

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS IN ZAMBIA: A CASE STUDY OF BAULENI SPECIAL SCHOOL  
IN LUSAKA DISTRICT.**

1258  
M.B.  
2011  
C.I.

**BY**

**PRISCA MUSONDA**


**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF  
EDUCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

**MARCH 2011**

## DECLARATION

I, Prisca Musonda, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is typically as a result of my own individual effort and that all the work from other researchers has been acknowledged. I further certify that this dissertation has not been submitted for a degree in any university or similar institutions.

Signature:.....

Date:..... 27/07/11

## DEDICATION

To my late father and mum who made me know and appreciate the importance of education.

Also to my children who I hope will value education as I have.

## APPROVAL

The University of Zambia approves this dissertation of Prisca Musonda as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Special Education.

0281511

Signed : *Blasenfwali* .....

Date : *26/07/11* .....

Signed : *J.T. Phiri* .....

Date : *26/07/11* .....

Signed : *Stasende Njindu* .....

Date : *26/07/11* .....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the people mentioned below for their valuable help, interest, involvement and practical assistance rendered to me resulting in producing this dissertation.

Sincere thanks go to Dr. J .T. Phiri, for supervising this dissertation and for his guidance and constant support. I thank him very much for even those times when I just needed to be understood.

To my children Mpazi, Wizya, Chilanzi, Mwansa and Natasha who had to endure the long periods when I was not around. To my mother, a brave and great woman who nursed and disciplined my children the way she raised me, disciplined- I am proud of you mum. Thanks to my course mates particularly Grace, Thomas and Mikala for the team spirit that we shared throughout our study.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the parents who participated in the study and whose precious time I robbed in my quest for information concerning their lives and that of their children. I thank them for allowing me to intrude in your homes and lives without any reservations. I am also grateful to the Head Teacher and staff of Bauleni Special School for their co-operation during data collection. Special thanks go to them for facilitating the research process by introducing me to the parents and aiding me in identifying and locating parents of children with special educational needs.

## **COPYRIGHT**

All rights reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, recording, photocopy or otherwise without written permission of the author or the University of Zambia.

## ABSTRACT

The study examined parent involvement practices in the education of learners with special educational needs in Zambia with a specific focus on Bauleni Special School located in Lusaka district. The objectives of the study were to find out whether the school had a policy, how parents' needs were being met, how parents' potential contributions were being utilized *and the barriers if any, to parental involvement. The research used a survey as its research design.* The target population for the study included parents and teachers of learners with special educational needs. The sample consisted of forty two (42) respondents comprising of thirty one parents and eleven teachers. Purposive sampling was used to arrive at the sample.

In collecting data, questionnaires were administered to both the parents and teachers. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used. The findings revealed that parents said the school had no written policy but teachers indicated that there was one. It became apparent that the policy is in place but was not accessed by parents.

From the study findings, it was also evident that parents' needs were being met by the school and that parents' potential contributions were identified and in many cases, utilized. However, the findings showed that there were challenges facing parental involvement in the education of children with special educational needs.

The major recommendations arising from the research findings were that more parent workshops should be held so that parents share ideas; parent-teacher school meetings should be encouraged; and that the school should involve parents more in the development of the children's individualized education plans so that proper assessment of the children are conducted.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Declaration.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Approval.....	iv
Acknowledgement.....	v
Copyright.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
List of tables.....	x
List of figures.....	x
<b>Chapter One-Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Background of the study.....	1
Purpose of the study.....	2
Research objectives.....	2
Research questions.....	2
Significance of the study.....	3
Definition of terms.....	4
<b>Chapter Two-Literature Review.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter Three-Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>15</b>

Research design.....	15
Target population.....	15
Sample size.....	16
Sampling procedures.....	18
Research instruments.....	18
Data collection procedures.....	19
Data analysis.....	20
<b>Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Summary.....	65
Conclusion.....	66
Recommendation.....	66
<b>References.....</b>	
<b>Appendix 1: Questionnaire for special education teachers.....</b>	
<b>Appendix 2 : Questionnaire for parents.....</b>	

## LIST OF TABLES

### Tables showing Parents' views on;

Table 1	Distribution of the Sample by Gender.....	17
Table 2	Written Policy on Parental Involvement .....	21
Table 3	Parental Involvement in Policy Formulation.....	22
Table 4	Does the Policy Outline Parental Rights .....	22
Table 5	Monitoring Procedures for Policy Implementation .....	23
Table 6	Active P.T.A in Place .....	23
Table 7	Representation of Parents in Committee .....	24
Table 8	Is P.T. A Necessary .....	24
Table 9	Welcoming help from Parents.....	25
Table 10	Are there Ways in which Parents are informed about the School.....	25
Table 11	Ways of Organizing Voluntary help from Parent.....	26
Table 12	Parental Contribution to Children's Assessment Needs .....	26
Table 13	Organisation of Individual Parents/Teachers Meeting.....	27
Table 14	Parental Involvement in Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P) Formulation.....	27
Table 15	Encouraging Parental Reinforcement to School Programmes.....	28
Table 16	Parental Involvement in School Progress Reviews.....	28
Table 17	School System of Information Gathering from Children.....	29
Table 18	Attendance of Parents to School Activities.....	29
Table 19	School Dissemination of Information.....	30
Table 20	Are Parents Informed of their Children's Achievements and Difficulties .....	30
Table 21	When Parents are Contacted.....	31
Table 22	Visitation of Teachers before Child Attends Classes .....	31
Table 23	Availability of Guidelines for Parents to Visit the School .....	32
Table 24	Channels of Communication in Place .....	32
Table 25	Channels of Communication Used .....	33
Table 26	Invitation to Attend Termly Meetings to Discuss Children's Progress.....	34

Table 27	Home Visits by Class Teachers .....	34
Table 28	The Use of Home/School Diaries .....	35
Table 29	Sending of Progress Reports.....	35
Table 30	Parental Invitation to Class Observation.....	35
Table 31	Organisation of Parental Workshops by the School.....	36
Table 32	Information about Community Opportunities.....	37
Table 33	Discussions of Parental Concerns .....	37
Table 34	Opportunities of Parent-Parent Concerns .....	38
Table 35	Encouraging Parental Participation in Support Groups Outside School .....	39

**Tables showing Teacher's Views on;**

Table 36	Written Policy on Parent Involvement .....	40
Table 37	Parental Rights and Responsibilities .....	41
Table 38	Parental Involvement in Policy Formulation .....	42
Table 39	Existence of P.T.A.....	43
Table 40	Representation of SEN in the Committee .....	43
Table 41	Room Reserved for Parental Involvement.....	44
Table 42	Organisation of Voluntary Help from Parents.....	44
Table 43	Parental Contribution to Children's Assessment .....	45
Table 44	Communication of Assessment Results .....	46
Table 45	Individual Parents/Teacher meetings .....	46
Table 46	Goals and Teaching Priorities .....	47
Table 47	Parental Involvement in the Development of Children's I.E. P .....	47
Table 48	Reinforcement of School Programmes.....	48
Table 49	Reviews of Children's School Progress .....	48
Table 50	System of Gathering Information .....	49
Table 51	Home Visits .....	49
Table 52	Dissemination of Information .....	50
Table 53	School Activities .....	50
Table 54	Methods of Information Dissemination .....	51
Table 55	Are Parents Contacted about their Children's Achievements and Difficulties .....	51

Table 56	Teachers Visits to S.E.N Homes before Starting School .....	52
Table 57	Are there Guidelines for Parents on Visiting the School .....	52
Table 58	Channels of Communication between Parents and Teachers .....	53
Table 59	Means of Communication used by Parents.....	53
Table 60	Reviewing of Individual Education Plan (I.E.P).....	54
Table 61	Use of Home-School Diaries.....	54
Table 62	Are Progress Reports Sent? .....	55
Table 63	Parental Observation of Teaching .....	55
Table 64	Organisation of Parental Workshops by the School.....	56
Table 65	Information of Community Opportunities for Parents' Education .....	56
Table 66	Participation of Parents in Support Groups and Organisations Outside School.....	57

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background to the study. It also presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical frame work, and definition of terms used in the study.

#### 1.1 Background to the study.

The importance of parental involvement as an accelerating and motivating factor in their children's education is a world-wide accepted factor. Children have two main educators in their lives, their parents and their teachers. Parents are the prime educators until the child attends nursery or starts school and remain a major influence on their children's learning through school and beyond. There is no clear line to show where parents input stops and the teacher's input begins. The school and the parents all have crucial roles to play and the impact is greater if the parents and schools work in partnership. There are two broad strands: parental involvement in the life of the school and their involvement in the life of the school and their involvement in support of the individual children at home and at school.

While sometimes viewed by professionals in negative ways, parents have increasingly been recognised as playing a substantial role in advocating for effective standard rules in education and social welfare of children in both general and special education. In the early years, parental involvement has a significant impact on children's cognitive development and literacy and number skills. Parental involvement in a child's schooling for a child between the ages of 7 and 16 is a more powerful force than family background, size of family and level of parental education (Feinstein and Symons, 1999). Educational failure is increased by parental interest in schooling. Parent involvement in the education of children with special needs is even more critical because many of these children have delayed developmental milestones.

Children with disabilities in Zambia are placed in either special schools or in special units within the mainstream schools. One of such special schools is Bauleni School. The school dates back to 1995 when a survey done by a specialist teacher revealed that the Bauleni high density residential area had more than 110 children with

disabilities. The children were aged between two to seven years. In order to cater for the children's education, a special unit was opened for them at Bauleni Basic School in 1996. However, the Catholic Church through the sisters of charity mobilized resources to build a separate institution for the children. In 1998, the Bauleni special school was established in order to provide a nurturing and safe environment in which to educate these and the many vulnerable children in and around the compound. The school is located along Leopards' Hill road. The school caters for intellectually disabled and children with low vision numbering 90 and facilitated by 21 teachers of whom 07 are special teachers.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem.**

Several research findings (e.g. Henderson & Nancy, 1994; Williams et al, 2002; and Desforges, 2003) have shown that a critical dimension of effective schooling is parental involvement. The studies have also shown that parents have potential contributions which the school should utilize. They also have needs which the school should try to meet. In Zambia, we do not know the parental involvement practices in special education institutions. This study on Bauleni Special School will give data on the extent of parental involvement and barriers to parental involvement if any.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study.**

The aim of the study was to evaluate parental involvement practices in special schools in Zambia with particular attention to Bauleni Special School.

## **1.4 Objectives of the study.**

The following objectives guided the study:-

- i. To find out whether the school has a policy on parental involvement.
- ii. To establish how parents needs are being met.
- iii. To determine how parents potential contributions are being utilized by the school.
- iv. To identify barriers to parent involvement.

## **1.5 Research Questions.**

The following research questions served as guide to the study:-

- i. Does the school have a policy in place on parental involvement?
- ii. How are parents needs being met by the school?
- iii. Are parents' potential contributions being utilized by the school?
- iv. What are the barriers of parental involvement in the education of learners with special educational needs?

## **1.6 Significance of the study.**

The findings from the study will help school administrators to better understand the role parents could play in the education of their children at school and at home. As heads, the findings will also help them understand the needs of parents or how the school can best help and also understand potential contributions which parents can make to the school and the best way to utilize their contributions.

The findings will be useful with teachers because they will inform them of the best ways which they could use to involve parents in the assessment and all other teaching processes.

To parents, the findings will help them understand the disabilities of their children better and prepare them in their education both at home and at school.

Finally, the study will add to existing knowledge and to the literature already in existence in the area of special education.

## **1.7 Theoretical framework.**

Several theoretical models are available which are designed to provide teachers with frameworks with which to formulate overall policy and plan for working with parents. Such models enable each school to conduct an audit of their current practice with regard to parent involvement in order to ensure that, as far as possible, parents' needs are being met utilized.

The theoretical framework for parent involvement used in this study was developed by combining and adapting existing models (e.g Bastiani, 1989; Kroth, 1985; Lombana, 1983; and Wolfendale, 1992) and by gaining feedback from numerous groups of parents and teachers. The model was originally devised with teachers of

children with special needs in mind (Hornby, 1989) but it was subsequently realized that, with slight adaptations, it was equally applicable to all teachers. The model consists of two pyramids, one representing a hierarchy of parents needs, the other a hierarchy of parents possible contributions. The model is designed to guide practice.

## 1.8 Definition of terms.

In this study, the following concepts were defined as follows:-

- **Disability:** - A physical problem that makes someone unable to use a part of their body properly.
- **Parent:** - biological parents, guardian or care givers of the children who have special educational needs.
- **Parent involvement:** - implies parents' participation in one or more of the schools related activities.
- **Special educational needs:** - the needs that are to be provided to help children with special needs in their education.
- **Special school:** - an established institution for children with special educational needs.
- **Special unit:** - the class in a given mainstream school dealing with children with special educational needs.

## 1.11 Limitations of the study.

One of the limitations of this study is that of time. This compelled the researcher to limit the study to one school. In addition, inadequate resources also limited the study in the number of respondents selected.

These two factors might make it difficult to generalize the findings to all the special schools in Zambia.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores literature on parent's involvement practices in the education of their children who have special needs. Research findings and conclusions made by other researchers on parent involvement are presented according to themes. The themes are school policy on parents' involvement; schools and parents' needs; the utilization by school of parents' contributions; and the barriers to parent involvement.

#### 2.1 School Policy on Parent involvement

Henderson and Nancy (1994) state that a critical dimension of effective schooling is parent involvement. Research by Hornby (1989) has conclusively shown that parents' involvement at home in their children's education improves learner achievement. Furthermore, when parents are involved at school, their children go further in school, and they go to better schools. Most research studies have indicated that families provide the primary educational environment; parental involvement in their children's education improves learner achievement and is most effective when it is comprehensive, supportive, long-lasting, and well-planned. In addition, Ofsted (2000) suggests that involving parents in supporting their children's education at home is not enough. He emphasizes that, to ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the schools. Children from low-income and culturally diverse families have the most to gain when schools involve parents. The extent of parental involvement in a child's education is more important to learn success than family income or education. Therefore, we cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from each other. Families and schools need to collaborate to help children adjust to the world of school. This is particularly critical for children with special needs. Desforges (2003) writes that Schools that undertake and support strong comprehensive parental involvement efforts are more likely to produce learners who perform better than identical schools that do not involve parents. Schools that have strong *linkages with and respond to the needs of* the communities they serve have learners who perform better than schools that don't. On the other hand, Balasundaran (2007) goes on to say that, Children who have

parents who help them at home and stay in touch with the school do better academically than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved. The inescapable fact is that consistent high levels of learner success are more likely to occur with long-term comprehensive parental involvement in schools.

Basile and Henry (1996) state that schools can only undertake and support strong comprehensive parental involvement if they have a working school policy which guides the parental involvement efforts. A parental involvement policy explains how the school district or the school itself supports the important role of parents in the education of their children. Every school district that receives government funding must have a parental involvement policy. So must every school in the district that receives government money. The policy will cover a wide range of issues. These include what the school staff will do to support parental involvement; parents' rights and responsibilities; how school staff will communicate with parents; and the school procedure for complaints and other concerns.

Brofenbrenner (1986) describes a parental involvement policy as one which explains how the school supports the important role of parents in the education of their children. Every school ought to have a parental involvement policy. It should be part of the general ethics of the school. Parents must be partners in the general formulation of the policy statement in which the aims and objectives of the school are set out. Brennan (1987) states that the school should seek to provide helpful communication with parents about how their child is doing and about the achievement of the school. It is implicit in the statement of the importance of having regard to the experiences the children will have had before entering school and those anticipated after they leave. The policy will emphasize on the parents to have effective channels of communication with all the professionals who work with their children, especially their teachers.

## **2.2 Schools meeting parents' needs**

Several research findings (e.g Bastiani, 1978) have shown that all parents needs to have effective channels of communication with the teachers of their children. They

need information about the organization and requirements of the school as it affects their child. They need to know when their children are to be assessed and when a change of placement would be considered. All parents need to know about their rights and responsibilities. This can be provided through handbooks or regular newsletters written especially for parents. In addition, parents need to feel that they can contact the school at anytime when they have a concern about their child. Some parents prefer to communicate by telephone; others would rather call in to see the teacher face to face, while still others find that contact through written notes or home-school diaries suits them best. Hobcraft (1998) add that the most important factor in maintaining good communication is the openness to parents which schools must demonstrate through their contacts with parents. The attitude of choice has often been referred to as an "open-door policy" in which parents feel comfortable about contacting, or going into, the school when they have a concern.

Many research findings (e.g. Cunningham and Davis, 1985) have highlighted liaison as one other need parents have. Most parents want to know how their children are getting on at school. They want to find out what their children have achieved and whether they are having any difficulties. They regard teachers as the main source of information on their children's performance at school and therefore need to have a working partnership with them. Williams and Williams (2002) advise that teachers can facilitate this by keeping in regular contact with parents through such means as telephone calls home-visits, home-school note books, weekly report cards and by meeting with parents at school. However, Basic Skills Agency (1995) states that teachers of children with special needs are often disappointed that some parents do not come to parent-teacher meetings at school, thereby giving the impression that they are not interested in how their children are getting on. However, there are usually other reasons for them not turning up such as, the difficulties in getting a baby sitter, the overwhelming demands of looking after the family or anxieties about coming to school related to the negative experience they had at school.

