

**THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION ON  
THE LEARNING AND TEACHING ENVIRONMENT IN SELECTED  
HIGH SCHOOLS IN MONGU DISTRICT**

**BY**

**SIYUMBWA LUCY WABEI**

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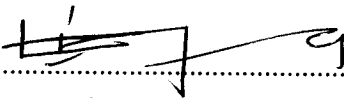
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**Declaration**

I, Lucy Wabei Siyumbwa, do hereby declare that this is my own work and that this work has never been presented to this University or any other University for a degree.

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Signed.....

Date..... 29/04/10

### Approval

This dissertation by Lucy Wabei Siyumbwa is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Sociology of Education by the University of Zambia.

Signed..... *K. M. Mwa* ..... Date..... *29/04/10* .....

Signed..... *O. K. Mwa* ..... Date..... *29/04/10* .....

Signed..... ..... Date..... .....

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I am thankful to the Ministry of Education for according me a chance to study and the Provincial Education Officer for Western Province for granting me permission to carry out my research in the four high schools in Mongu, Western Province.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my sisters, Rose, Julia, Cathy, Petty, Kwezi, Mumbe and my daughters Theresa and Lilato for their love, encouragement and understanding during the masters' study programme.

## **Abstract**

This study investigated the effect of community participation in education on the learning and teaching environment in selected high schools in Mongu District of the Western Province. The objectives of the study were to: find out the effect of community participation in education on learning environment; find out the effect of community participation in education on teaching environment; and to find out the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support.

The study used a survey approach. Data collection was done through questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions. The respondents were the school managers, teachers, parents, pupils and Parent-Teachers Association chairpersons. Mongu District has a total of four high schools, namely school A, school B, school C and school D (identity of the schools deliberately concealed). The study sampled all schools. The sample included 80 pupils (20 from each school), 32 teachers (eight from each school), four school managers (one from each school), four PTA chairpersons (one from each school) and 20 parents from the local communities of the high schools. All in all, there were 140 respondents.

The findings of the study revealed that community participation in education had effect on learning and teaching environment. The effect was more positive than negative. It was quite beneficial when the community was allowed to participate in education because the learning environment became conducive and rich. The study also revealed that the effect of community participation on teaching environment had more advantages than disadvantages. Community participation in education created a teaching environment with adequate resources and friendly enabling environment. Further, the study revealed that the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support had proved to be reliable, very significant and of great value.

The study showed that the effect of community participation in education on the learning and teaching environment in Mongu District was positive because community participation in education created a friendly enabling environment with adequate resources which was conducive and rich for learning and teaching. The study further revealed that community participation in education was critical to the provision of educational support because the

community owned resources and skills that would meet and spearhead the aspirations of teachers and learners positively.

The study recommended that Ministry of Education programmes should be separated from palace programmes for schools situated within palaces without cutting the relationship between the two; schools should not be built in palaces or near bars; school managers, teachers and pupils should be sensitised on the importance of community participation in education; and that communities should be innovative and responsible enough to run as many projects as possible; PTA chairpersons should work out awareness programmes among parents; the Ministry of Education should give directives to school managers to work hand in hand with communities to solve problems; and should give directives to schools to work with communities in ensuring that pupils are given right nutrition.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Declaration.....	i
Approval.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Table of contents.....	vii
List of tables.....	ix
Acronyms.....	x
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Background to the study.....	1
Statement of the problem.....	2
Purpose of the study.....	2
Objectives of the study.....	2
Research questions.....	3
Significance of the study.....	3
Theoretical framework.....	3
Operational definitions of terms in the study.....	5
Study limitations.....	5
Organisation of the study.....	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Introduction.....	7
Community participation in Education.....	7
The effect of community participation in education on the learning environment.....	9
The effect of community participation in education on the teaching environment.....	12
The effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support.....	14
Summary of reviewed literature.....	21
How the literature review has guided the study.....	22
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Introduction.....	24
Research design.....	24
Population.....	24
Sample size and sampling procedure.....	24
Research instruments.....	25
Data collection.....	26
Data analysis.....	27

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Introduction.....	28
Responses from pupils' questionnaire.....	28
Responses from interview schedules.....	36
Focus group discussions for the teachers.....	37
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Introduction.....	39
The effect of community participation in education on learning environment.....	39
The effect of community participation in education on teaching environment.....	51
The effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support.....	57
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>64</b>
Introduction.....	64
Summary.....	64
Conclusion.....	65
Recommendations.....	66
REFERENCES.....	68
APPENDICES.....	73
Appendix A: Introduction letter from University of Zambia.....	73
Appendix B: Introduction letter from Provincial Education Officer, Western Province.....	74
Appendix C: Questionnaire for pupils.....	75
Appendix D: Interview schedule for school managers.....	77
Appendix E: Interview schedule for parents.....	78
Appendix F: Interview schedule for PTA chairpersons.....	79
Appendix G: Focus group discussion guide for teachers.....	80

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Local community and pupils' learning.....	28
Table 2: Community assistance to teachers.....	29
Table 3: Projects run by community in the school.....	29
Table 4: Benefits from the projects.....	30
Table 5: Local community and pupils' learning.....	30
Table 6: Community assistance to teachers.....	31
Table 7: Establishment of the community projects in schools.....	31
Table 8: Benefits from the projects.....	32
Table 9: Local community and pupils' learning.....	32
Table 10: Community assistance to teachers.....	33
Table 11: Establishment of the community projects in schools.....	33
Table 12: Benefits from the projects.....	34
Table 13: Local community and pupils' learning.....	34
Table 14: Community assistance to teachers.....	35
Table 15: Establishment of the community projects in schools.....	35
Table 16: Benefits from the projects.....	35

## **Acronyms**

**AIDS - Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome**

**DVD- Digital Video Device**

**EFA - Education For All**

**HIV - Human Deficiency Virus**

**MOE - Ministry of Education**

**PTA - Parent-Teacher Association**

**SFEP - Social Forestry Education and Participation Pilot Project**

**SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences**

**TAAS - Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**

**UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organisation**

**USA - United States of America**

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the Study**

Community participation in education in learning and teaching environment means that the community should take part in education so as to improve the learning and teaching environment in schools.

Children do best when parents are enabled to play four key roles in their children's learning. These roles are: helping their children at home, contributing their skills to the school, helping children receiving fair treatment and participating in joint problem-solving with the school at every level (www.ed.gov).

Studies done in Zambia by Nzala (2006), Chituma (2005) and Makwaya (2005) show that there has been community participation in education in areas such as provision of finances as well as learning and teaching materials.

Justification for community participation in education in Zambia came because of the ongoing difficult of providing enough public fund for education which precipitated a serious crisis in the state-dominated education sector. Resource allocations to education have been drastically reduced in recent years, with the gravest qualitative and quantitative consequences for primary and secondary schools. The constraints on public financing necessitated increased involvement of the community and users of the educational services in the funding system (Ministry of Education, 1992).

The 1966 Education Act gave power to the Parent-Teacher Association to ensure through regular contacts between parents and teachers, the welfare and best possible education of pupils, an enlightening of all parents on all aspects of pupils' progress in school (Mwanakatwe, 1974).

Further, the Ministry of Education policy encouraged partnership in the education system. It encouraged cooperation between school and the local community. Communities participated in educational provision through construction of school buildings, management of schools, maintenance of classrooms and provision of school furniture (Ministry of Education, 1996).

The enactment of a policy is not enough to ensure its success. A lot needed to be done such as sensitisation of all stakeholders. All those involved needed to know the implications of the policy and what its intents were as well as their expected roles. Hence the cooperating partners, non-governmental organisations, communities and others, needed to be on board to support the policy. Currently, some community reactions to the policy have been negative. They have conceptualised the policy as a way of reducing their participation in education and suspension of their financial and material support. A lot of parents who previously supported their children were refusing even to buy pens, pencils or exercise books for their children arguing that the government had said that there was free education, and hence all these materials should be provided. Free education did not imply that parents would play no role in education provision, but because communities were not sensitised, the effects were not very positive. Some parents did not realise that grants given to schools could procure all the requisites needed, and it was unrealistic to expect schools to be able to provide exercise books, pens, pencils and rulers to all pupils in addition to processing textbooks, readers and other teaching materials. Parents needed to know that the current government policy also emphasised community participation and cost-sharing (Sikwibele, 2003).

### **Statement of the Problem**

We know that community participation in education outside Zambia has been established to have had a positive effect on learning and teaching environment (OECD, 1997; [www.ingetaconnect.com](http://www.ingetaconnect.com); [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)) but this has not been explored within Zambia. Therefore, this study investigated the effect of community participation in education on learning and teaching environment in Zambia in Mongu District.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study investigated the effect of community participation in education on learning and teaching environment in high schools in Mongu District, Zambia.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study sought to:

- (i) find out the effect of community participation in education on learning environment.
- (ii) find out the effect of community participation in education on teaching environment.

- (iii) find out the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the study:

- (i) What is the effect of community participation in education on learning environment in high schools in Mongu District?
- (ii) What is the effect of community participation in education on teaching environment in high schools in Mongu District?
- (iii) What is the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support in high schools in Mongu District?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study investigated the effect of community participation in education on learning and teaching environment. The findings may help the government to put up deliberate measures to enhance community participation in education. The findings may encourage communities to play a role in the education system in Zambia. The findings may also contribute information to the existing body of knowledge on school–community relationship in Zambia.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by the learning theory and conflict theory. The learning theory of Lave and Wenger's in the 1980s and 1990s ([www.infed.org](http://www.infed.org)) states that learning is social and comes largely from our experience of participating in daily life. Their model of situated learning proposed that learning involved a process of engagement in a 'community of practice'. A community of practice involves much more than the technical knowledge or skill associated with undertaking some task. Members are involved in a set of relationships over time and communities develop around things that matter to people.

Another conceptual framework used for the study is the conflict theory whose proponent was Karl Marx. Conflict theory focuses on those forces in society that promote competition and change and how those who possess more power in society exercise control over those with less power (Thomas, 1995).

There is a conflict between the school and the community when it comes to community participation in education. For example, community wants to take an upperhand in school administration and management and the school also tries to fight over the same upperhand of the administration and management of the school.

This study is in line with the learning and conflict theories on which it was based. It had revealed that community participation in education brought about a rich and conducive learning environment; created a teaching environment with adequate resources and friendly enabling environment and provision of educational support proved to be reliable, very significant and of great value. This happened in view of participation in daily life of the school and the community and developing around things that mattered around the school and the community in accordance with the learning theory.

Goos *et. al.*, (1971) citing Wenger, (1998); Wenger, McDermot and Snyder (2002); Saxe (2002); Sfard (2002) on the learning theory, postulated that, in a community of practice, a group of people engaged in an activity driven by common or closely intersecting goals and interests. In pursuit of these goals and interests, they employed common practices, worked with the same tools or resources and used specific discourse. Communities constituted social contexts and meanings for learning as people participated in social practices. Knowledge was integrated in the doing as well as social relations and expertise of these communities. Furthermore, the process of learning and membership in a community were inseparable. Communities constituted the most powerful learning environments for children, creating potential for their development as children engaged in social practices with others. This approach to learning suggested that teachers needed to understand their students' communities of practice and acknowledge the learning students did in such communities. It also suggested that drawing on communities' funds of knowledge could capitalise on cultural diversity and overcome any mismatch between students' home environments and the culture of the school.

On the other hand, application of the conflict theory in this study was seen in the effect of community participation in education as having had some negative connotation on learning environment. It was also reflected in the effect of community participation in teaching as having had some disadvantages. This happened when unnecessary competition was created through community participation in education and in the process of the participation, manipulation of one stakeholder occurred due to more power accrued and amassed by

another stakeholder. This created very strong resistance by the manipulated stakeholder, resulting in conflict.

### **Operational Definitions of Terms in the Study**

**Community:** This refers to a group of interdependent people living in a particular local area.

**Education:** In this study, education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, values, attitudes and imparting knowledge that helps one to survive ([www.sadashivan.com](http://www.sadashivan.com)).

**Community participation in education:** This refers to a situation where the community around a school work hand in hand with the school through provision of material, financial, technical, voluntary work and moral support.

**Environment:** This refers to the surrounding atmosphere or condition for existence which is essential for natural process or outcome of occurrence ([www.sadashivan.com](http://www.sadashivan.com)).

**Teaching:** Means guiding, instructing, training a learner in the process of learning knowledge or understanding.

**Teaching environment:** It is an atmosphere in which teaching takes place.

**Learning:** In this study, learning has been defined as an active continuous process of change in behaviour which is demonstrated by people implementing knowledge, skills, or practices derived from education ([www.umsl.edu](http://www.umsl.edu)).

**Learning environment:** It is an atmosphere in which learning takes place.

**Parent Teachers Association:** This is a group of parents and teachers involved in issues concerning the smooth running of school.

**Educational support:** This is a kind of assistance provided to schools by the community in order to help materially, financially, professionally so as to facilitate the smooth running, development and accountability of schools.

### **Study Limitations**

The sample of the study was small and the number of respondents was small, therefore, the results cannot be generalised to the whole country.

## **Organisation of the Remaining Chapters of the Study**

Chapter two deals with literature review in which literature in relation with the problem under study and the objectives of the study has been reviewed.

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study, covers research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection and data analysis while chapter four presents the research findings.

Chapter five discusses and analyses the research findings under emerging themes of the study in line with the research objectives and the research questions. Chapter six summarises the findings, concludes and offers recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews different studies done on the effect of community participation in education on learning and teaching environment by different researchers both local and internationally. Attention has been paid to the various problems, methodologies and a cross-section of subjects attended to by the researchers in order to find a gap in their studies and avoid flaws in the present study.

