parents enroll them in schools. In enrolling them in schools therefore, parents have their own interests that they want to meet. Given this background, it is just prudent that they are kept abreast of all activities that take place in school. The most important activity from which all others spring is the financial management. Without this resource, many other activities will ground to a halt.

Moreover, education as it is provided today in Zambia is based on partnership with other interested parties. Parents, Guardians and communities are among the most important interested parties. Government goes halfway in funding the education system and expects communities to take part in the financing of education. Thus their decisions about efficiency and cost-effectiveness of schools are what define school improvement. Situations and conditions in which schools operate abound and these are supposed to be taken care of by particular communities where schools are found.

The head of a school is of paramount importance and should play a prominent role in defining the relationship that exists between the school and the community. Schools require a lot of resources for their improvement and this in itself calls for openness in the manner of dispensing administration and financial management. As Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 157) observe:

The principle of partnership management is of utmost importance and is based on a fundamental relationship of trust and openness between partners.

Whereas communities have widely accepted cost sharing as a means of contributing to educational improvement, they cannot feel encouraged if they see unfairness in the way resources are used. What is prime in cost sharing for school improvement are the learning achievements of children who enter school as well as the retention and completion rates of poor children and girls.

In much of Zambia, especially the rural areas, poverty is at its peak. The education system should protect children from poverty stricken homes and this cannot be better done than through community participation. By inviting their input, communities would find means and ways of charting their way forward within the limits of their situations. Having decisions made on behalf of communities by people outside them can only work to deny access to children who may have chances of getting educated. It is in this regard that school heads and their staff should make efforts to make their schools in particular communities be accepted as community institutions. This can only be done when they cultivate close links with communities where schools are found.

In their work, school staff should know that they are accountable to parents who are their clients as well as partners. They should, therefore, endeavour to provide regular information and systems which allow their clients to manage to plan and control school activities. The starting point of all this is the financial management. The following therefore are cardinal conclusions of this study.

- 1 Parents understand well their responsibility towards the education of their children. It is for this reason that they always stand ready to continue cost sharing with government the provision of education. Further they are also willing to go beyond just paying school fees and participate in the management of school finances but are kept frustrated by heads' of school lack of openness in this area. This does not promote local community ownership of schools and stifles better management of educational provision.
2. Heads of school and teachers do not express much willingness to involve local communities in the management of schools' finances. They do not invite their opinions and their say in financial management is ignored. As such they do not show co-operation with them in many of the activities that involve schools' finances. Despite their general willingness to be involved in the planning of school activities, parents are ignored in many instances and little information on schools' finances is passed to them.
3. There is no difference of participation in managing schools' finances between parents who send their children to high schools and those who send theirs to basic schools. The level of participation is basically the same.

4. Similarly, there is not necessarily much difference in parental involvement in the financial affairs of the schools between parents in the peri-urban and those in rural areas. The only difference which is there is that parents in peri-urban pay their fees more readily than those in rural areas. This is because most parents in the peri-urban are in gainful employment as compared to those in rural areas who mostly depend on their subsistence farming.
5. There is little implementation of the policy to increase access and improve the quality of educational provision through cost sharing. The situation obtaining in schools with regard to schools' finances is that they are almost totally controlled by the heads of school. The involvement of parents only ends at payment of school fees. Other than this, communities do not make meaningful contributions to the development of schools as asked by government.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the conclusions just given, we can say the degree of community participation in managing school finances is very low. What is needed then is a change of attitude in schools' staff so that schools can open doors to communities for participation in the way schools' finances are managed. It is only through this that cost sharing in educational provision will be meaningful. The following therefore are recommendations of this study.

1. The offices of the PEO and DEBS should take keen interest in the financial operations of schools so that they can help protect the interests of parents and their children. Translations of the education policy should begin from the two

offices going down to head teachers and teachers in schools. Admittedly, many parents do not express as much interest in the learning atmosphere of their children as they should. Much of this is due to ignorance and poverty which limit their participation. But these instead of being exploited should be used as bases from which to begin educating them as not only parents stand to benefit from their participation in managing schools' finances, but schools themselves as well (Fullan, 1991).

2. The handling of schools' finances, whether government given or locally generated like the PTA funds, should be open to all interested parties, teachers and parents of the children in schools inclusive. When government sends grants to schools, they are meant for the improvement of schools and therefore this money becomes part and parcel of school funds as soon as it reaches schools. This means all the people who have embedded interests in the improvement of schools should know and have a say about all the expenditures made rather than just a few people. It does not help teachers' morale to teach in a school whose financial operations they little understand as if these schools are private. Similarly, parents cannot be encouraged to pay school fees if they are suspicious about the use of money in schools.
3. Heads of school should aim at improving their working relationships with the communities in which schools are located. They should follow guidelines about how PTAs are run and endeavour to be transparent in schools' financial operations. This will encourage members to take active roles in the operations of PTAs. The idea that PTAs are more informative than consultative discourages the participation of parents. The general membership expresses a willingness to be involved.

4. The charging of school fees should embrace the capability of all pupils to pay rather than aim at the denial of education to some as a result of their failure to pay. School fees should contribute to the improvement of schools in each particular locality where they are found. The well being of people in each particular area should thus be the deciding factor as to how much they can pay, and when this money is paid, it should be used for the purposes for which it is intended.
5. Powers of the PTA chairpersons should be scaled down so that they are seen to be drawn from the general membership rather than a single person. This will encourage transparency as decisions on finances will be group driven and thus community based.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Since this study covered very few schools, its results may not be representative of other areas outside the study. Perhaps more studies need to be conducted in other schools in other areas so that comparisons of the findings could be made.
2. This study covered a very specific subject in the operations of schools. There are many other subjects in the operations of schools which call for the participation of communities, e.g., school discipline, academic achievements of pupils, school administration, etc. Studies in these aspects would be interesting too and would contribute positively to the improvement of schools.