Topping (1986) has found out from his research that many parents are interested in participating in parent education or parent training programmes aimed at promoting their children's progress or managing their behaviour. This need (Parent education) can be conducted individually or in parent groups or workshops which are widely

reported in the literature (McConkey, 1985; Topping, 1986). According to Pugh (1981) the most effective format for parent education is one which combines guidance about promoting children's development with opportunities for parents to discuss their concerns. Parent education programmes which involve a group of parents, and employ a workshop format, easily tend themselves to providing a combination of educational input and sharing concerns. This type of format enables parents to learn new skills and gain emotional support.

Apart from the above needs (Communication, liaison, and education) some researchers (e.g. Bastiani, 1989; Hornby, 1994 b) have added the need for support. Some parents, it is argued, at sometimes, are in need of supportive counselling, even though they may not actually request it. This support can be provided either individually or in group counselling programmes or workshops. Although such support should be available to all parents, Wolfendale (1989) advise that from diagnosis of the disability onwards, the majority of parents seldom need extensive counselling. However, if parents have good channels of communication and regular liaison with teachers, coupled with the opportunity to receive guidance about their children whenever they need it, then only a few of them will need counselling at any particular time. Most parents are reluctant to seek the help of professional counsellors, but may approach their children's teachers in search of guidance and counselling for the problems which concern them.

### **2.3 Parents contribution to the school**

The last section of literature review highlighted the fact that parents have needs which schools should try to meet. However, many research findings (e.g. Lombana, 1983), Elliot and Hewison (1994) have revealed that parents also have potential contributions which the school can utilize to support learners' learning. The research findings highlight the contributions as being information, collaboration, resource, and policy. Parents have a duty to contribute viable information about their children with special needs as they have known them throughout their lives and have taken part and participated in all previous contacts with professionals in assessments and planning for meeting their children's needs. At parent-teacher meetings, parents are able to give out information concerning children's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses,

along with any relevant medical details. Majority of the parents feel more comfortable on their own territory and generally appreciate it when teachers offer to visit them. This also provides an opportunity for the teachers to observe how parents cope with their children with special needs at home and to learn more about any relevant family circumstances. The Warnock Report of (1978) stipulates that, when teachers make full use of parent's knowledge of their children, this leads to having more effective professional practice; results in parents feeling that they have been listened to and that active interest has been taken in their children. Therefore, teachers need to develop good listening and interview skills (Lombana, 1983). They also need to have some knowledge about how family dynamics are affected by children with special needs and also be aware of the possible effects on other family members.

Given a chance, parents can be willing and able to contribute more than just information. Bastiani (1989) stipulates that parents most of the times are able to collaborate with teachers by reinforcing classroom programmes at home, such as in home-school reading programmes. However, Cunningham & Davis (1985) writes that some parents, at times find it a problem and are not willing to carry out work at home with their children which result in frustrating the teachers since they believe that collaboration between home and school generally results in children making greater progress, so that the ones whose parents do not work closely with them are likely to develop more slowly. Blau and Duncan (1997) state that, it is however important for teachers to accept that some parents find it a problem to collaborate simply because their resources are already fully committed in coping with their other children at home hence are not able to do anything extra. It is advisable hence fourth that concern professionals respect parents' rights to make decisions in consideration of the wider needs of their families. Elliot & Hewson (1994) emphasizes that while involvement in home-school programmes, or other requests for parents to carry out duties with their children at home, should always be offered to all parents including those who have not collaborated in the past, it should be expected that a small proportion of parents will not participate. In this vain, teachers need the skills of collaborating with parents in a flexible partnership in which parents' choices are respected.

Jordan (1981) states that many parents have the time and ability to act as voluntary teacher aids, assisting either in the classroom, or in the preparation of materials, or in fund-raising. Another writer, Garguilo (1985) says that others may have special skills which they can contribute such as helping prepare newsletters, in craft activities, or in curriculum areas in which they have a special talent. Most research findings have shown that some parents may have the time, skills and knowledge to provide support to other parents either informally or perhaps through participation in self-help or support groups such as parent to parent schemes.

There is need for school teachers to have practical management and communication skills (Dean & Hagert 1984). This will result in helping them make optimum use of these valuable voluntary resources of the parents. In order for parents to have knowledge of what is happening in school, Invitations should be given and repeated at least annually by such means as newsletters. It is also important that parents also benefit from acting as a resource. They may acquire knowledge which is helpful to their understanding of their own children. In addition, Bastiani (1989) writes that, parents gain confidence through helping others rather than always being the ones to receive help.

Expertise of some parents can be through membership of parents or professional organization, for instance by being a member of the parent-teacher association (P.T.A). or even being involved in a parent support or advocacy group (Wolfendale 1989). Others can be used in giving talks at conferences or workshops or even by writing about their experiences. Teachers should always be on the lookout for parents with such abilities.

#### **2.4 Barriers to parent involvement**

Many parents are already involved in their children's education. However, some parents face challenges to being involved. Williams et al (2002) carried out a research to find out whether parents were involved, to what level and discover the perceived barriers to involvement. Key findings from the research were that approximately one in three parents (29%) felt very involved in their child's school life. Primary school parents were more likely to feel this than secondary school parents. Mothers were

more likely to say that they were “more involved; than fathers. Some 72% of all parents in the study agreed that they wanted more involvement while 58% of parents believed they had an equal responsibility with the school for their child’s education. When asked about barriers to becoming involved, parents cited the competing demands in their lives such as work commitments, demands of other children, child care difficulties and lack of time generally.

Parent’s difficulties with basic skills are also a barrier to being involved in their children’s education. Research conducted by the Basic Skills Agency (1995) found that 34% of parents said that they had difficulties reading from a children’s book and 18% said they found it difficult to understand and recognize numbers. In addition,

It is well documented that parents who themselves didn’t enjoy school, or had a bad experience at school, may have difficulties communicating with teachers, which may affect their level of involvement.

Recent research shows that numerous barriers to involvement exist for both schools and families. Some barriers are created by limited resources, while others originate from the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of families and school staff (Hobcraft, 1998). The most common barriers for family involvement include lack of teacher time; teachers’ misperceptions of parents’ abilities; lack of understanding of parents’ communications styles; limited family resources such as transportation and child care; parent’s lack of comfort at school; tension in relationships between parents and teachers; and lack of vested interest. Additionally, Desforges (2003) suggests that family involvement programmes are often not fully implemented because of reasons such as school staff not having been trained to work with families; educators were concerned that closer relationship with families would mean giving up power and decision-making; families were not aware of how far they could go in making or asking questions; they worried that children would be punished for their parent’s actions by a teacher who was annoyed or threatened by the parent; and teachers were worried that increased family involvement would add to their already busy schedules.

Other literature on parental involvement include Holle (1981) who states that what parents do or don’t do at home makes a huge difference in children’s reading ability,

in their attitudes towards learning, in the development of socially responsible behaviour and values, in children's performance on standardized test scores, in learners' likelihood of graduating from high school, and much more. Recently, as the importance of parental involvement in children's education has become widely recognized, much more attention has been focused on why parents were not more involved than they had was due to the fact that many parents encounter obstacles to participating in their children's education.

MacBeth (1989) mentions lack of confidence and understanding as one of the major barriers to meaningful parental involvement, which is often an issue in disadvantaged areas. This lack of parental confidence means that in some cases parents and specialist teachers need to especially be pro-active. Countless parents have shown that they love their children and want to be involved, but they simply don't want to do something wrong. Some studies by Dean and Hagert (1984) have consistently shown that when schools and teachers tell parent specifically, step-by step, what they can do to help their children to do better in school, parents will try their best to do it.

In Zambia, practical examples have shown this by means of driving the parents to the subject they are interested in, for example, if a parent has a child with cerebral palsy, this is the topic which the teacher should mostly discuss with the parent. Studies by Millard (1984) also show that it means making sure parents understood what is available to them by using the simple language and avoiding jargon wherever possible. If for example, one says, "special needs" some parents automatically, for some reason think of children in wheelchairs. They do not realize that having difficulty with their behaviour is a special need.

Another barrier can be poverty and work pressure which put extra stress on families of the intellectually challenged children. This means that not all parents will be able to access the support offered due to time constraints and work commitments. Holle (1981) suggests that the kind of pressure that the families experience on a day to day basis, the pressure of often having larger than average families in the community as a whole, the problem of family poverty where the men work long hours for very little money can cause a lot of pressure on these families. In the majority of cases, the parent that is most involved in their child's education is the mother. Jordan (1981)

states that with increasing numbers of large families, rising female headed homes and coupled with an intensification of work, time and other constraints can significantly affect the capacity for some parents to devote substantial amount of time and energy to that child's educational activities and school.

On the other hand, Holle (1981) writes that the vast majority of parents and other children's caregivers working full or part-time, lack time to be more involved with children's education is the single biggest parental involvement barrier. Certainly there are many ways to help parent's find significant and often surprising bits and pieces of perfectly good time to be involved with children's education is important to their children's success in life. But all too many don't see why they need to be parents' with schools is educating their children. They don't understand that they as parents are also their children's teachers, their children's first and most influential teacher whether they want to be or not.

Mayall (1990) mentions that one of the most frequent frustrations most educators express is that of parent's lack of responsibility for their children's learning behaviours. To this writer, that's direct reflection of parents not understanding the critical educational role they play. During this writers experience in teaching, it has been noticed that parents expect the school to be responsible for all aspects of child development learning and behaviour. But research by Macbeth (1989) actually suggests that parents simply don't realize the influence and therefore, the responsibility they have in their children's education.

A major change since most of today's specific teachers in their careers in the explosion of families whose first language is not English (Mittler and McConachie, 1983) since nearly all classroom instruction is conducted in English, textbooks and other resource materials are in English and homework assignments are also in English. It's easy to understand why non-English speaking parents feel at a disadvantage in supporting their children's school work. Beyond the language barriers, Rich (1987) states that there are also significantly different interact which school authorities must provide, i.e., help to parents in their native language to the greatest extent possible.

## Summary

The literature which has been reviewed has shown that parents have needs which the school should try to meet. The needs pertain to their need for communication with the school; their need for liaison because they need to know the progress their children are making; their need for participation in education; and their need for supportive counselling. The literature has also revealed that parents can contribute to the school in various ways, such as, giving information about their children; collaboration with teachers by reinforcing classroom; and contributing to school policy formulation and implementation. The literature which has been reviewed has also shown that the parent-involvement initiative faces many challenges.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods which were used to collect information for this study. It comprises a section on the research designs used. It also explains the population, the sample, sample size and sampling procedure. Furthermore the chapter also presents the research instruments, data collection procedure and method's used to analyze data.

#### 3.1. Research Design

The study was designed in form of a survey. This design was chosen because it allows a collection of a small amount of data in a standardized form from a relatively large number of individuals. When research is being conducted, two paradigms are used to collect information, i.e. quantitative and qualitative. Fetterman (2000) states that quantitative researchers assume that the behaviour of humans, like that of matter, can be objectively measured through the construction of appropriate research instruments. On the other hand, qualitative researchers maintain that the nature of the social world is qualitative and fundamentally different from nature reality.

Qualitative research is useful to the educational researcher in a variety of contexts. It helps the educational researcher to obtain in-depth data both within and outside school (Lincoln and Guba 1985). They go on to say that, data from within the school can help the researcher to discover the internal dynamics of the teaching-learning process and the hidden curriculum that remains invisible in qualitative survey type research.

#### 3.2. Population

Sometime referred as 'target population' is the set of elements that the research focuses upon and to which the results obtained by testing the sample should be generalized (Patton, 1990). However, due to distances, finances, time and non availability of research participants, a smaller group out of a mentioned population know as a sample is chosen to represent the population.

In the case of this research the target population were the parents of the children with special needs and specialist teachers. For purposes of convenience to the researcher, the population was restricted only to parents in Lusaka.

### **3.3. Sample size**

Cohen, et al (2000) defined sample size as the total number of subjects selected to participate in a given study. The sample size of this study consisted forty two respondents, i.e.; thirty one (31) parents and eleven (11) teachers from Bauleni Special School.

The table below shows the characteristics of the respondents who took part in the study

### **3.4. Sampling procedure**

The word sample as defined by Patton (1990) refers to a selected group of subjects or respondents who participate in a given study. He goes on to say that the sample needs to be as representative as possible though it's a small group that is chosen to represent the population to which the results would be generalized.

In research, there are two main types of sampling namely; probability and non-probability sampling.(Miles & Huberman, 1994). In probability sampling there is a system of random selection in which all members of the population have equal chances of being selected. This type of sampling is a mathematical method of selecting research participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote that the fact that not everyone can participate in a study from a given population, probability sampling is used to ensure that there is no bias in the selection of participants.

On the other hand, Fetterman (2000) explains that non-probability sampling refers the method of selecting the study participants with a bias towards certain individuals within the population. The individuals may be selected because of their unique characteristics in the study. Non-probability sampling is also referred to as convenient or purposeful sampling. This study used convenient or purposeful sampling.

### **3.5. Research instruments**

Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data from the forty two (42) respondents. Questionnaires were chosen as instruments for data collection because they could be presented to each respondent in exactly the same way to minimize the role and influence of the interviewer and to make a more objective comparison of the results. Likert scales were chosen in this study because they are suitable in attitude measurement. In addition, studies have found out that likert scales are easy to construct, have high coverage of response categories, i.e. use a five point's scale, and have high precision and reliability (Likert 1932

and Edwards 1957; in Sarantkaos, 1993). The two sets of questionnaires have been appended to this report.

### **3.6. Data Collection Procedure**

The collection procedure of how the researcher gathered information is explained here. This is important as it helps the one evaluating the study to understand what difficulties could have arisen during the research process and if the challenges that were encountered by the researcher could have an effect on the results.

The researcher collected data from Bauleni Special School as it is one of the many Special School in Lusaka district which caters for children with special needs.

Two sets of questionnaires were prepared and administered; one to the parents of children with special needs and the second questionnaires was administered to the eleven teachers in the sample. Each set of questionnaires had a number of questions with precise instructions on how to answer them. The respondents who were not able to read or write were assisted to understand and provide to responses to the questions in the questionnaire by the research assistant (a teacher at the same school) who was able to speak the language they understood.

The respondents were given one week to be in possession with the questionnaires after which the researcher collected them and used one (1) day to verify and clarify certain response that were not clear.

### **3.7. Data Analysis**

The purpose by which data is processed and converted into meaningful statements is referred to as data analysis and interpretation (Sarantkaos, 1995). The purpose of data analysis is to process raw data for interpretation. In regard to this study, analysis of data from questionnaires was done by using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). SPSS was used in order to obtain frequencies and percentages.

In order to obtain the required information, numbers were assigned to response categories to which individual belonged for instance, sex as a variable was divided into two categories; namely male and female. The number one (1) was assigned to male and two (2) to female. Scoring consisted of counting the number of the respondents who indicated that they were male and female. In short, parents and teachers count was the scoring procedure that was

used to analyze the questions. The scores were expressed in tables consisting of frequencies and percentages.

In questions requiring a parent or teacher to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement, a likert scale involving the allocation of a score to each point on the scale was assigned. A positive item was scored by the following key: strongly disagree (S.A)=3, agree (A)=2, undecided (U)=5 disagree(DA)=5 and strongly disagree SDA=4. In case of questions with the response yes (Y) =6. The negative item was scored by the following key: DA=1, AD=2 and none (N) =4. Thereafter, responses for parents and teachers were added up in order to determine the percentage of parents who had positive and those with negative views on the involvement of parents in the education of their children with special needs.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.0

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The data presented were obtained through questionnaires which were administered to parents and teachers of children with special needs. The study findings are presented according to the themes of the study. The themes were: school policy on parent involvement, schools and parents' needs, parents' contributions to the school and barriers to parent involvement.

- **Parents' Responses**

The literature that has been reviewed has shown that parents have potential contributions which the school can utilize to the benefit of learners with special needs. The potential contributions could be towards the school policy; they can be resourced; they can collaborate with the teachers; and they can offer information on their children. Parents were asked whether their potential contributions were utilized by the school and if not what were the barriers. The findings are reported below.