#### **Community Participation in Education**

Lessons learnt from other countries implementing education reforms confirm the increasing realisation that education is a vital community concern. Pupils are members of the school and broader communities and these all play important role in pupil development and learning. As a result, educators strive to find the best ways to involve all influential and active stakeholders to contribute in supporting and promoting education. It is vital to realise the importance of communal participation in improving the quality of education. Effective education systems have fuller community participation. Community participation can take many forms: enrolling children in public schools; helping raise funds and making decisions about deploying finances; attending and participating in school meetings and activities; giving advice and opinions on school matters; and, becoming involved in decision making ([www.english.education.gov.qa](http://www.english.education.gov.qa)).

Schools that support community involvement in education include representation of all stakeholder groups in school programme delivery and policy making decisions. When the concerns of the various stakeholder groups are considered in the decision making process, there will be increased acceptance of new programmes from the greater school community. The involvement of all stakeholders in education, calls for commitment of all stakeholders towards desired educational goals although such kind of involvement places additional responsibilities on the management of a school (Burke *et. al.*, 2001).

In all communities, education today plays a pivotal role in all aspects of human development. In this increasingly competitive age, the best gift a parent can give his/her child is good education. Every parent wants his/her child to be accomplished, educated and successful in his/her adult years. It is every parent's dream that his/her child attains peak academic

performance. Parents have a tremendous power of impacting their children's life. It is the parents, who generally are the best persons to understand their child's potential and needs; parents who can actively help their child to set academic goals and steer him or her in the right direction of academia. They understand that active participation entails being there for their child, ensuring proper nutrition, rest and sleep, besides providing myriad avenues for successful learning experiences. The high demand in today's educational system, calls for parental involvement in education (Bugwadia, 2009).

Bugwadia (Ibid) states that parents understand that active participation in education entails being there for the child, ensuring proper nutrition, rest and sleep besides providing myriad avenues for success learning experiences.

To supplement the efforts made by parents in feeding their children, Gateway High school in the United States of America held a food fair at the school. 'Gateway to better health' was the theme at the Fruit and Vegetable Festival on October 27, 2006. The school's cafeteria and campus grille staff turned the school's courtyard into a sea of fresh fruits and vegetables. Reportedly, only 14% of school children ate the recommended serving of vegetables each day. A sail boat of various fruit and vegetables was created and displayed in the lunch courtyard to educate and encourage students consume more fruits and vegetables. The students were allowed to taste the different fruits and vegetables displayed (Brintley, 2009).

Forms of community participation in education vary, but most of them relate with planning and development, as well as the concentration on community considering the community as the vital tool of participation, which has turned out to be key to good development. Experts see community participation as reflecting a positive, democratic popular will, based on encouraging communities to meet challenges and address pressing issues (Yemen Times, 2008).

On parent involvement, Cotton and Wikelund (2008) discovered that the kinds of parent involvement investigated by most researchers included telephone and written home-school communications, attending school functions, parents serving as classroom volunteers, parent-teacher conferences, home work assistance/tutoring, home educational enrichment, and parent involvement in decision making and other aspects of school governance.

Harvard Family Research Project asked leading family involvement researchers about the most important research questions facing the field today. It was acknowledged by the

Director, Richter Research Institute, Texas State University that research on community involvement has come a long way. 'We know that it works. Children benefit, families benefit, schools benefit, and communities benefit' ([www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)).

Sanders and Harvey (2002) in their study of one urban elementary school identified four factors that allowed the school to build successful bridges to its community. These factors were the school's commitment to learning, the principal's support and vision for community involvement, the school's receptivity and openness to community involvement and the school's willingness to engage in two-way communication with potential community partners about their level and kind of involvement.

Hoover-Dempsey *et. al.*, (1996) in their study tested the hypothesis that varying levels of parent involvement would be related to variations in qualities of school settings, specially socioeconomic status, teacher degree level, class size, teachers' sense of efficacy, principal perceptions of teacher efficacy, organisation rigidity and instruction coordination. Teachers (n=1,003) and principals' (n=66) reports and perceptions of the variables of interest were assessed in a sample of 66 elementary schools distributed across a large mid-Southern state. Stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that various combinations of the predictors accounted for significant portions of the variance in all parent involvement outcomes: parent conferences (52%), parent volunteers (27%), parent home tutoring (24%), parent involvement in home instruction programme (22%) and teacher perception of parent support (41%). Variables mostly consistently involved in outcomes were teacher efficacy and school socioeconomic status.

### **The Effect of Community Participation in Education on the Learning Environment**

In trying to establish the effect of community participation in education on the learning environment, archived information on Roosevelt High School in Dallas, Texas discovered that involving the community in education has a very positive effect on learning environment. According to the historical background of Roosevelt High School, the high school had in 1992 fewer than one-quarter of the students who met minimum academic standards on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The Dallas independent school district was considering whether to close the school or not. Student discipline at Roosevelt was often a problem. Roosevelt High School had to address various barriers to parent involvement. School related barriers at Roosevelt included teaching staff lack of resources for reaching out to parents and lack of vision in not expecting parents to be more active participants in their

children's education. Many parents felt education was purely the school's responsibility. Other community related barriers included the rapid social and economic decay of the surrounding community, a high proportion of single parents who had no time to participate in the school's affairs and parents who failed to participate due to personal negative experiences.

To solve the issue of minimum academic achievement at Roosevelt High School, teachers, parents, the principal and some community members hand-delivered a report card to every Roosevelt High School students' home who had one or more failing grades. Teachers and parents in turn discussed an appropriate course of action before taking any significant step such as failing the student or placing the student on academic probation. Telephone calls and home visits showed seriousness about the home-school relationship. Parents liaison were hired for calling parents and notifying them of school, school board and city council meetings so as to discuss children's academic and disciplinary standing. Averaging 30 to 60 calls a day, the liaison helped teachers and found time to keep parents informed and involved. Parents organised informal security patrols to monitor the high school. Teaching staff used a variety of strategies for reaching out to all of the school's families. Training was organised for teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders as they participated in school reform efforts.

Evidence of success showed in achievement gains which resulted in the school being removed from the list of low performers. Scores increased substantially between 1992 to 1993 and 1995 to 1996, scores rose from 40% to 81% in reading, 16% to 70% in mathematics, and 58% to 80% in writing. In addition, attendance at the high school jumped more than 11% between 1992 and 1993 and 1994 to 1995 which was the largest increase in the district at that time. Community involvement in education increased substantially and discipline problems decreased (<http://www.ed.gov>).

Williams (2007) states that in Australia and New Zealand, Asia and Europe, parent education classes for families were provided. The parent education classes were based on neurological development of the young child integrally linked to later learning and development. Information about the neuro-physiological basis for development was woven into every lesson in a way that did not overload parents, and positively enhanced both the parent's and child's enjoyment. This information was disseminated in a number of ways such as brief explanations, wall charts, weekly handouts series of parent education Digital Video Device

(DVD)/videos. When used with regular screening and professional early intervention strategies, such parent education programmes helped to provide a positive way of educating parents, improve parent awareness, increase early identification of children with developmental problems and reduced the number of children who were not identified until they failed school. Inviting parents to participate in their child's early development is an important undertaking.

A 2002 report from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Kentucky, USA concludes that when schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, earn higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behaviour, adapt well to school, graduate and go to postsecondary education (Joice and Childress, 2004).

Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement. The more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. This holds true for all types of parent involvement in children's learning. Schools with the most successful parent involvement programmes are those which offer a variety of ways parents can participate. Recognising that parents differ greatly in their willingness, ability and available time for involvement in school activities, these schools provide a continuum of options for parent participation (Schneider, 1996: 198 cited in Gottfredson, 2001; Cotton and Wiklund, 2008).

Epstein (1995, 1997) states that partnerships of schools, families, and communities that attempt to improve school programmes and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, connect families with others in the school and in the community and help teachers with their work.

Epstein (ibid) summarised various types of involvement to explain how schools, families, and communities can work productively together. For example, in parenting, attention should be put on helping all families to establish home environments that support children's learning at schools; on communicating, focus should be on designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication that enable parents to learn about school programmes and their children's progress in schools as well as teachers to learn about how children do at home; under volunteering, there should be recruiting and organising parent help and support of students; learning at home should involve provision of information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with home-work and other curriculum-related activities,

decisions, and planning; decision making should include families in school decisions, to have parent leaders and representatives in school meetings; whereas collaboration with the community should identify and integrate resources as well as services from the community in order to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning.

Similarly, in a paper presented by Moodley (2002) at Pathways 6<sup>th</sup> conference on inclusive education held in Johannesburg, it was stated that effective learning is directly related to and dependent on the social and emotional well-being of the learner. It is important to recognise that particular conditions may arise within the social, economic and political environment in which the learner lives, and which impact negatively on the learner's social and emotional well-being, thus placing the learner at risk of learning breakdown.

### **The Effect of Community Participation in Education on the Teaching Environment**

Maliwatu (2006) did a comparative study of the classroom practices of graduate and non graduate teachers of mathematics in selected high schools of Copperbelt province and one of the findings of the study was that various factors influenced the way teachers performed in classrooms. The factors mentioned include *inter alia*, availability of resources, the way schools were managed and the culture of the school in general.

One kind of parental involvement is school-based and includes participating in parent-teacher conferences and functions, and receiving and responding to written communication from the teacher. Parents can also serve as school volunteers for the library or lunch room, or as classroom aids. In one survey, almost all teachers reported talking with children's parents either in person, by phone, or on open school nights or sending notices home (Becker and Epstein, 1982 cited in Brown (no date).

Communities can have a very positive effect on teaching environment through motivation of teachers by taking care of their various needs. For example, community members themselves can be a rich resource to support teachers' practice in classrooms by facilitating children's learning. In the *Social Forestry, Education and Participation pilot project (SFEP)* in Thailand. local villagers came to schools and helped students understand various species indigenous to that village (Mc Donough and Wheeler, 1998). Community members can help students understand concepts which teachers teach in classrooms by having the students coming into community, interacting with community members who are knowledgeable about village history and the certain issues faced by the community. Respected community

members can become knowledgeable lectures who can come to the classrooms, and teach students issues faced by the community.

Also, community members can support teachers by contributing their skill to speak the local language when the majority of students don't understand the teacher's language of instruction. They can attend classrooms as interpreters who not only translate languages but also help teachers as well as students by bridging the gap that exists between cultural values of teachers and those of students. Furthermore, parents and community members can contribute to teachers' teaching materials by providing them with knowledge and materials that are locally sensitive and more familiar to children. Community participation in education can also be a powerful incentive for teachers. Teachers' absenteeism, and lack of punctuality to show up in classrooms on time are serious problems in many places. Among many other reasons, lack of monitoring system is one of the critical factors contributing to these problems. When teachers are monitored and supervised for their attendance and performance by communities, they tend to be more aware of what they do. Feedback from parents and the community about their teaching performance can be a strong tool to motivate teachers, if schools are also collaborative.

Banja (2001) in his study of the relationship between school environment and indiscipline among pupils in selected high schools in Kitwe district, found out that there was a significant relationship between pupils' indiscipline and the school environment. The findings were that teachers' behaviour such as absenteeism from work, reporting late for class, failure to attend pupils' personal problems, teachers' threats and use of sarcastic and abusive language towards pupils, having affairs with school girls among many others, all contributed to pupils' indiscipline. Though Banja's findings were true, he overlooked the fact that at times pupils' indiscipline could be due to the location of the school. If a school, for example, is located near a bar, pupils could be sneaking into the bar to drink alcohol. In such a case, pupils could be disciplined due to the school environment.

In the same vein, Makwaya (2005) observed that monitoring of teachers by community is vital in improving teaching performance of teachers. In his study in Mufulira and Chalimbana teachers' colleges, he observed that teachers had too many excuses for not teaching and staying away from their classes. These were excuses like attending of either a funeral or a workshop.

## **The Effect of Community Participation in Education on the Provision of Educational Support**

Community participation in education is seen as a way to increase resources, improve accountability of schools to the community they serve, ensure a more cost-effective use of resources and, importantly, be responsive to local needs. As a result, it intends to improve equitable access, retention, quality and performance of schooling (Rose, 2003).

Ministry of Education (1992) noted that community participation in education implies community participation in such areas as fixing educational policies and objectives, deciding about the location and type of school and how it is to be financed, determining the outline of the curriculum, assigning maintenance and upkeep responsibilities and accommodation of teachers. The school should draw on the skills and resources available in the community for its educational activities.

It was further noted by Ministry of Education (1992) that the school should make its skills and resources available to the community through various services teachers and pupils can render especially to illiterate, old or enfeebled individuals through making school facilities available to the community for the reduction of illiteracy; promoting of sporting and other leisure activities for the well-being of the community. Communities that benefit from infrastructure and amenities of a school are likely to identify with a school taking pride in its maintenance and willingly participating in its management.

Baum (2000) reporting on the university-community partnerships noted that expectations of partnerships are often so grand, and available resources so limited, that those who create partnerships may substitute fantasy about how partnerships will magically create abundant problem-solving resources for realistic analysis, organising, planning and funding.

In America, at Colorado University in Denver, it was reported that educational support services focus on provision of specialised technology and expertise to facilitate effective educational interaction between schools, staff and students in education and research ([www.uchsc.edu](http://www.uchsc.edu)).