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## APPENDICES

### QUESTIONNAIRE 1

#### PUPILS

School.....

Grade.....

1. What do you want to become after school?  
.....
2. Are your parents living?  
.....
3. What do they do for their living?  
.....
4. Who pays your fees in school?  
.....
5. Mention the type of fees that you pay in school.  
.....
6. How much do you pay for your school fees per term?  
.....
7. How many times are you required to pay these fees per year?  
.....
8. Are you able to afford school fees?  
.....
9. What happens when you fail to pay school fees?  
.....
10. Does your school give you deadlines in which to pay school fees?  
.....

11. Have you ever been chased out of school for failure to pay school fees?

.....  
.....

12. In what way did this affect you?

.....  
.....

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

BURSARS

School.....

1. How long have you been in this position in this school?  
.....
2. Are you involved in planning school expenditures?  
.....
3. Do you balance your budget after your money collections?  
.....
4. How do you manage your plans when money collections fall short?  
.....
5. Do you have any debts as a school?  
.....
6. Have you ever tried to get money in instalments?  
.....
7. Do you think there are merits in this arrangement?  
.....
8. Do you as a school meet parents to discuss how fees should be paid?  
.....
9. Have you ever had any money reserves in your school?  
.....
10. If the answer to 9 is YES, did this relate to school fees in any way?  
.....

11. In the event of erratic funds in the school, what would you suggest as an alternative method of collecting funds or implementing your programmes?  
.....
12. Do you have any other means of raising funds as a school?  
.....
13. If the answer to 12 is YES, how much money do you raise per month from the said venture?  
.....
14. How does this business relate to the school fees?  
.....
15. Do parents have an input in the venture stated in 12 above? Explain.  
.....
16. What means of accountability do you have as a school?  
.....
17. Do parents attend any meeting of financial management?  
.....
18. Are school accounts open to parents? Give reasons for your answer.  
.....

QUESTIONNAIRE 3

TEACHERS

School.....

1. What fees do you charge in school?  
.....
2. Do you think school fees should be maintained?  
.....
3. How much is a child expected to pay per year?  
.....
4. Do you think the money raised is enough to carry out your school plans?  
.....
5. Speaking generally, are you able to collect money from pupils?  
.....
6. What happens to pupils who fail to pay?  
.....
7. How is the money collected used?  
.....
8. Does your school get any money from government?  
.....
9. In what ways are parents involved in the management of school finances?  
.....
10. Does your school hold any PTA meetings?  
.....

11. How would you describe parents' attendance and contributions in the meetings?

.....

12. What is the school relationship with parents like in meetings?

.....

13. In what ways do you think your school values parental involvement/ to management?

.....

14. Do you believe that parents can contribute positively to school administration?

.....

15. How often do you have meetings with parents with regard to school finances?

.....

16. Is there any other means your school uses to raise money?

.....

17. Are parents involved in this initiative?

.....

QUESTIONNAIRE 4

HEAD/DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS

School.....

1. Do you think pupils should be paying school fees? Justify your answer.  
.....
2. What fees does your school charge?  
.....
3. How do you arrive at these fees?  
.....
4. Do you involve teachers in setting school fees?  
.....
5. Do pupils afford to pay school fees?  
.....
6. How do you treat pupils who fail to pay school fees?  
.....
7. Who decides how to spend money once raised?  
.....
8. Is the money raised enough for your school needs?  
.....
9. Does your school have any other means of raising money?  
.....
10. If the answer to 9 is YES, are parents involved in the business?  
.....
11. How would you describe the school financial relationship with parents?  
.....

12. What audit means exist in the school?

.....

13. Do parents have any role to play in the audit arrangement just talked about?

.....

14. Do you think paying school fees in instalments is a good idea?

.....

15. If the answer to 15 is YES, has this been ever tried in this school?

.....

QUESTIONNAIRE 5

DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY

1. Does this office get any financial reports from schools?  
.....
2. If the answer to 1 is YES, how often do these reports come to your office?  
.....
3. How much parental involvement is indicated in these reports?  
.....
4. How is the funding situation from government to schools?  
.....
5. Do you have any role to play in setting fees for schools?  
.....
6. Do you get any reports of pupils who fail to pay school fees?  
.....
7. How does your office cater for the education of such children?  
.....
8. Do you think involving parents in the school financial management is a good idea?  
.....
9. If the answer to question 8 is YES, in what ways would this be done?  
.....
10. Following your answer to question 9, to what extent should parents get involved?  
.....

INTERVIEW FOR CHILDREN'S PARENTS/GUARDIANS

School .....

1. Do you think the system of paying school fees is good?  
.....
2. What happens to your children in school when you fail to pay?  
.....
3. Do you discuss school fees with the school administration?  
.....
4. How would you want school fees to be paid? (Cash/Instalments)  
.....
5. Has the school ever informed you of how this money is used?  
.....
6. Do you think the money is used justifiably?  
.....
7. How would you like this money to be spent?  
.....
8. Would you like to participate in making school budgets?  
.....
9. Do you have any areas in school financial management you would like to be improved upon?  
.....
10. What improvements have you seen in school in the last two years which you can say are as a result of school fees?  
.....

11. Would you want completely to handle finances of the school? Give reasons.....
12. Have you ever attended any PTA meeting?  
.....
13. If your answer to 17 is YES, how would you describe the relationship between teachers and parents?  
.....
14. Do you discuss children's progress in school with teachers?  
.....
15. What would you want your child to be after school?  
.....
16. Do you think the school is helping you to realise your goal?  
.....