- **Parents and the School Policy**
- **Parents' responses to whether the school has a separate written policy on Parent involvement**
- **Parents' Responses on School Policy.**

**Table 2: Written policy on parental involvement**

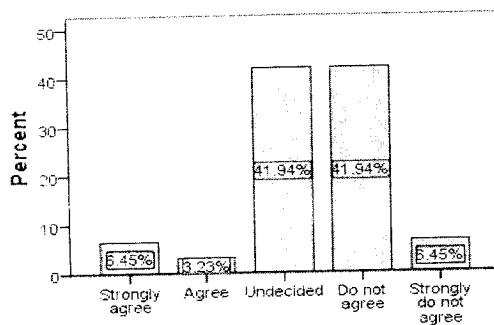
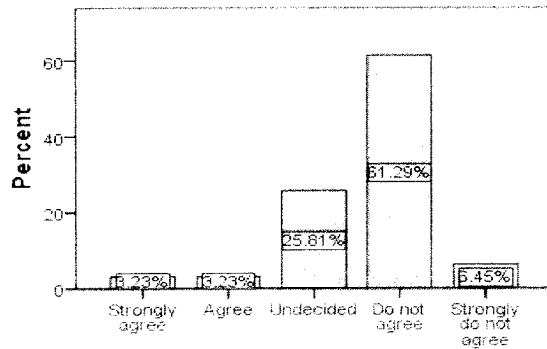


Table 2 above shows that of the 31 respondents, 3 (9.68%) agreed that the school had a separate written policy on parent involvement while 15 (48.39%) did not agree. Data also showed that 13 (41.94%) were undecided to the fact that the school had a written policy in parent involvement.

- Parents responses on whether they are involved in the formulation of the policy.

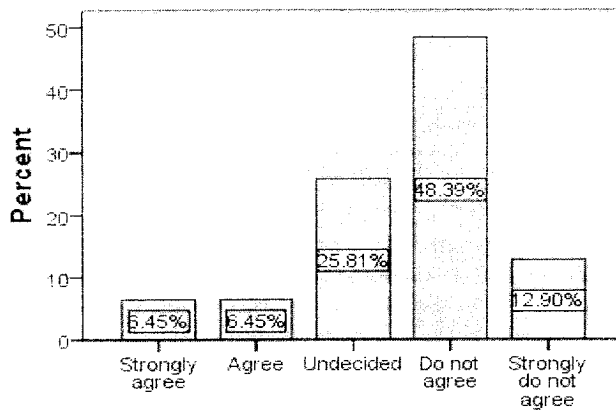
**Table 3: Parental involvement in policy formulation**



The data presented in the table above shows that only 2 (6.46%) agreed that parents were involved in policy formulation. A further 22 (70.97%) of the respondents indicated that they did not agree, while the rest 7 (25.81%) were undecided.

- Parents responses of whether parental rights are outlined in the policy.

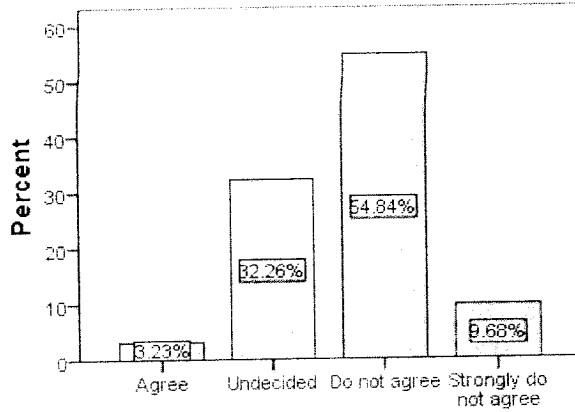
**Table 4: Does the policy outline parental rights**



The findings presented in table 4 above shows that 31 respondents, 4 (12.90%) agreed that the school policy had outlined parents' rights, while 19 (61.29%) did not agree and 8 (25.18%) of the respondents were undecided.

- Parents responses of whether monitoring procedures are in place for policy Implementation.

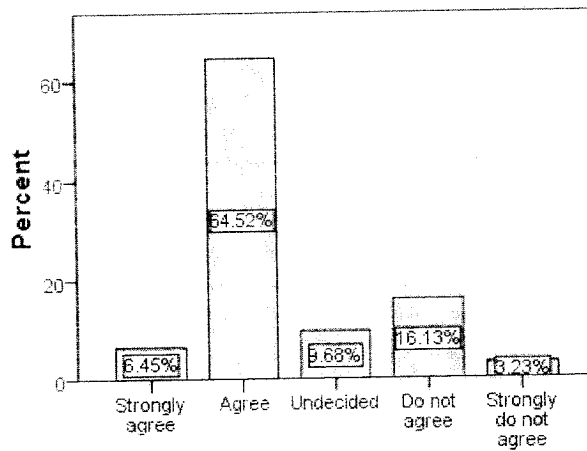
**Table 5: Monitoring procedures for policy implementation**



When respondents were asked on whether there were monitoring procedures for policy implementation, only 1 (3.23%) agreed and 20 (64.52%) did not agree, while the rest 10 (32.26%) were undecided.

- **Parents responses on whether the school has an active Parent's Teachers Association (P.T.A) in place.**

**Table 6: Active P.T.A in place**



Asked on whether the school had an active P.T.A in place, 22 (70.97%) of the respondents agreed and 6 (19.36%) did not agree, while the rest 3 (9.68%) were not decided.

- **Parents responses on whether there is representation of parents in the Committee**

**Table 7: Representation of parents in committee**

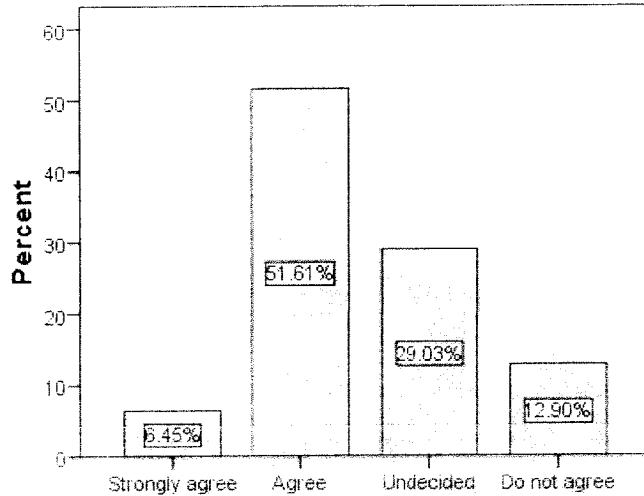
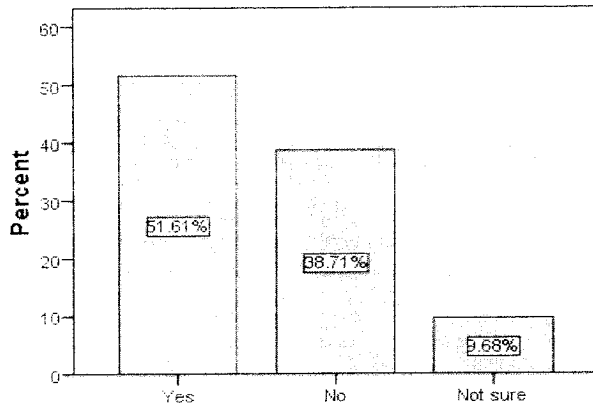


Table 7 above shows that of the 31 respondents, 17 (58.06%) agreed to the question of having representation in the committee and 4 (12.90%) did not agree, while the rest 9 (29.03%) of the respondents were undecided.

- **Parents responses on necessity of Parent-Teachers Association (P.T.A).**

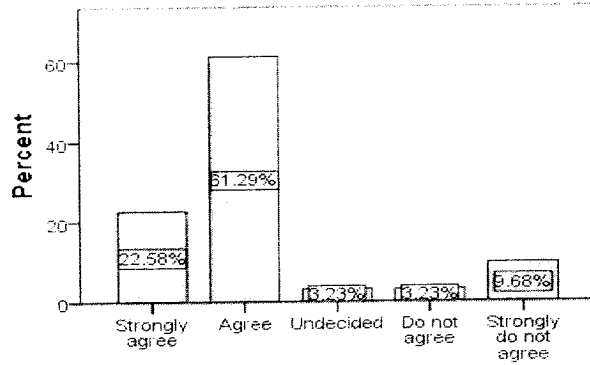
**Table 8: Is P.T.A necessary**



Respondents were asked to indicate if the parent-teacher association was necessary. Most of the respondents 16 (51.61%) positively agreed to the fact that the P.T.A is necessary and 12 (38.71%) indicated that it was not necessary while, only 3 (9.68%) said that they were not sure.

- **Parents as a Resource**
- **Parents' responses on whether the school welcomes help from them as parents.**

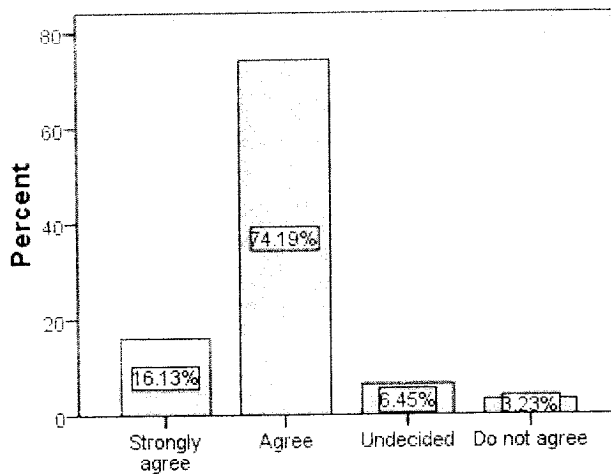
**Table 9: Welcoming help from parents**



When respondents were asked on whether the school welcomed help from them as parents of children with special needs, 26 (83.87%) of the respondents agreed and 4 (12.91%) did not agree, while the other 1 (3.23%) was undecided.

- **Parents responses on whether there are ways of informing parents about school information**

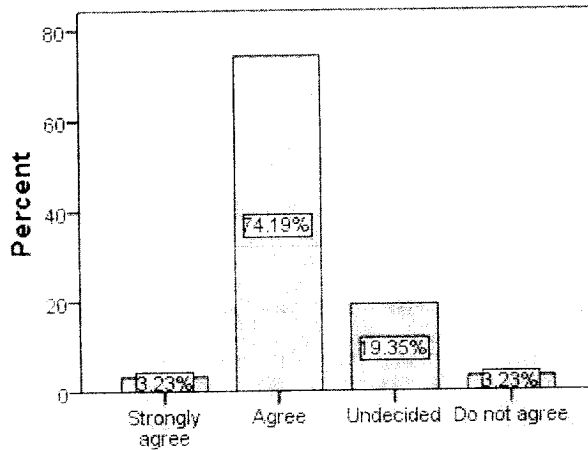
**Table 10: Are there ways in which parents are informed about the school activities**



The findings in table 10 above shows that of the 31 respondents, 28 (90.32%) of the respondents agreed that there were ways in which parents are informed about the school and 1 (3.23%) did not agree, while 2 (6.45%) were undecided.

- Parents responses on whether there are ways of arranging voluntary help from parents.

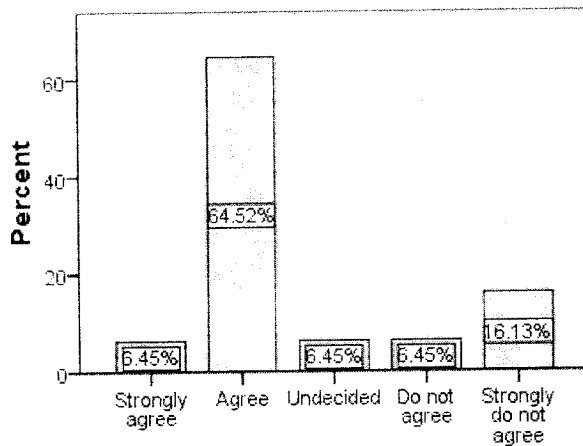
**Table 11: Ways of organising voluntary help from parents**



The findings in table 11 above shows that 24 (77.42%) of the 31 respondents agree to the question of whether there are ways of organising voluntary help from parents and 1 (3.23%) did not agree, while 6 (19.35%) were undecided

- **Parent-teacher Collaboration**
- **Parents responses on parental contribution to children’s assessment needs.**

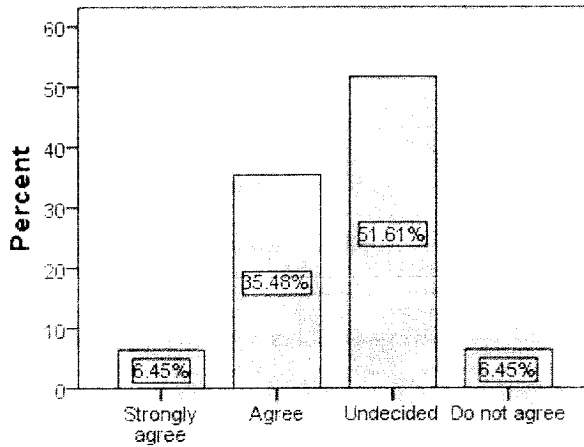
**Table 12: Parental contribution to children’s assessment needs**



Respondents were asked if they did contribute to the assessment of their children’s needs. 22 (70.97%) agreed to contributing to the assessment of their children’s needs, while 7 (22.58%) did not agree and only 2 (6.45%) were undecided.

- Parents responses on whether there is organization of individual parents/teachers meeting.

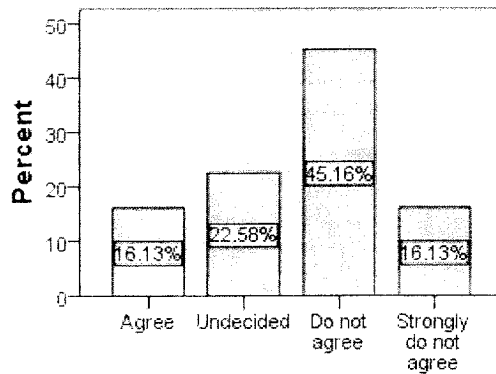
**Table 13: Organisation of individual Parents/Teachers meeting**



When asked if individual parent/teacher meetings are organised by the school, 13 (41.93%) of the 31 respondents agreed. On the other hand 2 (6.45%) did not agree, while 16 (51.61%) said they were not decided.

- Parents responses on Parental involvement in the formulation of children's Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P).

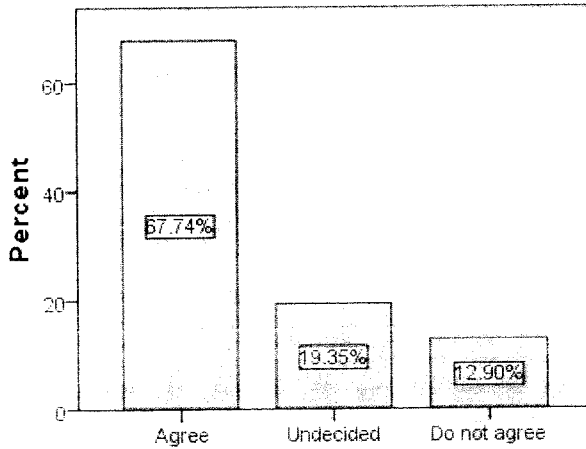
**Table 14: Parental involvement in Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P) Formulation**



Respondents were asked whether they were involved in the formulation of the individualized education plan for their children, 5 (16.13%) said that they agreed and 19 (61.29%) of the respondents did not agree, while 7 (22.58%) were undecided.

- Parents responses on encouraging parental reinforcement to school programmes

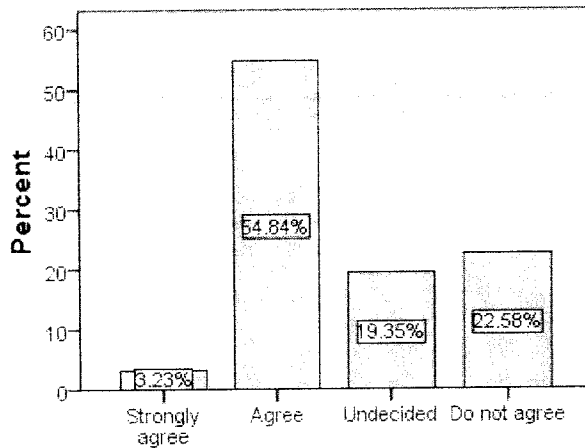
**Table 15: Encouraging parental Reinforcement to School programmes**



When respondents were asked if there are ways the school encouraged them to reinforce school programmes, majority of them 21 (67.74%) said that they agree and 4 (12.90%) indicated that they did not agree, while the rest 6 (19.35%) were undecided.

- Parental Involvement in Progress Review of School Progress

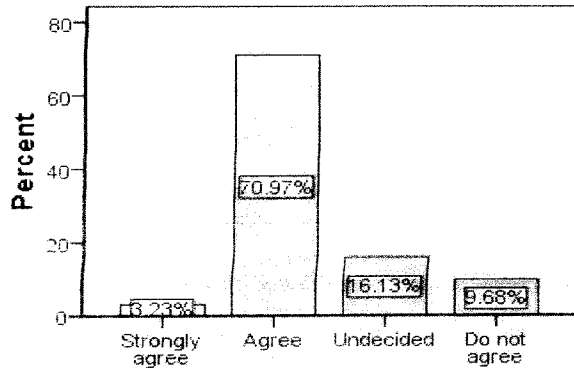
**Table 16: Parental involvement in progress reviews of school progress**



When respondents were asked if they were involved in the reviews of their children's school progress, 18 (58.07%) agreed. On the other hand, 7 (22.58%) of the respondents said they did not agree and the rest 6 (19.35%) indicated that they were undecided.