Parental involvement in education, particularly in school governance, is seen as a means of making schools more accountable to the society which funds them. This has been witnessed in some places such as England and Wales, Canada and the United States. The notion of parental involvement for accountability derives from a more market-oriented concept in

which school-family partnerships are viewed rather like business partnership, through which the two parties receive mutual and complementary benefits which enable them to operate more effectively (OECD, 1997).

In order to operate more effectively, school community partnership needs leadership, people with a vision of where the school and the community are headed and of the possibilities for the linked future. Partnership requires commitment of influential leaders outside the school. There is need to engage external players with power, recognition and credibility both within the school and the community who can act as brokers for the school-community projects. These brokers provide input and assistance to generate the project and ensure its successful operation. They must be able to commit themselves to the project on an ongoing basis. Sustainability needs to be built into any initiative from the onset (Black, 2001).

Community members may include families, schools, businesses, religious organisations, museums, libraries, colleges and universities, among others, they may demonstrate their involvement in different ways, such as forming relationships with high risk teens; intellectual resources, such as grand writing expertise or mentoring experience; and other funding opportunities (<http://www.mentoring.org>).

A school community consists of students, school site administrators, programme support and clerical staff, teachers, parents, agencies, local business, community volunteers, community-based volunteers, district personnel, legislators, governmental agencies, and funders. How a school communicates with these various stakeholders will establish its community's ability to build critical and effective partnerships that can ensure student's overall academic success and the ability to access services and resources (Schmitt and Tracy, 1996 cited in Burke *et al.*, 2001).

The extensive examination of six case studies on the Philippines, Kenya, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Colombia and Bolivia made Rugh and Bossert (1998: 157) conclude that

teachers and other school staff feel they should be accountable to community clients only when the community holds some power over them: when they either come from the same village and have social ties; if their continued employment or salaries depend on community satisfaction; or sometimes when community education committees exist to manage the schools and members are empowered to exert their influence.

They also argue that accountability is developed through routine parents' meetings and reporting systems on student progress. When parents contribute their time, labour, materials, land, and funds, they tend to be more involved in school activities, including participating in meetings with teachers and monitoring teachers' performance. Teachers and school staff, in turn, feel more obliged to deliver better education for the students in order to respond to the needs of parents and communities. Participation can greatly help develop accountability, which contributes to improving the education delivery.

### ***Hindrances to community participation in education***

Community participation in education requires facing and tackling a number of challenges. In general, as Uemera (1999) cited Crewe and Harrison (1998), articulated that participatory approaches tend to overlook complexities and questions of power and conflict within communities. They are designed based on the assumption that the community, group, or household is homogenous, or has mutually compatible interests. Differences occur with respect to age, gender, wealth, ethnicity, language culture and race. Even though marginalised or minority groups such as females, landless, or low-caste people may be physically present during a discussion, they are not necessarily given a chance to express their views to the same degree as others.

We encourage schools to use a range of ways to enhance the partnership with parents and carers, including advising schools to find out from parents what they would find helpful and what would encourage them to come into the school and participate at parents' evening (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk>).

Despite lack of interest that some parents show, there are still some schools that enjoy the benefits of vibrant and successful Parent-Teachers' Association (PTAs). Examples include the Bermady Primary School located in Trendsways, St Catherine about 7 miles north of Linestead and the St Ann-based, and Brown's Town Primary School on the Northern side of the Island which are prime examples in Jamaica. The PTA at Brown Town Primary School adopted a student more than 3 years ago. It also operated a breakfast programme that fed about 250 students weekly with a hot meal. In addition, the PTA assisted with the general maintenance of the school. The communication between parents, teachers, school and home was very good. Approximately 350 parents of the more than 1,000 registered students attended the meetings held every three months. In addition to the general meetings once per term, a grade meeting was also convened. This meeting was considered a study circle seminar where educational aspect of each grade was discussed. There were periodic parental

workshops. There was also a father's meeting, a yearly event at the school which attracted up to 90 fathers. The achievements and successes of the PTA were due to commitment of parents (Thompson and Hunt, 2008).

It is not an easy thing when schools and communities come together to participate in education as it often reflects in school environments that have found it hard to engage with students' families. Urban schools in particular have grown increasingly distant from the families they serve, leaving those schools as isolated institutions unable to communicate effectively with students and their families (Noguera, 1996 cited in Sanders, 2006). These situations can often result in schools having low parent participation or power relationships between parents and school staff can leave families feeling unwelcome or uninvited to participate in their child's education (Lareau, 1989 cited in Sanders, 2006).

Parents can be very helpful partners in education. Parents have the potential to be excellent HIV and AIDS educators, but many have limited access to the HIV and AIDS training. An HIV and AIDS programme was initiated with the assistance of the Virginia State Parent-Teachers Association in the United States of America. Workshops entitled how to talk to your child about HIV and AIDS had been held at the state PTA leadership conferences and the Virginia State Parent Association Convention for the past two years. High school programmes had been designed for parents and students or just students. The agenda of the parents involved basic HIV and AIDS education, discussion of sensitive and communication issues and answering difficult questions. The parent programmes had been received in all parts of Virginia. In 1993-1994 there were two requests for the programmes. In 1994-1995, there were eight requests. As of January 1, 1996, had been 39 requests for the 1995-1996 school year. Increased interest in the programme was a direct result of word-of-mouth recommendations from PTA leaders and parents who had taken part in the programme which had taken place at their school. Word-of-mouth recommendations from PTA encouraged other parents to take part in such programmes. This had been very encouraging when working with a population which had not been very enthusiastic about HIV and AIDS education in the past. Anecdotal evidence from parents who attended such programmes suggested that they were capable of talking to their children about HIV and AIDS equipped with adequate knowledge on the subject (Rankin, 1996).

It is important for schools to educate teachers, principals, and other staff in how to work well with parents and teach them the importance of parental involvement, and that parents have a

chance to help design and develop training for school personnel. It is vital to ensure that parents understand all aspects of their children's education. If there are issues parents do not understand, the school system should hold sessions to teach parents about those things. Schools are required to provide assistance to parents to help them understand the national education goals and the standards and assessments that will be used to determine children's progress. Parents must jointly develop and approve the district and school's parent involvement policy which should spell how money is spent (<http://www.cleweb.org>).

There are times that community members lack cooperation in taking part in certain projects because they lack interest in such kinds of projects. Responsibilities should be divided among community members in such a way that recognises special talents and interests. Power and responsibility are decentralised, and community action engages the natural enthusiasm and talents of community members (Reid, 2000).

Where schools are perceived as authoritarian institutions, parents and community members do not feel welcomed to participate in their children's education. They are not capable of taking any responsibility in school issues and tend to feel that education is something that should be taken care of by educational professionals at schools. Many people, especially minority groups in many developing countries, develop these kind of negative attitudes towards schools because they are not treated by teachers with respect. This educational environment is unfavourable to parents and children and, therefore, contributes to these students' low participation, poor academic performance, and high repeat and dropout rates. Involving communities in schools is a way of reaching democracy through identifying and addressing inequities embedded in institutions and society as a whole. In addition, it is a strategy to create an environment in which parents feel comfortable participating in schools.

Chituma (2005) did a study on the degree of community participation in managing school finances in Mansa District, Zambia. The main findings of his study were that schools' finances were mostly controlled and spent by heads of school with very little involvement of local communities. According to the major findings of the study, the relationship between local communities and teachers in schools under study was poor. Each group viewed the other with mistrust and heads of school in most cases were to blame for this because they did not accord parents any avenue in managing schools' finances and air their views. The major conclusions of the study were that the staff in schools showed reluctance to incorporate local communities in the financial operations of their schools.

Another study was carried out among Latino parents in Washington DC., by Osterling (2004) on strengthening Latino parental involvement in education to establish why these parents were not playing an active role in the education of their children. The research challenged the assumption that Latino parents' lower levels of formal parental involvement indicated a lack of interest in their children's education and argued that traditional methods of involving parents in their children's education were always not effective. The findings indicated that parental policy changes and practices were needed to promote genuine collaboration between Latino parents and the schools that their children attend rather than imposing agendas for an appropriate one-size-fits-all involvement. The parents under investigation were non-native English-speaking, low-income parents, who often faced wide range of cultural, language and transportation constraints. These parents required the American educational system not only to understand and address these barriers but also to develop and effectively use non-traditional outreach mechanisms that already existed in the local communities.

According to New York Times (2008) quoting Barack Obama, many parents in their own communities were not assuming their own responsibilities as parents. They did not read to their children, they did not play with their children, they did not attend school events with their children, they did not enrol their children in extra curricular activities, they did not ask their children about their home work, they did not prioritise education of their children, and in some cases, they did not even supervise their children. Some parents sacrificed tremendously for their children's education, others sacrificed minimally if at all. Regardless of economic class or ethnicity, parents knew their responsibility. Yet many American parents failed to fulfil these basic duties, and the children were the ones who suffered the consequences (<http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com>).

The poverty and illiteracy levels in Zambia have also been reflected in a UNICEF report (2008). According to the UNICEF report, 1600 to 2200 children in Zambia sleep permanently on the streets, with 500 in Lusaka the capital. An additional 6400 to 88000 across the nation work on the street on a daily and regular basis. Surprisingly, some parents (20%-25%) send their children out to the street to ask for money. Parents face serious difficulties in affording their children and education.

Some parents may have other reasons for not being involved with their children's schools:

A growing number of parents do not speak or read English well enough to communicate with teachers and administrators. Because of cultural differences, many parents are not familiar with the expectations of their children's schools and don't understand how to go about getting involved, even if they want to. Some parents lack the educational background or skills they feel they need to interact with teachers and staff. For others, their own negative experiences as students make them uncomfortable going to the school (Aronson, 1996: 58 quoted in Nathan, 1996).

Nathan (1996) acknowledges that there are some hindrances to community participation in education. For example, he is of the opinion that minimal community participation in education could be associated with some parents lacking the ability to read, speak English or are embarrassed about their lack of schooling. Educators should realise that not all parents are able to read newsletters, field trip forms, or home work assignments. They must not depend on written word as the only form of communication with the home. Home visits, phone calls, one-on-one-meetings, and other personalised contacts with parents are important.

Many parents in Zambia are not able to speak or write English and so they are unable to participate fully in the education of their children because of the problem of language. Due to high illiteracy levels in Zambia, many parents are not able to assist their school going children in home work or other academic activities since such activities require a good command of English, the official language. Many parents are just conversant with languages spoken by the main ethnic groups in Zambia. The main ethnic groups in Zambia are Lozi, Lunda, Bemba, Tonga, Ngoni, Luvale and Kaonde. There are approximately 72 languages spoken in Zambia; and apart from the 72 languages, some dialects are also counted as languages Zambia Tourism Board (2009).

It is generally accepted by educationists that learning is best done in the mother tongue. Though this could be true, this situation is found to be impracticable in multi-lingual societies such as Zambia (Ministry of Education, 1977).

Nzala (2006) also observed that there was very little parental involvement in the education of their intellectually challenged children. In her findings, it was further found that parents did not know their rights and responsibilities in the education of their intellectually challenged children. The study showed that all fifty-six (100%) parents did not know their rights in the education of their children.

There is strong evidence from archived information of 1997 in United States of America that despite evidence of the positive effects of family involvement, its potential is largely ignored in schools. Teachers do not systematically encourage family involvement. Several major barriers to family involvement exist in public schools. First, school environment may discourage family involvement, predominant institutional culture in the schools place little value on the views and participation of parents and the traditional philosophy still held by many public schools and teachers, concentrates largely on the needs of children, with little regard for their family life and circumstances. This narrow focus may contribute to lower levels of family involvement. In addition, large classes may preclude substantial family involvement because teachers have less time to spend with individual pupils during class time and their family members outside class. Furthermore, particularly in light of the pressing demand on teachers' time and energy, a lack of administrator support may inhibit family involvement because teachers often need incentives such as administration recognition before they will extend themselves to family members ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)).

The essence of involving parents in the educational process is to foster an improved learning climate and teaching environment for the child. When parents and teachers are involved in conflict, they do little to foster the development of environments conducive to effective interaction and learning of the child.

When the School becomes a battleground for fights between the local community, teachers and school managers, the learning and teaching environment turn out to be unfruitful environments for learning teaching and provision of educational support.

### **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The literature review has revealed that community participation in education has no single definition. There are many forms of community participation in education and varying degrees of participation. Community participation in education at times could involve stakeholders like non-governmental organisations and business communities apart from teachers, parents, religious organisations or specifically the local community as an entity. Such differences in types and degrees of participation bring about different kinds of effects on learning and teaching environments in schools. This implies that community participation in education may have a positive effect on teaching and learning environments even on the provision of material resources. On the other hand, it has revealed that community participation in education could be a source of conflict between the school and the community

and this has a negative effect on learning and teaching environment even on the provision of material support. This view correlates with that of Nathan (1996), Burde (2004), and Nzala (2006).

The literature review has also revealed that when there is community participation in education, the community is capable of assisting with home work, provision of proper nutrition, rest, sleep, construction and renovation of schools, field trips, running and monitoring school projects, sensitisation on civic matters, donation of learning and teaching materials, solving of disciplinary cases and would attend PTA meetings and open days. The community is also capable of assisting in formulation of curriculum or giving ideas that would improve the running of the school.

Review of literature further shows that community participation in education depends on the resources owned by the community, the location of the school, the size of the school, the number of stakeholders willing to participate in education, the time that the local community has, the degree of participation the community is allowed to have by the school, the community needs or cultural setting, the kind of relationship between the community and the school, the energy, age, marital status, sex and even the number of children of the stakeholders. Community participation in education also depends on the willingness of the community to participate in issues concerning the education and the well-being of their children. It points out that parents should be sensitized and encouraged to participate in educational matters concerning their children.

Literature review has also established that there are at times conflicts between the school and the community due to misunderstandings over utilisation of school or community resources and over power. Different points of view are also grounds for conflict. Literature review generally stated that schools are expected to engage parents and families in a partnership that supports the academic work of children at home and shared decision making at school. families are expected to help ensure that schools are adequately supported and that the schools and their teachers are held to high standard of accountability (Schneider, 1996: 198 cited in Gottfredson, 2001; Cotton and Wikelund, 2008).

### **How the Literature Review has Guided the Study**

The literature reviewed has guided the present study by pointing out how various communities in both developed and undeveloped countries participate in education in many

ways. It is through the examination of the various ways of participation in education of different communities both outside and within Zambia that helped to guide the present study establish the effect of community participation in education on learning and teaching environment in Mongu district. The gap in the various studies done locally and internationally justified why the present study had to be carried out.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methods used in the study. It offers the description of the design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection and data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

Survey design was used to carry out this study. According to Babbie (1973), a survey is a non- experimental descriptive research method. Surveys can be used when a researcher wants to collect data on a phenomena that cannot be directly observed, such as people's opinions. Surveys are used to assess attitudes and characteristics of a wide range of subjects. In surveys researchers sample a population. This design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to use both interviews and questionnaires to collect information from the respondents.

#### **Population**

The population in this study consisted of all teachers, PTA chairpersons, pupils, school managers, and all parents in the local community of the high schools in Mongu District.

#### **Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is a technique which allows a large number of units to be studied accurately while saving a lot of time and money (Gosh, 2003). The study used purposive and simple random sampling procedures.

Mongu District has a total of four high schools, namely School A, School B, School C and School D in the study (identity of the schools deliberately concealed). The study sampled all schools. The sample included 80 pupils (20 from each school), 32 teachers (eight from each school), four school managers (one from each school), four PTA chairpersons (one from each school) and 20 parents from the local communities of the high schools. All in all there were 140 respondents.

Purposive sampling was used to select the four high schools, school managers and PTA chairpersons. Purposive sampling was used to have access to information rich sources in the

study. The researcher chose the sample based on who she thought would be appropriate for the study. The school managers were chosen because they were the ones in-charge of the four high schools. The PTA chairpersons were chosen because they were the link between the school and the community. According to Gosh (ibid), purposive sampling is a method where certain units are selected purposively for judgements by the researchers. A small sample is representative and a researcher has the final say on the selection.

Simple random sampling was used to select pupils, teachers and parents. This was used because it gave chance to all members of the target population to be selected. Only grade 11 and 12 pupils were involved in the study because it was assumed they had been at the schools much longer than the grade 10 pupils. According to Easton and McColl (2009), simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (population). Each individual is entirely chosen by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. In this study, to pick a sample of 32 teachers from the four high schools, the researcher used lists of teachers obtained from each school manager. Names of teachers were written on pieces of paper. The pieces of paper were put in a black plastic bag. The plastic bag was shuffled several times by the researcher and the eight pieces of paper were picked from each school using the same process. The names on the selected pieces of paper guided the researcher on which teacher was to be part of the sample. The same procedure was used to pick samples from pupils and parents. Class registers were used to randomly select pupils while PTA member lists were used to pick parents.

### **Research Instruments**

The study used semi-structured interview schedules, questionnaires and focus group discussions to obtain in-depth information. Using a combination of research instruments, the advantage was that appropriate information was captured.

In semi-structured interview, the interviewer sets up a general structure by deciding in advance the ground to be covered and the main questions to be asked. The detailed structure is left out to be worked during the interview and the person being interviewed has a fair degree of freedom in what to talk about, how much to say, and how to express it. It is a very flexible technique for capturing information ([www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)).

The semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interview schedule. This is a written list of questions that need to be covered by the interview. Semi-structured interviews aim at gaining a complete and detailed understanding of the topic. This is because they consist of both open and closed-ended questions. The researcher gets a complete and detailed understanding of the issue under research (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

According to Walonick (1993), questionnaires are one of the most important methods of conducting scholarly research. They provide a convenient way of gathering information from a target population. They are easy to analyse and most statistical analysis software can easily process them. They are cost effective.

A focus group discussion is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude or perception towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. Focus group discussions allow interviewers to get information from people in more natural setting. Bryman (2001) states that the advantages of focus group discussion is that participants are able to bring out issues in relation to the topic they regard to be important. Participants are also able to argue by challenging each other's views and this offers the researcher opportunity to study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meaning around it.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection process took three months. Permission was gotten from the Provincial Education Officer of Western province who referred the researcher to the District Education Board Secretary to collect data from respective schools. Schools managers allowed the researcher to collect data from their respective schools.

Questionnaires were left with pupils to be completed at the four high schools. Twenty questionnaires were given to the selected pupils at each high school. The researcher later collected all 80 completed questionnaires. Interviews were held with school managers, parents and PTA chairpersons using semi-structured interview schedules. The research was guided by the interview schedule to capture information from the respondents. Pen and paper was used to record data collected. Focus group discussions were done with teachers at each high school with the researcher as moderator and recorder of the discussions. Participants were informed that the discussions would be tape recorded.

## **Data Analysis**

Data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Data from pupils was categorised, coded, and put into themes. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse quantitative data from questionnaires.

Data from the school managers, teachers, parents and PTA chairpersons was analysed qualitatively by having it transcribed and coded into themes in relation to research questions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings have been presented according to instruments used in data collection. The instruments used were questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings have further been organised in line with the objectives of the study which were to find out: (a) the effect of community participation in education on learning environment; (b) the effect of community participation in education on teaching environment; and (c) the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support.

#### Responses from Pupils' Questionnaire

##### *Responses from pupils' questionnaire for School A*

**Table 1: The local community and pupils' learning**

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid				
Studying hard	11	55.0	55.0	55.0
Role modelling and monitoring	2	10.0	10.0	65.0
Cooperation between school and home	3	15.0	15.0	80.0
Motivational talks	1	5.0	5.0	85.0
N/A	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 reveals that most pupils (55%) indicated that the community assisted in learning by encouraging them to study hard. Fifteen per cent of the respondents felt that the community encouraged them in learning through cooperation with the school while another 15% were undecided. Ten per cent felt the community was encouraging them in their learning through role modelling and monitoring their school progress. Only five per cent stated the community offered encouragement through motivational talks.

**Table 2: Community assistance to teachers**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Offering encouragement	3	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Cooperation	2	10.0	10.0	25.0
	Renovating and building of school infrastructure	1	5.0	5.0	30.0
	Offering extra lessons to pupils	2	10.0	10.0	40.0
	Donation of teaching and learning materials	5	25.0	25.0	65.0
	Empowering them	7	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 35% of the respondents felt the community helped the teachers by empowering them to take full control of the pupils without interference. Twenty-five per cent were of the opinion that the donation of teaching and learning materials by the community assisted teachers in teaching. Fifteen per cent perceived that the community offered encouragement to teachers. Ten per cent felt that the community assisted teachers by cooperating with teachers while another 10% felt the community assisted teachers by offering extra lessons to pupils through the establishment of tuition centres. Five per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers through renovating and building school infrastructure.

**Table 3: Projects run by the community in the school**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Yes	15	75.0	75.0	75.0
	No	5	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that 75% of the pupils acknowledged that there were projects run by the community in the school while 25% expressed ignorance of existence of any projects in the school run by the community.

**Table 4: Benefits from projects**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Academic development	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
	N/A	5	25.0	25.0	45.0
	Guidance and counselling	4	20.0	20.0	65.0
	Life skills	4	20.0	20.0	85.0
	Motivation	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 above shows that 25% of the pupils did not know how they were benefiting from any project run by the community in the school. Twenty per cent stated that projects being run by the community in the school were giving them academic development. Another 20% felt that they are benefiting from projects run by the community in the school through guidance and counselling while another 20% felt they were acquiring life skills through the community-run projects in the school. Fifteen per cent benefited through motivational talks.

***Responses from pupils' questionnaire for School B***

**Table 5: Local community and pupils' learning**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	HIV and AIDS awareness	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Extra lessons and homework	4	20.0	20.0	25.0
	Encourages to study hard	4	20.0	20.0	45.0
	Guidance and counselling	3	15.0	15.0	60.0
	Material support	6	30.0	30.0	90.0
	Donation of learning and teaching materials	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows that 30% of the respondents from school B felt the local community had been encouraging pupils in their learning through giving them material support in form of school fees. 20% felt the community was encouraging them in their learning by giving them extra lessons and encouraging them to do homework. Another 20% believed the community encouraged them to study hard. Fifteen per cent of the respondents acknowledged that encouragement from the community came through guidance and counselling. Ten per cent

stated that the community encouraged them in their learning through donation of learning and teaching materials while 5% acknowledged community encouragement through HIV and AIDS awareness offered by the community.

**Table 6: Community assistance to teachers**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Cooperation	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Material support	6	30.0	30.0	55.0
	Guidance and counselling	2	10.0	10.0	65.0
	Encouragement	4	20.0	20.0	85.0
	Sending children to school	2	10.0	10.0	95.0
	Provision of learning and teaching aids	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 reveals that 30% of the respondents felt that the community had been assisting the teachers by offering them material support. Twenty-five per cent stated that the community assisted teachers by cooperating with them. Twenty per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers by offering them encouragement. Ten per cent acknowledged that the community assisted by sending children to school while another 10% stated that the community offered guidance and counselling to teachers. Five per cent felt that teachers received assistance from the community through provision of learning and teaching aids.

**Table 7: Establishment of the community projects in schools**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Yes	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
	No	6	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows that 70% of the respondents acknowledged that there were projects run by the community in the school while 30% stated that they were not aware of any projects run by the community.

**Table 8: Benefits from the projects**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	N/A	9	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Learning more	9	45.0	45.0	90.0
	Material support	1	5.0	5.0	95.0
	Sensitisation concerning HIV and AIDS	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 reveals that 45% of the respondents stated that they were not aware of any benefits from the projects run by the community in the school while another 45% felt they were benefiting through learning more things. Five per cent were of the opinion that the projects benefited them through material support while another 5% acknowledged that they were benefiting through sensitisation concerning HIV and AIDS.

***Responses from pupils' questionnaire for School C***

**Table 9: Local community and pupils' learning**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	assist in homework	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
	support and advice	1	5.0	5.0	30.0
	role models	3	15.0	15.0	45.0
	no encouragement	2	10.0	10.0	55.0
	encouraging to study hard	7	35.0	35.0	90.0
	close supervision	1	5.0	5.0	95.0
	conducive environment	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that 35% of the respondents from school C were of the view that the community encouraged them in their learning by encouraging them to study hard. Twenty-five per cent stated that the community encouraged them by assisting with homework. Fifteen per cent acknowledged that the community offered encouragement through role modelling. Five per cent indicated that the community offered encouragement through support and advice. Another 5% acknowledged community support through close supervision offered by the community. Further, 5% also stated that the community assisted in learning by offering

conducive environment. However, 10% were of the opinion that there was no assistance offered by the community.

**Table 10: Community assistance to teachers**

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid material assistance	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
encouraging pupils to learn	5	25.0	25.0	45.0
renovating the houses	2	10.0	10.0	55.0
empowering teachers with authority	3	15.0	15.0	70.0
cooperation	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
not applicable	2	10.0	10.0	95.0
counselling	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 reveals that 25% of the respondents stated that the teachers received assistance through the community's encouragement of the pupils to learn. Twenty per cent were of the opinion that the teachers were given material assistance by the community. Fifteen per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers by empowering teachers with authority over pupils while another 15% acknowledged that teachers received assistance from the community through cooperation. Ten per cent stated that the community assisted teachers by renovating teachers' houses. Five per cent stated that the community assisted teachers through counselling. However, 10% of the respondents stated that they did not have an idea on how the community was assisting their teachers.

**Table 11: Establishment of the community projects in schools**

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid yes	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
no	8	40.0	40.0	90.0
not applicable	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 shows that 50% of the respondents stated that there were projects run by the community in the school. Forty per cent were of the opinion that there were no projects run by the community in the school. Ten per cent expressed total ignorance of availability of any project being run by the community in the school.

**Table 12: Benefits from the projects**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	not applicable	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
	enlightenment	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
	provides conducive environment for learning	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
	material support	1	5.0	5.0	95.0
	school development	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 shows that 70% of the respondents stated that they were not benefiting from the projects. Fifteen per cent acknowledged that they were getting enlightenment from the projects. Five per cent stated that the projects enabled them to have conducive environment for learning. Another five per cent was of the opinion that the projects enabled them to have material support. A further five per cent stipulated that the projects provided School development.

***Responses from pupils' questionnaire for School D***

**Table 13: Local community and students' learning**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Encouraging to study hard	15	75.0	75.0	75.0
	material support	2	10.0	10.0	85.0
	financial support	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
	not encouraging	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 13 shows that 75% of the respondents stipulated that the local community had been encouraging them to study hard. Ten per cent stated that the local community had been offering material support while 5% acknowledged that the community had been offering them financial support. However, 10% felt that the community had not been encouraging them in any way.

**Table 14: Community assistance to teachers**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	Not applicable	7	35.0	35.0	35.0
	cooperation	5	25.0	25.0	60.0
	offering encouragement	8	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 reveals that 40% of the respondents were of the opinion that the community assisted the teachers by offering them encouragement. Twenty-five per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers by cooperating with them. Interestingly, 35% had no idea on how the community had been assisting the teachers.