- Information from school to parents
- Parents responses on whether the school has a system of information gathering from Parents to their children.

Table 17: School system of information gathering from parents or their children



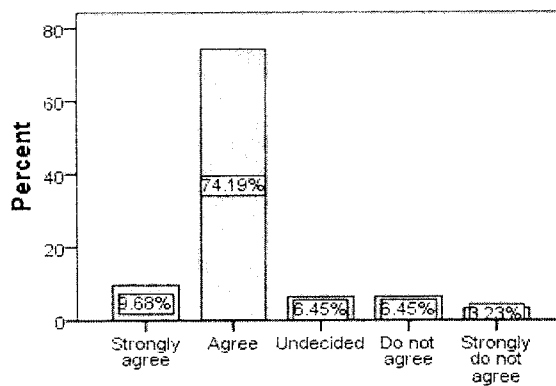
Having been asked if the school has a system of gathering information of the school from parents, 23 (74.20%) of the 31 respondents agreed. Other minority of the respondents indicated did not agree 3 (9.68%) and 5 (16.13%) were undecided.

- **The School and Parents' needs.**

The literature that has been reviewed has shown that parents have needs which the school should try to meet. The needs pertain to the need for communication, liaison, education and support. The findings on parents' views on whether the school meets their needs are presented below.

- Parents and communication from School
- Parents' responses on whether there is attendance of parents to school activities.

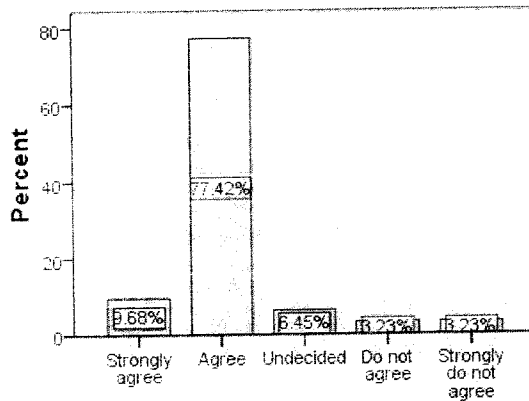
Table 18: Attendance of parents to school activities



When the respondents were asked whether there are school activities which they attend. The majority of the parents said they agreed, that is 26 (83.87%) the rest of them 3 (9.68%) did not agree and only 2 (6.45%) were undecided.

- **Parents responses whether there is School dissemination of information**

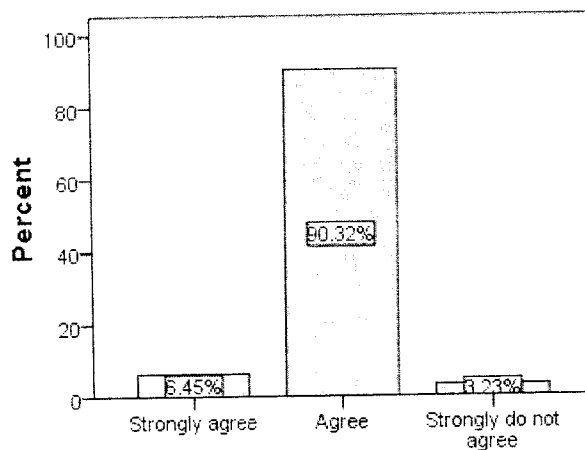
**Table 19: School dissemination of information**



Asked if the school disseminate information through newsletters or other means, of the 31 respondents, 27 (87.10%) agreed and 2 (6.45%) equally did not agree and were undecided.

- **Parents responses on whether parents are being informed of their children's achievements and difficulties.**

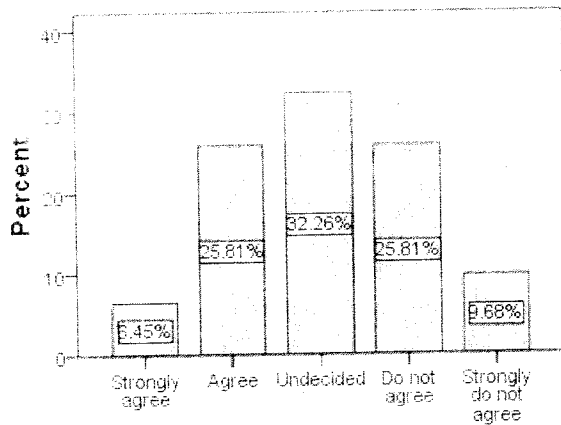
**Table 20: Are parents informed of their children's achievement and difficulties**



Respondents were asked whether they were informed of their children's achievements and difficulties. 30 (96.77%) agreed, while the minority 1 (3.23%) indicated strongly do not agree.

- **Parents responses on contacting parents of children with Special needs**

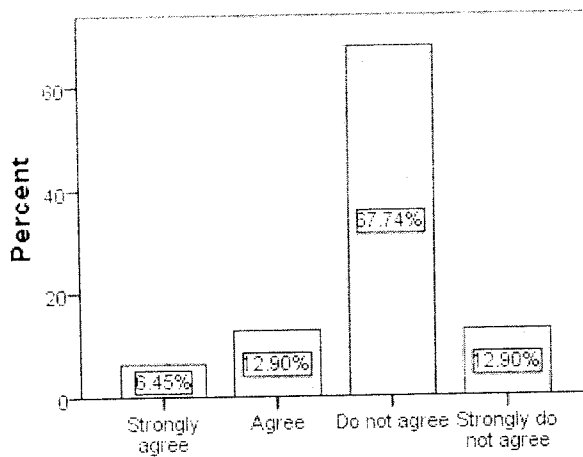
**Table 21: If parents are contacted only when there is a problem**



Asked if respondents are only contacted when there is a problem. 10 (32.26%) said they agree and 11 (35.49%), said they did not agree, while the rest of the respondents 10 (32.26%) said they are undecided.

- **Parents responses on visitation of teachers before child attends classes**

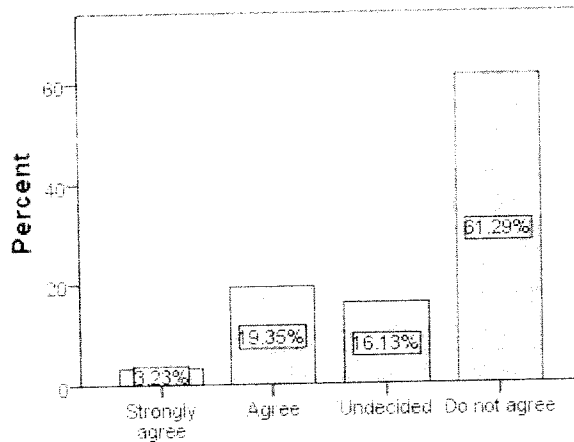
**Table 22: Visitation of teachers before child attends classes**



Majority of the respondents, 25 (80.64%) did not agree as to whether a teacher visited them before their child started to attend school while the minority 6 (19.35%) agreed.

- Parents responses on whether there are guidelines for parents on school visitation

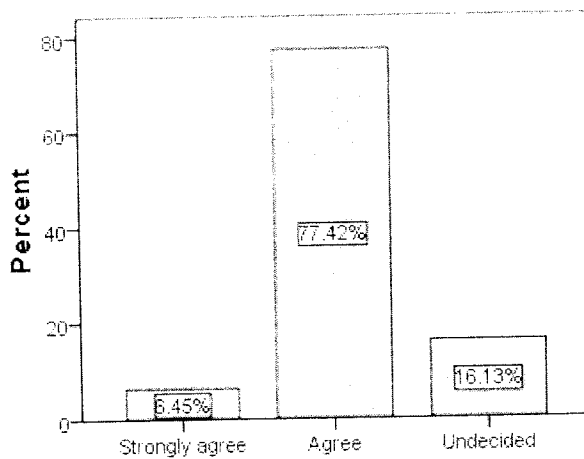
**Table 23: Availability of guidelines for parents to visit the school**



When the respondents were asked if the school has guidelines available for them on visiting to talk over the concerns of their children, the following were the responses. The majority 19 (61.29%) said they did not agree, 7 (22.58%) agree and 6 (19.35%) were undecided.

- Parents responses on channels of communication used in school

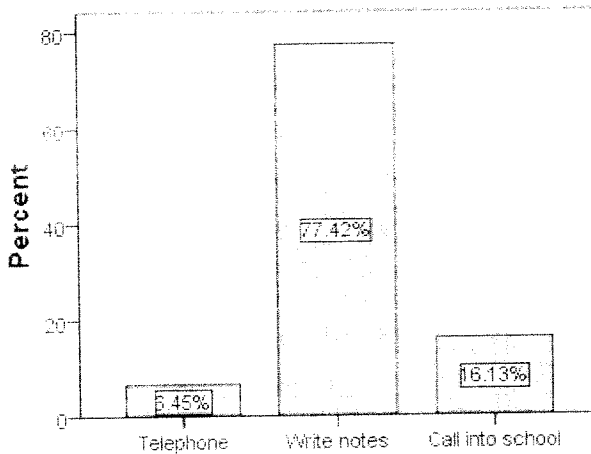
**Table 24: Channels of communication in place.**



When the respondents were asked if the school had some form of channels of communication in place between them and the teachers, the majority of respondents of 26 (82.87%) agreed that there channels of communication in place, the rest 5 (16.13%) were undecided.

- **Parents responses on channels of communication in place used by parents**

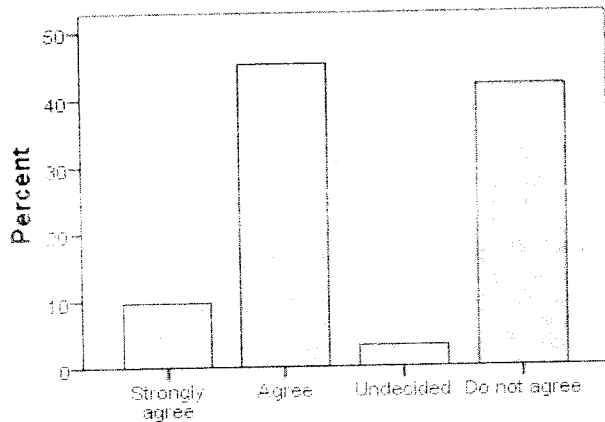
**Table 25: Channels of communication used**



- **Telephone**  
Out of the 31 respondents, 8 (25.81%) indicated that they used the telephone as the channel of Communication.
- **Writing notes**  
Data also showed that 8 (25.81%) of the 31 respondents indicated that writing notes to the school seems to be much easier channel of communication to use.
- **Call into school**  
Findings show that 15 (48.39%) of the 31 respondents indicated that calling into the school to talk to the teachers were a much more suitable channel of communication they use.

- School liaison with Parents
- Parents responses on invitation to attend termly meetings to discuss children's progress

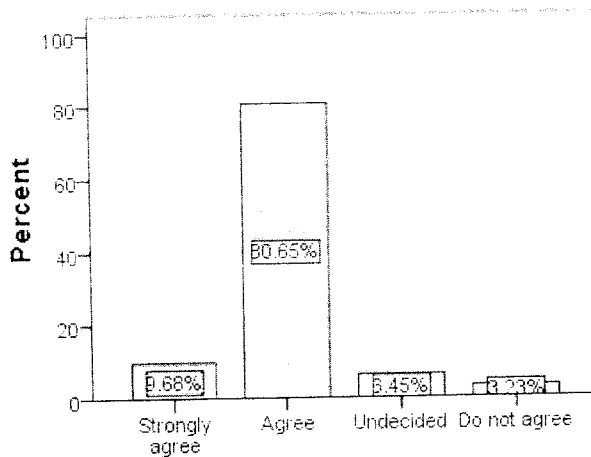
**Table 26: Invitation to attend termly meetings to discuss children's Progress**



Asked whether parents are invited to attend termly meetings to discuss their children's progress, data showed that 17 (54.84%) of the 31 respondents agreed and 13 (41.94%) disagreed, while the minority 1 (3.23%) was undecided.

- Parents responses on home visits by class teachers

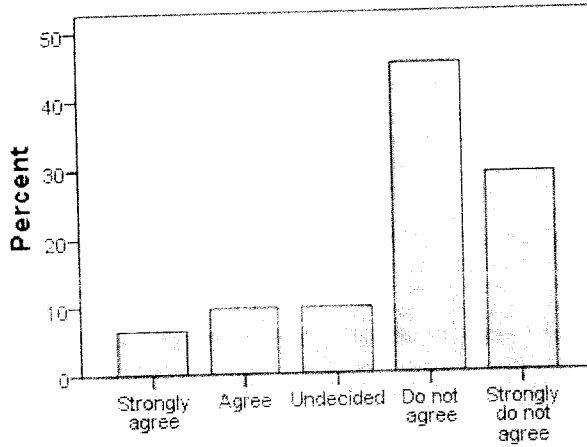
**Table 27: Home visits by class teachers**



Out of the 31 respondents, 28 (90.33%) agreed when asked as to whether class teachers visit their homes and 1 (3.23%) did not agree while the remaining 2 (6.45%) indicated that they were undecided.

- Parents responses on use of home/school diaries

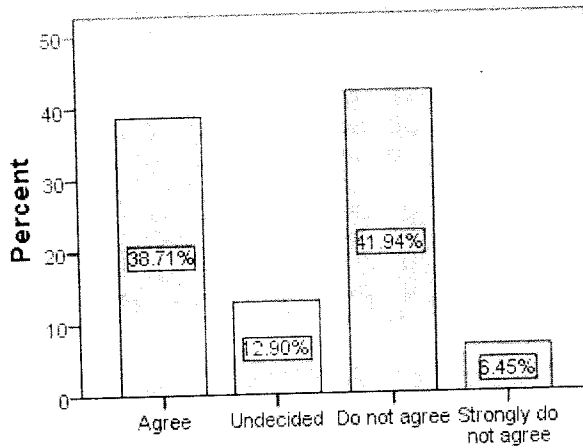
Table 28: The use of home/school diaries



With regards to whether the school used home/school diaries, data in table 28 above shows that 5 (16.13%) of the respondents agreed and 23 (74.19%) did not agree, while the rest 3 (9.68%) of the respondents said that they were undecided.

- Parents responses on sending of progress reports

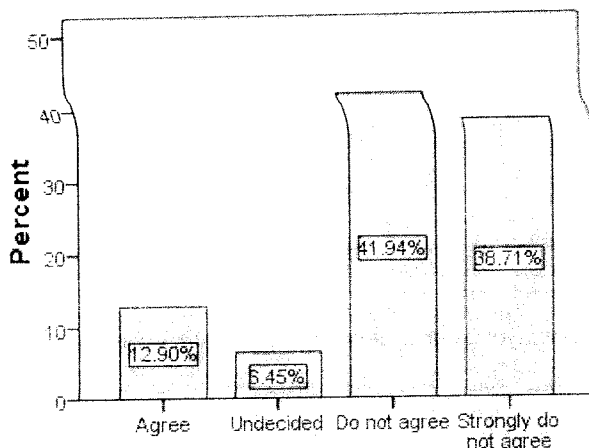
Table 29: Sending of progress reports



Findings in the above pie chart shows that out of the 31 respondents, 15 (48.39%) did not agree when asked whether the school does send progress reports and 12 (38.71%) agreed, while the remaining 4 (12.90%) were undecided.

- Parents' involvement in their children's education.
- Parents responses on parental invitation to class observation.

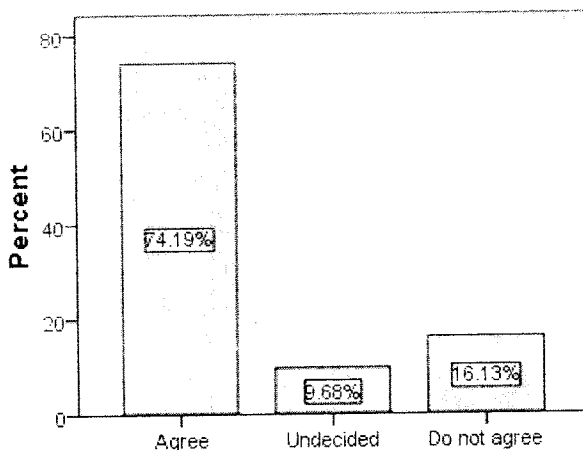
**Table 30: Parental invitation to class observation**



Respondents were asked whether they are invited into school to observe teachers teaching. Out of 4 (12.90%) agreed, while the majority 25 (80.32%) did not agree and only 2 (6.45%) of the respondents indicated that they were undecided.