**Table 15: Establishment of the community projects in schools**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	yes	11	55.0	55.0	55.0
	no	9	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 shows that 55% of the respondents acknowledged that there were projects run by the community in the school while 45% stated that there were no projects run by the community in the School.

**Table 16: Benefits from the projects**

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	not applicable	12	60.0	60.0	60.0
	encouragement to study hard	7	35.0	35.0	95.0
	HIV and AIDS sensitisation	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 16 shows that 35% of the respondents felt that the projects were encouraging them to study hard while 5% stated that they received sensitisation on HIV and AIDS through the projects. Surprisingly, 60% were of the opinion that there was no benefit that they received from the projects.

## **Responses from Interview Schedules**

Interview schedules were used to carry out face to face interviews. The respondents were School managers, parents and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons.

### ***The effect of community participation in education on learning environment***

School managers, parents and PTA chairpersons were interviewed to find out what they felt was the effect of community participation on learning environment.

School managers for schools B and D stated that community participation in education in their schools was quite minimal and presented many disadvantages that had negative effect on learning environment. On the other hand, managers for schools A and C were of the opinion that community participation in education in their schools was very good and had many advantages that brought positive effect on learning environment.

The parents from the local communities around schools B and D said that they were not very much involved in the running of the school affairs but that they would do much if they were given the mandate and resources to do so. Contrary to what parents from the communities around schools B and D said, parents from communities around schools A and C were of the opinion that they were actively involved in the running of the school affairs. The findings from interviews with parents were similar to those of school managers in establishing the effect of community participation on learning environment.

The PTA chairpersons stated that they faced a number of challenges in trying to improve the learning environment. Most of the challenges were arising from insufficient funds and in some cases unfavourable working relations with some parents and some school managers.

### ***The effect of community participation in education on teaching environment***

When asked whether the teachers were assisted in any way by the community members, the school managers for all four schools agreed that the community assisted teachers in various ways. The community assisted teachers through paying of school fees to enable pupils attend school, encouraging pupils to study hard, assisting pupils with their home work, attending to disciplinary cases when called upon, helping teachers during funerals, donation of teaching and learning materials to the schools, renovation of school infrastructure and teachers' houses.

The parents stated that the teachers were assisted by local communities in order to improve the teaching environment in many ways: donations of teaching materials; help in renovations of school infrastructure and teachers' houses; helping in field work by allowing the schools to use their surroundings for field work and to use community members as resource persons. Similarly, PTA chairpersons for the four schools acknowledged that teachers were assisted where necessary.

### ***The effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support***

When asked about the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support, the school managers acknowledged that there was support coming through various projects run by PTA and managing agencies from the local communities.

Some parents said that they paid school fees for their children and dependants, helped in renovation of school infrastructure, donated various educational materials to school and did voluntary work for the school.

The PTA chairpersons equally stated that educational support from the community's participation in education was quite distinct in areas such as renovation of school infrastructure, renovation of teachers' houses, voluntary work done by the local community for the schools, donation of teaching and learning materials and cooperation with the school.

### **Focus Group Discussions for the Teachers**

Focus group discussion was used to get in-depth information from forty teachers drawn from all four schools. The groups comprised ten teachers from each school.

### ***The effect of community participation in education on learning environment***

Most of the teachers from schools A, B, C, and D were of the opinion that the effect of community participation in education on learning environment was seen in such areas as cooperation between the community and the school; maintenance of school buildings; community helping in disciplinary cases; provision of accommodation to pupils who came from far places; parents monitoring pupil attendance; provision of food to pupils; financial and material assistance by some community organisations; provision of good learning environment at home; and encouragement of pupils to go to school by parents. However, very few teachers felt they did not see the effect of community participation in education on learning environment.

***The effect of community participation in education on teaching environment***

It was noted by many teachers that the effect of community participation on teaching environment was seen in such areas as community getting involved in field research; material support by parents to pupils and teachers; parents sending pupils to school; parents helping in moral conduct of both teachers and pupils; and parents monitoring learning.

***The effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support***

Participants in the focus group discussion reported that the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support was evident in introduction and implementation of school projects; facilitation of maintenance of school infrastructure and building of new school buildings; participating in policy making of the school and planning of school progress; coming up with fundraising ventures for the school; offering financial assistance; and civic awareness.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study taking into consideration the research questions based on the objectives of the study. Pupils, school managers, teachers, parents and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons responses are discussed.

#### **The Effect of Community Participation in Education on Learning Environment**

The study explored and addressed the question on what the effect of community participation in education on learning environment was.

#### *Discussion of responses from pupils' questionnaire*

Pupils from all the four schools evidently established that the effect of community participation in education on learning environment was that conducive learning environment was created for them by the community in many ways (see Tables 1, 5, 9 and 13 in chapter four).

Most pupils indicated that the community assisted in learning by encouraging them to study hard. This encouragement was given by the community through offering the pupils extra tuition. The extra tuition was offered by the community in most cases by paying money to teachers who were willing to offer such tuitions. Many community members had also offered some personal buildings to be converted into tuition centres so as to assist pupils in their studies. This had a very strong positive effect on the learning environment as it enabled many pupils complete the syllabus within good time and it encouraged many parents to actively participate in their children's learning. Completion of the syllabus within time accorded the pupils time to revise their work and be fully prepared for their examinations. Though the extra tuitions were quite beneficial to most pupils, the pupils that came from homes where parents could not afford to pay for such tuitions were deprived of such a chance of completing the syllabus on time.

The other ways through which conducive learning environment was created for the pupils was through monitoring their lessons, cooperation between the community and the school which reflected through the parents' attendance of PTA meetings and attendance to disciplinary cases when called upon by the school. This kind of cooperation reduced on

number of offences committed by pupils because most pupils feared disappointing their parents and good behaviour from pupils contributed to creation of good learning environment both at school and at home. Since combined effort between the community and the school concerning the welfare of pupils created a conducive learning environment, it would be good for policy makers to identify distinct areas where the community could be utilised fully in the education system so as to have wide access to the pool of resources the community has. For example, under localised curriculum, parents could be used as resource persons when using natural resources around the school. Parents for example would be used when making fishing baskets, mats, moulding clay pots, carpentry weaving baskets and curio curving.

It was further established in the study that the community assisted in learning through role modelling and mentoring through which guidance and counselling was offered to pupils. The role modelling, guidance and counselling offered by the community through participation in education enabled the pupils to lead better and responsible lives both at home and school. It also gave pupils a sense of direction in their studies and personal lives and a sense of belonging to their schools and respective communities.

Parents were custodians of norms and values. It was therefore important for them to transmit such norms and values to the children, it was vital that mentoring and counselling was done both at home and school because such combined effort enhanced learning.

These findings are consistent with Epstein (1995, 1997) on provision of conducive learning environment through community participation in education. Epstein (1995) discovered ways that helped children succeed in school and later life. From what she discovered, she stated that families should be assisted in establishing home environments that supported children's learning at school, communication between home and school should be established, parents should be encouraged to do voluntary work for the school, parent leaders and representatives should be attending school meetings, families should be provided with ideas on how to help pupils with home-work, resources and services from the community should be identified and integrated in order to strengthen school programmes.

The information in Tables 1, 5, 9 and 13 in this dissertation in connection with the study means that when the community was involved in education, the effect on learning environment was great and positive, and because of this discovery, community participation in education needed to be encouraged by all stakeholders in all parts of Zambia in line with

the Ministry of Education's inclusive education policy enacted in 1996 to encourage partnership in the education system (Ministry of Education, 1996).

The effect of community participation in education on learning environment was further seen in the way through which social and emotional well-being of pupils in Mongu district was taken care of by the community. This was done through the establishment of a community radio station that educated pupils about HIV and AIDS, peer pressure and shed light on their civic duties as community members and as Zambian citizens. The radio station further promoted girl child education and encouraged drop-outs to go back to school. The pupils acknowledged that the community also offered motivational talks on survival skills, careers and life skills to them. This was important because the world is dynamic. The global problem of HIV and AIDS for instance caused all syllabi to change as it was integrated in all subjects. The radio station therefore had a great effect on pupils' life style as it brought positive change of character which in turn gave the schools healthy pupils and responsible pupils.

The pupils acknowledged community encouragement on learning through community's provision of material support in form of school fees and food. Community assistance was also given to pupils in form of encouragement offered to pupils to do their home-work. Donation of learning materials was another form of encouragement given to the pupils by the community. This finding is consistent with Scheneider (1996) cited in Gottfredson (2001); Cotton and Wikelund (2008) who stated that schools with the most successful parent involvement programmes were those which offered a variety of ways parents could participate. Recognising that parents differed greatly in their willingness, ability and available time for involvement in school activities, these schools provided a continuum of options for parent participation. In the present study, it was a continuum of options for community participation in education that brought about a positive effect on learning environment.

In the same vein, Moodley (2002) stated similar findings in a paper presented in 2002 at Pathways 6<sup>th</sup> conference on inclusive education held in Johannesburg. Moodley stated that effective learning was directly related to and dependent on the social and emotional well-being of the learner. It was important to recognise that particular conditions might arise within the social, economic and political environment in which the learner lived, and which impacted negatively on the learner's social and emotional well-being, thus placing the learner at risk of learning breakdown.

When there was community involvement in areas where the community had no potential, the effect on the learning environment was minimal or negative. For example, an impoverished community would not participate well if given a task of construction of school infrastructure because of lack of resources for such a mammoth task. In the same vein, a community with high rate of illiteracy would not be capable of helping out in home-work due to illiteracy. This whole scenario would be quite disappointing to the school that had high expectation of full community involvement in education.

In order to solve the problem of illiteracy in the community so as to enable parents help their children with home-work to a greater extent, parents could be encouraged to attend literacy classes that would help them get enlightened academically and contribute positively towards enhancing education of their children and make the parents feel they are part of the school community all the time. When parents become literate, they would develop their own communities in better ways as well as articulate academic issues using critical thinking skills.

#### ***Discussion of responses from School managers, parents and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons' interview schedules on learning environment***

School managers, parents and PTA chairpersons were interviewed to find out what they felt was the effect of community participation in education on learning environment.

It was generally discovered from the responses from school managers, parents and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons that the concept of decentralisation in education had not been fully understood by these stakeholders. The concept of cost sharing, for example, needed to be availed to the community. This entailed that school managers and the community, as stakeholders in education needed a common understanding of educational demands. Due to this kind of situation, it was vital for schools B and D to have a platform where deliberations could have various issues brainstormed, analysed, prioritised and roles of stakeholders spelt out.

From the discussion, contrary to the pupils' general views, school managers for schools B and D stated that community participation in education in their schools was quite minimal and presented many disadvantages that had negative effects on learning environment. School B manager stated that most community members still had hand-out mentality from the white missionary sisters (nuns) that once were in charge of the administration and management of the school before the local African sisters. Instead of thinking of ways of helping out the

school, the community was always thinking of what the school could give them. The school had also experienced a lot of thefts from the local community. The school manager for school D indicated that community participation in education was quite minimal and there was overwhelming evidence to establish that fact. The community around school D hardly attended PTA meetings and because of this, there was no cooperation between the school and the community.

In view of the above, much needed to be done to encourage the community to participate in the running of the school. The community probably had not yet seen the benefits of the school. The school in this case should invite former pupils of the school who have excelled in their careers to come to their former school and motivate the parents on the advantages of education.

The school programmes at school D were at times inconvenienced by the programmes in the palace in which the school was situated. This was in cases where teachers and the school managers were required to attend meetings in the palace during working hours. However, both school managers for schools B and D acknowledged that the local communities paid school fees, offered food and accommodation to pupils, gave civic awareness, acted as role models and sensitised pupils on HIV and AIDS.

The parents from the local communities around school B and School D said that they were not very much involved in the running of the school affairs but that they could do much if they were given the mandate and resources to do so. One parent from the community around school D clearly stated that '*Lwaabela ku tusa sikolo sa luna, kono, mashelengi a kataza ku fumana*' (We would like to assist in the running of our school but the problem is that money is hard to come by). Another parent from the community around school B said, '*Lwaabela ku tusa kono a lu talusezwi hande se lu swanela ku eza*' (We would like to help but the problem is we are not clearly told what to do).

The responses by parents from schools B and D revealed that the relationship between the two local communities around schools B and D and their respective schools was weak and in a way negatively affected the learning environment.

This finding was not unique to Mongu District alone. Bouillion and Gomez (2009) discovered that a challenge facing many schools, especially those in urban settings that served culturally and linguistically diverse populations, was a disconnection between schools

and pupils' home communities, which could have both cognitive and affective implications for pupils.

Furthermore, Noguera (1996) cited in Sanders (2006), Lareau (1989) cited in Sanders (2006), Chituma (2005) and Nzala (2006) also acknowledged the conflict between the school and the community by stating that where schools were perceived as authoritarian institutions, parents and other community members did not feel welcomed to participate in their children's education; communities and the schools viewed each other with mistrust; parents did not know their rights in the education of their children.

Such conflicts between the school and the community would be solved when the stakeholders realised that they needed each other in order to establish learning environment, teaching environment and community environment conducive for the pupils' well-being as well as academic achievements. Schools should incorporate the community in programmes affecting the running of the school. The community also should incorporate the school in community programmes that have an inclination towards the building up of the pupil.