- Parents responses on organisation of parental workshops by the school

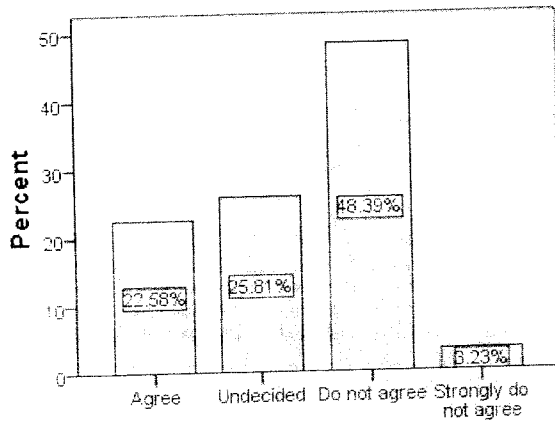
**Table 31: Organisation of parental workshops by the school**



Findings in the table above shows that of the 31 respondents, 23 (74.19%) agreed as to whether parental workshops are organised by the school and 5 (16.13%) did not agree, while 3 (9.68%) were undecided.

- Parents responses on whether they are informed about community opportunities

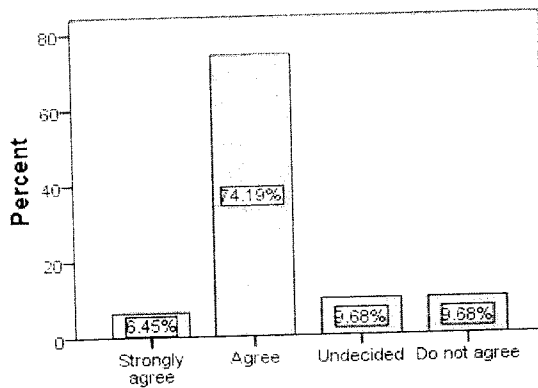
**Table 32: Information about community opportunities**



Findings in table 32 above show that of the 31 respondents, 7 (22.58%) agreed that they are informed about opportunities of the communities. On the other hand, 16 (51.62%) did not agree. Findings of the data also show that 8 (25.81%) indicated that they were undecided.

- School support for parents.
- Parents responses on discussion of parental concerns

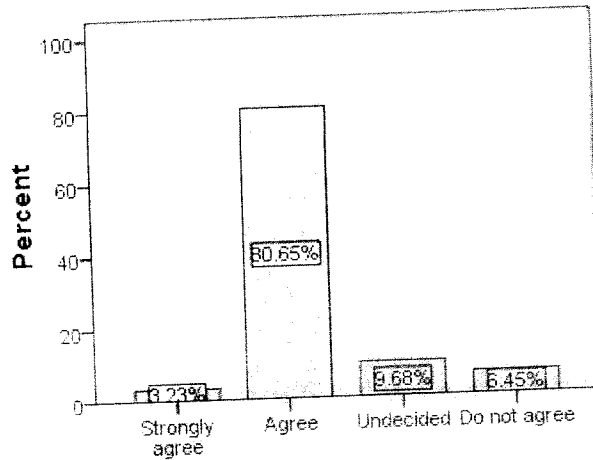
**Table 33: Discussions of parental concerns**



Data shows that the 31 respondents, 25 (80.64%) agreed to being given opportunities to discuss concerns on a one to one basis with the teachers. On the other hand, equal numbers of respondents 3 (9.68%) and 3 (9.68%) respectively indicated that they do not agree and the others were undecided.

- Parents responses on opportunities of parent-parent concerns.

**Table 34: Opportunities of parent-parent concerns**

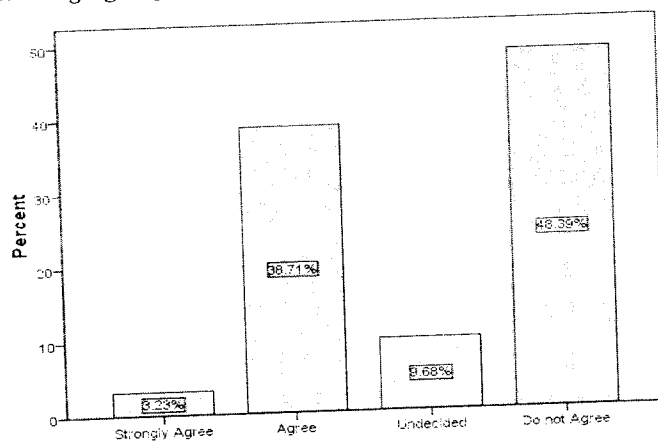


The findings above shows that 26(83.88%) of the respondents agreed on whether they were provided with opportunities to show concerns with other parents and 2 (6.45%) did not agree, while 3 (9.68%) were undecided.

- Parents responses on encouraging of parental participation in support groups

Responses showing if the respondents are encouraged to participate in support groups and parent organisations outside the school.

**Table 35: Encouraging of parental participation in support groups outside school**



Asked if the parents were encouraged to participate in support groups and parent organisations outside school, 13 (41.94%) agreed and the majority of the respondents 15 (48.39%) said they did not agree, while 3 (9.68%) were undecided.

- **Barriers to parent involvement.**
- **Parents responses on what they thought prevents them from getting involved in the school.**

In view of the above, mothers seemed to be more likely to be involved than fathers. When asked about barriers to becoming involved, parents cited the competing demands in their lives such as work commitments, demand of other children, childcare difficulties and lack of time generally. Parents' difficulties with basic skills were also a barrier to being involved in their children's education. Research found that of the 31 respondents, 8 (25.81%) indicated that their lack of confidence and not understanding their children's disability contributed to them not getting involved, 11(35.45%) said that their non involvement was due to poverty and work pressure and the rest 12(38.71%) of the respondents attributed lack of time.

- **Parents responses on measures to put in for them to get involved in their children's education**

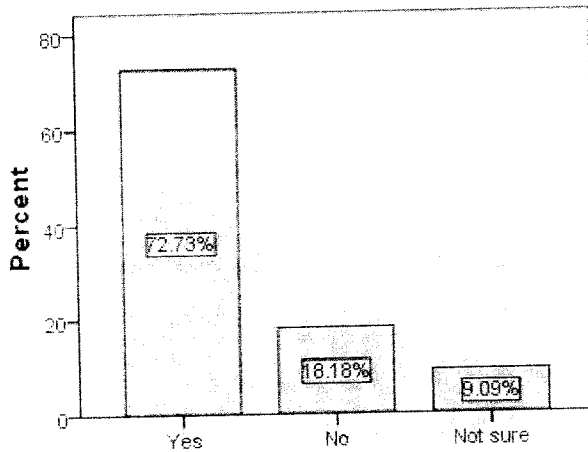
Having been asked about what parents thought should happen for them to get more involved in their children's education, 15 (48.39%) of the 31 respondents said they need to be more empowered, i.e., by being taught skills so that they become independent, 5 (16.13%) suggested that more parental workshops should be held in order for parents to have a platform to share ideas on how best they could handle their disabled children while 11(35.48%) said that it was imperatives for class teachers to become more open to parents so that both parties could find it easier to discuss both the strengths and weakness of the children.

- **Teachers' views on parents' contributions to school.**

The literature which has been reviewed has shown that parents have potential to contribute to the operations of the school at school or at classroom level. The contributions could be towards the school policy; being used as a resource; in collaboration with the school; or/and giving information on their children. Teachers were asked whether they utilize parents' potential contributions and if not, what the barriers were. The findings are presented below.

- School policy on parent involvement.
- Teachers' responses on whether the school has a policy on parental involvement in education of children with special needs.

**Table 36: Written policy on parental involvement**



Findings in table 36 above shows that of the 11 respondents, 8 (72.73%) said yes, 2 (18.18%) said no and 1 (9.09%) indicated that they are not sure of the school having a separate written policy on parental involvement.

- Teachers' responses on whether the policy clearly specifies parents' rights and responsibilities.

**Table 37: Parental rights and responsibilities**

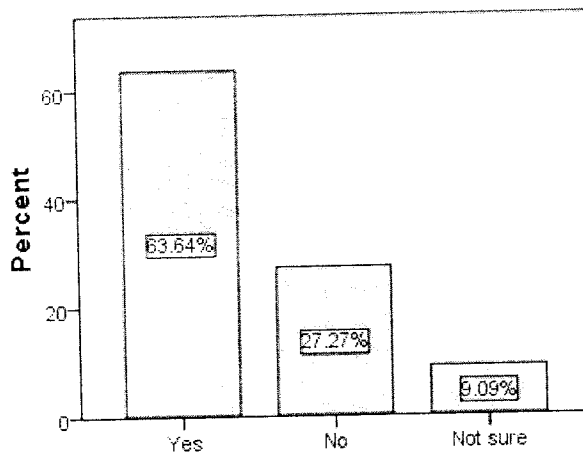
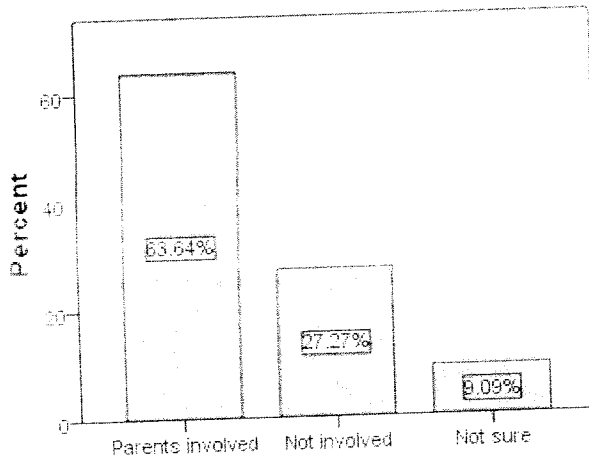


Table 37 above shows that 7 (63.64%) of the 11 teachers said yes, 3 (27.27%) said no and 1 (9.09%) indicated that he was not sure.

- Teachers responses on whether the parents have been involved in the formulation of the policy and if parental views are sought about the school policy for meeting special educational needs.

**Table 38: Parental involvement in policy formulation**



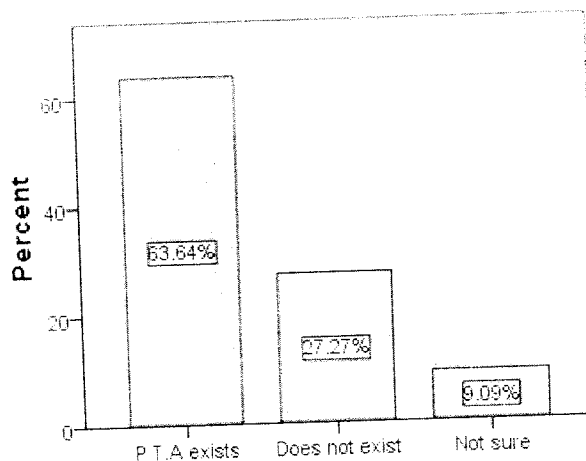
Findings in table 38 above shows that 7 (63.64%) of the 11 teachers indicated that parents are involved. 3 (27.27%) said they are not involved, while 1 (9.09%) was not sure.

- **Teachers views of whether there are any monitory procedures in place to ensure that the policy implemented.**

Findings indicate that 11 (100%) of the teachers were not sure of any monitory procedures in place.

- **Teachers responses on whether there is an active parent-teachers Association (P.T.A) at the school.**

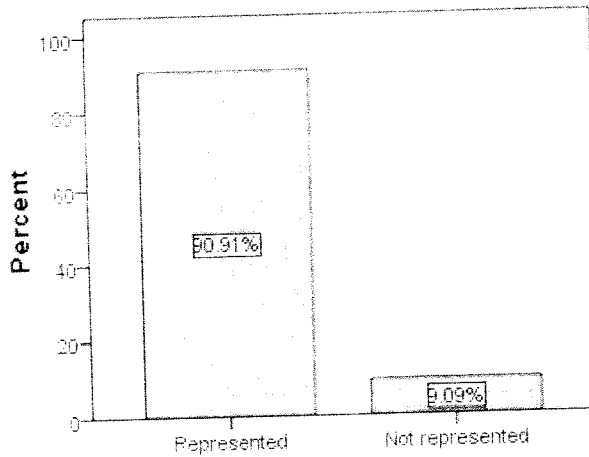
**Table 39: Existence of P.T.A**



Data above shows that 7(63.64%) of the 11 teachers said there is an active P.T.A in school and 3(27.27%) said it does not exist, while 1(9.09%) said he is not sure.

- Teachers' responses on whether parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) are represented in the committee.

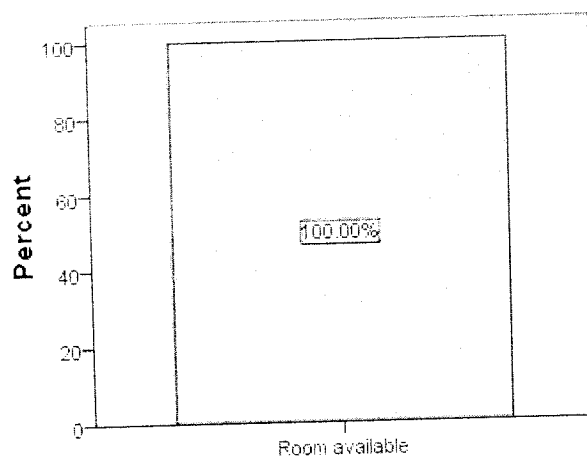
**Table 40: Representation of SEN in the committee**



The findings presented in table 40 above shows that of the 11 teachers 10 (90.91%) said there is parental representation while 1 (9.09%) said there isn't any parental representation.

**4.3.1.7. Teachers responses on whether there is a room set aside for parents to use.**

**Table 41: Room reserved for parental involvement**

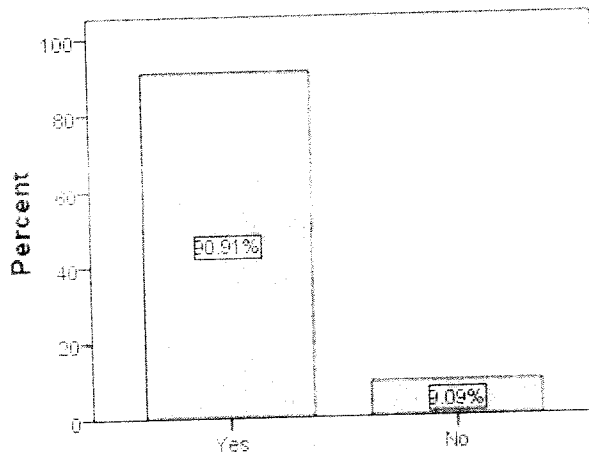


Data in table 41 above shows that of the 11 teachers, 11(100%) indicated that there is a room reserved for parents to use.

- Parents as a resource.
- Teachers responses on whether help from parents and if the school has any way of organising

**Voluntary help from parents with the school.**

**Table 42: Organisation of voluntary help from parents**



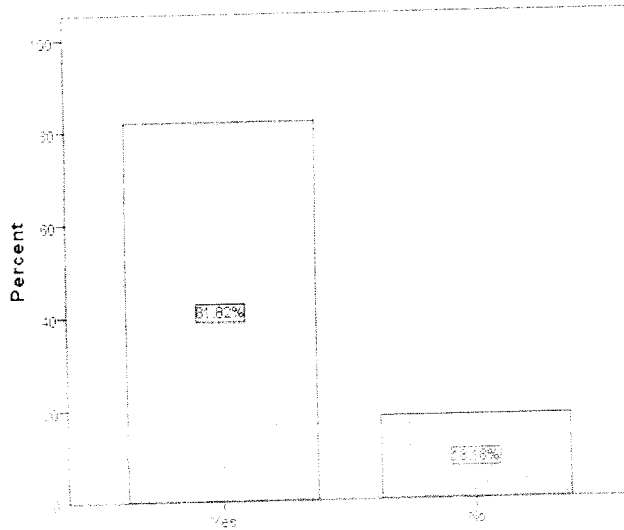
Data in table 42 above shows that 10 (90.91%) of all the respondents indicated that the school does welcome help from the parents and 1 (9.09%) said no to that.

- Teachers' responses on showing what ways are used by the school as voluntary help from parents.

Responses of the teachers were that 2 (18.18%) said they help in gardening, 5 (27.27%) sweep the classroom and 4 (54.55%) indicated that they offer help in skills training and health talks to children with special needs.

- Teacher collaboration with parents.
- Teachers' responses on parental contribution to children's assessment.

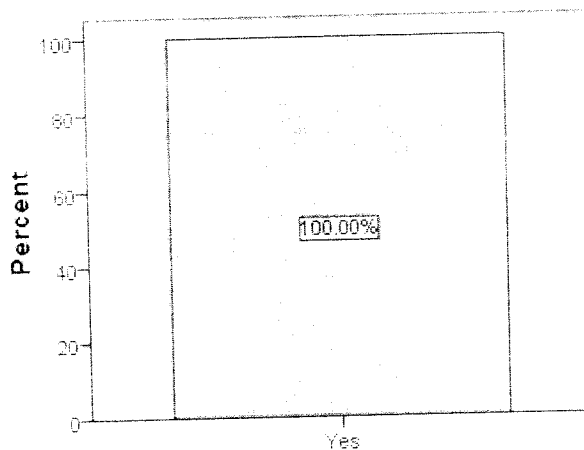
**Table 43: Parental contribution to children assessment**



The findings to the above shows that 9 (81.82%) out of the 11 respondents said yes, while the remaining 2 (18.82%) said no, when asked whether parents contribute to the assessment of their children's needs.

- Teachers' responses on communication of assessment results.

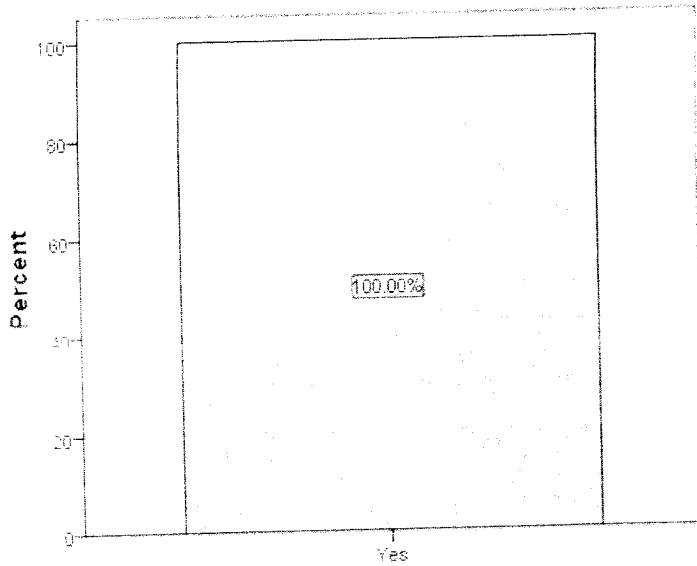
**Table 44: Communication of assessment results**



Data in table 44 above showed that all the respondents 11 (100%) indicated that the school does communicate to the parents results of school assessments.

- Teachers' responses on whether there are individual parents-teacher meetings.

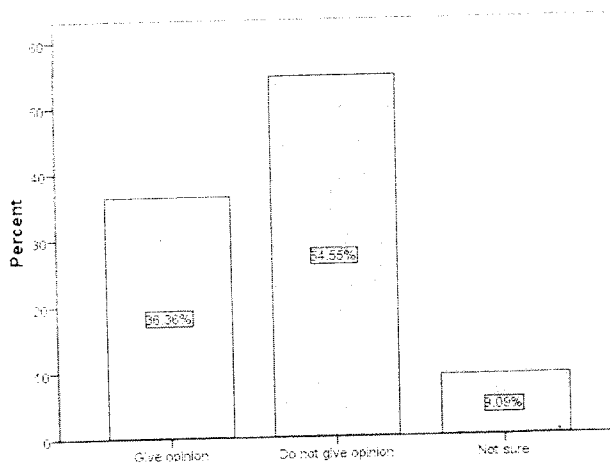
**Table 45: Individual parents/teacher meetings**



Asked whether individual parent-teacher meetings are held, data in table 45 showed that the 11 (100%) respondents said yes.

- Teachers' responses on Goals and Teaching priorities from parents.

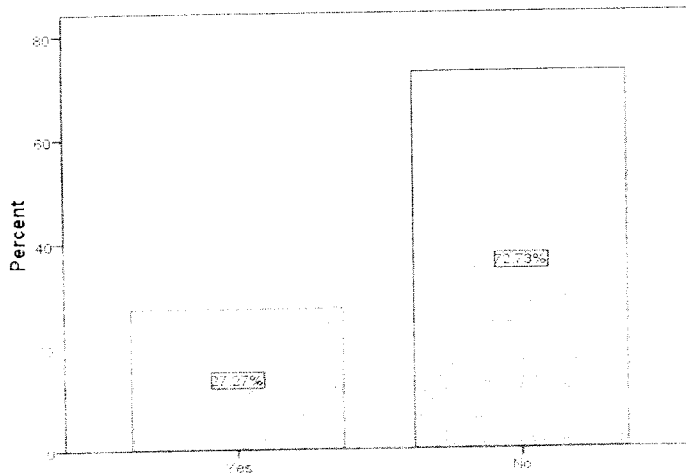
**Table 46: Goals and teaching priorities**



Data from table 46 above shows that 4 (36.36%) do give opinions, 6 (54.55%) of the respondents do not give opinions and 1 (9.09%) was not sure whether opinions are given or not.

- Teachers responses on parental involvement in the development of child's I.E.P.

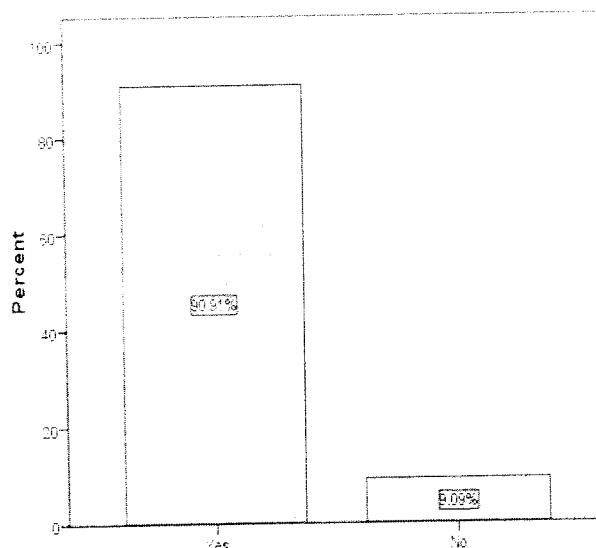
**Table 47: Parental involvement in the development child's IEP**



Findings from table 47 above shows that out of the 11 respondents, 3 (27.27%) indicated that parents are involved while the majority of the respondents 8 (72.73%) said that parents are not involved in the development of their children's I.E.P.

- Teachers' responses on whether there ways of Reinforcement of school programmes.

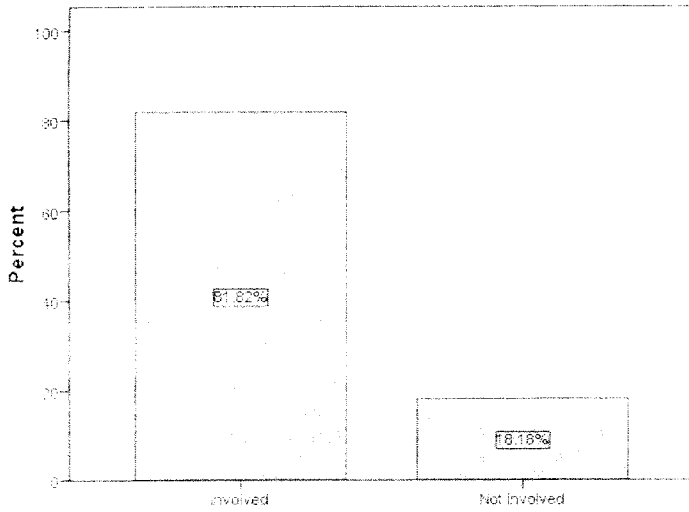
**Table 48: Reinforcement of school programmes**



Asked if there were ways the school encourages parents to reinforce school programmes at home, 10 (90.91%) of the respondents said yes and 1 (9.09%) denied that fact.

- Teachers responses on reviews of children’s school progress.

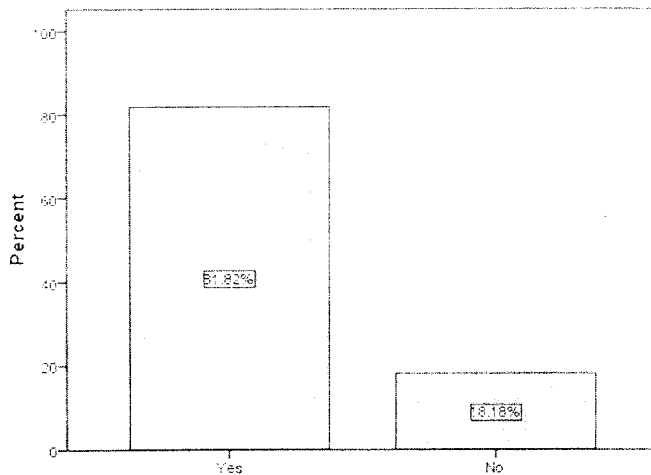
**Table 49: Reviews of children’s school progress**



The findings of table 49 above reveals that of the 11 respondents, 9 (81.82%) agreed to the fact that parents are involved and 2 (18.18%) indicated that parents are not involved in the review.

- Information from school to parents.
- Teachers’ responses on whether there is a system of gathering information.

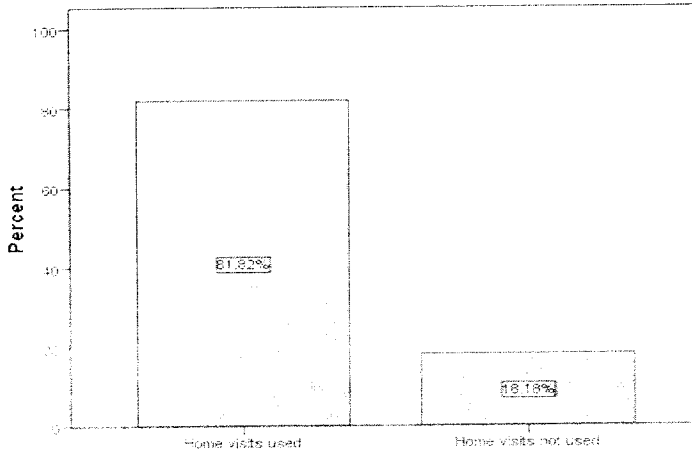
**Table 50: System of gathering information**



Of the 11 respondents, 9 (81.82%) indicated that there is a system of gathering information, while the rest 2 (18.18%) said there is no system.

- Teachers' responses on home visits.

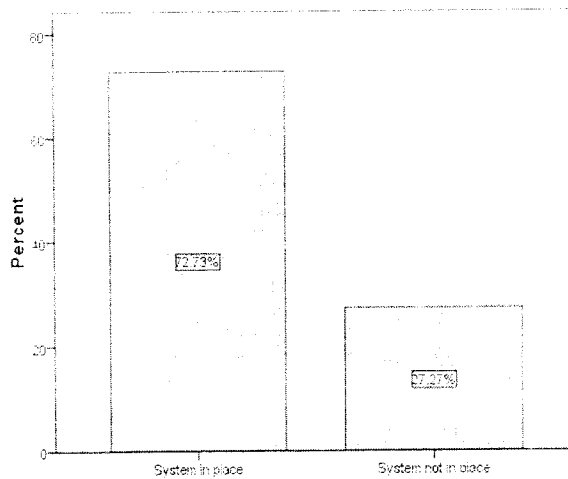
**Table 51: Home visits**



Data in table 51 above shows that 9 (81.82%) of the 11 respondents said that home visits were used in addition to parent-teacher meetings at school, while 2 (18.18%) indicated that they were not used.

- Teachers' responses on Dissemination of information.

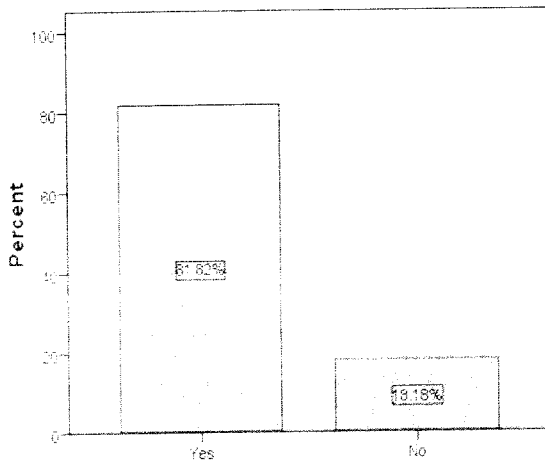
**Table 52: Dissemination of information**



Findings in table 52 above shows that of the 11 respondents 8 (72.73%) agreed to the system being in place and 3 (27.27%) said there was no system in place which the school use to disseminate relevant information from parents to all members of staff who work with the children. Furthermore, all the respondents 11 (100%) mentioned that the system that is used in the school was through staff meetings.

- Needs of parents.
- Teachers' responses on whether there are School activities.

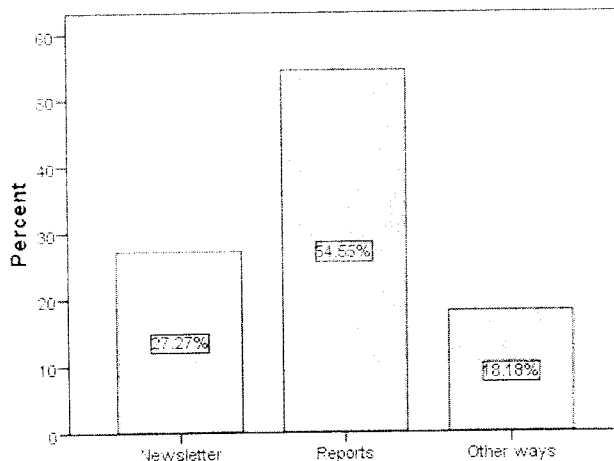
**Table 53: School activities**



Data from table 53 above shows that 9 (81.82%) of the 11 respondents said there were activities and 2 (18.18%) indicated that there are no activities, that were used to ensure that all parents established contact with the school.

- Teachers' responses on the ratings of what other methods the school uses to disseminate information to parents are outlined below.

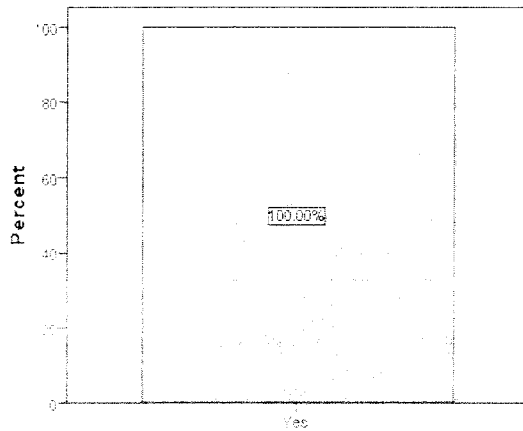
**Table 54: Methods of information dissemination**



3 (27.27%) of the respondents said that newsletters are used, 6 (54.55%) said this is done by sending reports to the parents and 2 (18.18%) outlined other ways of disseminating information.

- Teachers' responses on when parents are contacted.

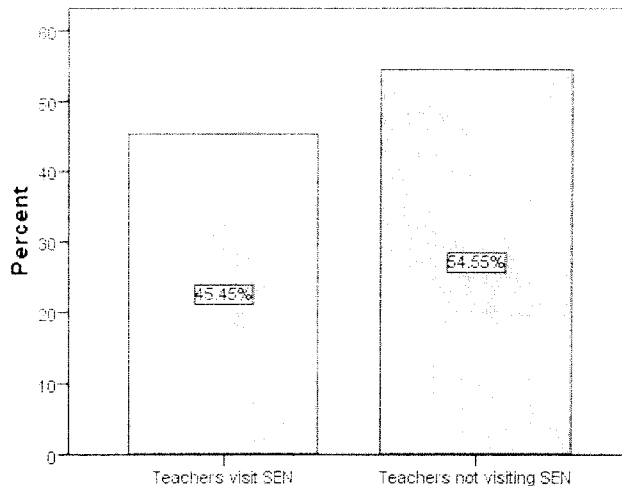
**Table 55: Are parents contacted about children's achievement and difficulties**



Asked whether parents were contacted to be informed of their children's achievements as well as difficulties, all the respondents 11 (100%) said that parents were contacted in both cases.

- Teachers' responses on whether they do visit the children with special needs before pupils start to attend the school.

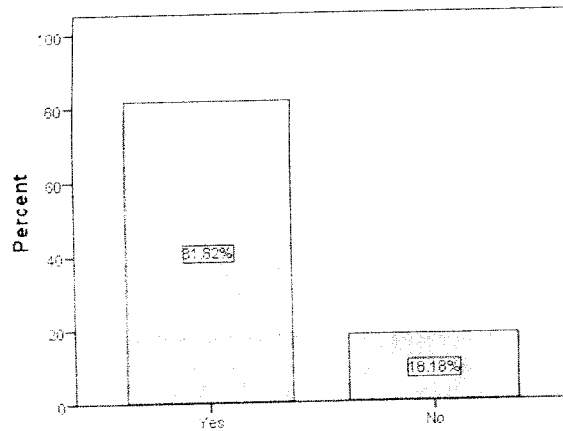
**Table 56: Visit SEN**



Minority of the respondents, 5 (45.45%) indicated that they did visit the families, while the majority 6 (54.55%) said they did not visit the families before the learners with special needs start to attend the school.

- Teachers responses on whether there guidelines for parents on visiting the school.