On the other hand, managers for school A and C were of the opinion that community participation in education in their schools was very good and had many advantages that brought positive effects on learning environment. School A manager acknowledged that the community around the school was actively involved in renovation of school buildings, erection of security wall fence and provision of transport through provision of a truck to the school. This was in line with the ideas of Epstein (1995, 1997) who stated that in order for school-community relationship to have a positive effect on learning environment, attention should be put on helping all families to establish home environments that supported children's learning at schools. Focus should be on designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication that enabled parents to learn about school programmes and their children's progress in schools as well as teachers to learn about what children do at home. Under volunteering, there should be recruiting and organising parents' help and support of students. Learning at home involved provision of information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with home-work and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning. Decision making included families in school decisions to have parent leaders and representatives in school meetings whereas collaboration with the community identified and integrated resources as well as services from the community in order to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning.

Contrary to what parents from the communities around schools B and D said, parents from communities around schools A and C were of the opinion that they were actively involved in the running of the school affairs. The findings from interviews with parents were similar to those of school managers in establishing the effect of community participation on learning environment. The parents claimed that they were cooperating with the school by paying school fees, attending to disciplinary cases when called upon and through active participation in renovation of school infrastructure.

The PTA chairpersons stated that they faced a number of challenges in trying to improve the learning environment. Most of the challenges were arising from insufficient funds and in some cases unfavourable working relations with some parents and some school managers. The nature of problems established by PTA chairpersons in this study were in conformity with findings by Goos (2007) who postulated that in the field of school, home and community partnerships there was no consistent agreement about the meaning of the terms 'community involvement', 'parent involvement' and 'partnerships'. Many different kinds of activities fell within this field. In addition, the stakeholders in these connections between home, school and community may hold conflicting perceptions about their roles and roles of other stakeholders. Similarly, Baum (2000) reporting on the university-community partnerships noted that expectations of partnerships were often very high, and available resources so limited that those who created partnerships substituted fantasy about how partnerships would magically create abundant problem-solving resources for realistic analysis, organising, planning and funding.

The solution to the kind of problems that arose due to community participation in education lay in acknowledgement of the fact that different local communities had different resource potentialities. In this case, dialogue among the stakeholders would help in solving such problems and even coming up with new aspirations for the well-being of the community and the school. This kind of atmosphere would have a positive effect on the learning environment.

Since the local community around school D, for example, respected local authority, the PTA should have a deliberate policy to include one of the traditional leaders in the PTA committee so as to enhance effective community participation in education.

### *Discussion of responses from teachers' focus group discussions*

Most of the teachers from schools A, B, C, and D were of the opinion that the effect of community participation in education on learning environment was seen in such areas as cooperation between the community and the school; maintenance of school buildings; community helping in disciplinary cases; provision of accommodation to pupils who came from far places; parents monitoring pupil attendance; provision of food to pupils; financial and material assistance by some community organisations; provision of good learning environment at home; and encouragement of pupils to go to school by parents.

Teachers from school D, for instance, commended the community for the ability in paying school fees for their children and dependants and also for provision of food and other school requirements. There were only a few cases where vulnerable children received school fees and other school requirements from World Vision organisation.

This was in line with what Bugwadia (2009) stated when he observed that parents understood that active participation in education entailed being there for the child, ensuring proper nutrition, rest and sleep besides providing myriad avenues for successful learning experiences. What Bugwadia classified as active participation in education was considered minimal participation by most stakeholders. Giving food to children by parents was considered as just an obligation fulfilled by parents due to their virtue of being parents. The same applied to the issue of offering their children shelter. Rarely did stakeholders consider the offering of shelter to pupils by their parents as portraying active participation in education. In the present study, for example, some of the respondents did not consider the provision of proper nutrition to the pupils as active participation in education. A parent from school B said that '*Lwa tabela ku tusa kono alutalusezwi hande se lu swanela ku eza*' (We would like to help but we are not told what we are supposed to do) and another parent from school D said that '*Lwa tabela ku tusa kono mashelengi a kataza ku fumana*' (We would like to help but money is hard to come by). Offering of proper nutrition, adequate rest and sleep to pupils by the community was some kind of cooperation with the school because it produced healthy pupils who were able to actively learn, contributed to the well being of the school and community and lead healthy lives.

Further, Brintley (2009) highlighted the success story of a school in the USA. Gateway High School in the United States of America offered one of the success stories in relation to the offering of proper nutrition to pupils to complement the nutrition given to them by their

parents and guardians. The proof of the success was seen in the Gateway to Better Health, Fruit and Vegetable Festival of October 27, 2006. At the festival, the school's cafeteria and campus grille staff turned the school's courtyard into a sea of fresh fruits and vegetables. It was discovered that only 14% of school children ate the recommended serving of vegetables each day. As a solution to this problem, a sail boat of various fruits and vegetables was created and displayed in the lunch courtyard to educate and encourage students consume more fruits and vegetables. The students were allowed to taste the different fruits and vegetables displayed.

As a way to ensure community participation in education, the school breakfast programme (SBP) was established in the United States of America in 1966 to provide categorical grants to assist schools serving breakfast to 'nutritionally needy' children. The original legislation stipulated that first consideration for programme implementation was to be given to schools located in poor areas or in areas where children had to travel a great distance to school. During the first year operation, the SBP served 80,000 children. In 1971, the programme included schools in which there was special need to improve the nutrition and dietary practices of children of working mothers and children from low-income families (United States Department of Agriculture, 2009).

Through participation in team nutrition, a growing national network of local schools were showcasing healthy changes in school meals and new nutrition education programmes in America. Each school designated a team of nutrition school leader who involved teachers, students, parents foodservice personnel and the community interactive and entertaining nutrition education activities with classroom cafeteria components. Activities ranged from planting a school garden to operating a school health fair (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>).

Research had shown that starting the day with a nutritional breakfast helped students stay alert and perform better in school. Having breakfast in the morning also helped children develop healthy eating habits and contributed to their overall well-being (<http://www.fns.usda.gov>).

The community in relation with the findings of the study participated indirectly in education by giving the pupils proper nutrition. The school should work hand in hand with the community in ensuring that pupils were given the right nutrition in order to improve their mental capacity as observed by Brintley (2009).

The kind of cooperation reflected in schools A,B,C and D evidenced by the provision of food, shelter, payment of school fees and sending of the children to school by the local community in the present study also tallies with the findings of the 2002 report from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Kentucky, USA which concluded that when schools, families and community groups worked together to support learning, children tended to do better in school, stayed in school longer, earned higher grades and test scores, attended school regularly, had better social skills, showed improved behaviour, adapted well to school, graduated and went to postsecondary education (Joice and Childress, 2004). It would not be disputed in this study that where cooperation existed between the school and the community, there was positive effect on the learning environment.

However, very few teachers felt they did not see the effect of community participation in education on learning environment. Teachers from school D stated that parents in most cases only showed up at school when they had something against the teachers. They further stipulated that they did not understand why parents were not always willing to attend PTA meetings. They only turned up in small numbers whenever such meetings took place. The teachers were of the opinion that PTA meetings were a very good platform for addressing matters that concerned the community and the school. It was unfortunate that some community members regarded teachers and school administrators as their enemies. This was evidenced by some court cases between the school and the local community.

Conflicts between the school and the community at times arose where schools were considered unfriendly or where communities were considered hostile, unfriendly or uncompromising. In this kind of atmosphere, schools did not feel free to allow serious community participation in education. For example, in the present study school D did not have serious community involvement due to the local community's lack of cooperation with the school.

Community members in some cases felt they could not participate fully or seriously in their children's education because at times the school environment was not friendly. This happened where teachers or school managers tended to belittle the parents and thought that parents were ignorant of educational or school issues and therefore would not contribute constructively to the learning or teaching environment in the school. Where such an attitude prevailed, teachers and administrators tended not to bother themselves in updating the community on the performance of pupils. Though the community would have helped in

bridging the gap between the school and the community itself, such a move was at times forgotten by the school. Parents were not capable of taking any responsibility in school issues and tended to feel that education was something that should be taken care of by educational professionals at schools. Many people, developed these kind of negative attitudes towards schools because they were not treated by teachers with respect. This kind of educational environment was unfavourable to all stakeholders and, therefore, contributed to low community participation, poor academic performance, and high repeat and dropout rates. Involving communities in education helped identify and addresses problems embedded in institutions and society as a whole. In addition, it was a strategy to create an environment in which parents would feel comfortable to participate in education.

In school D, the conflict levels between the school and the community seemed to be out of proportion due to struggle for power between school D and the paramount chief in whose palace school D was situated. The paramount chief wanted the school to pay allegiance to him even when such a move inconvenienced the running of the school. The teachers and school administrators were usually required to adhere to palace programmes but the school resisted such moves to save the school programmes from being disrupted. Teachers could not teach during such confusion and pupils found it a chance to sneak out to go and drink, smoke and do other kinds of mischief since nobody attended to them. Teachers felt inconvenienced to conduct remedial lessons just to make up for the lost time. It was under an atmosphere such as this one that community participation in education had a negative effect on learning environment. What was required in this case was dialogue among stakeholders.

Generally, the teachers from school D felt that community members were supposed to be assets to the school through getting them involved in fundraising ventures, monitoring of pupil progress which were very minimal in this case. The teachers further felt that the community was supposed to be involved fully in guidance and counselling of pupils who came from very distant places and lived among them due to lack of boarding facilities at the school. The teachers were of the opinion that if the community worked in harmony with the school, the school would successfully fight such vices as beer drinking, truancy, and sexual immorality among the pupils.

The most important factor in partnership would be communication; this would be in form of various systems like websites, study guides for parents, notes from teacher to the parent, e-mail, outlines of course expectations and approximate time lines, and home-work lists, as

well as parent meetings and focus group discussions seeking input on major policy issues. These opportunities for the exchange of information would be vital and must be consistently utilised for meaningful involvement to occur. There had been a pervasive atmosphere that the only time teachers and parents communicated was when there were problems. With more consistent communication, teachers and parents could address the many positives in the students' lives. On a large scale, schools, parents and community partners needed to meet in an atmosphere of mutual respect to address issues that affected the functions of the school. Schools should seek out parents who brought out a variety of perspectives to the issue. Those who would be willing to serve in decision making capacities would become important partners for individual schools and education in general (Indiana Department of Education, 2001).

Teachers from school C acknowledged that the community had been of great help to the school due to involvement in renovation of school infrastructure which in turn had made learning very easy for the pupils. These teachers cited an example of the renovation of an ablution block which was at first a hazard to the pupils. They also cited donation of books to pupils by the community as good gesture of improving learning environment. The teachers also stated that the community encouraged pupils in their learning by turning in big numbers in attending PTA meeting where matters concerning the welfare of both the teachers and pupils were addressed. This in itself had a positive effect on learning environment.

The teachers also pointed out that the renovation of teachers' houses and community involvement in field research motivated teachers to work better and this improved the learning environment in the school as teachers ended up putting in their best due to the motivation received from the community.

The teachers, however, complained that the community had a lot of bars and night clubs surrounding the boarding school which disturbed the pupils a lot during their study time at night. Some pupils sneaked out and went to drink from these bars and night clubs. It had been hard for the school to fight such cases as beer drinking, smoking, drug pushing, sexual immorality among pupils since the community had such pupils as their customers in the bars and night clubs where such vices took place. In this case, community participation in education had negative effect on learning environment. The most probable solution to this problem would be that of dialogue between school C and the local community.

The teachers from school C further complained that the community harboured thieves who stole from the teachers' houses in the night. The terrorising of teachers and their families brought negative effects on the learning environment since teachers got demoralised when such things happened. It would only take team work between the school and the local community to sort out such a serious issue.

## **The Effect of Community Participation in Education on Teaching Environment**

### ***Discussion of responses from pupils' questionnaire***

Generally the responses from the pupils indicated that the effect of community participation on the teaching environment was quite positive. The community in various ways and varying levels was able to constructively assist teachers in their respective schools. Teachers had different or categorical needs ranging from type of school, background of pupils, residential places, size of class handled, kind of grade taught, type of indiscipline presented by pupils and amount and type of teaching materials required. The few cases where pupils did not know how the community assisted teachers could mean that the pupils could have focused their attention on areas where the community did not do much or anything for the teachers or could have had focus on the problematic areas between the school and the community. There could even have been a possibility of some pupils having not understood the question. The fact that the pupils had indicated that the community was assisting their teachers in such divergent ways implied that community participation in education had a positive effect on the teaching environment as it fully equipped teachers with the right and adequate tools, motivated them and enabled them to teach effectively from a harmonious atmosphere, safe, supportive and materially enhanced environments.

Data in Table 2 revealed that 35% of pupils from school A felt that the community helped the teachers by empowering them to take full control of the pupils without interference. Some community members at times put up resistance when their children were punished by teachers for offences the respective pupils had committed in such instances as missing of study time, failing to write notes, absenting themselves from class during lessons, and missing from the dormitories during sleeping time, cases of beer drinking, smoking, stealing, disrespect of teachers, sexual immorality and fights among pupils. Twenty-five per cent were of the opinion that the donation of teaching and learning materials by the community assisted teachers in teaching. The community in this case donated books to the school which were valuable to both teachers and pupils.

As noted above, the school administration and management could operate smoothly and effectively without interference from parents or the community. Moreover, the role of PTA was to develop the infrastructure of the school while the school administration's role was that of dealing with academic issues. There should always be separation of responsibility roles between the community and the school so as to enhance effective community participation in education.

Fifteen per cent of the pupils perceived that the community offered encouragement to teachers. The encouragement was offered to teachers in terms of the community attending PTA meetings, open day, throwing end of year Christmas parties for teachers, getting involved in fundraising ventures for school A, and the community attending disciplinary cases when called upon. The community also helped teachers during bereavements. Ten per cent felt that community assisted teachers by cooperating with teachers while another 10% felt that the community assisted teachers by offering extra lessons to pupils through the establishment of tuition centres. They did this by providing facilities for tuition. Five per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers through renovating and building of school infrastructure.