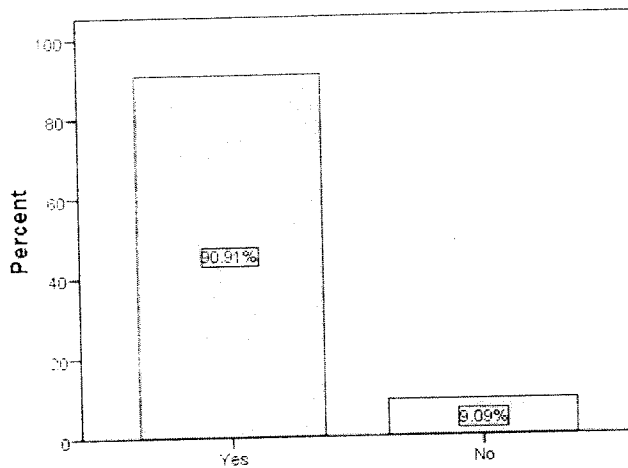
**Table 57: Are there guidelines for parents on visiting the school**



Data above indicate that out of the 11 respondents, 9 (81.82%) said yes and 2 (18.18%) said there were no guidelines for parents on visiting the school.

- Teachers' responses on whether there are channels of communication between parents and teachers.

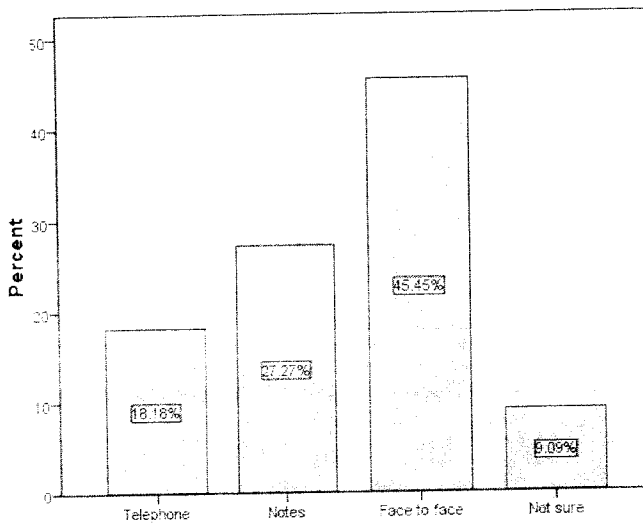
**Table 58: Channels of communication between parents and teachers**



Data in table 58 above indicate that 10 (90.91%) of the 11 respondents said that there were channels of communication in place, while 1 (9.09%) said there were no channels of communication between parents and teachers.

- Teachers' responses on means of communication in use by parents.

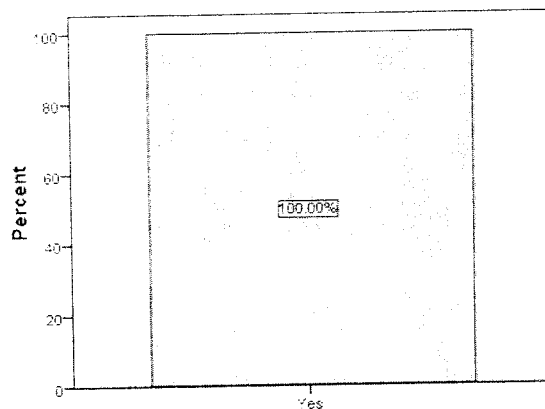
**Table 59: Means of communication used by parents**



The findings above shows that some parents 2 (18.18%) telephone, 3 (27.29%) write notes. 5 (45.45%) call into school and 1 (9.09%) were not sure of what means of communication were used by the parents.

- Liaison with parents.
- Teachers' responses on the children's Individual Education Plan (I.E.P).

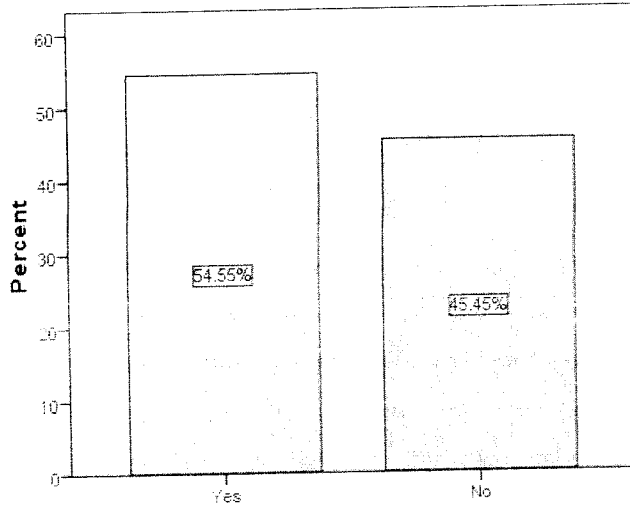
**Table 60: Reviewing of individual education plan (IEP)**



Asked if parents were invited to attend termly meetings to review their children's Individual Education Plan or annual meetings to review progress, all the 11 (100%) respondents agreed to the fact that the parents were invited

- Teachers' responses on whether home-school diaries are used by the school.

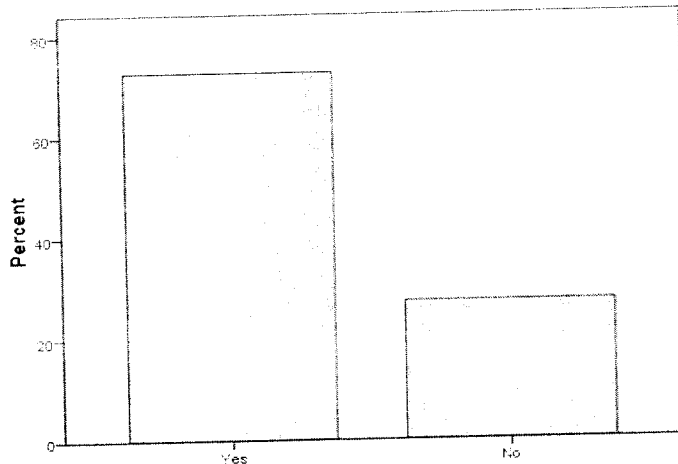
**Table 61: Use of home-school diaries**



Data in table 61 above shows that of all the 11 respondents, 6 (54.55%) agreed that home-school diaries were used and 5 (45.45%) indicated that they were not used by the school.

- Teachers' responses on whether progress reports are sent.

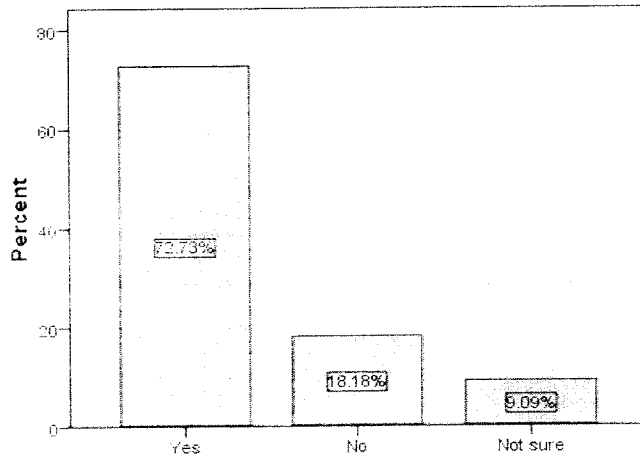
**Table 62: Are progress reports sent?**



Findings presented in table 62 above show that 8 (72.73%) of the 11 respondents agreed that progress reports were sent. In addition 3 (27.27%) said the progress reports were not sent.

- Parents' education.
- Teachers responses on whether parents are invited into the school to observe teaching in progress.

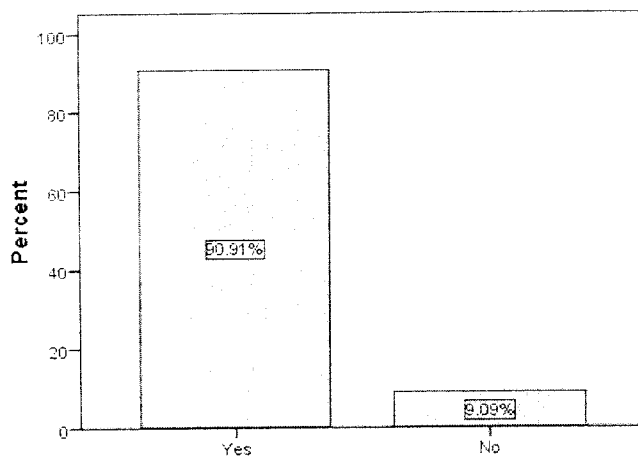
**Table 63: Parental observation of teaching**



Data from table 63 above shows that 8 (72.73%) of the 11 respondents said yes to the question of whether parents were invited into the school to observe teachers while teaching and 2 (18.18%) said no, while 1 (9.09%) was not sure.

- Teachers' responses on whether parents' workshops are organised by the school.

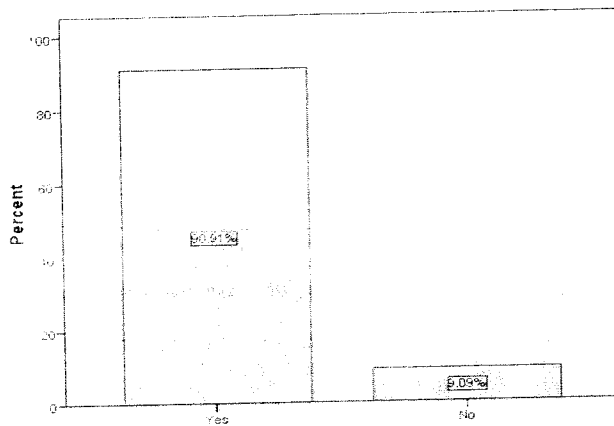
**Figure 64: Organisation of parental workshops by the school**



Findings in table 64 above shows that 10 (90.91%) of the 11 respondents said yes, while 1 (9.09%) said no, as to whether parental workshop were organised by the school.

- Teachers responses on whether parents are informed about opportunities for Parents education in the community.

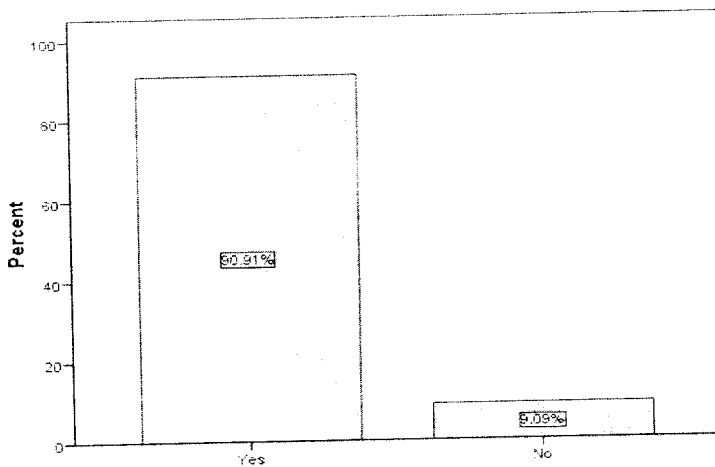
**Table 65: Information of community opportunities for parents' education**



Findings presented in table 65 above shows that 10 (90.91%) indicated that information was given to parents and 1 (9.09%) said no, information was given about opportunities for parent education in the community.

- Support for parents.
- Teachers' responses on whether parents are encouraged to participate in support groups and organisations outside school.

**Table 66: Participation of parents in support groups and organisation outside school**



Findings presented in table 66 above shows that of the 11 respondents, 10 (90.91%) indicated that parents are encouraged and 1 (9.09%) said no parents aren't encouraged to participate in support groups and parent organisations outside school.

- **Barriers to parent involvement.**
- **Teachers' responses on what they thought were the barriers to parent involvement.**

When asked what they thought were the barriers to parent involvement, the findings showed that of the 11 respondents, 7(63.64%) indicated that the negative attitudes the parents of children with special needs had towards their children's potentialities on how to handle their children with special needs, while 1(9.09%) attributed poverty as a barrier indicating that most parents were busy looking for money or working to earn a living hence having little time for involvement.

- **Teachers responses on what they thought could be done to improve parent involvement**

Data showed that 5(27.27%) of the 11 respondents said that more parent/parent workshops should be encouraged so that parents shared ideas on how best they could handle the children with special needs, while the rest 6(54.55%) indicated that the school should outline clear and proper channels of communications for parents to follow so that it makes them know how best they can communicate with their children's class teachers.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The order of the discussions follows the order in which the findings have been presented in the previous chapter namely; school policy on parental involvement, schools and parents' needs, parents' contributions to the school and views on barriers to parent involvement.

#### 5.1 School Policy on Parental Involvement

Basile and Henry (1996) state that schools can only undertake and support strong comprehensive parental involvement if they have a working school policy which guides the school's parent involvement efforts. The results from this study show that there are challenges the school should work on. When asked whether there was a written policy, 90% of the parents disagreed or were not sure. They also stated that they did not participate in its formulation. Some 61% indicated that their rights and responsibilities were not outlined and that there were no procedures in its implementation (65%). Asked as to whether there was an active PTA, 71% agreed; 58% agreed that they were represented on the PTA and 51% indicated that a PTA was necessary. The findings from parents contrast badly from those teachers. As far as teachers were concerned there is a written policy on parent involvement at the school (73%). According to 64% of the teachers, parents participated in its formulation and that the policy outlines the rights and responsibilities. However, teachers (15%) indicated that there were no procedures to guide its implementation. The teachers (64%) agreed that there was an active PTA and that parents were represented on it (90%) and 100% said that it was necessary.

One plausible explanation for the differences in opinion between parents and teachers on the school policy was that the school policy was written by teachers and parents years back but that the crop of parents who participated in its formulation were no longer associated with the school as their children have since moved on. Many of the teachers have stayed on. As the teachers indicated, there are no procedures to guide the policy implementation and that the document has not been circulated to parents

over the past few years. However, both parents and teachers agreed that the school had active PTA; that parents were represented on it and that it was a necessary tool for involving parents in the school routines.

## **5.2 Parents contributions to the school**

### **5.2.1 Utilization of parents as a resource**

Findings on whether the school utilized parents as a resource revealed that both teachers and parents agreed that the school welcomed help from parents a (90% and 84% respectively); that the school had devised and used some ways of informing parents about school activities and children's progress (90% and 90% respectively); and that the school had a system of arranging voluntary help from parents (90% and 77% respectively).

This finding was in line with what Bastiani (1989) found that given a chance, parents could be willing and able to contribute more than just information. In fact, parents were most of the times able to offer their services in collaboration with teachers.

### **5.1.3 School collaboration with parents**

Findings obtained in this study showed that the school is weak when it comes to collaborating with parents. Both parents and teachers are not in agreement on whether parents contribute to assessment of children. While (71%) of parents said they were not, (81%) of teachers said that parents contributed to assessment. However, on the formulation of IEPs, both parties were in agreement that parents were not involved (83% of parents and 72% of teachers). They were also in agreement (58% parents and 81% of teachers) that parents were involved in the review of their children's school progress. The above findings differ significantly with those obtained by Lombana, (1983) and Elliot and Hewison, (1994) who both emphasized on the need for teachers to involve parents when carrying out assessment of children, devising IEPs and when reviewing children's school progress.

#### **5.1.4 Parents contributing information**

The study has shown that the school has a system of gathering information from parents on their children. Both parents and teachers (74% and 72% respectively) indicated that there was a system and that the system was working well. These findings are in line with those obtained by Seligman (1979) and Atkin et al (1988) who found that all parents can contribute valuable information about their lives and have been the ones who have participated in all previous contact with professionals in order to assess and plan for meeting their children's needs. Making full use of parents' knowledge of their children not only leads to more effective professional practice, it also makes parents feel that they have been listened to and that an active interest has been taken in their children.

### **5.2 Parental needs**

#### **5.2.1 Communication with parents**

The study findings showed that the school was very strong in this area of communication. The school administration and staff understood that all parents need to have effective channels of communication with them. They needed information about the school and its requirements as it affects their child. On parents' attendance to school activities, (84%) of the parents and (81%) of the teachers agreed that parents attend school activities; (87%) of parents and (100%) of teachers indicated that the school disseminated information to parents; (62%) of parents and (90%) of teachers agreed that there were guidelines on parents visiting the school; and that the channels of communication in place were telephone (Parents 26%, teachers 19%); written notes (Parents 26%, teachers 27%); and calling in school (Parents 48%, teachers 10%). These findings are in line with those done by Harding and Pike (1988) who advised that parents needed to feel that they can contact the school at any time when they have a concern about their child. Parents prefer using any means of communicate and the school should remain open to them.

Elliott & Hewison (1994) writes that apart from enhancing the teachers' general understanding, this contact can be relevant to assessing the success or otherwise of a

teaching programme. One teacher, for instance, reported using home visits to see how the child's behaviour was affected by home conditions, hence, one can conclude that the information that is picked up in this way would help decide whether to maintain or adapt the teachers teaching programmes or seek to do something about the home situation.