The attendance of PTA meetings and open day activities by the community created mutual understanding between parents and teachers as parents understood the difficulties and challenges faced by the school. Such understanding made parents respond favourably to school demands and requests, for example, it made parents understand such issues as change of uniform or adjustment of fees.

Table 6 reveals that 30% of pupils from school B felt that the community had been assisting the teachers by offering them material support. The material support in this case was seen in terms of the community taking various farm products to teachers for consumption and assisting teachers during funerals. Twenty-five per cent stated that the community assisted teachers by cooperating with them. The cooperation in this case was seen in parents monitoring their children's work, going to school to attend disciplinary cases when called upon, attending open days to learn of the pupils' progress and behaviour, attending PTA meetings in order to plan for the improvement of school B and attend to the welfare of teachers.

As seen in school B, the social role of the community could not be overlooked. The teaching staff were part of the surrounding community therefore, the social role played by the

community gave encouragement to the teachers so much that the teachers played their academic role effectively.

The community around school B had been offering cooperation to teachers by ensuring that they offered guidance and counselling to pupils living in the community against such vices as premarital sex, pregnancies outside marriage, stealing, smoking, drinking and fighting. This was seen in how the community supported the school when dealing with such disciplinary cases.

Twenty per cent of pupils from school B felt that the community assisted the teachers by offering them encouragement. Ten per cent acknowledged that the community assisted by sending children to school. In this case, the community ensured that their school going children were released from performing house chores so as to go to school. The community also helped in stopping early marriages by paying fees for their children to go to school. Ten per cent stated that the community offered guidance and counselling to teachers through gospel ministers from the community who ministered the word of God to teachers. Five per cent felt that teachers received assistance from the community through provision of learning and teaching aids. This was done by the community through donations of books and reams of paper.

The above data indicated that the surrounding community offered spiritual assistance and guidance to the teachers and this helped in moulding the moral character of teachers which in turn helped mould the moral character of pupils from different backgrounds.

Table 10 reveals that twenty-five per cent of pupils from school C stated that the teachers received assistance through the community's encouragement of the pupils to learn. Twenty per cent were of the opinion that the teachers were given material assistance by the community. Fifteen per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers by empowering them with authority over pupils where pupil behaviour and school performance were concerned while another 15% acknowledged that teachers received assistance from the community through cooperation. This cooperation came through combined effort of community and school to improve the welfare of teachers. Ten per cent stated that the community assisted teachers by renovating teachers' houses as well as school infrastructure in order to make teaching easy. Five per cent stated that the community assisted teachers through counselling offered to both teachers and pupils. However, 10% of the respondents stated that they did not have an idea on how the community assisted their teachers.

Table 14 showed that forty per cent of the pupils from school D were of the opinion that the community assisted the teachers by offering them encouragement. The encouragement was seen through community participation in school programmes and activities. Twenty-five per cent felt that the community assisted the teachers by cooperating with them when matters arose concerning their welfare and the welfare of pupils. Interestingly, 35% had no idea on how the community assisted the teachers.

The relationship between school D and the local community around it was not a good and strong relationship and that explained the reason why such a big number of pupils basically had no idea on how the community surrounding the school was assisting teachers.

***Discussion of responses from School managers, parents and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons' interview schedules on teaching environment***

When asked whether the teachers were assisted in any way by the community members, the school managers for all four schools agreed that the community assisted teachers in various ways. At school D, the school manager acknowledged that the community assisted teachers by allowing them to draw water from their wells when there was shortage of water at the school. However, the School manager for school D regretted that prominent individuals in the community personalised affairs of the school which in turn negatively affected the teaching environment. School D's authority was seriously undermined by the local community and this caused teachers to put up some resistance which in turn affected their teaching environment.

The school managers for schools C and A acknowledged that teachers were assisted through renovation of the houses as well as school infrastructure and donation of learning and teaching materials for conducive teaching environment.

School manager for school B stated that the teachers received minimal help from the community because the community around the school was accustomed to receiving help from the school instead of giving help to the school. There were also a lot of thefts experienced by the school from the local community and such vandalism of school property affected the teaching environment at the school.

The parents generally stated that the teachers were assisted in many ways by local communities in order to improve the teaching environment. The most prominent examples given by parents from all schools were that parents put in a lot of effort to ensure that their

children attended school. The presence of these children in school made teaching environment easy as teachers were not subjected to conducting remedial lessons from time to time. The parents made sure that school fees were paid to the schools in order to enable the children to be in school. The parents further noted that there were prominent people in society that were role models for the pupils. The parents further claimed that their provision of food for the children made the children strong and healthy. This in itself had an impact on the teaching environment as teachers were accorded a chance of teaching healthy pupils who were receptive to lessons and could attend school regularly. The offering of civic education to the pupils by the community brought up civic awareness and responsibility that gave pupils a sense of belonging to their school which in turn made them responsible enough to look after the property in their schools. This in turn had a positive effect on teaching environment.

The sensitising of the pupils by the community on HIV and AIDS also had a positive effect on the teaching environment because it complemented the efforts by teachers to fight sexual promiscuity among pupils. The sensitisation concerning HIV and AIDS extended by the community to teachers also had a positive effect on teaching environment because many teachers were able to avoid being infected with HIV and AIDS due to the acquired knowledge and this had a positive effect on the teaching environment since teachers were able to perform their duties properly due to good health.

The PTA chairpersons for the four schools acknowledged that teachers were assisted where necessary. This assistance came in form of provision of such things as project levy. Such project levy had been of help in renovation of school infrastructure, building of more classrooms, laboratories, accommodation of practical subjects such as home economics and industrial arts, sinking of boreholes, running of fundraising projects such as poultry, piggery, building and renovation of teachers' houses, settling of water and electricity bills. All these activities had a positive effect on teaching environment.

Responses from school managers, teachers, parents and Parent-Teacher Association chairpersons generally showed that the school and the community had worked together to provide a successful teaching environment. The study had clearly revealed that there was a great pool of community resources that the schools drew from to make teaching successful.

### *Discussion of responses from teachers' focus group discussions*

It was noted by many teachers during focus group discussions that the effect of community participation in education on teaching environment was seen in such areas as community getting involved in field research. For example, in the teaching of geography, the community became the teaching environment from which project work was undertaken. The community members became active participants in these field projects. In such cases the community became teaching aids since they had knowledge of the local environment. They provided detailed information in relation to the projects in line with their areas of specialisation. At times they even provided money to ensure that such projects were a success. There were times that the community provided transport to help such field projects succeed.

The teachers also acknowledged that parents in the community gave material support to both pupils and teachers, for example, teachers from school B stated that the community donated few computers to the school after the rehabilitation of the school infrastructure. These computers were helping both the teachers and pupils to be conversant with the latest technology as well as being up to date with most issues that happened in the community, the country and the entire world.

The community did pay money to teachers as an incentive to help them conduct extra tuition so as to prepare examination classes adequately for final examinations. This in itself motivated teachers and had a positive effect on the teaching environment.

The sending of pupils to school by the community helped in curbing juvenile delinquency because as long as pupils were in school, their moral conduct was shaped by both parents and teachers. In this case there was combined effort of monitoring learning by both parents and teachers. Moreover, the payment of school fees by the community motivated both the teachers and pupils and provided a proper teaching environment because pupils were not troubled by the fact that their fees had not been paid. It would be hard to teach pupils that were demoralised by non payment of fees.

## **The Effect of Community Participation in Education on the Provision of Educational Support**

### *Discussion of responses from pupils' questionnaire*

Table 3 reveals that the majority of pupils (75%) from School A acknowledged that there were projects run by the community in the school while few pupils (25%) expressed ignorance of existence of any projects in the school run by the community. This simply implied that there was positive effect on the provision of educational support by the community. As noted in School A, school projects undertaken by the community, enhanced development in various areas, ranging from infrastructure construction and renovation to moral behaviour positive transformation.

From Table 4 it is clear that majority of the pupils were benefiting from community participation in education in relation with provision of educational support. Twenty per cent stated that projects run by the community in the school were giving them academic development. Another 20% felt that they were benefiting from projects run by the community in the school through guidance and counselling while another 20% felt they were acquiring life skills through the community-run projects in the school. Fifteen per cent benefited through motivational talks. Twenty-five per cent of the pupils, however, did not know how they were benefiting from any project run by the community in the school. This tallies with 25% of the pupils in Table 3 who expressed ignorance of existence of any projects in the school run by the community. This ignorance did not prove that there were no projects run by the community in School A. The school manager for School A acknowledged that the community around the school was constructing a wall fence around the school to curb vandalism of school property experienced by the school over the past years.

Going by the findings in Table 4, many pupils benefited from community participation in provision of educational support. The benefit would result in many school drop outs leaving school with relevant life skills so as to lead sustainable lives. The findings have also revealed that there would be security for school property and facilities as a result of the wall fence being constructed by the community around school A.

Findings in Table 8 show that the majority of the pupils were benefiting from provision of educational support due to community involvement in education. This was shown by forty-five per cent of the pupils who felt that they were benefiting through learning more things. Five per cent were of the opinion that the projects benefited them through material support

while another 5% acknowledged that they were benefiting through sensitisation concerning HIV and AIDS. However, 45% of the pupils stated that they were not aware of any benefits from the projects run by the community in the school. The responses from the 45% of pupils who claimed that they were not aware of any benefits from the projects run by the community in the school tallies with the claim of their school manager who stated that community participation in the school was minimal as the community around the school was still used to receiving hand outs from the white missionaries that were once in charge of school B. The white missionaries used to have a lot of material support from abroad. The material support was in form of money, clothes, food, books and other things that would make life bearable for the local community. These things were in turn distributed to the local community as some kind of charity. After the departure of the white missionary sisters, black indigenous sisters who took over the running of the school claimed that help or donations from abroad was no longer there. The school usually had a deficit budget and required community resources to avoid this kind of situation. Community participation at school B was seen mostly in promotion and facilitation of girl child education and sensitisation projects on HIV and AIDS run by the community in the school as serious community participation ventures in education.

Findings in Table 11 show that fifty per cent of the respondents stated that there were projects run by the community in school C. Forty per cent were of the opinion that there were no projects run by the community in the school. Ten per cent expressed total ignorance of availability of any project being run by the community in the school. Table 12 revealed that 70% of the pupils stated that they were not benefiting from the projects. Fifteen per cent acknowledged that they were getting enlightenment from the projects. Five per cent stated that the projects enabled them to have conducive environment for learning. Another five per cent was of the opinion that the projects enabled them to have material support. A further five per cent stipulated that the projects enhanced school development.

This could imply that the pupils did not just understand who was behind the running of the projects in their school since the school manager, teachers, parents and PTA chairperson acknowledged that the community was behind the renovation of school infrastructure and teachers' houses which were quite dilapidated since they were built a long time ago. The building of new infrastructure, the renovation of teachers' houses as well as school infrastructure was not perceived by pupils as a form of community participation in education through running of projects. From the pupils' perspective everything was just taken for granted as learners and therefore they failed to establish how they were benefiting from such projects and how this had a positive effect on the provision of educational support.

Table 15 showed that 55% of the pupils from school D were of the opinion that there were projects run by the community in the school while 45% stated that there were no projects run by the community in the school.

Data in Table 16 shows that 35% of the pupils felt that the projects were encouraging them to study hard while 5% stated that they received sensitisation on HIV and AIDS through the projects. Sixty per cent of the pupils stated that there was no benefit that they received from the projects. This tallies with what was stated by the school manager and teachers from school D who claimed that community participation in their school was quite minimal and that there was a lot of interference in the school coming from the community. The interference was mostly coming from palace programmes imposed on the school by the paramount chief on whose land the school was built. In this case the school complied with the palace programmes since the school was situated within the palace area.

The teachers and the school manager found it quite disturbing whenever they were summoned to attend palace meetings even when the school had a serious schedule. Resistance to attend such meetings had always been interpreted as insubordination which called for some kind of discipline or punishment on the culprits by the paramount chief.

These findings are quite unique in that the conflicts between schools and their local communities have always happened in such cases where the community would still allow the school to be a separate entity but yet in a way remain linked to the community by taking part in community affairs without disrupting the flow of learning and teaching. School D happened to be in real trouble because of the aspect of authority exercised by the owner of the land upon which the school was built. His word over subjects in his palace was quite firm and final even when it took disruption of teaching and learning environment. It was only the government that could put into effect the rule of law in this case so as to solve the conflict between school D and the paramount chief's palace in which the school was situated. It is strongly felt that the Provincial Education Officer should seek audience with the royal authorities so that they can explain the roles the community plays in the provision of educational support.

***Discussion of responses from school managers, parents and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons' interview schedules on provision of educational support***

When asked about the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support, the school managers acknowledged that there was support coming through various projects run by PTA and managing agencies from the local communities. Some school managers felt there was very minimal support in schools B and D while other school managers in schools A and C were of the opinion that the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support was quite high.

In school B community support was quite minimal because the community was used to having material and financial assistance from the white missionaries that used to run the school at its inception. Things however changed when indigenous black sisters started running the school and could not continue giving out such assistance to the community since they did not have the resources and capacity to do so.

In school D community participation was quite minimal due to the school's location in the palace. The school and the community were not working hand in hand. The school administration and management desired to incorporate community visions so as to develop the school but the community wanted to domineer the running of the school and this brought about a lot of conflicts between the school and the community. For example, the inclusion of the school in palace programmes disrupted the running of the school.

Parents may have feelings of educational inadequacy, experience language barriers, have economic issues, or possess life stresses that hinder their participation. They must still be recognised as the primary individual in the child's life, and schools bear the responsibility of making contact. Educators have an essential duty to determine the reasons for barriers to non-participation and to offer assistance to those parents so that they can become integral partners in their children's education. For even the previously non-involved parents, educators must view such parents as a vital resource to be tapped in assisting students to master skills needed for advancement (Indiana Department of Education, 2001).

Schools A and C on the other hand acknowledged that there had been positive effect on provision of educational support in their schools as seen in parents' payment of school fees for their children and dependants, helping in renovation of school infrastructure, donation of various educational materials to schools and doing voluntary work for the schools.

The PTA chairpersons equally stated that educational support from the community's participation in education was quite distinct in areas such as renovation of school infrastructure, renovation of teachers' houses, voluntary work done by the local community for the schools, donation of teaching and learning materials and cooperation with the school.

Despite lack of interest that some parents showed, there were still some schools that enjoyed the benefits of vibrant and successful Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs). For instance, the Bermady Primary School located in Trendsways, St Catherine about seven kilometres north of Linestead and the St Ann-based, and Brown's Town Primary School on the Northern side of the Island were prime examples in Jamaica. The PTA at Brown Town Primary School adopted a student more than three years ago. It also operated a breakfast programme that fed about 250 students weekly with a hot meal. In addition, the PTA assisted with the general maintenance of the school. The communication between parents, teachers, school and home was very good. Approximately 350 parents of the more than 1,000 registered students attended the meetings held every three months. In addition to the general meetings once per term, a grade meeting was also convened. This meeting was considered a study circle seminar where educational aspect of each grade was discussed. There were periodic parental workshops. There was also a father's meeting, a yearly event at the school which attracted up to 90 fathers. The achievements and successes of the PTA were due to commitment of parents (Thompson and Hunt, 2008).

As noted above, the participation of the community could not be over emphasised, as it promotes teacher-parent understanding as far as the provision of educational support is concerned.

#### ***Discussion of responses from teachers' focus group discussions***

Teachers who participated in the focus group discussions noted that the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support was evident in introduction and implementation of school projects; facilitation of maintenance of school infrastructure and construction of new school buildings; participation in policy making of the school and planning of school progress; coming up with fundraising ventures for the school; offering financial assistance; and civic awareness.

Schools that supported community involvement included representation of all stakeholder groups in programme delivery and policy making decisions. When the concerns of various

stakeholder groups were considered in the decision-making process, there was increased acceptance of new programmes from the greater school community (Burke, *et. al.*, 2001).

Some teachers, however, were of the opinion that though the community implemented and run projects in their respective schools, at times such projects were not very beneficial because there was no proper accountability and transparency in most cases. For example, some school managers tended to mismanage funds meant for projects. In many instances, funds meant for some projects were diverted into other avenues of the schools, these were avenues where the schools were financially handicapped and needed money urgently in order to continue with school operations. This made some projects not to succeed. Lack of adequate finances was also an obstacle to the completion of such projects. For example, some parents failed to honour their promises after having pledged to contribute some money towards the running of such projects.

School community partnership needed leadership, people with a vision of where the school and the community were headed and of the possibilities for the linked future. Partnership required commitment of influential leaders outside the school. There was need to recruit external players with power, recognition and credibility both within the school and the community who could act as brokers for the school-community projects. These brokers provided input and assistance to generate the project and ensured its successful operation. They must be able to commit themselves to the project on an ongoing basis. Sustainability needed to be built into any initiative from the onset (Black, 2001).

They also observed that at times lack of cooperation among the stakeholders affected the completion of such projects. For example, at every stage of the running of a project, the community was supposed to come together to evaluate the project progress. In most cases when stakeholders did not turn up for such evaluation meetings, the project tended to stand still. It was in such cases that people started stealing the materials meant for the project. The teachers acknowledged that it was through monitoring by all stakeholders of such projects that success could be achieved.

It should be mentioned, however, that there were times that community members lacked cooperation in taking part in certain projects because they lacked interest in such kinds of projects. Responsibilities would be divided among community members in such a way that recognised special talents and interests. Power and responsibility would be decentralised, and community action engaged the natural enthusiasm and talents of community members (Reid,

2000). It would be important to take into consideration that how a school communicated with various stakeholders would establish its community's ability to build critical and effective partnerships that would ensure student's overall academic success and the ability to access services and resources (Schmitt and Tracy, 1996 cited in Burke *et. al.*, 2001).

Community participation in education should not be participation with an intention of domineering the school but it should be participation based on mutual understanding and respect for the school. On the other hand, the school should also treat the community with respect and understanding. The school and the community should be ready to work together for the provision of educational support and for building up the teaching and learning environment appropriate for the pupil. Parents should feel that the school belongs to them and that they have the responsibility to develop and look after its infrastructure.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

This study sought to establish the effect of community participation in education in the learning and teaching environment in selected schools of Mongu District in Western Province.

The objectives of the study were: (a) to find out the effect of community participation in education on learning environment, (b) to find out the effect of community participation in education on teaching environment, and (c) to find out the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support.

#### **Summary**

Using interview schedules, the researcher had interviews with school managers, parents and PTA chairpersons. Questionnaires were given to pupils. Focus group discussions were held with teachers.

The findings of the study were as follows:

#### ***The effect of community participation in education on learning environment***

The effect of community participation in education on learning environment was more positive than negative. It was quite beneficial when the community was allowed to participate in education because the learning environment became conducive and rich.

The learning environment became conducive and rich because the community worked hand in hand with the school to bring out a sense of responsibility in the children; supplemented lessons given at school by assisting in homework; donated learning materials and paid school fees. It was negative when community wanted to fully rely on school for assistance and when there was vandalism of school property.

#### ***The effect of community participation in education on teaching environment***

The effect of community participation in education on teaching environment had more advantages than disadvantages. Community participation in education created a teaching environment with adequate resources and friendly enabling environment.

When the community was allowed to participate in education, the advantages were that there was mentoring of pupils; feeding of pupils; taking of pupils to school; provision of teaching aids; renovation of teachers' houses; renovation of school infrastructure; running of projects for the school; assisting in disciplining of pupils and cooperating with the school. The disadvantages were seen in personalisation of school issues which resulted into conflict and undermining of the capacity and potential of the community's involvement in education.

***The effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support***

It was evident from the findings that the effect of community participation in education on the provision of educational support had proved to be reliable, very significant and of great value. It had proved to be very reliable because the community provided expertise which the schools utilised from time to time when need arose to utilise such expertise. It was very significant and of great value because the community understood the kind of educational support required by their respective schools and relevant to their children. The schools also understood the capacity of their communities where provision of such educational support was concerned.

**Conclusion**

The study revealed that the effect of community participation in education on the learning and teaching environment in Mongu District was positive because community participation in education created a friendly enabling environment with adequate resources which was conducive and rich for learning and teaching. All this was seen in the encouragement given to both teachers and pupils by the community which in turn had a very strong positive effect on learning and teaching environment. The negative part was seen in cases where the community in one school wanted the school to pay allegiance to the paramount chief in a way that disturbed the running of the school; it was also seen in community's vandalism of school property; community's handout mentality; high levels of poverty and illiteracy and some schools' unwillingness to involve the community fully in the running of the schools which resulted in conflict. The study further revealed that community participation in education was critical to the provision of educational support because the community owned resources and skills that would meet and spearhead the aspirations of teachers and learners positively.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- (a) The main finding of the study was that the effect of community participation in education on learning and teaching environment as well as provision of educational support was more positive than negative. The Ministry of Education therefore should encourage more community participation in education.
- (b) One of the findings of the study was that community participation in education in School D was minimal mostly because there was much interference in the running of the school from the palace in which the school was situated. The recommendation to the Ministry of Education is that school programmes should be separated from palace programmes without cutting off the relationship between the two institutions. Thus, the Ministry of Education should, therefore, ensure that schools are not built in palaces because traditional chiefs tend to disturb the learning and teaching process because of the abrupt programmes for their subjects.
- (c) The Ministry of Education should ensure that schools are not built near bars.
- (d) There should be sensitisation of school managers, teachers and pupils on the importance of having community participation in education in the teaching and learning environment.
- (e) Communities should be made aware that schools belong to them and were for their own benefit. Communities therefore should be responsible to run as many projects as possible in schools in order to improve the learning and teaching environment.
- (f) PTA chairpersons should work out awareness programmes among parents to enable them run as many projects as possible.
- (g) The Ministry of Education should give directives to school managers to work hand in hand with communities to solve problems. Similarly, the Ministry of Education should give directives to schools to work hand in hand with communities in ensuring that pupils are given right nutrition in order to improve their mental capacity.
- (h) This study was limited to high schools in Mongu District of Western Province. There was need, therefore, to carry out a study covering many provinces of Zambia. In

addition, research should be carried out to establish the effect of community participation in education on the administration and management of schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA



UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381  
Fax: +260-1-292702

P O Box 32379  
Lusaka, Zambia

30<sup>th</sup> January, 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD WORK FOR M.ED STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. SIYUMBWA LUCY WABEI computer number 526003970 is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

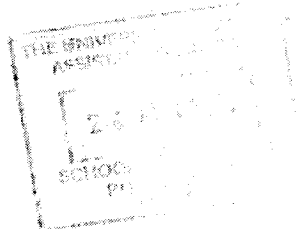
The student is taking a Masters Programme in Education. The Programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her.

Yours Faithfully

*Mall*  
P. C. Manchishi (Dr.)  
ASSISTANT DEAN (PG), SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

cc. Dean, Education  
Director, DRGS



**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICE,  
MONGU**

*All correspondence should be addressed  
to the Provincial Education Officer  
and not to individuals  
Telephone: 260-217-221831  
Tel/Fax: 260-217-221836  
Telegrams: PROVED MONGU*



*In reply please quote*

PEO/WP/104/11/1.....

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICE  
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
P.O. BOX 910031  
MONGU  
WESTERN PROVINCE**

10<sup>th</sup> June 2008

To: All Basic Schools in Mongu District  
All High Schools in Mongu District

**FIELD WORK FOR M.ED STUDENT: MS SIYUMBWA WABEI LUCY**

This letter serves to introduce the bearer, Ms Siyumbwa, who is a student at the University of Zambia. Permission has been granted to her to visit a number of schools in Mongu District to conduct her research.

Kindly assist her in any way possible.

I wish to thank you in anticipation.

Handwritten signature of Lancelot Mutale.

Lancelot Mutale  
Senior Planning Officer  
For/Provincial Education Officer  
WESTERN PROVINCE

cc The District Education Board Secretary  
Mongu

**APPENDIX C**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS**

1. How is the community encouraging you in learning?

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2. Is the community interfering in any way in your learning?

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3. What assistance are you giving to the community?

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4. Do you participate in local community activities?

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5. What has been the most serious problem you have faced from the community?

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6. How has the community been assisting your teachers?

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7. Are there any projects run by the community in your school?

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8. How are you benefiting from the projects?

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9. What do you think should be done by the community for the school?

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10. How do you view the idea of the community using your school infrastructure for various activities?

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, ANSWERS AND COOPERATION.

END

## **APPENDIX D**

### **SCHOOL MANAGERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. How do you view community participation in education?
2. Has the community been of any help to your school?
3. Does the community get involved in day to day school activities?
4. Are your teachers assisted in any way by the community members?
5. Does your school participate in local community activities?
6. What do pupils do for the community?
7. Has the school employed any of the locals?
8. In which area of your school management has the community participated very well?
9. What problems do you encounter with the local community?
10. How have such problems affected learning and teaching in school?
11. Do you allow the local community to use school premises when they are in need?
12. What would you have done better concerning the relationship between your school and the local community?
13. How often do you allow community participation in the affairs of the school?
14. Are there any projects run by the community in your school?
15. If your answer in 14 is 'Yes,' then, how is your school benefiting from these projects?
16. Do you have any other comment concerning community participation in education?

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, ANSWERS AND COOPERATION.**

**END**

## **APPENDIX E**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS**

1. In which ways do you assist your local school?
2. Does the school involve you in its day-to-day operations?
3. What benefits do you get out of the school?
4. How do you assist pupils concerning school work?
5. How do you raise learning achievements of pupils?
6. How are you increasing the levels of access of pupils in your local school?
7. How do you encourage balance between boys and girls in education?
8. How do you assist vulnerable pupils to attain education within your local community?
9. In which ways do you assist teachers?
10. How much power has the school given you in taking part in the running of the daily activities of the school?
11. How much have you done as parents to motivate teaching and learning in your local school?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, ANSWERS AND COOPERATION.

END

**APPENDIX F**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENT-TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

**CHAIRPERSONS**

1. How is the community encouraging the pupils in learning?
2. Has the school ever faced any problem from the community?
3. How has the community been assisting the teachers?
4. What do you think should be done by the community for the school?
5. Have there been any problems between the school and the Parent Teacher Association?
6. Are there projects run by the community in the school?
7. Does the community take part in the school activities?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, ANSWERS AND COOPERATION.

END

## APPENDIX G

### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Do you view community participation in education as something important or not?

How do you benefit from school-community relationship?

*State the areas where you feel community participation in education is vital?*

Which are the most problematic areas concerning school-community participation in education?

What challenges do you face with the local community?

What assistance do you get from your local community in terms of teaching and learning?

Does your local community involve you in their local activities?

How does the community assist pupils to participate effectively in education?

How do you as teachers assist pupils to participate effectively in education?

0. Would teaching have been effective and interesting without community participation in education?

1. How often do you allow community participation in the teaching and learning process?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, ANSWERS AND COOPERATION.

END