Findings in this study revealed that majority of both parents and teachers agreed that the school has activities which parents attend, for example performances and exhibitions that are done by children with special needs. The study also revealed that the school also has methods on how to disseminate information, some of which were mentioned being; calling the school using a telephone, writing notes or even physical calling in of a parent. In line with the argument of Horby, (1995) who wrote that all parents needed to have effective channels of communication with all the professionals who work with their children, especially their teachers. This makes them get enough information about the school and requirements of their child.

It is important that the school has information to help them know when their children are to be assessed and when a change of placement is being considered. It is imperative that parents know about their rights and responsibilities and these can be provided through handbooks or regular newsletter written especially for parents.

At Bauleni special school, parents are able to contact the school at any time when they have a concern about their child. As mentioned earlier, some prefer to communicate by telephone, other would rather call in to see the teachers face to face, while still others find that contact through written notes or home-school dairies suites them best though it was found that the school rarely use home-school dairies. In line with the study done by, Cattermole & Robinson (1985) suggests that educators need to develop effective written and oral communication skills in order to ensure that a wide range of communication options are open to parents. Other studies by China, Winn & Walters (20002) emphasizes that the most important factor in maintaining good communication is being open to parents which schools should demonstrate through their contact with parents. The attitude of choice has often been referred to as an 'open-door' in which parents feel comfortable about contacting, or going into the school when they have a concern (Bastiani, Harding and Pike, 1988).

### **5.2.2 School liaison with parents**

The study findings show that there is a strong liaison between the school and parents. All the teachers (100%) indicated that parents were invited to attend termly meeting to discuss the progress of children while (55%) of the parents also did. The school had guidelines which parents used to visit the school (90% of teachers 62% of the parents, (74% parents, and 55% teachers), said that home-school diaries were used; and that the school sends progress reports (75% teachers and 48% parents). These findings are consistent with those arrived at by Simpson (1990) who stated that most parents wanted to know how their children were getting on at school. Parents wanted to find out what their children achieved and whether they were facing any difficulties.

### **5.2.3 Parental involvement in children's education**

The results from this study have shown that many parents were interested in participating in parent training programmes aimed at promoting their children's progress or managing their behaviour. Parents (75%) indicated that workshops were organized for them by the school. Teachers (91%) agreed too. However, (80%) of parents said that they were not invited to observe classroom activities and (77%) of them said that the school did not inform them of opportunities in the community. In contrast, (72%) of teachers said that parents observed classroom activities and 91% said they informed parents of opportunities in the community. In contrast Hornby and Murray (1983) insisted that parent education programmes must involve a group of parents and employ a workshop format because such lend themselves to providing a combination of educational input and sharing of concerns.

### **5.2.4 School Support for Parents**

From the findings of this study the school gave support to parents. Parents (80%) and teachers (91%) indicated that the school promotes the discussion of parents' concerns on a one to one basis and the school encouraged parents to share with other parents their experiences (parents 84% and teachers 91%). These findings are in line with what Hornby and Peshawaia (1991) found that if parents have good channels of communication and regular liaison with teachers, coupled with the opportunity to

receive guidance whenever they needed it, there will be few parents who will need counselling. However, the school needed to work harder in encouraging parents to join support groups in their communities.

### **5.3 Barriers to parent involvement**

Parents indicated that there were many barriers to parent involvement. They cited lack of teacher time, teachers' misperceptions of parents' abilities, parents' lack of comfort at the school, tension in relationships between parents and teachers, mobility, lack of vested interest, limited family resources, work pressure, poverty, lack of confidence and understanding. Parents' views are in line with those found by Hobcraft (1998).

On the other hand findings from teachers showed that the barriers had to do with parents' negative attitudes towards the school and teachers; parents' ignorance of the role of the school and the procedures it followed; poverty which left most parents disinterested in the education of their children. The teachers also said that they were not trained to work with families and they often feared that increased family involvement would add to their already busy schedules. It would also mean giving up power and decision-making. The teachers' opinions are the same as those by Desforges (2003).

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter covers the summary of the study, conclusions that have been drawn from the study and present the recommendations from the study.

#### 6.1 Summary

This study investigated parent's involvement practices in special education institutions in Zambia in general and the Bauleni Special School in Lusaka district in particular. A survey was conducted at the school on 42 respondents comprising of 31 parents and 11 teachers. Purposive sampling was used to arrive at the sample.

The study was divided into six chapters. Chapter one consisted of the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms and limitations of the study. Chapter two reviewed related literature while chapter three presented the research methodology. Chapter four presented the findings while chapter five discussed the findings. Finally, chapter six presented the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

The findings of the study showed that the policy was in place but has not been exposed to parents and that to some extent parents' needs were met by the school and that to some extent parents' potential contributions were being utilized by the school. However, there are a number of barriers towards an effective parental involvement regime.

#### 6.2 Conclusion

It is evident from the findings that the school has the policy on parental involvement. However, it must disseminate it to all stakeholders in general and parents in particular. The findings also show that the school tried to meet parents' needs and utilize parents' contributions but more should be done. **Above all, the school and**

parents must address the barriers which both parents and teachers have highlighted to make parents involvement at the school more effective.

**6.3 In view of the findings, the following recommendations were proposed:**

1. The priority of Education should develop a parental involvement policy for all Basic and High Schools.
2. The colleges of Education should include parental involvement in the teacher training syllabus, so that all graduates can implement it in schools.
3. Headteachers (Basic and High Schools) should table parental involvement policy for discussion by teachers so as to arrive at a whole-school policy on it.
4. Headteachers working with the PTA should workout ways of making parental involvement an effective tool in the school.
5. Headteachers working together in a district should organize in-service training courses in parental involvement once in a year.
6. Headteahcers working through District Education Board Secretaries should work out parents workshops in parental involvement once a year.

## REFERENCES

- Altshuld, J. and Wittin, B. R. (2002). **Transferring Needs into Solution Strategies**. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Atkin, J., Bastiani, J. and Goode, J. (1988) **listening to parents: An Approach to the Improvement of home-school relations**. London: croom Helm
- Basic Skills Agency (1995). **Parental Participation in Schools**. ISER Working Paper 2003-12
- Bastiani, J. (1989) **Working with parents: A whole school approach**. Windsor: WFER- Nelson.
- Balsundaeram, P. (2007). **Is Early Intervention Effective?** Worth Publishers. New York
- Basiile, K.C. and Henry, G. T. (1996). **Quality and Effectiveness of Pre-Kinder garden Programs in Georgia: Parental Perspective** Atlanta G.A: Georgia Council for School Performance.
- Bastian, J. (1987). **Parents and Teachers**. England. The Nfer Nelson Pub Co. Ltd
- Blau, P. and Duncan, O. (1997). **The American Occupational Structure**. New York: Free press.
- Brennan, W. K. (1987) **Changing Special Education Now; Children with Special Education Needs**. Open University Press. Philadelphia.
- Brofenbrenner, U. (1986). **Developmental Psychology; Ecology of the Family**. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Bastiani, J. and Robinson, W. (1985) **Effective home/school communication –from the parents perspective**. Phi Delta Kappan.
- Clark, M. M. (1988). **Children Under Five**. New York: Gordon & Breache Science Pub.
- Cohen, L. Manion, L. & Morrison, K, (2000). **Research Methods in Education**. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Cunningham, C. and Davis, H. (1985). **Working with Parents: Frameworks for Collaboration**. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Dean, A. & Hager D. (1984). **Learning for Independence: A Special Needs Document**. Further Unit London.
- Desforges, C. (2003). **The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and**

**Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment.**  
DFES Research Report. 433

- Edwards, R. David, M and Allared, P. (1999). **Parental Involvement in Education – (Children and Young People’s Views).** ESRC
- Elliot, J. a. and Hewison, J. (1994). **Comprehension and Interest in Home Reading.** British Journal of Educational Psychology.
- Feinstein, I. and Symons, J. (1999). **Attachment in Secondary School:** Oxford Economic Papers.
- Fetterman, D. M. (2000). **Ethnography: Step by Step.** Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 17. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Garguilo, R. M. (1985). **Working with Parents of Exceptional Children: A Guide for Professionals.** Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- altersely, S. and Tennat. I. (1987). **Working with Parents:** Massachusetts: Brookline Books Cambridge
- Harding, J. and Pike, G. (1988) **Parental Involving Secondary Schools.** London: ILEA Learning Resources Branch.
- Henderson, A.T and Nancy, B. (1994). **A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement.** New York: National Committee for Citizens in Education.
- Hoberaft. I. (1998). **Childhood Experience and the Risk of Social Exclusion in Adulthood.** CASE Briefing, November, 1998.
- Hornby, G., Murray, R. and Jones, R. (1987) **Establishing a Parent to Parent Service.** Child: Care Health and Development.
- Hornby, G. and Peshawaria, R. P. (1991) **Teaching Counseling Skills for handicapped children in a developing country.** International Journal of special education.
- Hornby, G. (1995). **Working with parents of children with special needs.** London Cassel.
- Holle, B. (1981) **Motor Development in Children; Normal and Retarded.** Blackwell Scientific Publishers. London
- ISER (2002). **Childhood Parental Behaviour and Young Peoples Outcomes.**

- Jordan, B. (1981) **Creative Social Work with Families**. Cassell, U.K.
- Lincoln, Y. B., and Guba, E. G. (1985). **Naturalistic Inquiry**. Beverly Hills, CA. Sage.
- Lombana, J. H. (1983). **Home-School Partnerships: Guidelines and Strategies for Educators**. New York: Grune and Stratton.
- Macbeth, A. (1989). **Involving Parents: Effective Parent Teacher Relations**. London : Heineman.
- Mayall, B. (1990). **Child Care and Childhood, Children & Society** : Vol No. 4  
 Millard, D. M. (1984). **Daily Living with a Handicapped Child**.  
 London: Croom Helm
- Mcconkey, R (1985) **Working with parents; Apractical Guide for teachers**.  
 Gordon and Breach pub. New York.
- Mittler, P. and McConchie, H. (1993). **Parents, Professional and Mentally Handicapped Children**. London: Croom Helm.
- Ofsted (2000). **Family Learning: A Survey of Good Practice**.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). **Qualitative Evaluation and Research Method, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.**  
 Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Pearson, I and Linsay, G. (1987). **Special Needs in Primary School**: England: Nfre  
 Welson Pub. Co.
- Phillip, M. and Duckworth, D. (1982). **Children with Disabilities and Their Families: A Review of the Research**.  
 Windsor: NFER – Nelson.
- Miles, M. B and Huberman, A. M. (1994). **Qualitative Data Analysis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.**  
 Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Rich, D. (1978) **Success for Children Begins and Continues at Home**: Baruth:  
 Guil For Special Learning Corporation.
- Sarantakos, S. (1993). **Social Research**. Riverina : McMillan Education, Astralia  
 Pty Ltd.
- Seligman, M. (1990) **Strategies for Helping Parents of Exceptional Children: A Guide for Teachers children**: New York: free press.
- Simpson, R. L. (1990) **Conferenceing parents of Exceptional children (2<sup>nd</sup> edn)**.  
 Austin, TX: PRO- ED

Fopping, K. (1986). **Parents and Educators.** Training Parents to teach their Children. London: Croom Helm

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at UNZA. You have been selected to participate in providing information for research. The research is part of my studies.

This questionnaire is intended to collect information on how parents of children with intellectual challenges at Bauleni special unit can be involved in the education of their children. The information to be collected will be used for academic purposes only and confidentiality on the part of the respondent shall be up held.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- (i) Tick in the appropriate box for your response to the questions or statements with boxes in the questionnaire.
- (ii) Write brief responses to the questions that are in this questionnaire in the spaces provided.

A. **RESPONDENT'S IDENTIFICATION**

Q1. What is your sex? Male [ ] Female [ ]

Q2. What is your age?  
20 or young [ ] 21 – 24 [ ] 25 – 29 [ ]  
30 – 34 [ ] 35 or older [ ]

Q3. What is your marital status?  
Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ]  
Widowed [ ]

Q4. How many children do you have?.....

Q5. What is the sex of your child at Bauleni Special School?  
Male [ ] Female [ ]

Q6. Does the school have a separate written policy on parent involvement?  
Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] undecided [ ]  
Do not agree [ ] strongly do not agree [ ]

Q7. If the answer to question six is yes, have parents been involved in the formulation of this policy?  
Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] undecided [ ]  
Do not agree [ ] strongly do not agree [ ]

Q8. If the answer is no, what are you as parent doing in order to encourage the school come up with a policy?

---

---

Q9. Are that monitoring procedures in place to ensure that the policy is implemented?  
Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] undecided [ ]  
Do not agree [ ] strongly do not agree [ ]

Q10. Do you agree that unless a parent knew how to read and write, he or she cannot get involved in the education of their child

Strongly agree [ ]      Agree [ ]      undecided [ ]

Do not agree [ ]      strongly do not agree [ ]

Q11. The belief that the disability of a child is as a result of sin of parents makes me not attend to my child's school activities.

Strongly agree [ ]      Agree [ ]      undecided [ ]

Do not agree [ ]      strongly do not agree [ ]

Q12. Education of children with intellectual disabilities is not the responsibility of parents but government and teachers.

Strongly agree [ ]      Agree [ ]      undecided [ ]

Do not agree [ ]      strongly do not agree [ ]

Q13. Long distance between school and my residence makes me as a parent not to get involved in the school activities.

Strongly agree [ ]      Agree [ ]      undecided [ ]

Do not agree [ ]      strongly do not agree [ ]

Q14. List any other reasons for you as a parent for not getting involved in the education of your child with intellectual challenges.

---

---

---

Q15. Do you agree that encouraging your child with intellectual challenges in his or her school work contributes to high academic achievement?

Strongly agree [ ]      Agree [ ]      undecided [ ]

Do not agree [ ]      strongly do not agree [ ]

Q16. Does reading loudly to your child with intellectual challenges contribute to his or her high academic achievement?

It does contribute very much [ ] It does contribute much [ ]

Do not know [ ] It does not contribute much [ ]

It does not contribute very much [ ]

Q17. Mention some of the school activities you are currently involved in at your child's school.

---

---

---

Q18. Suggest how you would prefer to be involved in the education of your child.

---

---

---

---

Q19. How do you relate with teachers of your child's school?

Very well [ ] well [ ] undecided [ ]

Not well [ ] not very well [ ]

Q20. Would you like teachers to involve you in decision-making concerning the education of your child?

Very much [ ] much [ ] undecided [ ]

Not much [ ] Not very much [ ]

Q21. Would working together between parents and teachers in the education of children with intellectual disabilities contribute to positive behavioural outcome?

It would contribute very much [ ] It would contribute much [ ]

Undecided [ ] it would not contribute much [ ]

It would not contribute very much [ ]

Q22. Is Parents-Teachers Association necessary at your child's school?

very necessary [ ] necessary [ ] undecided [ ]

not necessary [ ] not very necessary [ ]

Q23. How involved do you personally feel you are in your child's school life?

very much [ ]                      much [ ]      undecided [ ]

not much [ ]              very much [ ]

Q24. Would you like to be more involved in your child's school life?

Strongly would like to be [ ]              would like to be [ ]

undecided [ ]              would not like to [ ]              strongly would not like to [ ]

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

## **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at UNZA. You have been selected to participate in providing information for research. The research is part of my studies at UNZA. You are therefore, kindly requested to complete this questionnaire. This questionnaire is intended to collect information on how teachers could involve parents in the education of their children with Intellectual challenges. The information to be collected shall be used for academic purposes only and confidentiality on the part of the respondents shall be upheld.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- (i) Tick in the appropriate box for your response to the questions or statements with boxes in the questionnaire.
- (ii) Write brief responses to the questions that are in this questionnaire in the spaces provided.

**A. RESPONDENT'S IDENTIFICATION**

1. What is your sex? Male  Female
2. What is your age?  
20 or young  21 – 24  25 – 29   
30 – 34  35 or older
3. What is your marital status?  
Single  Married  Divorced   
Widowed
4. How many children do you have?.....
5. Which town do you live in?-----
6. Indicate the date when the interview was conducted ...../.....2010.

**B. QUESTIONS RELATED TO HOW THE SCHOOL INVOLVE PARENTS IN THE EDUCATION OF INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN.**

1. Who brings the child to school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are parents involved in the Planning of the programmes for their intellectually challenged children?  
very much  much  undecided   
not much  not very much
3. Are parents happy with the programmes that you provide?  
very much  much  undecided   
not much  not very much
4. What are they mostly fascinated with?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who provides uniforms and other necessities for the child?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do parents offer any assistance to the school?  
very much  much  undecided   
not much  not very much

7. If they do, what do they offer?

---

---

8. Do parents provide their children with school requirements?

very much [ ]                      much [ ]                      undecided [ ]  
not much [ ]                      not very much [ ]

9. What types of school requirements do they provide?

---

---

10. If 'YES' how many are able to provide?

---

11. If "NO" then who provides?

---

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION