A MODEL FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGED SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

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B.A. Cur., B.A., B. Ed. M. Ed.

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Philosophiae Doctor

in the

School of Educational Sciences

at the

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

(VAAL TRIANGLE FACULTY)

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2009

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis "A model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools", is my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR DEGREE at Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

The opinions that are expressed in this study and the conclusions that are reached are those of the researcher and should not be ascribed to the Graduate School of Educational Sciences at Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University.

JOHN MFUNDO NOJAJA

May 2009

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Vathiswa,

My collaborator

My philosopher

My joy

My wife

and our beloved children

Vukani

Linah

Fezile

Lusanda

and our lovely grandchildren

Asanda

Sisipho

Yandisa

Lusanele

Litha

for their incessant encouragement and support, and also their patience during the period of my study and my long absence from home during the preparation and data gathering period for this study.

My dearly departed parents and daughter (may their souls rest in peace) for the discipline in which they brought me up. Were it not for that, I could not have been disciplined enough to complete my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following persons have been instrumental in making this study possible:

- Dr. E.A.S. De Waal, my promoter who provided me with expertise, motherly guidance, encouragement, assistance, patience, co-operation and support throughout this study. I am greatly indebted to her for her painstaking advice and guidance.
- Prof. P.J. Mentz, my co-promoter for his valuable inputs, assistance, his friendliness, fatherly love and care.
- Mrs. A. Oosthuyzen of the Department of Statistical Consultancy Services, at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus for professional assistance and guidance with the empirical study.
- Dr. J.C. Huebsch for editing the language in this study
- Pfunzo Denzhe Nursing School colleagues and friends for their encouragement and support.
- Mr D.D. Mphuthi for his support and encouragement during my studies.
- The late Mr. T.D. Phaswana for helping me with diagrams of this study.
- The staff of the Ferdinand Postma Library of the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus for their excellent service.
- The Eastern Cape Departrnent of Education for granting me permission to conduct research in Eastern Cape secondary schools in the District of Lusikisiki.
- District Manager, Principals, educators and parents of the Lusikisiki District, who participated in the study by completing the questionnaire.

Last, but above all the researcher is conscious of his debt to HIM in whose grace and by whose grace everything was made possible. May this work in some way be of use to others and in so doing bring honour to HIS name.

SUMMARY

A MODEL FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGED SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

As societies developed, the demand and need for properly educated people increased and educators gradually replaced parents. In this process the weakness of the home/parents were replaced by the strengths of the school/educator, while the strengths of the home/parents were lost. This research suggests that positive parent involvement and partnership with schools is a prerequisite of effective schooling and that co-operation between home and school can raise educational achievement.

This study was undertaken by means of literature review, quantitative and qualitative investigations in order to:

- provide a thorough background to the role and place of parents in general and within disadvantaged communities in particular, by studying models and practices of parent involvement in education as it is presently manifested in various urban and disadvantaged communities in the world.
- examine educational provision and parent involvement in disadvantaged communities in South African Schools and to exclude external factors which impinge on effective educational provision for this group.
- investigate the state of affairs regarding parent involvement in disadvantaged communities by means of quantitative and qualitative study in order to extend the body of knowledge concerning parent involvement in disadvantaged South African Schools; and to formulate a suitable effective model for parent involvement in order to empower the milieu-deprived parent, educators and learners.

Chapter 1 deals with problem statement, aims of the research, clarification of concepts and the methods employed in achieving the purpose of the study. This includes a discussion of the population and sample used for the empirical research and an outline of the chapters.

Chapter 2 highlights the nature and scope of parent involvement in education, fundamental and educational grounds for parent involvement were discussed, models of parent involvement were identified and discussed, advantages and disadvantages of parent involvement were mentioned, and ways in which parents become involved in education of their children were discussed.

In Chapter 3, the nature of disadvantaged Schools in South Africa was discussed and the poor socio-economic position of parents in disadvantaged rural areas was also discussed.

The qualitative and quantitative research design, administrative procedures, population and random sampling as well as statistical techniques were discussed in Chapter 4.

The duly completed questionnaires returned by educators and parents of the children of the selected schools as respondents were empirically analyzed, and the qualitative research data was collected by means of observations and an in-depth individual and focus group interviews was analyzed in Chapter 5 and presented a background data on the informants and the context in which this research takes place.

In Chapter 6, the information gathered from literature review, the quantitative and qualitative data were used to develop a model and strategy for the implementation of a model in disadvantaged rural community South African schools.

The last chapter, Chapter 7, throws light on the summary of all the chapters, research findings and recommendations based on the research findings derived from the previous chapters, as well as final remarks. This implies that all relevant issues raised in all chapters are summarized and recommendations are also made.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As societies developed, educators gradually replaced the demand and the need for properly educated people also increased. In this process, the weaknesses of the home/parents were replaced by the strengths of the school/educator, while the strengths of the home/parents were lost (Smit & Liebenberg, 2003:1-5).

Each child, regardless of his/her social and economic background, needs to have the opportunity for sound educational experiences that enable him/her to realise his/her fullest potential (Laminack, 2000:33-34). According to Smit and Liebenberg (2003:3), disadvantaged children are already seriously behind other children in the development of aptitudes necessary for success in school. It is important for each disadvantaged child to be offered opportunities to develop these abilities so as to prevent failure or a limited future in life.

While the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is presently moving through a dramatic transition process, and while it is grappling with implementation of the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), it cannot miraculously shake off the legacy of the apartheid past. Although the Republic of South Africa is moving away from racial division, it is true that this legacy causes a myriad of problems among traditional black schools, particularly due to the denial of educational equity for the past disadvantaged majority population (RDP, 1994:60)

Although the lack of equity in education has crippled the quality of life of the past disenfranchised and marginalised population, particularly with regard to home environments that lack the resources to address educational needs adequately, it is possible for educators to create a breakthrough for children from such disadvantaged homes (Jantjes, 1995:289-290).

Although consensus has not been reached, it is now becoming more widely accepted that positive parent involvement and partnership with schools is a pr-requisite of effective schooling and that cooperation between home and school can raise educational achievement (Tomlison, 1993:131).

Involving parents in the education of their children has become a major goal of professionals, particularly those working with at-risk learners. However, systematic collaboration between the home, the school and the community remains a distant reality. If education is to foster learning, it should be an uninterrupted experience that actively involves the learner and his/her surroundings. Consequently, continuous support from the home, community and school is a prerequisite for academic success (Engle, 1998:4).

The focus of this study is on the development of Parent-Educator-Community-Learner Partnership Model that will increase parent involvement in the education of their children in disadvantaged rural communities thereby improving learner achievement.

Shared responsibility, accountability, sense of purpose, mutual respect, and sharing information are important qualities if we want this partnership to succeed. Currently it is expected that parents must be partners in education, which indicates, that parents should be part of the decision-making process and its implementation (Heystek, 1998:1).

It is imperative to search for the best ways of empowering parents and educators in order to allow them to be involved and participate meaningfully in the education of children.

Parent involvement is possible only when parents and educators have mutual sensitivity and empathy for the daily problems, frustrations, challenges and expectations that are all part of the teaching situation (Coley & Morris, 2002:982-998).

Economic competition and social stability require that the current high level of academic and social failure among poor children in disadvantaged South African schools today have to be reduced drastically. There is a great danger

in continuing a two-tiered society in South Africa, one affluent, generally well educated, and optimistic; the other poor, increasingly isolated, badly educated and despairing. The schools cannot address this problem alone; neither can low-income and disadvantaged families. Schools and families need each other, and need to devise ways of working together for the benefit of children. To build such partnership effectively, it is necessary for all parties to truly understand each other. This is becoming increasingly difficult. Family-school relations like all major areas of education and social policy is characterised by competing viewpoints and ideologies, widely differing experiences and contradictory arguments and evidence. This also applies to differences on the topic among professionals and parents.

Involving parents in the education of their children has become a major goal of professionals, particularly those working with at-risk learners. However, systematic collaboration between the home, the school and the community remains a distant reality. If education is to foster learning, it should be an uninterrupted experience that actively involves the learner and his/her surroundings. Consequently, continuous support from the home, community and the school is a prerequisite for academic success.

The fast pace of societal institutions, poverty, and illiterate and economic reality forced change in the family patterns and increased the need for support systems and empowerment of parents in order for them to be involved in the education of their children (Engle, 1998:4).

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

South Africa's previous education system was characterised by racial inequality and segregation. The democratisation of education in South Africa required a new national education system which suggests the participation in school activities by all stakeholders including parents, educators, learners, the state and the community. This idea is entailed in the South African School's Act of 1996 which states that parents, educators and learners shall promote and accept the responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools, in partnership with the state (South African Schools Act, 1996:2).

An inadequately skilled labour force will be unable to utilise the complex technologies of the twenty first century, forcing large sections of the population to live in Third World poverty and deprivation. It is therefore imperative to find more effective ways of educating children, especially those within disadvantaged communities where the deficiencies of the previous education system need to be addressed (Van Wyk, 1996:11).

According to Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booyens (1996:88), the single most important way to improve education is to strengthen parent involvement. The achievement of academic success in school depends on a triangle of interaction of three elements, namely, the educator, the parent and the learner. Engelbrecht *et al.* (1996:88) research has indicated, that any form of education that excludes anyone of the three elements, seems to be ineffective in both the disadvantaged and urban communities of the Republic of South Africa.

In Spain, Gonzalez-Pienda (2002:257-287) used the *Structural Equation Model* approach to test a model hypothesising the influence of parent involvement on learners' academic aptitudes, self-concept, and causal attributions, as well as the influence of the three variables on academic achievement. The results of this model indicate that parent involvement had a positive and significant influence on the participant's measured characteristics.

The discussions held with principals of the five traditional black high schools in the district of Lusikisiki with a high failure rate revealed that parents are not involved in the education of their children. According to the Eastern Cape Province grade 12 Examination results (2007:1-19, 2008:1-24) report that the poor grade 12 results are due to absence of parent involvement in many schools of the district of Lusikisiki.

The research conducted by Heystek (1998:13) verifies the assumption that parents are not actively involved in school activities and education of their children. Weeto (1997:2-3) investigated the problems that school principals

experience to involve parents in school activities in the secondary schools in the Free State Province and North West Province results.

According to Van der Westhuizen, Mentz, Mosoge, Nieuwoudt, Steyn,Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego (1999:315-319), lack of parent involvement in the education of learners is ranked first by school principals and second by educators and learners as the cause of poor grade 12 results, and this confirms that parents are not sufficiently involved in the education of their children and their involvement is necessary to improve academic achievement of learners.

Nojaja (2003:222-224) indicated, that parents lack knowledge on the nature, purposes, and organisational structure of the school and how to get involved in the activities of the school. In this study it was concluded that parents do not know how to get involved in the education of their children.

Parents cannot be interested and concerned with the child and the school's problems unless they are involved, and to be involved, the parents must know and experience some of the child's educational experiences. King (Nichols-Solomon, 2001:33-37) has shown in her study that parent involvement in educational experiences improves the relationship, not only between the parent and the school, but also between the child, the parent and the educator. Whilst the importance of parent involvement has been the subject of newspaper reports, educational books, the Department of Education, and from literature studies done on parent involvement, one can conclude, that the development of a model for parent involvement in South African disadvantaged schools has never been considered.

Although various models on parent involvement through literature were identified and discussed in this study but as far as could be established, there is no model that has been developed for parent involvement in the disadvantaged communities with special reference for Lusikisiki black schools in the Eastern Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa.

Against the foregoing background of the problem, it is clear children are failing and dropping out and that parents are not sufficiently involved in the education of their children in the South African disadvantaged schools and it

becomes a point of concern that many learners are leaving school without actualising their potential. Once learners fail they are seen as failures of the education system. The learner who has failed finds it difficult to obtain a suitable job and turns to juvenile delinquency, thereby becoming a burden to the community. When learners drop out the nation is hurt grievously in terms of health, wealth and the achievement of its democratic goals (Gage, 1990:280).

The following problem questions arise from the afore mentioned discussion:

- How is the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged schools in South Africa?
- What models of parent involvement can be identified in literature?
- How parent involvement can be increased in disadvantaged schools in South Africa?

Poor learner performance that is observed by poor grade 12 examination results during the last decade that is affected by insufficient or low parent involvement in the Lusikisiki district of the Eastern Cape Province prompted for the research of this study.

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In the light of the above research problems, the following aims for this research may be identified.

- To determine the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged schools in South Africa.
- To investigate different models related to parent involvement
- To develop a model of the parental involvement process in order to understand the kinds of involvement activities they can engage in and how their involvement influences children's learning outcomes.

1.4 RESEARH METHODOLOGY

The aims of the research will be achieved by means of the following methods.

1.4.1 Literature study

Both primary and secondary literature sources will be studied to gather information that will:

- Determine the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged schools in South Africa.
- Investigate different models related to parent involvement.
- Help in developing a model of the parental involvement process in order to understand the kinds of involvement activities they can engage in and how their involvement influences children's learning outcomes.

In order to identify relevant sources, a DIALOG and UCTD-search was launched by using the following key words: parent, academic, achievement, empowerment, and parent involvement, culture of learning, disadvantaged, model and community.

1.4.2 Empirical research

An empirical investigation was conducted to determine the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged schools in South Africa and to investigate different models related to parent involvement in the Lusikisiki district of the Eastern Cape Province.

1.4.2.1 Quantitative research

Data for this study were collected through the use of a questionnaire. In order to ensure validity and reliability of the instrument used, a pilot study was done and the response proved that the questionnaire was valid and reliable.

Two structured questionnaires were administered to parents and educators (one to each target group) in order to compare their responses.

1.4.2.1.1 Population

The population comprised parents and educators from fifteen (15) South African disadvantaged high secondary schools in the Lusikisiki district of the Eastern Cape Province where the problem had been identified and the recommendations were aimed at the Lusikisiki district. It was assumed, that these fifteen schools would render information-rich data, with some applicability to schools in similar circumstances elsewhere in South Africa.

1.4.2.1.2 Sample

The sample consisted of selected parents (n=500) and selected educators (n=100) from South African disadvantaged schools in the Lusikisiki district.

A stratified random sampling method was employed in order to ensure that identified parents and educators were represented, bias was avoided and that parents and educators had an equal opportunity of being selected.

1.4.2.1.3 Pilot study

The questionnaires were pre-tested by administering it to five selected parents with regard to its qualities of measurement and appropriateness, and to review it for clarity.

1.4.2.1.4 Data analysis

The statistical department of North West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, was consulted on suitable descriptive statistics.

1.4.2.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative data collection strategies were used. The dominant strategies employed in this current investigation were participant observation, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews. The reason for choosing these qualitative research strategies was to extend understanding within the context of a particular situation as to obtain rich data in order to build theories that describe a setting or explain a phenomenon. This research was aimed at

elucidating parents' and educators' experience of parent involvement, as well as the context in which this takes place.

1.4.3 Ethical consideration

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Provincial Department of Education of the Eastern Cape Province and from the principals of the fifteen schools of the Lusikisiki district.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research. No information was made available to an unauthorised person without the permission of the schools in question and the Provincial Department of Education involved in the research.

1.5 FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY

The study is feasible because of the following:

- Sufficient literature sources on the topic were available. DIALOG and UCTD searches were conducted, using the following key words: Parents, parent involvement, academic achievement, empowerment, disadvantaged communities, education and model.

- The study was conducted in fifteen South African disadvantaged schools in the Lusikisiki district of the Eastern Cape Province where the problem was identified.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF STUDY

It must however, be noted that the degree or quality of parent involvement in school activities, differ from school to school, depending on such variables as location of school, affluence, socio-economic status of the parent, community, and whether the school is private or a public school.

The research area was limited to the Eastern Cape Province and more specifically to fifteen schools in the Lusikisiki district. It was assumed that these schools would render information-rich data, with some applicability to schools in similar circumstances elsewhere in South Africa.

The field of study covered the nature of parent involvement in South African disadvantaged schools and models for parent involvement in the education of their children.

No claim can be made, because of the limited scope of the investigation, that the results of the investigation be generalised with regard to all disadvantaged schools in South Africa.

1.7 DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

Only those terms that were used in a specific context in this research, are clarified.

1.7.1 Parent

According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:212-213), the concept "parent" refers to an adult person who shows and guides a child. Barnard and Vos (1980:88-90) however, state that a mature person can be regarded as a parent. "Parent" can refer to the legal guardian of a child (Barnard, 1996:75-76). According to De Villiers (1988:146-147) "parent" can also refer to a biological father or mother who may decide to educate his/her child.

1.7.2 Learner

A learner is one who is learning subject content or skills, or one who acquires knowledge, skills and receives instruction from the educator (Hegarty, 1993:117-130).

1.7.3 Parent involvement

Squelch (1994:1), Mc Caleb (1993:3), Munn (1997:2) and Dekker (1993:154) define this concept as "... active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities. It is manifested in a variety of activities, from supporting and upholding the ethos of the school to supervising children's homework".

Vandergrift and Greene (1992:7) define this concept as follows:

"The idea has two key elements: first, parents are supportive. They encourage their children and are systematic, reassuring, and understanding. They show a high level of commitment to their children and their education. Second, parents are active. They are doing something that is observable. This combination of level of commitment and active participation is what makes an involved parent".

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997:6) provide a broad definition, which also includes home-based activities such as reviewing the child's work and monitoring the child's progress, helping with homework and discussing school events. They also include school-based involvement such as coming to school for scheduled conferences, volunteering at school and serving on school governing boards.

Mavhivha and Heystek (1996:9) describe this concept as decision-making, problem-solving, policy-making, and appointment of educators, dismissal of educators, expulsion of learners and building, as well as renovating of schools. According to Wolfendale (1992:3) and Dekker (1993:155) parent involvement can take the form of co-operation, participation and partnership.

Parent involvement in this research should be understood to mean the intentional efforts, which are made by the parent in order to assist his/her growing child.

1.7.4 Disadvantaged schools

The concept is defined as unfavourable conditions or circumstances, detriment or prejudice, which includes social and material factors such as income, unemployment, housing, health and environmental conditions. The concept simply means poverty (Mortimore, 1996:8).

In this study the term disadvantaged schools will be used to encompass all those schools who experience social or economic limitation to full participation in the education of learners coming from low-income, minority, limited English-

proficient and poorly educated parents of the rural areas of the Eastern Cape Province.

1.7.5 Disadvantaged child

The concept is defined as the poor survive-underfed, ill educated and socially and economically marginal. It is the poorest child who does worst in school, who cares least about learning, who swells the ranks of youthful delinquency, drug addiction, who may reveal mental and emotional disability, and who shows a high rate of cumulative educational retardation (Keller, 1967:146-147).

Ausabel (1996:8) pictures the disadvantaged child as one who has poor perceptual discrimination skills and the inability to use adults as a source of information, correction, and reality testing. This child also has an impoverished language-symbolic system and a dearth of information, concepts and relational propositions. It is often in the area of language development that the disadvantaged child manifests the greatest degree of intellectual retardation.

1.7.6 Model

Gunter, Estes and Schwab (2003:175-179) define a model as something intended to serve, or that may serve, as a pattern of something to be made; a material representation or embodiment of an ideal; sometimes, a drawing; or a plan.

In this study a model is described as a schematic description of a parent-educator-learner-community partnership working toward a common goal and it has been designed to bring about improved parent involvement.

1.7.7 Culture of learning

Smit and Liebenberg (2003:145) define this concept as the general disposition and attitude of learners towards learning. This includes the atmosphere of diligence or industry that develops as a result of a combination of the personal characteristics of learners, commitment and involvement of parents the

leadership of the principal, the professional conduct of educators and the general attitude of the community towards the school.

1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Orientation.

Chapter 2: The nature of parent involvement in education.

Chapter 3: The nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged schools in South Africa.

Chapter 4: Research design and methods.

Chapter 5: Presentation and interpretation of data.

Chapter 6: The development of a model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools.

Chapter 7: Summary, findings and recommendations.

1.9 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the purpose of the research and to state the problem of the research

The aims of the research were stated. The method of the research was explained and the demarcation of the field of study was indicated.

The composition of the various chapters and the definition of the terms were explained in this chapter. The next chapter will deal with the nature of parent involvement in education.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with parent involvement as a theoretical framework for the discussion of parent involvement in the education of their children. Consideration is given to the definition, nature and scope of parent involvement, reasons for parent involvement, advantages of parent involvement, ways in which parents become involved in the education of their children, reasons for non-involvement of parents in education, parent involvement in South Africa and models of parent involvement.

The school is set apart from other societal institutions by its task, namely educative teaching. For education in schools to be effective, it must also contribute to the learner's education. The school and the educator are, however, merely the secondary educators of the learner, while the parent is considered to be the primary educator (Van Schalkwyk, 1990:19). Because the education task is indivisible, education managers and parents are therefore jointly responsible for assuring that the education is effective.

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement in education continues to be of national, political and local interest and is relevant to all professionals in education, parents and parent representatives. The case for involving parents in their children's development and education has been established by innumerable studies and projects and many schools are committed to pursuing home-school links (Griffith, 1996:33-40). This has since been recognised in South Africa as a key variable to school effectiveness in general and learner attainment in particular.

Parents have been given new rights and a greater responsibility over their children's schooling (SA, 1996a). These rights and new roles are intended to make schools more responsive to parent concerns and to improve the quality of education. The following media reports not only illustrate the importance of

parents in education, but also reflect a renewed call for the decentralisation of education.

- "Skole is self weer baas" (Anon, 1997a:1), commenting on the implications for parents in the landmark judgement Grove *versus* Education Ministry, 20 June 1997.

- "Parent involvement is crucial" (Anon, 1995a:16).

Parents are essential resources and possess unique abilities and opportunities as educators. The school needs to harness this resource for the benefit of children (Dean, 1992:219). Vandergrift and Greene (1992:57) are of the opinion that the improvement of parent involvement, particularly among at-risk populations, has become one of the most challenging tasks facing educators today.

Most parents in the world play a minor role in the education of their children due to a variety of reasons such as parents with little or no education, cultural diversity, lack of knowledge and skills, educators' attitudes, natural fear of schools, psychological problems (stress), learners discouraging their parents from visiting the school, and a communication breakdown between the home and school.

Raffaele and Knoff (1999:450) quote Monacker, saying that some parents experienced educational failure themselves and do not trust that educators have their children's best interests at heart. Other parents may perceive their education to be different from their children's formal education. Still others may feel disempowered by the traditional bureaucracy operating in most school systems. Vandergrift and Greene (1992:57) say that for many parents school bring back memories of their own failure. Some feel uncomfortable, embarrassed and even guilty when they walk into a school. Others do not feel valued by the school. Some parents experience fears and they are too shy to come to the school environment. Some parents have the perception that their cultural values are not accepted or affirmed by the school personnel.

Raffaele and Knoff (1999:452) quote Moles (1993), who says, that disadvantaged parents and school personnel may lack knowledge and skills for interacting with each other. According to Chavkin and Williams (1988:34) parents frequently lack understanding of an administrator's roles, pressures and concerns. Administrators fail to capitalise on the parents as educational resources and parents fail to latch on to administrators as access points to gain the increased involvement they desire. Administrators sometimes hold negative views about parent involvement, hence, they place limits on the ways parents could participate in the education of their children.

Herman (1998:27) identifies natural fear as another reason for parents' absence in the education of their children. According to Herman, this fear seems to be most prevalent in schools undergoing significant change and parents who have had negative childhood experiences in school.

Piltch (1991:58) points out that many parents are so overwhelmed with the task of simply making a living, that they are unable to spend a significant amount of time monitoring a child's school progress. He further indicates that some parents have physical or psychological problems that keep them from being constructive educational partners.

Locks (1999:20) reports that many learners often discourage their parents from coming to school. For the most part, learners relate parents' visits to the school with a disciplinary situation or with poor grades.

Swap (1987:79) identifies communication measures between home and school as another factor that continues to prevent parents from playing a major role in the education of their children at school. Swap states, that effective communication between home and school will become increasingly more difficult to achieve in the next few years due to a variety of factors, the most significant being the large numbers of families where both parents are in the work force, leaving them little time for school-related activities.

Seefeldt (1985:99) indicates stress as a cause of poor parent involvement. She says that mothers in the USA are increasingly employed outside of the home, and more parents than before are facing the job of child rearing without

a partner. They are so overburdened and short of time that they do not have time to involve themselves in the education of their children.

In a study carried out by the United States of America Education Department in 1994, the following were identified as obstacles to parent involvement: lack of time, uncertainty about what to do, cultural differences and a lack of supportive environment (Reid, 1995:2-6).

Research studies done in South Africa, especially in exclusive Black communities, indicate that the obstacles which hamper parents from being involved in the education of their children, are illiteracy, a lack of time, a negative school climate, a lack of parent involvement opportunities, urbanisation, social circumstances, attitudes of parents, and the attitude of both educators and school managers.

A study of parent involvement carried out by Van Wyk (1996:121), reports that some Gauteng parents, especially in Black townships, do not bother much about their children's education and therefore, do not involve themselves in the children's activities. They do not check their children's written work or go to school to enquire about their progress from their educators. Despite the benefit that goes with parent involvement, parents in the rural areas and black townships continue to distance themselves from the education of their children. Apart from basic obligations given to children by their parents, parents do not know other ways or means in which they could be involved in formal education at school. Most parents lack knowledge of parent involvement and nobody bothered to equip them with basic skills necessary for that concept.

Many African parents in South Africa cannot read or write. Helping children in formal education would remain a problem for some time. Coetzee (1991:216) reports that the level of illiteracy in South Africa at the time of his study was estimated at 8.3 million people, of which the vast majority were Black people.

Kruger (1988:3) identifies the following obstacles that prevent parents from becoming involved in the education of their children: a lack of time, parents' rights that could not be interpreted by parents and educators, a negative

school climate and lack of parent involvement opportunities. Both parents and educators lack the knowledge and skills of formal parent involvement. Kruger (1988:3) again observes that parents did not give themselves time to be with their children nor to visit the institutions where their children were learning.

Many educators in public schools do not want to accept that parents have the right to be involved in the education of their children. Some parents and educators interpret parents' rights in the education of their children incorrectly; hence, involvement at times shakes the authorities of the school. Some educators in public schools in the rural areas see parent involvement as another form of policing educators in their jobs. One often hears educators from the rural areas complaining about parents acting as police. The researcher is of the opinion that this also happens in other parts of the world.

Educators lack knowledge of parent involvement activities. Parent involvement policies in most schools are absent. Despite the call by the Education Department that parents had to form part of the school governing bodies, the government did very little to implement the policy such as holding workshops that would allow them to carry out their duties in a practical way.

The attitude of some parents towards schools and educators in most parts of the world leaves much to be desired. In this researcher's community, which is also in the context of this study, some parents accuse educators of being lazy, drinking liquor during school hours, engaging in love affairs with school girls, failing their children and so forth. Some of the accusations are true about many educators. However, there are those educators who are committed to their profession. Educators are academic parents in a school situation and they should not act unprofessionally in front of the school children and the community in which they are serving. Parents should have had formal ways of dealing with these problems collectively, rather than by pointing fingers at educators from a distance. Parents should have corrected their children in a mutual and friendly way if the education goals of the child were to be realised. Surely, the managers of schools need to step in here and intervene with regard to the behaviour of educators.

Though there are a number of obstacles that hamper parents from being involved in the education of their children, such as illiteracy, lack of time and the negative climate of the school, attitudes of both educators and school managers are crucial factors in parent involvement activities in South Africa, especially in disadvantaged rural areas, as is clear from this study.

2.3 PARENT INVOLVEMENT: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUALISATION

Parent involvement is defined as the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children's homework at home. Parent involvement implies mutual co-operation, sharing and support (Squelch and Lemmer, 1993:93).

The *UNISA METROPOLITAN LIFE PROJECT* (1994:2) for the training of educators in parent involvement, defines parent involvement as an active and supportive participation of parents and being partners and allies of the educators in the primary aspects of formal and informal education of their own child, as well as a child of the school and of the broad education of their community in an individual and collective way, in a structured and orderly manner, in order to achieve the objective of education as fully as possible.

According to Marcon (1999:395), parent involvement refers to a wide range of parent behaviours, such as communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Griffith (2001:4) states that each type of parent involvement can lead to different outcomes for learners, parents and educators.

According to Feuerstein (2000:2), parent involvement encompasses a broad range of parenting behaviour, ranging from discussions with learners about homework to attendance at parent-organisation meetings. In the literature, Dimock, O'Donoughue and Robbs (1996:5-20) identified five basic categories of parent involvement: school choice, decision-making through formal structures or site based council, teaching and learning, effects on the physical and material environment and communication.

Edwards and Wann (1998:13), describe parent involvement as the co-responsibility the parents must assume for essential concerns of the education of their children. Parent involvement means sharing leadership, which means sharing of knowledge, responsibility and power (Nichols-Solomon, 2001:33).

Epstein (1996a:224) defines parent involvement as an observable relationship between classroom-educators and parents with an aim of improving learner's academic performance.

In support of the definitions stated on parent involvement, Blackstone (1999:81-98) states, that a greater extent of overlap between educators and parents' roles is desired for its own sake. The degree of overlapping between parent and educator roles in education is seen as positive for parent-educator partnership and is being recognised on all levels of education.

One is able to deduce from these definitions, that parent involvement involves far more than serving on school committees or helping at school functions.

Parent involvement, in this research, should be understood to mean that parents, as partners, participate with educators in the interests of education of the learners for the purpose of assisting the learners in their educational endeavours, by improving the learning conditions of the learners.

2.4 NATURE AND SCOPE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The importance of parent involvement in the education of children cannot be over-emphasised. Parent responsibility in the education of children has been emphasised in various ways for many years. This is evident from the rapidly increasing academic literature on this topic, as well as from the frequent references made in the media.

The concept "parent involvement" can be interpreted in various ways, from parents showing interest in their children's education to parents having a say in the administration of the school. According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992:57), parent involvement has two essential dimensions: firstly, it involves

parents supporting their children in their schoolwork and secondly, it involves parents participating actively in the education of their children.

Vandergrift and Greene (1992:58-59) use the above dimensions to divide parents into the following four categories according to their involvement in the education of their children:

Type 1: (++): These parents support their children at home and are also actively involved in school activities; they may even serve on management bodies. This type of parent is not necessarily attainable, since many parents are not always able to be actively.

Type 2: (+, -): These parents support their children at home but are not actively involved in school activities. Newsletters, circulars and other forms of communication with the home are very effective in these cases.

Type 3: (-, +): This type of parent is difficult to identify. They may attend parents' evenings and they may even participate actively in some school activities, but they do not give their children any support at home.

Type 4: (-, -): These parents do not support their children, nor do they participate actively in school activities. They are uninvolved parents and are difficult to reach.

From the above discussion it is clear, that parent involvement is important in the education of their children, and their role as primary educators have to ensure that the teaching children receive from school educators, is in line with that being offered at home.

The next section of this chapter will focus on parent involvement in informal education, beginning of formal education in early societies, parent involvement in formal modern societies and parent involvement in South Africa.

2.4.1 Parent involvement in informal education

Parent involvement in informal education is an old concept. The concept is as old as humankind. Throughout the world parents have been involved in the education of their children informally. Berger (1983:1) says that in ancient times, prior to the development of written records, which is believed to have occurred between 6000 and 5000 B.C., parent involvement was a crucial factor in the education of their children. Children were taught rules and regulations of both the family group and a larger society. Berger (1983:2) adds that children were also taught various processes needed to obtain their food supply. This was very important for children to survive and become adults. Children were taught how to gather wild foods, to hunt, to herd cattle, and to produce crops.

Parents have always been called the primary educators because they are involved in the education of their children from birth. According to Frost (1966:45), primitive societies did not develop schools, and the family was the most important teaching agency in any society then. Children learnt from their parents and they were reminded that they would be adults one day. Parents were not professionals and they depended on their intuitive and experiential knowledge when teaching their children. Frost (1966:47) says that the methods, which parents used during their teachings, were telling and showing. Children, who failed to measure up to the standards set by the family group, were punished.

As time went on, education moved to formal mass schooling. Qualified school educators taught children in formal institutions. Educators were called secondary educators.

2.4.2 Beginning of formal education in early societies

Formal education was established and taught in formal institutions outside the home. Braun and Edwards (1972:156) say that there was a need in early societies to preserve communities and to maintain a stable society and a viable state. The researcher indicated in the above section, that schools

developed and education had to take place in the formal school situation. The schools developed continually from 3787 to 1580 B.C.

Parents, who could afford, sent their children to learn in a formal school. Educators, who were skilled professionals and qualified in their jobs, were responsible for educating the children. Educators' teaching and learning activities were more structured and organised than the informal education at home. Parents in early societies did not distance themselves from schools and they co-operated with educators in the education of the child.

Berger (1983:2) asserts that in Greece there were regulations that governed people to teach their children how to read, write and swim. Schools were in sessions for hours and parents had the right to choose the school they desired for their children. Roman parents were actively involved in the education of their children in the formal situation. Modern educationists like Rousseau, Pestalozzie, John Locke and Froebel studied extensively on the importance of parent involvement in the education of the child by postulating theories and concepts. Pestalozzie was regarded as the father of parent involvement and he was an advocate of parents as primary educators, while Froebel saw the mother as the first educator of the child.

The following section looks at parent involvement in modern societies throughout the world. The study looks closely at formal institutions and how parents have been involved in the education of their children.

2.4.3 Parent involvement in formal modern societies

Parent involvement had been in operation all over the world, for example, in the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia, since the 1960s. Research and studies were done throughout the world and demonstrated that children had a significant advantage when their parents were directly involved in the learning process.

In the United States of America parent involvement programmes were strongly supported by various stakeholders such as the President of the country and his educational advisors. Researchers, practitioners and policy

makers had noted the importance of parent involvement as a component of effective schooling. Epstein (1996b:38) says that research on the family environment has constantly documented the importance of parent involvement at all grade levels.

Riley (1997:23) undertook a study of parent involvement in the Cockburn district of Western Australia in state primary schools and concluded that parent involvement contributed to school effectiveness. The findings of the researcher suggest that instructional forms of parent involvement were considered to contribute to school effectiveness. The study indicated that parents are important resources to schools. Walker (1998:34) also carried out a parent involvement study on children's literacy during the primary school years and it revealed a general acceptance that parent involvement was good for the children.

The researcher chose the United States of America from the developed countries because the United States of America once was also a colony of Britain once, and therefore a "victim of colonialism", like in South Africa.

When studying different literature reports on parent involvement (Clase, 1985:5, Carrim & Sayed, 1990:22; Meadows, 1993:33 and Munn, 1997:1), it becomes clear that there are some factors directly contributing to the minimal role parents are playing in the education of their children. Some parents are not interested in being involved in the education of their children. Some distance themselves from the involvement process because they do not know how they can be involved in the formal situation. They also get no help from educators or the government about parent involvement. Some uneducated parents do not bother much about formal parent involvement because they do not have the knowledge of working with their children at home and in informal school activities. Some parents see schools and homes as different entities having no relation. There is a lack of institutions that teach both parents and educators about the home-school partnership.

Research shows that there are benefits when parents play a significant role in their children's education. The benefits of parent involvement include learner

learning and achievement, positive attitudes and behaviour of learners, a positive school image, high attendance rates, school success, motivated learners, and psychological benefits for learners, parents contributing financially, as well as the maintenance of discipline at school (Clase, 1985:5; Carrim & Sayed, 1990:22; Meadows, 1993:33; Munn, 1997:1).

According to Solomon (1991:360) Henry Becker and Joyce Epstein reported that parent involvement benefits learner learning by increasing the educational productivity when parents and learners spent time with one another at home. These writers support their arguments with findings from other studies, such as a study that concluded that learners in Catholic and other private high schools perform better than comparable learners in public schools, because of the relationship between the schools, the families and communities they serve. Kennedy (1991:25), a school principal in Missouri, USA, observed that parent involvement lead directly to higher grades and test scores, and better long-term academic achievement. Bauch (1990:78) reports that educators in the USA agrees that parent involvement in learners' learning influences attitudes and promotes achievement, but the form of involvement that contributes most, is not clear.

When the attitude and behaviour of learners are positive as a result of parent involvement, there is an increase in learner achievement scores, a decrease in learner dropouts, and an improvement in learner motivation, self-esteem and behaviour, and more parent and community support for the school (Williams, 1988:87).

A study of parent involvement carried out by Potter (1998:10) at the State University of West Georgia, Carrolton, indicated that the school's image improved in the community as the programme of parent involvement evolved and as parents and businesses became more involved in academic as well as curricular activities. Parents felt welcomed and the bottom of the class performed better academically.

Bauch (1990:78) says that, apart from learner achievement, parent involvement improves attendance and school success. Parent involvement

helps to reduce school failure in education. Pearson (1990:15) says that an obvious advantage is that learners benefit from the extra motivation that comes from knowing that their parents are interested and involved in their education.

Apart from physical requirements such as clothes and food, the family also provides a good psychological background without which the child would experience anxiety and aggression. The omission of these essential needs is an obstacle to the education process (Jowett & Bangisky, 1998:42).

Parents also contribute towards the financing of the school, directly and indirectly in the form of taxes. Beale (1985:215) observes, that learners behave better, thus fewer discipline problems occur. School rules and regulations are easily applied at school. Bond (1973:2) indicates that parents who make the effort to visit the school and talk to the class educator, and are willing to communicate in other ways, are undoubtedly more likely to be interested and concerned with their child's work and activities generally within the home situation. Bond continues to say that, the results in the attitude towards work and attainment, is even more spectacular and encouraging.

Parent involvement has value for educators, the learners and the community in the education of the child. Piltch (1991:58) asserts that everyone agrees that parent involvement in a child's education is vital. He goes on to say that when parents take an interest in a child's learning, and provide incentives for a child to read independently and complete homework, the child is more likely to be successful.

Riley, secretary of United States of America Education Department during the 1990s, quoted Sanders as saying that when schools are operating at maximum efficiency, they are responsible for about 40 to 60 percent of what a learner learns. The other 50 to 60 percent of learning comes from the family and community (Riley, 1997:18). In a situation where parents are uninvolved in their children's education, for example, 40 percent is learned at school and 60 percent learning that should come from the parents, will be missing.

2.4.4 Parent involvement in South Africa

The South African experience of parent involvement is unique and different from that of the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. The South African experience may be looked at in terms of the South African education eras, that is, before 1652; 1652-1800s; 1850-1948; 1948-1976; 1976-1994, and the democratic era (since May 1994) (Claassen, 1995:455-458). Furthermore, the experiences have to be classified according to the different South African races. In this study the focus is on education for disadvantaged learners in disadvantaged schools. In a study conducted by Van Wyk in 1996 in a South African township (in Pretoria), the disadvantaged Black parents under study, were not involved in the education of their children due to various problems of a more practical nature, such as illiteracy, working long hours, and getting home late, children in the care of grandparents, or older brothers and sisters, and extreme poverty in the communities (Van Wyk, 1996:112). Mkwanazi, (1994:29), also in a South African study, found that most educators and principals attribute the lack of parent involvement to the parents themselves. She pointed out that educators are not critical of themselves in the process of parent involvement. She added that most parents are extremely interested and wish to assist in their children's progress but cannot do so, because of the lack of stability in the broader social, economic and political context prevailing at the time of her research (Mkwanazi, 1994:27).

Early education or pre-colonisation education started before 1652, continued under Dutch rule, during the era of a liberal education policy and during the apartheid education system (1948-1994). The study also notes legislation in respect of parent involvement in the form of Acts, Reports and Papers. Evaluation of this legislation is discussed in terms of their failures and successes.

2.4.4.1 Education before 1652

Before colonisation, which started in 1652, there was no formal education in South Africa. Just like other societies in the world, parents were the primary

educators right from birth. However, Claassen (1995:455) identifies two phases the child's education, namely an informal phase and a formal phase. Informal education was elaborated upon in the first session and it will not be repeated here. In the second phase, African children had to receive their education during the period of initiation. Young boys and girls, who had already graduated, helped parents with formal lessons during the initiation periods. There is no doubt that parent involvement was a success in all phases.

2.4.4.2 Missionaries and Dutch rule education 1652-1800s

During the time of Dutch rule, between1652-1800, itinerant educators and missionaries were secondary educators in formal institutions. The role of parents in the education system was there because parents sent their children to school. Parents encouraged and supported their children in their education (Claassen, 1995:455). During these period missionaries from Europe and America offered Christian education.

Christie (1985:67) states, that there is no doubt that the church did a lot of good for education of the country then. Missionaries were humane people who spread the Christian faith among the African tribes and at the same time brought education and western medicine. People were taught to read and write, as well as master the Christian doctrines. Missionary education was not well received by Africans, as it caused division among them. Missionaries wanted Africans to leave their culture and follow the western culture. Some educated Africans deserted their culture and followed the western style and they were called the Black Elite. Christie (1985:75) quotes Etherington as saying that, parents withdrew their daughters from mission schools and rotated their sons so that they might earn shirts and wages".

Education in the four provinces during the liberal era (1850-1948) flourished and encouraged parents to play a role in the education of their children. In the Cape Province parents had to teach the children themselves or use itinerant school masters (Muller, 1990:60). There were no schools for children who could not attend school in Cape Town or in one of the smaller towns.

In the Natal Province parents had local control of education and they had a voice in the education of their children (Behr & McMillan, 1978:45).

In the Transvaal the "Volksraad" passed the Burger's Education Act in 1874. The Act provided for the establishment of farm and town primary schools and a secondary school or gymnasium in Pretoria. The Act also provided parents with a voice on and in educational matters through elected school commissions. The Act allowed parents to support the education of their children in the management and administrative spheres.

2.4.4.3 Apartheid education 1948

The education system for Africans in South Africa changed for the worse when then National Party won the election in 1948. The Eiselen Commission was appointed to look into the education system of the country and made recommendations to the government. The commission gave birth to the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953. Concerning parent involvement section 6 (1) of Act No.47 of 1953 it states that subject to the provisions of this Act, the minister may, on such special conditions as he may stipulate and in accordance with such general principles as he may determine in consultation with the Minister of Finance, to set aside money for native education, subsidise any Bantu school established or maintained by Bantu authority, or any native council, tribe or community (hereafter called a Bantu community school), or assist in the establishment or maintenance of any such school (Behr & McMilan, 1978:45).

The Act set the tone for African parents to participate fully in the education of their children (Mkwanazi, 1994:52). Parents had to establish and build community schools so that children could learn. Parents controlled and financed the education of their children in the formal school situation. That meant children from communities, which had no money, were denied the right to basic education in the formal situation. Some children had to walk long distances to attend school. African children were the ones who suffered most under this Act. White people were also involved in the education of their children. The government helped White parents in financing the education of

their children by building schools and supplying those schools with teaching and learning aids. They got books free and their education was of a higher quality than that of Africans (Mkwanazi, 1994:56).

The Act also allowed African parents to participate actively in the management of Government Bantu schools such as regional, local and domestic councils, as well as other boards. Their role was to participate in the teaching and learning activity of the education of their children. Christie and Collins (1982:66) state, that in 1955 the state enacted legislation to restrict the total operation of mission schools and the state schools replaced those mission schools. In 1953 there were over 5000 state-aided mission schools. By 1965, 509 out of a total 7222 African schools were state-aided mission schools.

The Bantu Education Act (SA, 1967) gave the Minister of Education a great deal of power to have control over educators, syllabuses and any other matters related to the establishment, maintenance, managernent and control of government Bantu schools. The Act divided the education system into two departments, namely, the Black education and the White education systems.

According to Van Wyk (1996:87), the Bantu Education Act was criticised by African parents, English speaking missionaries and Black Elite groups. The Act was perceived to be racist and it was against Christian norms and values of African and English people who were in South Africa then. The Act contradicted itself when it stressed that it offered Christian education, whereas it was relegating African education. African parents had to pay a lot of money to build schools, paid school fees and supported their children while they were at school. Samuels and Lodge (1990:179) stated that, less apparent at the inception of the Bantu Education Act, was that the system imposed increasing financial obligations on African communities. Parents were, for example, responsible for purchasing uniforms, stationery and textbooks for their school going children."

In a nutshell the Bantu Education system was not well received by both Africans and White missionaries throughout the country. Riots and school

boycotts were rife in the country by the late 1950s. School committees, school boards and management councils could not convince the government about how bad the system of education was for Africans.

Section 2 (h) of the National Education Act (1967 Act 39 0f 1967) supported Bantu Education by giving parents rights to participate in the education of their children through school boards, management councils and boards of management (Behr, 1988:67).

During this time there were two parent bodies, statutory and non-statutory bodies. The statutory parent body constituted a management council and school committee or school governing body. The body had certain powers given to it by law, hence, the term "statutory", and functioned in most traditionally White schools, but was not well established in Black schools (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:88).

The management councils executed tasks of professional activities. They reported on those activities and made recommendations to the director of education. Some of their duties were to make recommendations regarding the appointment of educators, as well as to collect and control any money collected. The statutory body served as the mouthpiece of the parents with regard to the physical and material matters of the institution. The body carried out all the duties entrusted to it by the educational authorities (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:89).

A management council consisted of the principal of the school concerned and many others as determined from time to time by the education authorities. In the Transvaal such councils consisted of eight members of which four were parents (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:89). Parents who were less educated could not make good recommendations, for example in respect of the appointment of an educator. An incompetent educator could be appointed ahead of a competent one due to race, ethnic grouping etc. In the different Acts that were referred to in the above section, very few gave detailed information with regard to the training of school committees, school boards and management councils.

According to Van Schalkwyk (1988:88), school boards functioned at the district level and they had supervisory, advisory, administrative and managerial tasks in education. They were responsible for the maintenance of the grounds, buildings, surroundings and apparatus. They worked hand in hand with the regional council regarding advice pertaining to provision and maintenance of buildings and grounds, as well as the establishment or closure of institutions. Therefore, to execute that task exceptionally, training was important to parents. Depending on circumstances, such as the class of the school district or the number of educational institutions within its boundaries, a school board could consist of 6 to 12 members representing various institutions.

Van Schalkwyk (1988:149) defines the non-statutory bodies as free and autonomous associations or committees established from their own members and on their own initiative in order to promote parental interests in formal education.

Van Schalkwyk (1988:150) states, that the main purpose of this body was to combine the efforts of parents and educators to a very limited degree when some services were required by the school, such as the collection of funds, entertainment or assistance with the transportation of learners. They merely rendered services and made no contribution to the more fundamental matters of education such as policy-making. They had to organise and manage matters of mutual interest to the local parent community.

The differences between the two bodies and their functions were outlined above. The two bodies were successful in some schools and unsuccessful in other schools and communities. Some schools were closed during the 1980s due to school boycotts. The bodies had successes and failures in the country.

The non-statutory bodies, which were well established in the rural areas, succeeded in executing their duties and functions.

2.4.4.4 Period of 1976: the Soweto uprising

Behr (1988:37) states that a new dawn in the education of South Africa set in on 16 June 1976 when a well organised mass protest of some 6 000 school children from Soweto led to a confrontation with the police. The event triggered off riots, violence and unrest, which swept throughout South Africa in the months that followed. Statutory bodies in the form of management councils and boards were there, but they could not resolve the education situation. Guidance and support of parents were crucial in bringing stability to the chaotic situation. Innocent people were killed during the riots and schools were damaged. The situation was uncontrollable, especially in urban areas. Lessons, however, continued to run smoothly in some schools in rural areas. Most educationists called the period between 1976 and 1994 a period of reform.

The promulgation of the Education and Training Act of 1979 (SA, 1979) which took effect on January 1 1980, and which initiated a new dispensation for Black Education, replaced the Bantu Act of 1953, and it wanted to do away with the aspects of the previous system. Subsection 7 of Act No. 90 of 1979 places the position of parent involvement within the: "...establishment of councils, committees, boards and other bodies for schools and conferring certain powers in regard to community schools upon certain other bodies (SA, 1979)."

The Act gave the parents a platform to participate in the education of their children in the community. Parents could make provisions and exercise particular duties and powers in connection with the control and management of public schools. Local councils, committees and school boards were established.

State schools got grants and aid from the government, and educators continued to be hired by the school committees and the state. It was not the duty of parents to pay them, but that of the state. The Act was also applicable to the homelands (SA, 1979).

According to Mkwanazi (1994:27), De Lange Report recommended that, communities desiring facilities in excess of the given norms would have to provide these from their own funds. Parents in the rural areas continued to finance their education under their various homelands. Schools in the cities were declared state schools and were financed by government. Act 70 of 1988 also stressed parent involvement in terms of Section 2 (h) of the National Education Act, 1967 (SA, 1967).

In the 1990s the country was in political turmoil. Schooling for Black learners was characterised by riots and boycotts. This was the period when political activities were unbanned. Parents lost control of their children's schooling and education, and schools started experiencing a high failure rate, which could be due to insufficient of parent involvement in the education of the child, especially in secondary schools.

The Acts of Parent Involvement (SA, 1967) passed then by the government, was also applicable to the Lusikisiki district, through the Transkei Education Department. Transkei was a Xhosa- and partly Sotho speaking independent homeland. Education offices were at Umtata, the capital of the homeland. Schools were usually not interrupted by the strikes. Though the concept functioned in different areas, how it functioned, remained the same. There were no riots in the Lusikisiki district (Behr, 1988:37). The involvement of parents was not disturbed when compared to what happened in the other Black townships, like Soweto.

2.4.4.5 Education in the democratic era: from 1994

The democratic era began with the democratic election of April 1994 and then the non-racial education system based on equality was instituted. The National Department of Education, headed by a minister and the nine provincial education departments, each headed by a member of the Executive Committee responsible for Education came into existence. Each provincial department administers and controls its education system. A fair amount of autonomy was given to the provincial governments.

In the democratic era parents are encouraged by the Acts and White Paper to involve themselves in the education of their children. In March 1995 the White Paper on Education and Training was released. Concerning the parents, the White Paper (SA, 1995a: 21-23) highlights the importance of parents and community involvement as follows:

"The principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stake-holders, interest groups and role players. This is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the education process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not."

The White Paper took parents and community involvement in the education of the child into consideration. Parents continue to be given a chance to involve themselves formally in the education of their children.

On 31 August 1995, The Hunter Report Committee released the *Organisation Governance and Funding of Schools Report*. Among its observations, the Hunter Report (1995:51) acknowledged that parents have both the right and the responsibility to participate in the education of their children.

The Report entrusted parents with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt a school policy. Parents could comment and make suggestions with regard to decisions taken by the school. Parents, through school governing bodies performed various functions in the school like, the maintenance of school buildings, purchase of textbooks and materials and the purchase of equipment. In case where the governing body of the particular school did not have the relevant capacity, the Report stressed that the educational authority would exercise those powers on behalf of the governing body (Hunter Report, 1995:57).

White Paper No. 2, *The Organisation, Guidance and Funding of Schools*, released in February 1996, stipulates the following: "School Governing Bodies

involve all stakeholder groups in active and responsible rules; encourage tolerance, rational discussion and attractive decision-making" (SA, 1996c:16).

According to the White Paper (SA, 1996:17) each public school ought to have had a governing body by January 1997, which should have comprised of the following.

Elected representations of:

- parents or guardians of learners currently enrolled at school,
- educators,
- learners in secondary schools,
- non-teaching staff,
- the principal, and
- members of the community, elected by the governing body.

The South African Schools Act, No.84 of 1996a, subsection (16), states that governance and professional management of every public school is vested in its governing body. Parents form part of the governing body. In July 2000, the Minister of Education released the *National Policy on Whole School Evaluation* and parent involvement was among the principles of the evaluation. The policy recognises the role the parent community could play in the process. The process encourages parents to help the school achieve its vision and mission in school success. The school would be considered to be successful by the government if parents took an active role in teaching and learning activities.

2.4.5 Ways in which parents become involved in education of their children

Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booyens (1996:301) and Le Roux (1994:73), propose the following methods to improve parent involvement in the education of their children.

- Homework assignments that invite parent participation by clarifying what the child may not understand.

- Parent books that the parent has to sign after he or she has gone through the schoolwork of the child as proof that the parent is aware of the child's performance at school.

- Parent meetings that provide or inform parents about the skills their children are learning and to show off the school, including learner's scholastic progress, equipment and materials. Parent meetings provide parents with an opportunity to experience directly what their children are learning and how instruction is imparted.

- The newsletter is an effective way of periodically communicating information to parents. A large majority of parents read and respond to the newsletter, as it serves as a medium for conveying specific, current information to parents.

- The parent-educator organisations are the most familiar non-statutory structures that bring families and schools together. The main purpose of these bodies is to unite the efforts of parents and educators when some service is required.

- Home visits are essential to acquaint the educator with the home environment and provide a relaxed setting for discussing common issues on school matters. Parents can be shown how they can help their children with their studies at home. Both parents and educators benefit from such visits as they get to know one another better.

- Parents or other members of the community can be invited to give talks to learners and educators on topics in which they have a particular interest or of which they have a specialised knowledge.

Various models on parent involvement through literature were identified and are discussed below in this study.

2.4.6 Parent involvement in education: a theoretical framework

The conceptual framework of this study consists of Comer's approach which recognises the importance of empowering parents and educators to work in partnership with schools, the Epstein theory of parent involvement which guides the researchers and practitioners in thinking about family and school relations, and Swap's models of parent involvement, which emphasise the importance of organising parent involvement programmes so as to ensure effectiveness of parent involvement in the education of their children.

The purpose of this section is to project the theoretical stance of the role players towards home-school relations as a modifying factor influencing the outcomes of these relations. This is because the degree to which educators and parents are influenced by a specific theoretical stance will influence the extent to which collaboration between the home and the school exists and to describe exemplary models of parent and community involvement (Golbart & Mukherjee, 2000:1-11).

A theoretical framework helps educators to develop more comprehensive programmes of school and family partnerships and also helps researchers locate their questions and results in ways that inform and improve practice (Weber State University, 2005:1-4).

Substantial theorising has been done on this topic to which attention will now be given.

2.4.6.1 The Comer approach to parent involvement

The Comer model (Comer, Haynes & Joyner, 1996:10) holds that, if you empower parents and educators to work in partnership with schools, and if the developmental needs of the whole child are addressed in the process, then learners will succeed in school. The programme developed by Comer to improve schooling, particularly within lower socio-economic grouping, has been in place since the 1970's and is currently being implemented in 563 schools in more than 80 districts in 21 states in the USA.

According to Comer (1988:13-14), educators responded to post Second World War conditions by raising credential standards and improving course content and teaching methods, but paid little attention to the quality of relationships between educators and learners, among school staff, and between staff and community, particularly parents. In contrast, Comer's *School Development Programme* promotes development and learning by building supportive bonds that draw together learners, parents and school (Comer, 1988:24).

The *School Development Programme* (SDP) can best be conceived of as a systematic process that targets the entire school for change. It includes nine basic components (three mechanisms, three operations, three guidelines) to ensure that all school decisions are made in the best interest of learners (Borton, Preston & Bipper, 1996:1; Comer & Haynes 1991:272). The three mechanisms comprise the School Planning and Management Team, the Parent Team, and the Learner and Staff Support Team (Comer, Haynes & Joyner, 1996:9). In earlier publications, the Learner and Staff Support Team was known as the Mental Health Team (Comer & Haynes, 1991:272).

2.4.6.1.1 The three mechanisms of the School Development Programme

The three mechanisms of the *School Development Programme* (SDP) are explained as follows.

- The School Planning and Management Team is the central organizing body in the school and include the principal, educators, parents, and support staff representative (Comer, Haynes & Joyner, 1996:11). Among others, the School Planning and Management Team develops a comprehensive school plan, plans staff development activities, and assesses and modifies the school plan in order to improve learner achievement (Borton, Preston & Bipper, 1996:1; Comer, 1988:15).

- The Parent Team involves parents in every facet of school life, including active daily participation in school endeavours, policy and management issues and general school support (Haynes & Comer, 1993:168). However, parent collaborators contribute mainly in the area of school

climate, thereby helping to eliminate harmful stereotypes that staff members may harbour about the community served by their school (Perry & Tannenbaum, 1992:107). The Parent Team also bridges the gap between the school and the home and is actively involved in developing workshops for themselves and the learners (Flaxman & Inger, 1992:17). One such programme, implemented with great success, is the Social Skills Curriculum for inner-city learners (Comer & Haynes, 1991: 275). According to Comer (1988:15) the need for parent involvement programmes is greatest in low–income and minority communities or where parents feel a sense of exclusion, low self-esteem and /or hopelessness.

- The Learner and Staff Support Team includes staff with child development and mental health knowledge and experience, such as the school psychologist, guidance counsellor, school nurse, special education educator, attendance officer, learner personnel worker and any other appropriate staff member (Comer, Haynes & Joyner, 1996:12). The Learner and Staff Support Team work mostly preventively and prescriptively and share learner development and behaviour knowledge, skills and sensitivity with parents, educators, and administrators (Comer, 1988:15).

The three mechanisms (the School Planning and Management Team, the Parent Team, and the Learner and Staff Support Team) described above are driven by the following three operations.

2.4.6.1.2 The three operations of the School Development Programme

The three operations are the following, as set out by Haynes and Comer (1993: 168):

- A comprehensive school plan that delineates the social and academic goals and activities of the school.

- Staff development activities designed to address the goals and activities of school.

- Monitoring and assessment that generate useful data on programme processes and outcomes and recycles information back to inform programme modification where necessary and establish new goals and objectives. In order to sustain a learning and caring community in which all adults feel respected and where all learners feel valued and motivated to learn and achieve, the work of the team is driven by three guiding principles, consensus decision-making, genuine collaboration, and a no-fault approach to problem-solving (Borton, Preston & Bipper, 1996:1).

2.4.6.1.3 The three guiding principles of the school development programme

The following constitute the guiding principles.

- Consensus allows for brainstorming, in-depth discussions, cross-fertilization of ideas, and a plan for trying different solutions in some sequence.

- Collaboration requires all concerned to respect the other person's point of view and to demonstrate a willingness to work as part of a team (Comer, Haynes & Joyner, 1996:10).

- A no-fault philosophy puts the emphasis on problem solving rather than fault finding, ensuring that everyone accepts equal responsibility for change. Haynes, Ben-Avie, Squires, Howley, Negron and Corbin (1996:57), explain that the team accepts accountability, but time and energy are not wasted in acts of blaming.

2.4.6.2 The Epstein theory of parent involvement

In the 1980's Epstein developed a theoretical model to explain parent involvement (Epstein, 1996a:214). Underlying this, Epstein (1996a:121) identified three perspectives, which guide researchers and practitioners in their thinking about family and school relations.

2.4.6.2.1 Three perspectives

Epstein (1996a:121) enumerates three guiding perspectives for researchers and practitioners in their thinking about family and school relations.

- Separate responsibilities of families and schools;
- Shared responsibilities of families and school,
- Sequential responsibilities of families and school.

Assumption based on the separate responsibilities of institutions, emphasizes the inherent incompatibility, competition and conflict between families and schools. Epstein's theory of parent involvement assumes that educators and parents direct school bureaucracies and family organizations respectively, who can best fulfil their different goals, roles and responsibilities (Epstein, 1996a:121). In other words, the distinct goal of parents and educators can best be achieved when educators keep a professional distance from and equal standards for learners in their classroom, in contrast with parents who develop personal relationships with and individual expectations for their children at home (Christenson, Round & Franklin, 1992:36).

The opposing assumptions based on shared responsibilities of the school and home, emphasises the co-ordination, corporation and complementary of schools and families, and encourages communication and collaboration between the two institutions (Epstein, 1996a:121). In this opposing assumption, based on shared responsibilities, the schools and families share responsibilities for the socialization of the learner. Educators and parents are believed to share common goals for learners that are achieved most effectively when educators and parents work together. This perspective is based on models of inter-institutional interactions and ecological designs that emphasise the natural and necessary connections between individuals and their groups and organisation. In this perspective an overlap of responsibilities between parents and educators is expected (Christenson, *et al.* , 1992:36).

Although educators may combine these perspectives, they tend to emphasise the precepts of one theory when organising their teaching practices.

Finally, in the third perspective, the sequential perspective, the critical stages of parents' and educators' contribution to learner development are emphasised (Epstein, 1996a:121). Parents teach needed skills to children until the time of their formal education around the ages of five or six. At that time, educators assume the primary responsibility for learners' education. These major theoretical perspectives on home-school relations have a profound effect and either encourage or discourage parent involvement in schools. Epstein (1996a:122-123) points out, that the three main theories explain the basic differences in philosophies and approaches of educators and parents and produce more or fewer, shallow or deep family-school connections.

The perspectives on family-school relations do not however explain motivations to reinforce or remove boundaries between schools and families, nor the changing patterns in home-school relations. They also fail to explain the influence families and schools have on each other or take cognisance of learner development and the effect thereof on home–school relations. To address all the variables, Epstein (1996a:126) proposed an integrated theory of family–school relations, characterised by a set of overlapping spheres of influences.

2.4.6.2.2 The theory of overlapping spheres of influence

In the 1980's Epstein (1996a:214) developed a theoretical perspective called overlapping spheres of influence, using data collected from educators, parents and learners. This theory was based on the needs for a social organisational perspective that posits that the most effective families and schools have overlapping, shared goals and missions concerning learners, and conducted some work collaboratively.

The theory (model) of overlapping spheres of influence includes both external and internal structures. The external structure can, by condition or design, be pushed together or pulled apart by three main forces (Epstein, 1996a:214).

These forces create conditions, space, and opportunities for more or fewer shared activities of schools, families, and communities. The forces are as follows:

- Time: to account for changes in the ages and grade levels of learners and the influence of the historical period.
- The philosophies, policies, and practices of the family.
- The philosophies, policies and practices of the school.

These forces determine how much and what kinds of overlap occur at any given time, and affect the interactions among the members of these institutions.

The internal structure represents the patterns of interaction of the participants within context at the institutional and individual level. Institutional level interactions involve all members or groups within schools, families, and communities; individual interactions involve one learner, parent, or community member (Epstein, 1996a:215). Combinations of these interactions may also occur within the areas overlap.

Epstein's model of overlapping spheres assumes that there are mutual interests and influence of families and schools that can be more or less successfully promoted by the policies and programmes of the organisations and the action and attitudes of the individuals in the organisation (Epstein, 1996a:130).

The model argues that, although some practices of families and schools are conducted independently, other practices reflect the shared responsibilities of parents and educators for the learners' learning and development. When educators and administrators adhere to the perspective of separate responsibilities of families and schools, they emphasise the specialisation of skills required by educators for school training and by parents for home training. With specialization comes division of labour that pulls the spheres of school and family influences apart, decreases overlap and restricts interaction

between parents and educators (Epstein, 1996a:104). According to Epstein (1996a:131), when educators and parents emphasise their shared responsibilities, they support the generalisation of skills required by educators and by parents to produce educated and successful learners. Their combination of labour pushes the spheres of family and school influence together, increases interaction between parents and school personnel about the developing learner, and creates school-like families and family-like schools. A family-like school recognizes each learner's individuality and makes each learner feel special and included. Such schools welcome all families and not just those that are easy to reach (Epstein, 1995:702). A school-like family recognizes that each child is also a learner and reinforces the importance of school, homework, and the activities that build learner skills and feelings of success (Epstein, 1995:502). Communities also create family-like settings, services and events to enable families to better support their children. Community–minded families and learners help their neighbourhoods and other families. Schools and communities talk about programmes and services that are family friendly. This means that they take into account the needs and realities of family life, are feasible to conduct, and are equitable toward all families. When all these concepts combine, learners experience learning communities or caring communities (Epstein, 1995:702).

Across the grades, as learners, families and schools change, while the nature and extent of overlap in practices and the interpersonal relationships among partners also change. For example, efforts to involve parents typically start to drop as early as grade 2 or 3 (Epstein, 1996a:129).

The Epstein model illustrates that any time, in any school, and in any family, parent involvement is a variable that can be increased or decreased by the practices of educators, parents, administrators, and learners (Christenson *et al.*, 1992:36). Moreover, the overlapping spheres of influence recognize the multiple context and interpersonal relations of all participants.

Because it is assumed that the learner is the reason for the connections between home and school, the model focuses on the key role of the child as a learner in interactions between families and schools, parents and educators,

or other influential participants (Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap & Epstein.1995: 499). The learners are the key to successful school and family partnerships. Epstein (1995:702) explains that the unarguable fact is that learners are the main actors in their education, development, and success in school.

Schools, family, and community partnerships cannot simply produce successful learners. Rather, partnership activities may be designed to engage, guide and motivate learners to produce their own success. According to Epstein (1995:702) the assumption is that if learners feel cared for and encouraged to work hard in the role of learner, they are more likely to do their best academically, and to remain at school.

Initially, a framework of five major types of involvement that fall within the areas of overlap in the spheres of the influence model was identified (Davies, 1991:377). These include basic obligations of families, communication from school, volunteers, learning activities at home, and decision-making (Epstein, 1992:503). When guided by schools, practices of all types help all families participate as acknowledgeable partners in their children's education. A sixth type of school and family partnership has now been added to this list: collaborating with the community (Epstein, 1995:704).

2.4.6.2.3 Epstein's typology of parent involvement

According to Epstein (1996a:215) there will be a more or less overlap and shared responsibility depending on whether many or few practices of the six types of involvement are working, and each practice implemented, opens opportunities for varied interaction of educators, parents, and others across contexts. In surveys and field studies involving educators and parents, some important patterns relating to Epstein's framework of six major types of parent involvement are briefly described as follows (Weber State University, 2005:1-3):

- Type 1 – Parenting: Assist families with parenting and childbearing skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each stage and grade level.

- Type 2 – Communication: Communicate with families about school programmes and learner progress with school-to-home and home-to-school communication.

- Type 3 – Volunteering: Improve recruitment, training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at school or in other locations to support learners and school programmes.

- Type 4 – Learning at home: Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework, and other curricular-linked activities and decisions.

- Type 5 – Decision-making: Include parents as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through PTA, committees, councils, and other parent organizations.

- Type 6 – Collaborating with the community: Co-ordinate the work and resources of community, business, colleges or universities, and other groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices and learner learning and development.

Each of six types of involvement poses specific challenges for its successful design and implementation, and each type leads to some different results or outcomes for learners, parents, and educators (Epstein, 1996a:216). Moreover, research on parent involvement can be successfully located within this framework.

Epstein (1996a:16) argues that good programmes to implement or improve parent involvement will appear differently, as individual schools tailor their practices to meet the needs and interests, time and talents, ages and grade levels of learners and their families. There are, however, some commonalities across successful programmes at all grade levels. These include a recognition of the overlapping sphere of influence on learner development; attention to various types of involvement that promote a variety of opportunities for schools, families, and communities to work together; and an action team for

school, family and community partnerships to co-ordinate each school's work and progress (Epstein, 1995:704).

In conclusion, it appears that each of the scholars and projects mentioned above is distinctive. Most have their own orthodoxies, and some have become the equivalent of brand names. However, the commonalties outweigh the differences and add up to a new definition of what has usually been called parent involvement. With reference to Epstein's model, Davies (1991:377) lists the following themes of central importance.

- Providing success for all learners, this means that no learners should be labelled as likely failures because of the social, economic or racial characteristics of their families or communities.

- Shared responsibility, the social, emotional, physical and academic development of the learner is shared and overlapping responsibility of the school, the family, and the community. In order to promote the social and academic development of learners, the key institutions must change their practices and their relationships with one another.

2.4.6.3 Swap's models of parent involvement

Swap (1992:57) proposes that parent involvement programmes are to be organized according to three different models, namely the *School-to-Home Transmission Model*; the *Curriculum Enrichment Model*; and the *Partnership Model* for school success. Swap (1992:28) also adds a fourth model, which she calls the protective model, which includes minimal parent involvement.

2.4.6.3.1 The Protective Model

This is Swap's (1992:28) most dominant model for home-school relationships. The goal of the *Protective Model* is to reduce conflict between parents and educators, primarily through the separation of parents and educators' functions. Swap refers to this model as the *Protective Model*, because its aims are to protect the school from interference by parents. This model is driven by the following three assumptions (Swap, 1992:28):

- parents delegate to school the responsibility of educating their children,
- parents hold school personnel responsible for the results, and
- educators accept this delegation of responsibility.

According to this model, parent involvement in decision-making or collaborative problem-solving is seen as inappropriate and as an interference with the educator's job. According to Swap (1992:29), many educators share this attitude, as is illustrated by one educator's comment: "Parents should be actively involved with learners at home. The responsibility of parents ends at home. Educators are responsible for teaching".

The disadvantages of this model, includes ignoring the potential of home-school collaboration for improving learner achievement; exacerbating many conflicts between home and school by not providing structures or opportunities for preventive problem-solving; and losing out on wealth of resources for enrichment and school support available from families and other members of the community (Swap, 1992:29).

2.4.6.3.2 The School to Home Transmission Model

In the *School-to-Home Transmission Model*, educators specify what parents should do to support their children's learning at home (Swap, 1992:58). In this model educators envisage the participation of parents in two ways. The primary expectation is, that parents will aid their children's learning by endorsing the importance of schooling and making sure that the learner meets the minimum academic and behavioural requirements. In line with this expectation educators, for example, expect parents to make sure that children complete their homework. Alternatively, if learners are getting into trouble at school, educators hope that the parents will work with them to reinforce expectations of good behaviour and create conditions at home that support a change of behaviour.

A secondary expectation is that parents will spend enough time with their children to transfer cultural capital to them. The latter comprises the way of

being, knowing, writing, talking, and thinking which characterise those who are successful within the dominant culture (Swap, 1992:58). Schools hope that parents can in some way contribute to the cultural capital of the child. A minimum version of this expectation is that parents will read to their children and listen to their children reading to them. Parents might also contribute to their children's cultural capital through such activities as helping their children with a science project or visiting a museum.

The importance of parents supporting the growth of children's social skills is endorsed by Comer (1980:192).

Children whose parents feel that they can and should be a part of the social mainstream have the best chance to acquire the social skills that will lead to school and life success. Children, whose parents are not part of the social mainstream, can acquire such skills if they are taught in school and there is parental support for their acquisition and use. Regardless of the social background of the parent, the climate and the operation of a school must be reasonably good to constructively enhance children's social skills.

The values and behaviours, which are hypothesized under, gird school successes are, however, not necessarily confined to parents of a particular class, racial, or ethnical background. Swap (1992:59) explains that middle-class parents may, for example, not support the mainstream values of hard work, self-discipline, self-motivation, and respectful manners; yet poor families may teach those skills very successfully. Although schools rely on parents to support the school, it is the school personnel who define goals and programmes (Swap, 1992:30). Two-way communication is not sought because the goal is for parents to understand and support the school's objectives. Swap (1992:59) explains that parent programmes based on the school-to-home transmission often contain components that reflect an unwillingness to consider parents as equal partners having important strengths.

2.4.6.3.3 The Curriculum Enrichment Model

This model is built on an explicit premise of mutual respect between parents and educators, and stresses mutual learning and mutual developed objectives (Swap, 1992:38).

Within this model there are two valued outcomes that justify parent involvement: learners' successful achievement in the mainstream and the valuing of the goals and beliefs of the non-mainstream culture (Swap, 1992:61). The *Curriculum Enrichment Model* is different from the other models of parent involvement, because its assumptions do not necessarily permeate all aspects of the school culture and structure. Its focus is on curriculum and instruction (Swap, 1992:39).

One aspect of the *Curriculum Enrichment Model* is the recognition by parents and educators of the importance of continuity between the home and school. Lightfoot, quoted by Swap (1992:62), articulates the importance of a home-to-school connection by bringing more parents into the school and recruiting more educators into the school that reflect and value the learner's culture so that parents and educators get to know each other through frequent informal communication and shared project or through volunteering in the classroom. If one recognizes the initial social and cultural tasks assumed by all families and their primary education function, then it becomes clear that in order for schools to be productive and comfortable environments for learners, they will have to meaningfully incorporate the familiar and cultural skills and values learned in homes and communities.

2.4.6.3.4 The Partnership Model

Schools prescribing to this model, view parent-school partnerships as fundamental components of learners' success, and educators welcome parents as assets and resources in the search for strategies that will guarantee success for all learners (Swap, 1992:63). According to Ellis (2003:49) the *Partnership Model* differs from the *School-to-Home Transmission Model* in its emphasis on two-way communication, parental strengths, and problems solved with parents. The *Partnership Model* also

differs from the *Curriculum Enrichment Model* in promoting a single unifying mission that suffuses the entire culture and galvanizes all aspects of the school.

Although curriculum revision is seen as an essential tool in achieving the mission, the emphasis also extends to other areas. In the *Partnership Model*, parent involvement is seen not as an addendum, but as an indispensable component of school reform (Swap, 1992:50). The most important precepts of this model will subsequently be described below.

In the first place there is clarity and consensus about goals, which means that the school, parent, and the community must have a shared sense of mission about creating success for all learners (Levin, 1987:20). One of the key ingredients is developing a shared mission of success for all learners and agreement on the standards by which success will be measured. Cuban (1989:30) speaks of adults and children sharing common values about respect, intellectual achievement, and caring for one another. Such commitment represents a significant change in how school failure is conceptualized. This can be viewed as a paradigm shift in which blaming families and children for failure are replaced by an expectation of success for all children (Seeley, 1989:47).

In the second place, a revised curriculum is suggested (Swap, 1992:65). This means that a remedial approach to educating at-risk learners is replaced by an accelerated approach. A comprehensive, intensive curriculum is used which assesses learners' progress frequently, and provides individual support through peer or educator instruction. Moreover, the implementation of successful educational programmes to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged learners requires the involvement of parents and the extensive participation of educators. Levin (1987:20) argues that such an approach would create learning activities characterised by high expectations and a learning environment characterized by high a status for the participant.

In the third place local autonomy and control are required (Swap, 1992:65). This is necessary so that educators and principals have the flexibility to

respond to changing needs within the school. Moreover, control over major decisions about budget, incentives, resources, curricula, schedule, and educator assignments builds commitment, ownership and professionalism among the staff (Swap, 1992: 65). Fourthly, Swap (1992:65) maintains partnership among educators, parents and community members. Schorr (1988:257) underscores this, stating that successful programmes see the learner in the context of family and its surroundings. Recognition of the necessity of collaboration among educators, parents and community representatives in meeting the goal of success for all learners is an essential part of the paradigm shift, as articulated by Seeley (1989:47).

Meaningful parent involvement in schools has been shown to improve learner achievement, decrease dropout rates, and improve behaviour regardless of the socio-economic class of the family. Translating the rhetoric of increased parent involvement into action, however, has proved difficult. Solomon (1991:360) points out that parent involvement boosting learner learning does not just happen. Thoughtful, co-ordinated planning and systematic actions must integrate parent involvement into school and classroom programmes. Such co-ordination starts with leadership at the state level.

However, for whatever reason, state-level administrators have played a limited leadership role in parent involvement. In actual practice, they do not seem to have advanced much beyond the concept of "bake sale" parent involvement (Nardine & Morris, 1991:366).

In conclusion it appears as if parents are available but untapped resources that educators can mobilize to help learners master and maintain needed skills for school. This, however, requires educators' leadership, evaluating, and continually building parent involvement practices.

2.5 THE ADVANTAGES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

According to Galvin, Mercer and Costa (1990:25-30), and Lall, Campbell and Gillborn (2004:2), the influence of parents on the social and emotional development of their children is very strong. Children spend more time at home than they do at school, and their parents usually have primary

responsibility, as well as real concern, for them. Moreover, children come to school with values, beliefs and knowledge that they have learned informally from their parents. Parents can thus make a valuable contribution to the educational process through their commitment to and knowledge of their children. Review of literature indicates that parent involvement programmes benefit all role-players, namely parents, learners, educators, school and the community as a whole.

2.5.1 Advantages for learners

There is widespread understanding of both the crucial and continuing role that parents play as educators in the education, welfare and development of their children (Bastiani, 2003:14).

Researchers underscores, those children are more successful learners at all grade levels if their parents participate in school activities and encourage education and learning at home, regardless of the educational background or social class of their parents (Dauber & Epstein, 1993:53; Wanat, 1994:632).

Learners' attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment are critical to achievement. These attitudes are formed at home and are the products of myriad, kinds of interaction between parents, children and the surrounding community. In other words, when parents show an interest in their children's education and have high expectations for their performance, they promote the attitudes forming the key to achievement (Henderson, 1987:4). Desforges and Abouchaar (2003:6) agrees, that there is substantial evidence that changing the school climate and involving parents will substantially raise not only the achievement of low-income at-risk children, but will change their self-concept and motivation as well.

It is true that motivated learners have more positive attitudes toward schools, better homework habits, higher attendance, lower drop-out rates and improved behaviour as supported by well-documented research (Hamby, 1992:54; Henderson, 1987:19; Swap, 1992:210). In one project, for example, fifth grade learners were surveyed for their reactions to educator practices of parent involvement and their parents' help at home. Learners whose

educators and parents used frequent parent involvement practices reported more positive attitudes toward school, more regular homework habits, greater concurrence between the school and family practices, more familiarity between the educator and their parents, and more homework completed on weekends (Epstein, 1990:111). All these factors obviously contribute to improved learner achievement. Moreover, Hamby (1992:59) found that, increased achievement is sustained across grade levels for low-income learners as well as for middle-income ones.

2.5.2 Advantages for parents

When educators make parent involvement part of their teaching practice, parents increase their interaction with their children at home, and feel more positive about their own abilities to help their children (Epstein & Dauber, 1991:290; Hamby, 1992:59). Parents benefit by being alerted to different and more effective ways of creating or developing learning opportunities and stimulating experiences for their children by parenting programmes (Wolfendale, 1992:9). However, most parents need help to know how to be productively involved in their children's education at each grade level (Epstein & Dauber, 1991:290).

Davies (1993:206) also lists many benefits for parents when they become involved in the education of their children, including greater appreciation of their own important roles, strengthened social network, access to information and materials, personal efficacy and motivation to continue their own education. The contact with other parents experiencing comparable problems often has positive results. Moreover, by understanding their adolescents better, parents are in a position to work with the school in resolving other school-related issues.

Ball, (2003:18) adds, that parents actively involved in their children's education, develop more positive attitudes about school and school personnel; help gather support in the community for parent involvement programmes; become more active in community affairs and develop increased self-confidence. Most parents report the pleasure of getting to know

educators as people and they find a new appreciation for the commitment and skill of educators as well as an increase in their own parenting abilities.

Collaboration between parents and children reduces the characteristic isolation of their roles. It is very reassuring for parents to know that educators share their concerns about their children. In turn it is comforting for educators to know that parents recognise the complexity of their role in the classroom (Swap, 1992:11).

2.5.3 Advantages for educators and schools

Increased parent and community involvement can also bring multiple benefits to educators and schools. The educator's work can be made more manageable, parents who are involved have more positive views of the educator and the school, and the parents and others who participate are likely to be more supportive of the schools (Davies, 1993:206). This view is shared by Epstein and Dauber (1991:289) when they remark that parents rate educators higher overall, when they are involved with the school in any way. Moreover, educators come to know and understand parents better (Hamby, 1992:59). This obviously increases educators' understanding of the children in the family and provides information, which may be of value in the handling of specific children. Educators also report more positive feelings about their school when their children's education rates all parents, including less educated and single parents as being helpful (Epstein, 1990:112). Educators are impressed by the mutuality of interests and find that collaboration both broadens their perspective as well as increases their sensitivity to varied parents circumstances (Swap, 1992:10).

This aspect is corroborated by the observation of Becker (Henderson, 1987:17-18) that educators become more proficient in their professional activities, devote more time to teaching, experiment more frequently, and develop a more learner-orientated approach when there is parent involvement. In programmes where parents and educators work together successfully, educators experience support and appreciation from parents and a rekindling of their own enthusiasm for problem-solving (Swap, 1992:10).

Collaboration between the school and parents also increases the resources available to the school, for example, parents may contribute to a school as volunteers or paid aides, thus helping to individualise and enrich learner work. Parents' expertise may help a school in the development or maintenance of the school buildings and grounds. Parents may also provide linkages to partnerships with businesses, agencies, cultural institutions, or other resources in the community. Moreover, parents can be political assets, when they argue for the interests of children and schools at board meetings or in legislative sessions (Swap, 1992:11).

Increased linkages between school and community have shown to have multiple positive results; increased access to school resources and facilities, cost saving and improved services through collaboration, increased capacity to solve community problems, and community pride (Davies, 1993:206).

Parent and citizen participation in the schools can also contribute to advancing the prospects of a more democratic and equitable society (Davies, 1993:206). For example, increased opportunities for participation in school decision-making contribute to skills of individual and collective empowerment. These are important ingredients for effective citizen action in all areas of civil life.

Although there are numerous advantages of parent involvement in the education of their children, parent participation and involvement in the schools can also contribute to impediments that may dishearten parents to such an extent that they may not see any valid reason why they should be associated with the school and its activities (Cotton, 2001:112). In the following section, disadvantages of parent involvement will be discussed.

2.6 DISADVANTAGES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Many disadvantages of parent involvement, as discussed by Lall, Campell, & Gillborn (2004:2) exist that prevent parents from being actively involved in a learner's education:

- Relationships between schools and parents can be strained, especially where schools feel unfairly criticised and /or parents feel patronised and unwelcome.

- Parents feel threatened about being involved in school activities when educators adopt an autocratic stand when addressing school issues.

- An unhealthy school climate discourages parents from being involved in school activities.

- Educators feel that their professional rights and freedom are threatened by effective parent involvement.

- Parents, who have a higher standard of education and have a higher socio-economic status than have educators, make educators feel inferior, and as such educators become hesitant to encourage parent involvement in the education of the child.

- Parents, who have a low economic status and are less educated than educators, feel inferior in the presence of educators.

2.7 SUMMARY

Both parents and educators are partners in education and as such have to share information, skills, responsibilities, accountability and decision-making. Because parents and educators have rights in the education of a child, it is imperative that they work together.

Parents have an educational obligation towards their children. For that reason it would be a mistake to leave them out of curricular and extracurricular activities. Through their involvement in these activities, they would be in a very good position to evaluate education objectively and should be able to make a meaningful contribution to the teaching of their children. It is equally important that a parent should at all times acknowledge the operational areas of each other so that the education of a child can be effective.

In this chapter parent involvement as a theoretical framework for the discussion of parent involvement in education of their children was dealt with. Consideration was given to an explication of the definition of parent involvement, nature and scope of parent involvement, reasons for parent involvement, advantages and disadvantages of parent involvement, ways in which parents become involved in the education of their children, reasons for non-involvement of parents in education, and various models of parent involvement. The next chapter will deal with the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 BACKGROUND STUDIES

Conflictual and fragile relationships between all sectors of the school community, coupled with poor socio-economic conditions such as poverty and crime, were identified as important contributory factors for the continued absence of an effective culture of teaching and learning (Nxumalo, 1993:55-59; Anon, 1995a:20; O'Grady, 1996:6; Maree, 1997:22; and Anon, 1997a:19; Ngcai, 1996:14; Ngcai, 1997:8). The symptoms of these adversarial relationships identified by school communities include a lack of respect and co-operation between parents and educators, which invariably leads to poor communication and thus to poor relations. Lack of parent involvement undermines the educator's morale. Debilitating frustrations and dissatisfaction of all stakeholders result in isolation, a lack of communication and fragmentation (Anon, 1996:22).

In the Kwa-Mashu schools' survey, parents acknowledged that they feared to exercise discipline over their children. They also admitted that they were unsupportive and further more, that they lack interest and motivation to become involved in school issues (Nxumalo, 1993:57). Notwithstanding the poor conditions of schools, the study also revealed, that parents have to play a crucial role in reconstructing a culture of learning by *inter alia*, promoting healthy communication with their schools and exercising positive discipline over their children (Nxumalo, 1993:58).

Constraints such as ignorance fear for educators, and other socio-economic ills such as poverty and violence, militate strongly against the establishment of a constructive and sustainable parent-school relationship.

It must also be borne in mind that the turbulent past has resulted in many schools having no culture of constructive and disciplined parent involvement

at all. The restoration of these relationships and the development of a mutual interdependency based on respect, trust and an ongoing commitment towards joint responsibility for quality education should be the focus of the entire school community and government.

In Chapter 2 parent involvement as a theoretical framework for the discussion of parent involvement in education of their children was dealt with. Consideration was given to an explication of the definition of parent involvement, nature and scope of parent involvement, reasons, advantages and disadvantages of parent involvement and various models of parent involvement. In this chapter the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools will be discussed.

3.2 KNOWING THE DISADVANTAGED

Poverty reinforces the deleterious effects of many conditions of life on the ability to learn. The disadvantaged child is often undernourished. Many are chronically fatigued and show listlessness due to the lack of both sleep and food. Some show signs of certain physical defects already present or incipient, such as anaemia or heart ailment. Rees (1996:34) states that the disadvantaged child may show a lack of social experience in everyday interaction with his/her peers and with adults in his/her environment. According to Fantini and Weinstein (1986:23), the disadvantaged cannot be defined by race, residence, jobs, or behaviour alone. What they have in common is that all are left out of the process which aims to carry all mankind, regardless of background, towards the same basic goals: physical comfort and survival, feelings of self-worth, potency, connection with others, and concern for the common good.

There is evidence that poverty adversely affects the physical and mental health of children and youth. In the final report of the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children in America (1986:5), the following facts were emphasised:

- Disadvantaged children show high rates of cumulative educational retardation.

- There is a consistent correlation between poverty and the number of school dropouts.

In describing the world of the disadvantaged community child, Keller (1967:146-147), asserts that poverty is costly and that its most innocent victims are the children raised under its influence. The disadvantaged child is the poorly survived, underfed, ill educated and socially and economically marginal. Children continue to be born in ghettos, mothers are deserted and families are on relief in a society that has put self-reliance and self-support among its cardinal virtues. Social and economic deprivation goes hand in hand with other frightening problems; with crime and delinquency, with illiteracy and ill health. It is the poorest children who do least well in school, who care least about learning, and who swell the ranks of youthful delinquents, drug addicts, and the mentally and emotionally disabled.

The disadvantaged child, who is passive, is usually considered the good child at home. Tired, discouraged and busy parents consider the curiosity of the child a nuisance. Often, the child's environment is rigid, inconsistent, or disorderly. Cultural deprivation affects the child's learning patterns. Ausabel (1996:6) pictures the disadvantaged child as one who has poor perceptual discrimination skills and the inability to use adults as sources of information, correction, and reality testing. This child also has an impoverished language-symbolic system and a dearth of information, concepts and relational proposition. It is often in the area of language development that the disadvantaged child manifests the greatest degree of intellectual retardation.

3.3 THE NATURE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGED SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

From the above discussion, it is clear that parent involvement is insufficient in disadvantaged South African schools, especially in rural communities due to various constraints, such as ignorance, fear of educators, and other socio-economic ills.

In this section of this chapter a closer look will be given at the historical background of education in South Africa in the pre-democratic and post-

democratic era and parent involvement in the education of their children in disadvantaged South African schools and limitations to parent involvement.

The reason for this exercise will be to show that parents need to become concerned with the education of their children. This notion is fully supported by Ball (2003:243-246) who states, that the restructuring of education over the past decade in many countries has been characterised by the devolution of power and responsibilities of parents and schools.

Parent involvement in education is now assuming a new form in South Africa and those disadvantaged areas within South Africa as a result of the greater democratisation of education in this country (SA, 1996a). However, during the last decade changing socio-political circumstances in this country have brought the importance of parent participation to the fore. More recognition has been given to the role of parents in the management of the school. Furthermore, the need to equalise educational opportunities in South Africa has placed greater financial burdens and responsibilities upon parents, thereby involving them more directly in education. Legislation has given parents a more formal stake in the management of schools (Steyn, Steyn & De Waal, 1997:40-41). Educators thus realise more than ever before that the success of their effort depends largely on parent confirmation and co-operation (Lemmer & Squelch, 1993:96-97).

Parent involvement in South Africa, including the disadvantaged schools in the rural areas, has been receiving attention since 1652 (Van der Linde, 1993:12). This serves to indicate that from the historical perspective parents have been involved in school activities in the Republic of South Africa (Buys, 1986: 109).

In the pre-democratic era the government initiated parent involvement in different ways.

3.3.1 Government initiated parent involvement in the pre-democratic era

In accordance with Claassen (1995:449), the term democratic and pre-democratic era is used to indicate the post-election and pre-election eras respectively.

Parent involvement in the pre-democratic era will be discussed under the disadvantaged South African schools (mainly Black disadvantaged learners) in rural areas, with special reference to the Lusikisiki district.

3.3.1.1 Black parent involvement during missionary education

While acknowledging the fact that the missionaries pioneered a western type of education among Blacks in South Africa, this education was full of shortcomings and failures with regard to parent involvement. According to Florin (1965:33) Christianity played a forceful role in changing the tribal traditions of the Blacks. Education, having Christianity as the main aim, did not make provision for Black parent involvement in the education of the learner.

3.3.1.2 Black parent involvement during Provincial Administration

Besides a few local councils and advisory boards through which Black parents could make recommendations to the provincial administrators, the control of education still remained almost entirely in the hands of White administrators (Behr, 1988:166). Another difficulty which provincial administrators were faced with was the absence of general legislative authority which would centralise Black education as an integral part of all social services under a system in which active participation of Black parents would be secured.

In conclusion, however, despite the difficulties, which the Administrators encountered in Black education in disadvantaged areas in the Union of South Africa, important groundwork was started in getting Black parents involved in the education of their children (Behr, 1988:166).

3.3.1.3 Black parent involvement in education before 1994

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 resulted in Black parents having a direct involvement in the running of schools. Black parent bodies as constituted by the Department of Bantu Education were entrusted with various powers and functions, which made them effectively involved especially in the local control of schools. In terms of the aims of Bantu Education, these parent bodies were elected by parents in order to represent their educational aspirations. Black parent bodies utilised their powers and responsibilities to control schools, which fell within their jurisdiction (Barron & Howell, 1974:143).

Jefferson (1973:153), stating the success and progress of the involvement of Black parent bodies in the education of the child, mentions that by 1970, 500 school boards and 6000 school committees were serving in Black schools. In these parent bodies about 50000 Black members, who were elected by parents, served to represent their interests in the education of their children.

Despite the success achieved by the introduction and implementation of The Bantu Education Act 1953 which resulted in effective Black parent involvement in the education of the child, there were numerous problems which parent bodies were faced with in the execution of their various functions. Some Black parents did not welcome the introduction and implementation of the Bantu Education policy. They alleged that Bantu Education was an inferior system of education designed to lower the standard of Black education. Other Black parents felt that they had not been consulted when Bantu Education was introduced and they were, therefore, not readily prepared to co-operate with the department (Horrel, 1968:140).

The Education and Training Act (SA, Act 90 of 1979) replaced the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Bantu Special Education of 1964 (Behr, 1988:200). The Act sought to do away with some of the worst aspects of the previous legislation. It dropped the designation *Bantu* and replaced it with *Black*. It declared that compulsory education would be a central aim of policy. It also pledged itself to the active involvement of the parents and communities in the education system (Mncwabe, 1992:59). Moreover, educators were no

longer to be hired by school boards. Their appointment and dismissal became the domain of the Department of Education and Training. Another important aspect of the Act was the provision that the home language would be used as medium of instruction up to standard 2. The introduction of compulsory education in certain areas was also suggested, provided that the parents wanted it and co-operated with the Department of Education in the matter (Davies, 1991:351).

In response to the Bill, some Black education groups, such as the African Educators' Association (ATASA) and the Transvaal United Educators' Association (TUATA), expressed cautious approval of certain provisions, but all Black organisations rejected the continuing categorisation of education on a racial basis and the retention of a separate department of Black education (Davies, 1991:352). In 1981 an official announcement by the Minister of National Education in the House of Assembly promised compulsory education in 38 urban school districts applicable to pupils entering the first year of schooling. This announcement excluded the disadvantaged schools in the rural areas. Opposition leaders welcomed this step and many Blacks perceived a more sinister purpose behind this new dispensation; that of a political tool to be used against school boycotts, trouble free areas could be given preference over troublesome localities. Furthermore, penalties were to be imposed for non-attendance at school, but the onus for getting children to school, (and thereby containing learner unrest), was being shifted from the authorities to the parents (Davies, 1991:357). Both educators and learners felt that the Act did not go nearly far enough, and the school boycotts continued (Samuel & Lodge, 1990:25). However, this time learners started to relate the educational issues to the broader political struggle of Black communities.

The implications of the Education and Training Act (SA, Act 90 of 1979) which replaced the Bantu Education Act of 1953 were also applicable and felt by the disadvantaged South African schools in the rural areas, but some of these schools were not participating in the schools boycotts such as the schools of the Lusikisiki district.

In the pre-democratic era, allowance was made for two types of formal parent involvement, namely a statutory parent body (usually called school committee) and a non-statutory body (usually called a parent-teacher association or a parent-teacher-student association) (Weeto, 1997:27-32).

3.3.1.3.1 Statutory parent body

The statutory parent body had certain powers given to it by the law, and functioned in most traditionally White schools, but was not well established in Black schools because parents felt that the school committees and school boards were not representing them properly (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:88).

Although the management council could not concern itself directly with the professional activities of the school, it could, however, report on them and make recommendations to the Director of Education. This could include recommendations regarding the appointment of educators (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:88). The management council/school could also collect money to defray current expenditure and also control such funds. Finally a management council carried out all duties entrusted to it by education authorities. The statutory body functioning on district level was known as a school board, and had a supervisory, advisory administrative and managerial task as regards education (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:89). According to the circumstances, such as the size of the school district or the number of educational institutions within its boundaries, a school board could consist of 6 to 12 members representing the various institutions.

3.3.1.3.2 The non-statutory parent body

The non-statutory parent body did not have powers granted to it by law. Its main purpose was to combine the efforts of parents and educators to a limited degree when a service, such as fund-raising, was required by the school (Van Schalkwyk, 1988:88).

Although there were many school committees and school boards in place by the end of 1960's, their structure and policies continued to generate friction between the school committees, the community and educators because of

lack of accountability of the boards to parents allowed them to trample over grassroots opinion (Hyslop, 1989:210). The Department of Education and Training's treatment of school board members also served to undermine their credibility and their loyalty, for example; members of the boards and committees, who were politically suspect, were arbitrarily removed from their positions (Hyslop, 1989:211).

According to (Mkwanazi, 1994:55), the introduction of the De Lange Commission in 1980 was an attempt by the government to address the deepening crisis in education and the uncompromising stance of the parents on involvement in education through established structures. Although the report stressed the need for parents to have a greater share in decision-making, the role of the parents in legitimising the system was once more emphasised (Kallaway, 1990:33).

The government's Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS), launched in 1991, contained proposals for the decentralisation of the education system through the establishment of management councils at all schools with increased decision-making and executive functions (ERS, 1991: 75-76).

The curriculum model of the same year moves further than the ERS, in regard to parent involvement in education and acknowledge their participation in curriculum development. Mkwanazi (1994:59) states, that this represents a notable shift on the part of the state towards recognition of the opposition's concept of parental governance. The feeling of the majority of Black academics and parents was that the concessions were too few and too late.

3.3.2 Government initiatives in the democratic era

The empowerment of the masses was something the ANC felt strongly about and following their victory in the 1994 elections this was also reflected in their commitment to increasing parent involvement in education.

3.3.2.1 The White Paper on Education and Training, 1995

The change envisaged for education in South Africa in the White Paper on Education and training (SA, 1995:22), highlights the importance of parent and community involvement in education.

According to the White Paper on Education and Training (SA, 1995a), the principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stakeholders, interest groups and role players. This is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the education process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not.

3.3.2.2 The Hunter Report

On 31 August 1995, the report of the committee to review the organisation, governance and funding of schools, was released. AP Hunter chaired the committee and the report is commonly referred to as the Hunter Report. In this report various suggestions related to school governance are made.

The Hunter Report (1995:51) acknowledges that parents have both the right and the responsibility to participate in the education of their children" and recommends that schools establish governance structures that will enable elected representatives to assume active and responsible roles in the determining and adoption of policies in schools. School governance and management are seen as interwoven elements in a process aimed at enabling schools to provide effective and efficient education, and therefore difficult to define. Nevertheless, the committee agreed that governance is primarily concerned with the formulation and adoption of policy, while management is concerned with the day-to-day delivery of education. This being so, parents would be entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt school policy, while day-to-day decisions about the administration and organisation and activities, supporting teaching and learning in the school,

would be the domain of the professional staff, although stakeholders should have the right to comment on and make suggestions with regard to such decisions (Hunter Report, 1995:52).

In their discussions of the role and responsibilities of governing bodies, the committee agreed that not all bodies would be able to accept responsibility for the total range of functions (Hunter Report, 1995:56). The committee suggested that a governing body should be able to negotiate for certain powers or functions. Examples of such functions are the maintenance of school buildings, the purchase of textbooks and materials, and the purchase of equipment. If the governing body does not have the relevant management capacity, the educational authority will exercise these powers on behalf of the governing body (Hunter Report, 1995:57).

Many schools and school governing bodies have accumulated substantial knowledge and skills to run their schools effectively. Many communities have, however, not had the opportunity to do so. In this regard the committee suggests a process of capacity building, which they defined as the "power to act" (Hunter Report, 1995:97). Capacity building is directed at community empowerment and entails the development of both the material and human resources necessary for effective governance and management. The recommendations of the Hunter Report were taken up in the White Paper on Education No.2 and provided the framework for the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SA, 1996c:16).

3.3.2.3 The White Paper

The education White Paper No. 2, entitled, *the organisation, governance and funding of schools*, was released in February 1996 and is based on the proposals set out in the Hunter Report.

Included in the White Paper (SA, 1996c:16), is the suggestion that the school governing structures should involve all stakeholder groups in active and responsible roles, encourage tolerance, rational discussions and collective decision-making. In accordance with the Hunter Report, the White Paper acknowledges that national and provincial policy should allow for the fact that

such capacities may be under-developed in many communities and will need to be built.

According to the White Paper (SA, 1996c:17) each public school had to have a governing body in January 1997, which should comprise elected representatives of parents and guardians of learners currently enrolled at school.

Each public school governing body would be responsible for a set of basic functions, but would be entitled to negotiate with its provincial education department to take responsibility for additional functions, as well as when it is willing and believed it was ready to do so (SA, 1996c:19-20).

A task team had been established to plan a comprehensive programme to build capacity for management and governance where this was needed (SA, 1996c:25). The White Paper concludes:

"The idea that all public school governing bodies must be responsible for a basic list of functions is deceptively simple. Once implemented, the vast majority of South Africans will recognise that this decision constitutes by far the most significant devolution of responsibility in the history of South African education".

This is indeed true, especially regarding the role of parents in predominantly Black schools. However, the success will depend to a great extent on the proposed training programmes for members of the governing bodies. Moreover, not all educators are in agreement with the proposal that governing bodies are still to be consulted regarding appointment of educators to schools, or with the fact that parents are to be in the majority and can outvote educators on all issues.

In predominantly White schools, where some governing bodies have had extensive powers, it is felt that the rights of parents could be violated by the limits placed on the role of governing bodies in such matters as the appointment of educators, the determination of school fees, language of instruction, religion and other admission criteria (SA, 1996c:7).

In general, the acknowledgement of the government that parents have the right to be involved in decision-making at school is commendable. However, it is lamentable that there is a lack of encouragement or incentive to expand parent involvement to other aspects of education. School governance is of great importance, but does not involve the majority of parents, besides allowing them to vote for the members of the governing body. If the advantages of parent involvement, as set out in Chapter 2 are sought, parent involvement on a broader front must be pursued.

3.4 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION OF PARENTS

The socio-economic position of parents in disadvantaged rural areas has the greatest impact on the lack of preparedness of parents to be involved in school activities (Maynard, 2004:37-43). He states, that school principals working in rural disadvantaged areas, do not have powers to turn parent involvement in education into financial support for schools. The parents have difficulty in acquiring books or fail to pay school fees and principals cannot either refuse them admittance at school or send them home to fetch the required money (Legotlo, 1994: 109). Poor and uneducated parents have the tendency of being reluctant to get involved in school activities. This is due to the fact that they feel inferior before the highly educated, knowledgeable and rich educators. Such parents would feel out of place among such persons and the only way out would to distance themselves from school activities.

Wagstaff and Gallagher (1990: 104-105) say that for the poor members of a community, meetings that are held at school and at which they are expected to contribute could be an embarrassment. Secondly, school principals do not take the distance parents have to travel to school into consideration. Maynard (2004:45-47) maintains, that the empirical research revealed that 61.5 % of the learners in rural areas have to travel very long distances from home to school. This implies that poor parents who have to travel to school for meetings could be facing an extra burden. As such, it could be highly improbable for school principals to involve such parents effectively in school activities.

Comer and Haynes (1998:273-274) allege that the major obstacle in the involvement of parents in school activities may be the changing of community demographics. There are a growing number of families where both parents are working and large number of single parent families who is tied up with other matters such as their employment or raising small children, these are all matters that prohibit them from being involved in school activities. As a result, parents are frequently not readily available for school programmes and, therefore, their involvement in school activities may be negatively affected.

Wisbrun and Ecart (2000:121) state that parents are caught up in the forces of unemployment. It is, therefore, going to be difficult for principals of schools to optimise parent involvement when these parents are already struggling to make ends meet.

Legotlo (1994:109) asserts, that research revealed that 50.7 % of the parents in rural areas are not readily accessible to the school due to the inadequate physical facilities that poor parents have to fund such activities, the inadequate equipment that schools have and the problems relating to creation of schools and the cost of schooling for their children.

Because of poverty, most parents in these areas find themselves too busy most of the time looking, among others, for the next meal of the day, next term's school fees and thus fail to address the basic needs of the education of their children. It is very obvious that the school principals can have a problem in optimising the involvement of such parents in school activities.

One of the peculiar things about rural areas is that tribal authorities who fail to collect levies for the erection of schools entrust this to the school principals. According to Maynard (2004:45-47) principals have to ensure that every child pays these fees. It is without doubt that school principals are further placed in an awkward position when they are to face with parents whose children have not paid. Such parents will surely view his position with hatred and mixed feelings. In turn, this unwarranted task that is given to school principals negatively affects the optimisation of involvement of parents in school activities.

From the above discussion it is clear that schools in rural areas should consider the socio-economic position of parents when attempting to involve them in school activities. Poor and uneducated parents will not feel comfortable before rich and educated persons. These parents may not feel free to contribute for the fear of being irrelevant. It is also vital that the distance between the school and home be taken into consideration if these are projects in which parents have to feature.

The next section will be devoted to the study of the nature of parent involvement in the education of the child in rural communities at home and at school.

3.5 NATURE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

Parents as individuals have a responsibility to fulfil in the education of the child. The main aim of parents as individuals in the education of the child is to assist the development of the child as a totality. For the sake of this research, however, focus will be laid on the influence a parent has on the educational development of the child. This section will examine the involvement of an individual parent in the education of the child at home and at school.

3.5.1 Involvement of parents as individuals at home

An involvement of parents as individuals in the education of the child does not necessarily mean that the parent should always go to the school where the child attends. An individual parent whilst at home can nevertheless contribute and participate in the education of the child. The following are some examples of how an individual parent can be involved in the education of the child at home:

3.5.1.1 General discussion of school matters

An individual parent has the opportunity of becoming involved in the education of the child at home by mere discussion of school matters with the child. It gives the child motivation to see and hear his parents discussing his/her schoolwork in general. This is an opportunity, which individual parents should

utilise in order to become involved in the education of the child (Vincent, 1996:8-9).

3.5.1.2 Checking of homework

Individual parents can participate in the education of the child by checking the homework of the child. If a parent can regularly check the child's homework in exercise books in order to see that at least work is done, this can contribute towards the success of the child's learning at school. This type of parent involvement should not be mistaken for a parent doing the corrections of homework of the child (Kroth & Scholl, 1992:31-32).

3.5.1.3 Creating study time

Individual parents can be involved in the education of the child by making sure that the child at home has special time reserved for study. A parent, who does not make any efforts to ensure that a child is not disturbed while he/she is studying, cannot be regarded as fully involved in the education of his/her child (Bastiani, 2003:40).

3.5.1.4 Acquaintance with the child's subjects

Individual parents can become involved in the education of the child by gradually becoming acquainted with the child's subjects at school. Parents should not necessarily master the detailed contents of the subject, but the mere knowledge of the subjects, which are taken by the child, could prove as sufficient parent participation in the education of the child, because the child is usually encouraged to know that his/her parents know what she/he does at school. According to Kroth and Scholl, (1992:26) parents should learn about what is going on in the school and appreciate what educators are doing.

3.5.1.5 Studying school reports

Parents as individuals at home can become involved in the education of the child by studying the child's school reports. Parents should make it a habit to look into the quarterly and final year reports and the findings should be

discussed with the child concerned. This type of parent involvement can work as an inspiration to the child (Kroth & Scholl, 1992:26).

3.5.1.6 Provision of school clothes

It is the responsibility of every individual parent to make sure that the child has the necessary school clothes as required by the school. This form of parent participation does not mean that parents should buy new and expensive clothes. Simple and clean clothes will make the child proud of his/her parental support in her/his education. Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothatha and Squelch (1997:28), showing that it is the parent's responsibility to cater for the child's requirements, state that it is the adult who should decide on behalf of the child what is good and appropriate for him/her.

3.5.2 An involvement of parents as individuals at school

Parents as individuals can be involved in the education of the child at school. Parents as individuals have the responsibility of visiting schools for the purpose of making the learning of the child easier. At school parents can participate in the education of the child in many different ways.

The following are some of the main activities, which can be performed by parents at school in order to become involved in the education of the child.

3.5.2.1 Meeting with educators

Parents can visit schools as individuals and share various ideas with educators about school matters. Children usually become motivated when they see their parents visiting schools and discussing what goes on at schools with their educators. Parents can meet with the educators for the purpose of planning methods and strategies of encouraging children to attain success in their educational efforts (Garber, Faure & Kok, 1987:222-230).

3.5.2.2 Co-operation with educators

Involvement of parents as individuals can take place at school, especially when parents show support of what educators do at school. Parents as

individuals can support the efforts of educators only by co-operating with educators rather than opposing the educators' attempts (Lightfoot, 1990: 9-10). It is a positive influence for children when parents appreciate the endeavours of educators in order to assist the child in his/her educational learning.

3.5.2.3 Parents financial support

Parents as individuals can become involved in the education of the child by supporting school projects financially. There are various projects and programmes, which aim to raise funds for the schools. Parents as individuals are usually expected to contribute to these funds by sending some money to the school (Van Schalkwyk, 1990:180).

This type of involvement benefits the child in the long run and his or her learning becomes simplified and above all, the child enjoys learning under such healthy and happy conditions.

3.5.2.4 Beautifying of school premises

Parents as individuals can become involved at schools by participating when school premises and surroundings are being beautified. The child develops pride and love in his/her school when he/she sees that his/her parents take part in the maintenance of school premises. Parents can avail themselves especially on weekends to perform any small jobs at school, which, however, result in giving children moral support, which they require for their learning. According to the editorial of Educamus (Katz, 1999:3) the active involvement of parents and the community in the school as a whole is one of the essential ingredients of the successful schooling of the child. The implication is that parents should become involved in all spheres of the school including the caring of school premises.

From the above discussion, it is clear, that schools in rural areas in the Lusikisiki district are facing the same, as Lusikisiki is also one of the poorest rural areas in the Eastern Cape Province.

In conclusion, parent as individuals, have an opportunity to become involved in the education of the child. Involvement of parents as individuals is usually confined to the local level where parents can communicate with educators as individuals in order to support the child's education. The contact between the parent and the educator can also form another important educational involvement of a parent in the child's education.

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGED SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Although the contact areas between the parent as an individual in the education of the child, at home and at school as discussed above are vital, it should be borne in mind that numerous and unaccountable limitations are being experience by parents in trying to be involved in school activities. Cheung, Chen and Tam (1996:2), affirms by saying that when parents fail to make a contribution in education or when their inputs can be made only through recommendations they make, they will not be easily prepared to be involved in school activities.

According to Cotton (2001:10-12), the following are the key limitations with regard to parent involvement in the education of their children in rural areas.

- Economic disadvantaged families may face a variety of challenges not ordinarily faced by middle and upper class families. These challenges include the inability to take time off from work without the risk of losing their jobs. Additionally, many of these parents cannot afford to take time off in low-wage positions.

- Parents who struggle academically themselves often do not have the basic skills necessary to assist their children with homework. These parents may find it difficult to be involved in the education process when they themselves have not had positive experiences in the education realm.

- Illiteracy is another significant limitation that may prevent parent involvement. Not only are parents unable to assist learners with homework, but communication with the school is also hindered because of

the lack of the ability to read. Some parents have the belief that it is solely the responsibility of the school to educate their children.

- Lack of communication between the school and home also prevents parent involvement. Additionally, parents who have had one or more negative experiences when contacting the school are even less likely to become actively involved in their child's education. According to the State of Texas Education Report (2002:5), "... parents themselves had negative experiences in their own schooling; they may already have formed a negative view of schools. These parents can view their children's school as hostile territory".

- Lack of proficiency in the English language is a limitation that prevents some parents from being involved in a child's education. Parents who are not comfortable speaking English may have experienced discrimination and humiliation because of the language difference. The lack of bilingual staff in schools contributes to feelings of powerlessness on the part of non-English speaking parents when attempting to advocate for or resolve problems for their children" (State of Texas Report, 2002:6).

- Demands on time ranging from work to family to church may become a limitation to parent involvement in education. Some parents may find it difficult to take the time to make a difference by being involved.

- Parents do not usually get feedback on their inputs in education.

- Two working parents do not have time to get involved in school activities.

- Poor parents fail to provide for their children.

- Poor parents are afraid to be looked down upon by rich educators.

- Poor parents do not want to be involved in school activities because the fear that they will be asked to contribute financially to the school projects.

- Negative socio-economic issues drive parents away from school activities.

- High divorce rates contribute to the absence of parents in school activities.
- Rural parents are not used to being involved in school activities
- Parents, who live too far from school, fail to get involved in school activities.

Due to the fact that parents' knowledge about school is not sufficient to enable them to exercise their rights and responsibilities in the education of their children, they rather stay away from school activities than getting involved (Van der Linde, 1993:40).

It is evident that parents will not be able to understand a circular or notice sent out to them if they are not well educated and informed. Makoanyane (1989:44-45), rightly maintains, that because most parents are not academically well educated to be able to make valid inputs in school activities, they will be hesitant about being involved.

Family involvement in the education of children is essential to academic success. Research shows that several limitations stand in the way of parent involvement. (Iowa Department of Education, 2002:15). In order to foster parent involvement in each child's education, schools must address the limitations to parent involvement. Until these limitations are addressed and eliminated, children will not reap the benefits of parents who actively participate in the educational process.

The above mentioned limitations will be empirically investigated by means of a questionnaire in chapter 4 in order to determine the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in the education of their children so that parents and educators should develop an insight, the knowledge and skills on how to get parents involved in the education of their children.

3.7 THE SITUATION OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE LUSIKISIKI DISTRICT

The Lusikisiki district is a rural community and it is a disadvantaged area of the former Transkei Government and now forms part of the Eastern Cape

Province. The problems experienced with parent involvement in public schools of the Lusikisiki district, seem to be the same problems experienced by the rest of South Africa and the world. There is no literature review of parent involvement in the Lusikisiki district, due to the lack of research studies in the area. The literature review of the situation of parent involvement in the Lusikisiki district can be done within the broad literature on South Africa because the Lusikisiki district forms part of in South Africa.

Most parents in the Lusikisiki district are illiterate, some are working and others are not working. Large numbers of working parents are labourers in the Gauteng Province and on sugar cane farms around Kwa Zulu-Natal Province. Most parents, who are working, earn little to support themselves. There are parents who partially not working and they depend on the pension fund of their grand parents and child support grant. The rate of unemployment seems to be high because most parents are not working.

Most educators were trained at the teacher training institutions around the Eastern Cape Province. Very few educators were trained at universities around South Africa. Most educators in the Lusikisiki district schools come from the villages and urban areas of the Eastern Cape Province.

According to the information obtained from the district manager of the Lusikisiki district, the age groups of learners in secondary schools ranged from thirteen years to twenty years. Most learners repeated their grades in Lusikisiki district schools.

Most Lusikisiki district schools have poor toilet facilities, shortage of water supply at schools and lack of learning resources and classes.

The relationship between the parents and children in some situations is good. There are also situations where the relationship between parents and children has turned sour.

There is not much variation in the parents' socio-economic and political backgrounds. Before and during the period of this research, poverty levels seemed to be high in the Lusikisiki district. The administration of schools

seemed to be poor, due to the generally low socio-economic background in the area. There is also a high failure rate; school dropout; teenage pregnancy and absenteeism of both learners and educators.

The researcher's own personal experience and observation as an educator confirms that despite the many problems confronting parents, the desire to become actively involved with their schools in order to enhance the learning process, is indeed strong. Constraints such as, ignorance, fear for educators, and other socio-economic ills such as poverty and violence, militate strongly against the establishment of a constructive and sustainable parent-school relationship. Other factors are to be found within the school itself, such as, poor management and the absence of an invitational school climate.

It must also be borne in mind that the turbulent past has resulted in many schools having no culture of constructive and disciplined parent involvement at all. The restoration of these relationships and the development of a mutual interdependency based on trust, respect and an on going commitment towards joint responsibility for quality education should be the focus of the entire school community and government.

The research study addresses the problem of parent involvement in the schools of the Lusikisiki district and attempts to answer the following question.

- What mechanisms need to be introduced to improve the current state of parent involvement in the disadvantaged schools of the Lusikisiki district?

According to Desforges and Abouchaar (2003:49-50), an extensive research on parent involvement and models in other fields of study has been conducted in the world and in South Africa. However, such research studies had never been conducted in the Lusikisiki district.

3.8 SUMMARY

Both parents and educators are partners in education and as such have to share information, skills, responsibilities, accountability and decision-making.

Because parents and educators have rights in the education of a child, it is imperative that they work together.

Parents have an educational obligation towards their children. For that reason it would be a mistake to leave them out of curricular and extracurricular activities. Through their involvement in these activities, they would be in a very good position to evaluate the education objectively and should be able to make a meaningful contribution to the teaching of their children. It is equally important that a parent should at all times acknowledge the operational areas of each other so that the education of a child can be effective.

In this chapter parent involvement as a theoretical framework for the discussion of parent involvement in education of their children was dealt with. Consideration was given to an explication of the definition of parent involvement, nature and scope of parent involvement, reasons for parent involvement, advantages of parent involvement, ways in which parents become involved in the education of their children, reasons for non-involvement of parents in education, and various models of parent involvement. The next chapter will constitute an empirical research. Consideration was given to the aims of empirical research, research design, and selection of the population and construction of the questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters form an important background to the investigation contained in this research. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background to the nature and various models of parent involvement in education, and Chapter 3 provides a theoretical background to the nature of parent involvement in disadvantaged schools in South Africa. It is clearly illustrated that lack of parent involvement in the education of their children is due to insufficient knowledge of parents and educators of how parents could be involved and unavailability of a model that could help parents and educators so that parents can be involved in the education of their children.

The substantive literature study, as well as the preliminary research, served to identify some crucial issues pertaining to the topic, as well as to indicate gaps in the existing knowledge on the models of parent involvement. This research addresses some of these questions through in-depth interviews with the distribution of questionnaires to selected parents, principals and educators in the district of Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape Province.

In this chapter all the relevant information concerning the qualitative and quantitative research designs and methods is presented. These research designs and methods will be used to investigate the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools. Attention will be focused on the research designs, conducting of interviews, construction of the questionnaire as measuring instrument through which the presentation and analysis of the responses to the interviews and questionnaire will be explained, the pilot study, target population, sampling method and data analysis. The reason for the choice and types of questionnaires will be advanced.

The aim of qualitative and quantitative research designs is to test the validity and reliability of the discoveries from the literature study and determine the

need for the development of a model for parent involvement in the education of their children in the district of Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape Province.

The main steps in the gathering of data for the current research is described in this chapter, as well as justification for the methods of data gathering and the subsequent analysis employed.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a plan outlining how information is to be gathered for an assessment or evaluation that includes: identifying the data, gathering methods, the instrument to be used or created, how the instruments will be administered and how the information will be organised and analysed.

Research design is a plan for collecting and utilizing data so that desired information can be obtained with sufficient precision or a hypothesis can be tested properly (Burns & Grove, 2005:50).

In this study the following research design method is discussed:

4.2.1 Mixed research design method

This is a design that includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in parallel form (concurrent mixed method design, in which two types of data are collected and analysed) in sequential form (sequential mixed method design, in which one type of data provides a basis for collection of another type of data), or where the data are converted (qualitised or quantitised) and analysed again (conversion mixed method design). This design includes studies that used mixed data (numerical and text) and alternative tools (statistics and text analysis) but apply the same method.

Mixed research design method is used in this study because it employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information on instruments as well as text information on interviews so that the final database represents both qualitative and quantitative information (Creswell, 2003:18-25).

Mixed research design by using quantitative and qualitative research approaches are considered to be the most appropriate in this study, because the study is aimed at obtaining an in-depth insight on the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in Black disadvantaged South African schools. To motivate the choice of the research designs, a brief description of each of these research approaches is subsequently given.

4.2.2 The quantitative survey

Quantitative research is a major focus in this study, and involves the generation of numerical data to address the research objectives or questions and to generalise the outcomes.

Quantitative methodology is useful when you need to know numbers of things, and is less useful for researching attitude or for understanding how people behave. In this type of research, the answers are limited by the question (Coullson, Goldstein, & Ntuli, 2002:43).

An exploratory, descriptive, quantitative survey will be used in the study in an attempt to explore and describe the phenomena in real life, and to identify and describe a possible model that could be used by parents and educators in the education of children.

Quantitative research refers to the use of numbers in collecting or working with research data. The quantitative method has advantages and disadvantages. According to Louw and Edwards (1997:36), the following advantages and disadvantages are identified.

4.2.2.1 Advantages of the quantitative survey

- Provides a basis of comparing one result with another.
- Numbers can be subjected to mathematical procedures and worked with on a computer, so quantitative methods provide ways to deal with large bodies of data.
- Statistical techniques permit hypotheses to be rigorously tested.

4.2.2.2 Disadvantages of the quantitative survey

Data converted to numbers are removed from the actual behaviour and experience of the participant and the results then often fail to show the true nature of data that have been quantified.

Many complex psychological phenomena are difficult to quantify and emphasising quantitative research, may keep the researcher's attention on simple and superficial aspects of human nature.

4.2.2.3 The questionnaire

Data for this study will be collected through the use of the structured questionnaire survey technique, which will be developed in the light of the literature study. The questionnaire is intended to find out whether the responses of the target groups will be in agreement, or refute the discoveries of literature study. A questionnaire is a printed self-report form designed to elicit information that can be obtained through written responses of the subjects (Burns & Grove, 2005:311).

Babbie (1999:39) defines a questionnaire as a set of questions on a form, which is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project.

For the purpose of this research, the structured questionnaires have been used because the quantification and analysis of the results may be carried out more efficiently (Burns & Grove, 2005:358).

Questionnaires have been designed to determine facts about events or situation known by subjects, or beliefs, attitudes, opinions, levels of knowledge, or intentions of the subjects (Burns & Grove, 2005:311).

The aim of the questionnaires is to determine whether the responses of the target group will be in agreement, or refute the discoveries of literature study.

4.2.2.3.1 Types of questionnaires

- **Mailed questionnaire**

According to Grinnell (1993:216-217), a mailed questionnaire is a questionnaire, which is sent off by mail in the hope that the respondent will complete and return it.

The researcher compiles the questionnaire, which is accompanied by clear, carefully worded prescriptions at the level of understanding of the target population to be reached. The first section of a mailed questionnaire must be designed in such a way that it is not threatening and creates an interesting impression. What is important here is that the respondent and the researcher are physically removed from one another. The questionnaire is the only communication channel between the compiler of the questionnaire and the respondent (Grinnell, 1993:216-217).

The appearance of the mailed questionnaire must encourage the respondent to complete it. The researcher must do everything in his/her power to raise the respondent rate, for instance to prepare the respondents for the study by means of a newsletter. Sending reminders and including franked envelopes are also conducive to higher response rate.

- **Telephonic questionnaire**

As in the case of the mailed questionnaire, the researcher and respondent are physically removed from each other, but able to communicate with each other about the contents of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire completed telephonically, must contain comprehensive instructions because the field worker does not have the opportunity to consult separate manuals while he/she busy asking the questions (De Vos, 2000:54).

- **Personal questionnaire**

In this case the questionnaires are handed to the respondents who complete them on their own, but the researcher is available in case problems are

experienced. The researcher limits his or her own contribution to the completion of the questionnaire to the absolute minimum. The researcher thus largely remains in the background and can at most encourage the respondents with a few words to continue with their contribution or lead them back to the subject (Struwig & Stead, 2001:86).

- **Questionnaire delivered by hand**

The researcher or the field worker delivers questionnaires by hand, so that the respondents can complete them in their own time, and then collects them again later. It is important that an appointment be made for collecting the questionnaires again and this should preferably not be more than 48 hours after delivery (Struwig & Stead, 2001:88).

- **Group-administered questionnaires**

In this case respondents who are present in-group complete a questionnaire on their own. Preferably each respondent should receive the same stimulus and complete his or her own questionnaire without discussion with the other members of the group (De Vos, 2000:52-156).

In this study, questionnaires delivered by hand will be used because it is convenient, quicker and cheaper compared to mailed questionnaires.

4.2.2.3.2 Principles of questionnaire construction

A number of basic principles must be taken into consideration when a questionnaire is developed. Some of these are discussed below.

- **Information needed**

Before the researcher can decide on the nature of the questionnaire, there must be clarity on precisely what information is to be obtained. The questionnaire must be brief, including only those questions, which are absolutely necessary to collect all the questions, so that a situation does not arise later where information is missing. (Brink, 2001:153-155).

- **The format of the questionnaire**

The format of the questionnaire will be influenced by whether it is be a mailed, telephonic, group-administered or other type of questionnaire, as well as where, under what circumstances and by whom it will be completed. All questionnaires should, however, be accompanied by a covering letter. In the covering letter the person or organisation undertaking the research must be identified. A brief description of the purpose of the study is given in order to motivate respondents to give their co-operation for the investigation. The covering letter must also give an indication of the importance of the study. The covering letter should also give an indication of how the respondent came to be involved in the investigation (Bak, 2004:135).

- **Formulating the questions**

According to De Vos (2000:56-186), certain basic principles can be stated for the formulation of questions of a questionnaire.

- Sentences must be brief and clear, and the vocabulary and style of the questions must be understandable to the respondents.
- Questions and response alternatives must be clear and not reflect the bias of the researcher.
- Every question must contain only one thought.
- Every question must be relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire.

4.2.2.3.3 Reliability and Validity of questionnaire

Measurement experts believe that every measurement device should possess certain qualities. Perhaps the two most common technical concepts in measurement are reliability and validity.

Any kind of assessment whether traditional or "authentic" must be developed in a way that gives the assessor accurate information about the performance of the individual.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to decide what should be measured and how it should be measured. It is imperative the instrument selected for data gathering be as accurate and consistent as possible. The theoretical basis for research is limited to the extent of the accuracy of the measurement.

The reliable and valid measures for the instrument selected will be discussed in depth.

- **Reliability**

Worthen, Borg and White (1998:197) define reliability as the degree of consistency between two measures of the same thing, the measure of how stable, dependable, trustworthy, and consistent a questionnaire is in measuring the same thing each time. Reliability therefore is the accuracy and how trustworthy is the measuring instrument.

- **Validity**

Worthen, Borg & White, (1998:199) define validity as when the instrument measures what it purports to measure and the degree to which the instrument accomplish the purpose for which it is being used.

4.2.2.3.4 Steps taken to ensure completion of the questionnaire

For mailed questionnaires, an addressed, franked enveloped must be enclosed. Follow-up letters or postcards can be mailed to those who have not reacted about two or three weeks after the original has been mailed. A second follow-up request and even telephonic requests can be considered.

In conclusion, the questionnaires will be designed to be clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. The design of questionnaires is intended to minimise potential errors from respondents and coders. Since the participation of the respondents in this survey will be voluntary, questionnaires will be designed so as to engage their interest and encourage their co-operation.

For the purpose of this research and after taking into consideration the advantages and disadvantage of a questionnaire as a measuring instrument,

it has been decided to deliver the questionnaire to the principals of the eight schools which will participate in this research. The principals will distribute the questionnaire to the educators and learners to give to their parents.

The completed questionnaire will be placed into a specific container designed by the researcher in each school, and be collected by the researcher on a specific predetermined set date (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 90-92).

The questionnaire is deemed suitable for this specific survey, because all the parents could read and write and could be reached easily. The respondents could complete the questionnaire in their own time, and responses can be easily analysed.

4.2.2.4 Ethical consideration

The questionnaires were completed anonymously and no respondents were traced, as the questionnaires were not numbered before hand. As the questionnaires were completed anonymously, the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their individual responses. The respondents returned completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes to the principal, without coercion and without remuneration.

No codes were used on the questionnaires, in an effort to ensure absolute anonymity in order to obtain truthful answers, thus the non-respondents could not be identified.

4.2.2.5 Data analysis

As this research is conducted as an exploratory, descriptive, quantitative survey and no hypotheses were formulated, the responses from the usable questionnaires tallied, percentages calculated and frequency displayed in tables as necessary.

Data were processed and analysed by means of statistical programmes selected in consultation with the Statistical Consultation Service of the Vaal Triangle Campus of North-West University, so that statistical comparisons

personal, literacy style, and they often include the participants' own language and perspectives. Although all researchers must be able to write clearly, effective qualitative researchers must be especially skilled in this area (Brink, 2001: 193).

For this reason it is necessary to discuss qualitative research in more detail.

4.2.3.1 The philosophical basis of qualitative research

In qualitative research, frameworks are not used in the same sense as they are in quantitative studies, because the goal is not theory testing. In some qualitative studies, theory development is one of the results of the study. Each type of qualitative research is guided by a particular philosophical stance considered a paradigm. The philosophy directs the questions asked, the observations that are made, and how the data are interpreted (Munhall, 2001: 54). The researcher does not always clearly state the philosophical stance on which the study is based; however, this can be identified by a careful reading of the literature review, the presentation of the problem, and the methods used (Munhall, 2001: 56).

The conduct of qualitative research requires the rigorous implementation of qualitative research techniques, such as openness, scrupulous, adherence to a philosophical perspective, thoroughness in collecting data, and inclusion of all the data in the theory development phase (Burns & Grove, 2005:65).

The qualitative researcher gathers descriptive data rather than numerical data; uses it inductively to lead to a conclusion on phenomena observed, and has a descriptive outcome often involving the development of a theory. Researchers, who wish to explore the meaning or describe and promote understanding of human experiences, would find it difficult to quantify the data. Quantitative methods would be more appropriate and effective alternative methods to use in such cases (Brink, 2001: 119).

This is in essence what this study is all about; to attempt to understand what educators and parents feel about the development of a model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools.

In conclusion, qualitative approaches focus on phenomena that occur in natural settings, in the "real world" and involve studying those phenomena in all their complexities. Qualitatively the researchers recognise that the issue they are studying has many dimensions and layers, and so they try to portray the issue in its multifaceted form (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 147).

4.2.3.2 Data collection strategies

Researchers conducting a qualitative study, use some methods of data collection and analysis that are unique to qualitative research. Other methods similar to quantitative methods are applied differently in quantitative studies. In data collection the researcher as a whole person is totally involved, perceiving, reacting, reflecting, attaching meaning, and recording (Harrison, 2002: 856-872). In this study, only unstructured interviews and focus group interviews are discussed in the ensuing section, since these are the dominant strategies employed in the current investigation.

4.2.3.2.1 Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews are used primarily in descriptive and qualitative studies. Unstructured interviews are the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings (Palmerino, 2000: 35). As used in research, the purpose of unstructured interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. McEvoy, (2001: 49-59) points out that the interviewer is not after factual information. From the perspective of qualitative research, interviews generate socially constructed knowledge. The interviewer influences the interviewee in terms of "... she/he listens, attends, encourages, interrupts, digresses, initiates topics and terminates responses" .

The basic thrust of qualitative interviewing, is to minimise the imposition of predetermined responses when gathering data. It is therefore, critical that questions should be asked in a truly open-ended fashion, thereby allowing participants to respond in their own terms (Harrison, 2002: 856-872).

4.2.3.2.2 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews are interviews with groups of about 5 to 15 people whose opinions and experiences are requested simultaneously (Brink, 2001:159). Focus groups were designed to obtain the participants' perceptions in a focused area in a setting that is permissive and non-threatening. One of the assumptions underlying the use of focus groups is that group dynamics can assist people to express and clarify their views in ways that are less likely to occur in a one-to-one interview. The group may give a sense of "safety in numbers" to those wary of researchers or those who are anxious (Burns & Grove, 2005: 542).

4.2.3.3 Data analysis

The purpose of a qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. The process of data collection is not an end in itself. The culminating activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. The data in qualitative research is non-numerical, usually in the form of written words or videotapes, audiotapes and photographs. Analysis of data in qualitative studies, therefore, involves an examination of words rather than numbers, as is done in quantitative studies (Brink, 2001:192).

According to Burns and Grove (2005:548) various techniques are used by qualitative researchers during the process of data analysis and interpretation. These techniques include coding, reflective remarks, marginal remarks and developing propositions.

4.2.3.4 The generation of grounded theory

The last step in qualitative research is the task of integrating the categories to form a grounded theory. Brink (2001: 121) describes the grounded theory approach as a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived ground theory about a phenomenon. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon.

In conclusion, it is beyond dispute that grounded theory offers a systematic method by which to study the richness and diversity of human experience, and to generate a relevant plausible theory, which can be used to understand the contextual reality of social behaviour (Hutchinson, 1988:127).

4.2.3.5 Ethical consideration in qualitative research

The qualitative researcher needs to observe or interview individuals or groups, in order to collect the data on the phenomena being studied. Data will simultaneously, or subsequently, be analysed and the findings presented in a predetermined way. All this implies that certain ethical principles need to be addressed concerning the research participants used in any research project.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 108) list the following ethical considerations.

- The researcher should not expose research participants to undue physical or psychological harm. Participants should not risk losing life or limb, nor should they be subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem.

- Research participants should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and be given the choice of either participating. Furthermore, they should be told that, if they agree to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Any participation in a study should be strictly voluntary.

- Research should respect participants' right to privacy. In general, the researcher must keep the nature and quality of participants' performance strictly confidential. The terms of agreement should be made clear prior to the research. If the results are to be used solely for a thesis, this should be stated; if there is, however, the possibility that an article may be published on the research results, this must be agreed upon by the participants.

- Researchers must report their findings in a complete and honest fashion, without misrepresenting what they have done, or intentionally misleading others as to the nature of their findings.

4.2.3.6 Attributes of a qualitative methodology which makes it suitable for this research

The problem of this research is to determine the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools within the context of the district of Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape. The lack of clarity regarding the problem indicates the need for an exploratory research methodology, which would enable the problems explored, and the questions asked to become more specific as the study progresses.

The characteristics of qualitative research, such as the following, make it a particularly appropriate methodology for this research.

- The researcher works in natural settings
- Qualitative research is holistic
- Qualitative research is hypothesis-generating
- Qualitative data is descriptive
- Qualitative research is concerned with process rather than outcomes
- Data are analysed inductively
- Small samples are used
- Qualitative researchers try to understand people from their own frame of reference (Du Plooy, 2002: 29).

4.3 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is frequently defined as a smaller version of a proposed study conducted to refine the methodology. It is developed similarly to the proposed study, using similar subjects, the same treatment and the same data collection and analysis techniques (Burns & Grove, 2005:198).

- **Pilot testing the questionnaire**

In all cases it is essential that newly constructed questionnaires be thoroughly pilot-tested before being utilised in the main investigation. This ensures that errors of whatever nature can be rectified immediately at little cost. The field worker and/or the respondent should also leave space on the questionnaire for comment or evaluation of the questionnaire. In this manner the researcher obtains a general impression of the feasibility of his/her questionnaire and the data, which he/she obtained (Du Plooy, 2002: 48).

The questionnaire has been pre-tested with selected respondents who are the representative of the target population with regard to its quality of measurements and appropriateness, and reviewed it for clarity.

In this research study, respondents are parents and teachers who took part in the research project indicating their views on parent involvement in disadvantaged Black South African Schools.

The questionnaire was found to be appropriate to the study, clear and with quality of measurement.

4.4 SELECTION OF STUDY POPULATION

This research handles theories, problems, advantages, and solutions towards parent involvement in education of the child. The education of the child implies the involvement of parents as primary educators, and school educators as secondary educators of the child. Therefore, the questionnaires used in this research, were aimed at gathering information from both parents and educators. This research project focused on the needs for the development of a model of parent involvement in the education of their children, with special reference to the Lusikisiki district of the Eastern Cape Province.

The target population for the research was identified as educators and parents in the Eastern Cape Province.

The Eastern Cape Province consists of 16 districts. Due to logistical factors, it was not possible to include all 16 districts in the Eastern Cape Province. From

the 16 districts, Lusikisiki was chosen as a district for this research, because it is the biggest district in the Eastern Cape Province, and will be representative of the target population of a disadvantaged community. A list of all the secondary schools in the Lusikisiki district was obtained from the Eastern Cape Department of Education. In the Lusikisiki district there are 15 secondary schools and all of them were used in this study.

The study population for this survey comprised of parents (3514) and educators (287) from fifteen secondary schools (n=15) in the Lusikisiki district of the Eastern Cape Province.

4.5 SAMPLE SIZE

All of the fifteen (15) secondary schools in the district of Lusikisiki participated in this research. In each of these fifteen (15) schools, the principal was approached to assist the researcher in distributing questionnaires to a 100 out of 287 educators in these schools and to 500 out of 3514 parents in these schools. A proportional random sampling method was used to obtain the sample size in each school.

4.6 PERMISSION

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Department of Education of the Eastern Cape Province in the Lusikisiki district, and from the principals of the schools selected.

4.7 DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Principals of the schools were requested to distribute questionnaires to the children of the selected families and children of these families were asked to help parents who may not understand English to interpret for their parents, and educators were also available to assist those parents who may not understand the questionnaires by interpreting in their home language.

4.8 RESEARCH RESULTS

Quantitative and qualitative research results, obtained from parents and educators living in the district of Lusikisiki of the Eastern Cape Province will be presented together with brief interpretations and discussions from both groups of respondents whenever possible, in an effort to enhance the meaningfulness of the research results. Furthermore, references to similar or dissimilar results reported by others in the literature review will provide an attempt to link this project's results to those of previously reported research projects addressing the same issues.

4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter a concentrated holistic description of the entire research process, including the quantitative and qualitative research designs and the quantitative and qualitative means of data collection and data analysis as well as the measure to be implemented so as to ensure the trustworthiness of the research was provided.

In the next chapter the operationalisation of the fieldwork, data analysis and the discussion of the collective results obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews will be done.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter relevant information concerning qualitative and quantitative research designs and methods were presented and discussed.

This chapter presents and interprets the collected research data from qualitative and quantitative research designs. As a background to aid interpretation of responses, personal details with regard to respondents are given. Responses concerning parent involvement in the education of their children are presented and analyzed. This involves, in the final analysis, a comparison of the respondents' perceptions on parent involvement between parents and educators from the disadvantaged schools in Lusikisiki district in the Eastern Cape Province.

At the end of the quantitative research, responses concerning the outcomes of parent involvement are presented. A summary of the contents of the quantitative research responses is then given.

5.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.2.1 Data on General Information

Data concerning review of respondents are shown in Table 5.1 and personal background, are shown in Table 5.2. Responses in this section are analyzed and interpreted as follows.

5.2.1.1 Review of respondents

Questionnaires were distributed to the sample population composed of educators and parents in the Eastern Cape Province schools in the district of Lusikisiki. 100 questionnaires were distributed to school educators and 500 questionnaires were distributed to the parents by the principals of the schools. Table 5.1 below indicates the return rate.

Table 5.1: Response rate from educators and parents

Educators			Parents		
Sample	**Return**		**Sample**	**Return**	
F	f	%	F	f	%
100	98	98	500	436	87.2

Table 5.1 indicates the distribution of questionnaires to school educators and parents. The return rate indicates that 98% of the educators reacted to the request, while 87.2% of the parents reacted to the request. This indicates a favourable response. To ensure a high response rate, the researcher encouraged the learners to interpret to those parents who may not understand English and to explain to their parents the importance of completing the questionnaire as that would help the researcher to develop a model that would help parents and educators to develop means and strategies to get parents involved in the education of their children in order to increase academic performance of their children.

5.2.1.2 Statistical techniques

The research data were processed by means of statistical measures, such as frequencies, mean, and standard deviation for each sample of the population (Burns & Grove, 2005:214). These statistical measures were employed to obtain an idea about the perception and needs of a model that can be developed irrespective of parent involvement for parents for the disadvantaged schools in the education of their children.

5.2.1.3 Data on biographical information

This section deals with biographical details of educators and parents from Eastern Cape Province schools in the district of Lusikisiki such as age, gender experience and qualifications. Each item of the biographical details is discussed separately. This information would enable the researcher to have a better understanding of the background of the respondents.

5.2.1.4 Data on respondents' gender

Table 5.2 explains the situation regarding the gender of parents and educators from disadvantaged schools of the Eastern Cape Province in the district of Lusikisiki who participated in the research.

Table 5.2: Respondents' gender

	PARENTS		EDUCATORS	
Gender	f	%	F	%
Male	168	38.53	28	28.57
Female	268	61.47	68	69.39
Missing	0	0	2	2.04
Total	436	100	98	100

Table 5.2 shows that 61.47 % of parent (268/436) female respondents were involved in the completion of questionnaires, while male parent respondents constitute 38.53% (168/436). The reason for the low rate of participation among male parents could be that males are mostly away from home and females do take care of children even after work.

In table 5.2, female educator respondents constitute 69.39% (68/98), while male educator respondents constitute 28.57% (28/98) while 2.04% (2/98) were absent. The reason for the low rate of participation among male educators could be that females are always dominant in number in most of the schools. Although questionnaires were given randomly to parents and not specifically to males or females, it is noticed that females were more than males (Table 5.2).

This interpretation necessitates the need for parents and educators to participate in education so that the learner can benefit from the contribution of parents and educators.

5.2.1.5 Age of educators and parents

The ages of respondents, namely educators and parents from disadvantaged schools in the Lusikisiki district, are reflected in Table 5.3

Table 5.3: Age of educators and parents

	Educators		Parents	
Age	F	%	f	%
20-29	4	4.08	21	4.82
30-39	54	55.10	179	41.06
40-49	25	25.51	168	38.53
50-59	6	6.12	53	12.16
60 and above	2	2.04	5	1.15
Missing	7	7.14	10	2.29
Total	98	100	436	100

Table 5.3 presents the distribution of age groups of educators and parents from the Eastern Cape Province in the district of Lusikisiki. The largest component of educators participating in this survey, namely 55.10% is around 30-39 years and the second largest age group is around 40-49 years, namely 25.51%. The implication is that most of the educators who participated in the survey should be intellectually, socially and physically matured to involve parents in the education of their children, according to the reflected age in table 5.3. It should, therefore, not be much of a problem for the educators to encourage parent involvement in the education of the child.

Table 5.3 also shows that the largest component of parents who participated in the survey, namely 41.06% is around 30-39 years and the second largest age group is around 40-49 years namely 38.53%. The implication is that most of parents should be intellectually, socially and physically matured to be involved in the education of their children according to the reflected age in table 5.3. It should therefore not be much of a problem for the parent to take

responsibilities for their children's education if they are guided and encouraged irrespective of how to get involved in the education of their children.

5.2.1.6 Highest academic qualification of parents

Data relating to academic qualification of parents are detailed in table 5.4

Table 5.4: Highest academic qualification of parents

PARENTS		
Qualification	F	%
Less than matric	191	44.01
Matric	129	29.70
1 year post-matric	21	4.80
2 year post-matric	16	3.68
3 year post-matric	75	17.28
4 year post-matric	0	0.00
Missing	2	0.46
Total	434	100

From table 5.4 it can be seen, that 44.01% of the respondents are below matric qualification. This points out that the majority of parents in the survey are unable to assist their children with the school subjects content matter, as they lack the educational knowledge and skills to assist their children, when and where they may have learning problems.

5.2.1.7 Highest academic qualification of educators

Table 5.5: Highest academic qualification of educators

EDUCATORS		
Academic qualification	f	%
Less than matric	0	0.00
Matric	4	4.08
1 year post-matric	2	2.04
2 year post-matric	2	2.04
3 year post-matric	21	21.43
BA Degree	36	36.73
B Ed. Degree	17	17.35
Honour's Degree	6	6.12
Master's Degree	8	8.16
Doctorate	2	2.04
Total	98	100

From Table 5.5 it is noted that the majority of respondents (educators) have qualifications of at least a BA degree (36.73%), while 2.04% possesses a doctorate. This points out, that the majority of educators are able to assist or guide parents to assist their children, where they may have learning problems, as they lack the educational knowledge and skills to assist their children.

The biographic data was analysed and brief interpretation given. The aim of biographic data information in this study was to help the research to be aware of the gender, age and academic qualification of the participants so that during the development of the model such factors (English-proficiency, availability due to age restriction and house hold business) should be considered to ensure fully participation of parents and educators in the

implementation of the model in order to achieve effective parent involvement in the education of children.

5.2.2 Demographic information

Section B of the questionnaire deals with the demographical details of the school, predominant socio-economic status of the area of the school, predominant socio-economic status of the area parents and educators live in, and language medium at the school, irrespective of their social status as educators are supposed to be in the same income group.

These demographical details are illustrated in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Demographic data of educators and parents

	Educators		Parents	
Predominant socio-economic status of school area				
	f	%	f	%
Lower income group	72	73.47	320	73.40
Middle income group	15	15.31	89	20.41
Higher income group	11	11.22	27	6.19
Total	98	100	436	100
Predominant socio-economic status of area where they live				
Lower income group	64	71.11	352	81.10
Middle income group	21	23.33	56	12.90
Higher income group	5	5.56	26	6.00
Total	90	100	434	100

5.2.2.1 Predominant socio-economic status of school area

According to Table 5.6, 73.47% of the educators reported that their schools are situated within the lower-income group area; and the majority of the parents' respondents (73.39 %) stated that their schools are situated within

the lower-income group area. The difference between the educators' and parents' perception of the school area, is only 0.08%. This indicates that the schools are situated in a disadvantaged community.

5.2.2.2 Conclusion

In summary, the demographic characteristics of the respondents as outlined above helped to demonstrate the following.

- It was noted, that the majority of both parents and educators stated, that their schools are situated within the lower-income group area
- Both educators and parents stated that they live in the lower- income group area.

These variables would help to understand the situations in which the learners and educators find themselves and the need for the development of a model in order to assist the educators in promoting parent involvement in the education of their children.

The questionnaire on the views on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement will be analyzed and interpreted.

5.2.3 Responses of educators on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement in education

Frequencies and percentages are used in interpreting the responses of educators on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement and a four-point scale was used to determine if they agree or disagree with the statement

Scale:

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = agree
4 = strongly agree

Table 5.7: Responses of educators on the needs for the development of a model of parent involvement in education

Item	Involving activity	Extent of parent involvement							
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
C01	Schools and parents determine school policy jointly	1	1.02	93	94.90	1	1.02	0	0.00
C02	Parents want to discuss their children's problems with the school	56	57.14	20	20.41	20	20.41	0	0.00
C03	Parents are adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children	27	27.55	35	35.71	32	32.65	0	0.00
C04	I have been trained in parent involvement	25	25.51	26	26.53	46	46.94	0	0.00
C05	Parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education	17	17.35	23	23.47	54	55.10	0	0.00
C06	Parents want to be invited to school extramural activities	34	34.69	35	35.71	23	23.47	0	0.00
C07	Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents towards the schools	32	32.65	26	26.53	34	34.69	0	0.00
C08	Poor parents want to be seen with educated educators	22	22.45	31	31.63	41	41.84	0	0.00
C09	Parents fully understand their role in schools	17	17.35	34	34.69	44	44.90	0	0.00
C10	Schools have adequate time to involve parents in school extramural activities	28	28.57	27	27.55	38	38.78	1	1.02
C11	Parents determine the school curriculum with educators	29	29.59	32	32.65	33	33.67	0	0.00

Item	Involving activity	Extent of parent involvement							
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
C12	I communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply	39	39.80	23	23.47	33	33.67	0	0.00
C13	I ensure that all parents have regular access to clear, concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom	21	21.43	15	15.31	58	59.18	0	0.00
C14	I ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school, and then address those concerns	11	11.22	24	24.49	59	60.20	1	1.02
C15	I accommodate parents' work schedules	11	11.22	26	26.53	57	58.16	1	1.02
C16	I accommodate language and cultural differences	7	7.14	33	33.67	50	51.02	0	0.00
C17	I establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school	17	17.35	18	18.37	57	58.16	0	0.00
C18	I promote and support parenting skills	13	13.27	24	24.49	59	60.20	0	0.00
C19	I encourage active parent participation in learner learning	10	10.20	20	20.41	65	66.33	0	0.00
C20	I welcome parents as volunteer partners in school	6	6.12	13	13.27	74	75.51	0	0.00
C21	Schools invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families	7	7.14	25	25.51	63	64.29	0	0.00
C22	I reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools	12	12.24	18	18.37	66	67.35	0	0.00

Item	Involving activity	Extent of parent involvement							
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
C23	I provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at your child's grade level	9	9.18	14	14.29	73	74.49	1	1.02
C24	Schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals	13	13.27	13	13.27	70	71.43	0	0.00
C25	I initiate classroom volunteer programs	13	13.27	15	15.31	66	67.35	0	0.00
C26	Schools create a parent resource centre, provide materials on issues of concern to parents	9	9.18	24	24.49	63	64.29	0	0.00
C27	Schools invite parents to present talks /or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills	11	11.22	24	24.49	61	62.24	0	0.00
C28	Schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills	4	4.08	23	23.47	70	71.43	0	0.00
C29	I ensure that the first contact with parents, is a positive one	11	11.22	15	15.31	67	68.37	0	0.00
C30	Parents ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics	8	8.16	13	13.27	75	76.53	0	0.00

5.2.4 Summary responses of educators on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement in education

Scale 1 and 2 were grouped together to determine the extent of disagreement, while 3 and 4 were also grouped together to determine the extent of agreement.

In the following analysis responses 1 and 2 will be seen as "disagree" and responses 3 and 4 as "agree".

After a detailed discussion of the background of educators in sections A and B, it is necessary to analyze the results of section C. This section consists of 30 questions. Each of these questions will be analyzed individually and where necessary, explanations will be made.

The responses of educators are reflected in Table 5.7. The respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on a four point Lickert-type scale on both the actual and desired parent involvement in the education of their children.

For discussion purposes, however, responses are dichotomized into no involvement (strongly disagree and disagree) and there is involvement (agree and strongly agree).

5.2.4.1 Determination of school policy

Question C01 expected educators to strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree to parent involvement in the determination of school policy.

A total of 95.92 % of the respondents disagree with the principle that parents and educators determine school policy jointly, whilst 1.02 % of the respondents agree with this principle. It appears that the majority of schools do not involve parents in the determination of school policy.

5.2.4.2 Parents want to discuss their children's problem with the school

In question C02 educators are expected to indicate if parents want to discuss their children's problems with the school.

Question C02 indicates, that 77.55 % of the respondents state that parents do not want to discuss their children's problems with the school, whilst 20.45 % of the respondents state that parents want to discuss their children's problems with the school.

5.2.4.3 Parents are adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children

In this question (C03), educators were expected to indicate whether parents are adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children.

According to C03, 63.26 % the respondents' responses indicate, those parents are not adequately qualified to make valid contribution in the education of their children.

According to this response indicate that parents will not be able to make valid contributions to the education of their children due to lack of knowledge on the how to get involved in the education of their children hence they have never been trained on parent involvement.

5.2.4.4 Educators have been trained in parent involvement

This question (C04) expected respondents to indicate, whether educators have been trained in parent involvement or not.

According to question (C04) 52.04 % of the respondents indicate that educators are not trained in parent involvement, whilst 46.95 % of the respondents agree that educators are trained in parent involvement

5.2.4.5 Parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education

According to question C05, educator respondents were to indicate whether parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education.

Question C05, shows that parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education as indicated by 55.10 % of the respondents.

5.2.4.6 Parents want to be invited to school extramural activities

Question C06 expected educators to indicate whether parents want to be invited to school activities.

According to this table it is evident that parents do not want to be invited to school activities, as indicated by 70.40 % of the respondents. The majority of educators view parents as not being willing to be invited to school activities. This is a negative response, indicating that educators consider parents as not willing to co-operate with educators.

5.2.4.7 Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents towards the schools

In this question (C07), educators were requested to state whether unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents towards the schools.

According to C07 59.18 % of the respondents indicate, that unhealthy socio-economic issues do not drive parents towards the schools. The majority of educators are thus of the opinion that parents from unhealthy socio-economic areas fail to feature properly in school activities. Poor and uneducated parents may assume that schools are a threat and their participation could be an embarrassment for educators.

5.2.4.8 Poor parents want to be seen with educated educators

Question C08 asked responding educators whether poor parents want to be seen with educated educators or not.

Answers to question C08 indicate, that 54.08% of the respondents indicate, that poor parents do not want to be seen with educated educators. This may indicate that some of parents feel inferior to educators because they are uneducated and may not understand discussions on educational matters.

5.2.4.9 Parents fully understand their role in schools

Question C09 requested educators to indicate whether parents fully understand their role in schools.

According to question 09, 52.04 % of the respondents disagree that parents fully understand their role in schools. This may result in parents being unable to provide their children with their basic necessities.

5.2.4.10 Schools have adequate time to involve parents in activities

Question C10 asked responding educators whether they agree that schools do have adequate time to involve parents in activities.

Question C10 shows that, 56.12 % of the respondents indicated that schools do not have adequate time to involve parents in school activities, whilst 39.80 % of the respondents stated that schools do have time to involve parents in school activities.

5.2.4.11 Parents determine the school curriculum with educators

Question C11 requested responding educators to indicate whether parents determine the school curriculum with educators.

A total of 62.24 % of the respondents indicate that parents do not determine the school curriculum with educators. This indicates that the majority of educator's respondents perceive the involvement of parents in curricular affairs as an intrusion because parents may not be qualified to know what is involved in the curriculum, and educators are aware of the changes in the curriculum.

5.2.4.12 Educators communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply

Question C12 requested responding educators to indicate whether they do communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply.

Question C12 reflects, that 63.27 % of the respondents indicate that educators do not communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply. This indicates that the majority of educators do not share school information with parents and this makes it impossible for parents to know what is happening at the schools regarding the education of their children.

5.2.4.13 Educators ensure that parents have regular access to clear and concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom

Question C13 requested responding educators to indicate whether they do ensure that parents have regular access to clear, concise, and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom.

A total of 59.18 % of the respondents indicate, that educators do ensure that parents have regular access to clear and concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom.

5.2.4.14 Educators ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school and then address those concerns

Question C14 requested responding educators to indicate whether they do ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school and then address those concerns.

According to question 14, 61.22 % of the respondents indicate, that educators do ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school and then address those concerns. This indicates a positive relationship between educators and parents in a learning environment.

5.2.4.15 Educators accommodate parents' work schedule

Question C15 requested responding educators to indicate whether they do accommodate parents' work schedules.

A total of 59.18 % of the respondents indicate that educators do accommodate parents' work schedules. This indicates that educators are also concerned about parents' availability and importance of job availability to parents.

5.2.4.16 Educators accommodate language and cultural differences

Question C16 requested responding educators to indicate whether they do accommodate parents' language and cultural differences.

According to question C16, 51.02 % of the respondents indicate, that educators do accommodate parents' language and cultural differences.

This indicates that educators are also concerned about parents' language and cultural beliefs. This could encourage effective communication between educators and parents and respect of each other and this could promote effective guidance and encouragement of parents on parent involvement in the education of their children.

5.2.4.17 Educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school

Question C17 asked responding educators to indicate whether they do establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school.

A total of 58.16 % of the respondents indicate that educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school.

This indicates that educators are also aware of the effects of effective communication in the establishment of rapport and good relationship between educators and parents.

5.2.4.18 Educators promote and support parenting skills

Question C18 asked responding educators to indicate whether they do promote and support parenting skills.

According to question C18, 60.20 % of the respondents indicate that educators do promote and support parenting skills.

This indicates that educators are willing to ensure that parents acquire the necessary parenting skills in order so that parents are involved in the education of their children.

5.2.4.19 Educators encourage active parent participation in learner learning

Question C19 asked responding educators to indicate whether they do encourage active parent participation in learner learning.

A total of 66.33 % of the respondents indicate that educators do encourage active parent participation in learner learning.

This indicates that educators are willing to ensure that parents are involved in the education of their children.

5.2.4.20 Educators welcome parents as volunteer partners in school

Question C20 asked responding educators to indicate whether they do welcome parents as volunteer partners in school.

A total of 75.51 % of the respondents indicate that educators do welcome parents as volunteer partners in school.

Although educators' responses in this question show that parents are welcomed as volunteer partners, questions; C01, C02 and C06 in this section prove that parents are not involved in the education of their children, that educators would like to see parents as volunteer partners in the school.

5.2.4.21 Schools invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families

Question C21 asked responding educators to indicate whether schools do invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families.

Question C21 indicates, that 64.29 % of the respondents indicate that schools do invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families.

Although the responses give an impression that parents are invited to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families, the

question could be asked; how many parents do honour the invitation made by the school?

5.2.4.22 Educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools

Question C22 asked responding educators to indicate whether educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools. Table 5.7 represents the responses.

A total of 67.35 % of the respondents indicate that educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools

According to the responses on this question, it appears that educators are able to reach out to the community for resources to strengthen disadvantaged schools.

5.2.4.23 Educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at child's grade level

Question C23 requested responding educators to indicate whether educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at child's grade level.

Question C23 reflects that 75.51 % of the respondents indicate that educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at child's grade level.

According to the responses on this question, it appears that parents are provided with mastery skills for each subject in order to ensure that each parent is knowledgeable about the content of each subject taught at school.

5.2.4.24 Schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals

Question C24 requested responding educators to indicate whether schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals.

According to question C24, 71.43 % of the respondents indicate that schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals.

5.2.4.25 Educators initiate a classroom volunteer programs

Question C25 requested responding educators to indicate whether educators initiate a classroom volunteer program.

According to question C25, 67.35 % of the respondents indicate that educators initiate a classroom volunteer program.

According to the responses, volunteer programs are available should parents wish to be involved in the education of their children

5.2.4.26 Schools create a parent resource centre; provide materials on issues of concern to parents.

Question C26 requested responding educators to indicate whether schools create a parent resource centre, provide materials on issues of concern to parents.

A total of 64.29 % of the respondents indicate that schools create a parent resource centre and provide materials on issues of concern to parents.

5.2.4.27 Schools invite parents to present talks/or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills

Question C27 requested responding educators to indicate whether schools invite parents to present talks/or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills.

A total of 62.24 % of the respondents indicate, that schools invite parents to present talks/or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills.

5.2.4.28 Schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills

Question C28 requested responding educators to indicate whether schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills.

According to question C28, 71.43 % of the respondents indicate that schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills.

5.2.4.29 Educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one

Question C29 requested responding educators to indicate whether educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one. Table 5.7 represents the responses.

A total of 68.37 % of the respondents indicate that educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one.

5.2.4.30 Parents ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics

Question C30 requested responding educators to indicate whether parents do ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics

A total of 76.53 % of the respondents indicate, that parents do ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics

5.2.5 Responses of parents on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement in education

Frequencies and percentages have been used in interpreting the responses of educators on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement and a four-point scale was used to determine if they agree or disagree with the statement.

Scale:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = agree

4 = strongly agree

Table 5.8: Responses of parents on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement in education

Item	Involving activity	Extent of parent involvement							
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Schools and parents determine school policy jointly	189	43.35	120	27.52	114	26.15	5	1.15
2	I want to discuss their children's problems with the school	163	37.39	118	27.06	143	32.80	1	0.23
3	I am adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of my children	64	14.68	158	36.01	185	42.43	10	2.29
4	Educators have been trained in parent involvement	107	24.54	139	31.88	170	38.99	1	0.23
5	I am aware of the ever-changing nature of education	102	23.39	150	34.40	164	37.61	5	1.15
6	I want to be invited to school activities	101	23.17	147	33.72	173	39.68	1	0.23
7	Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive me towards the schools	84	19.27	145	33.26	191	43.81	4	0.92
8	Poor parents want to be seen with educated educators	95	21.79	131	30.05	186	42.66	6	1.38
9	I fully understand my role in schools	88	20.18	143	32.80	178	40.83	8	1.83
10	Schools have adequate time to involve parents in school activities	70	16.06	144	33.03	197	45.18	8	1.83
11	I determine the school curriculum with educators	80	18.35	136	31.19	191	43.81	6	1.38

Item	Involving activity	Extent of parent involvement							
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
12	Educators communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply	76	17.43	118	27.06	218	50.00	7	1.61
13	Educators ensure that all parents have regular access to clear, concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom	92	21.10	127	29.13	197	45.18	8	1.83
14	Educators ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school, and then address those concerns	76	17.43	128	29.36	219	47.71	5	1.15
15	Educators accommodate parents' work schedules	76	17.43	137	31.42	201	46.10	4	0.92
16	Educators accommodate language and cultural differences	77	17.66	129	29.59	210	48.17	4	0.92
17	Educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school	92	21.10	116	26.61	206	47.25	2	0.46
18	Educators promote and support parenting skills	83	19.04	140	32.11	194	44.50	4	0.92
19	Educators encourage active parent participation in learner learning	87	19.95	109	25.00	217	49.77	3	0.69
20	Educators welcome parents as volunteer partners in school	87	19.95	114	26.15	212	48.62	5	1.15
21	Schools invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families	80	18.35	125	28.67	208	47.71	3	0.69
22	Educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools	82	18.81	129	29.59	210	48.17	1	0.23

Item	Involving activity	Extent of parent involvement							
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
23	Educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at your child's grade level	79	18.12	105	24.08	233	53.44	1	0.23
24	Schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals	84	19.27	109	25.00	221	50.69	4	0.92
25	Educators initiate classroom volunteer programs	72	16.51	113	25.92	226	51.83	3	0.69
26	Schools create a parent resource centre provide materials on issues of concern to parents	90	20.64	141	32.34	191	43.81	0	0.00
27	Schools invite parents to present talks /or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills	85	19.50	115	26.38	225	51.61	0	0.00
28	Schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills	77	17.66	129	29.59	217	49.77	0	0.00
29	Educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one	83	19.04	106	24.31	230	52.75	6	1.38
30	I ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with my children about tough topics	86	19.72	87	19.95	248	56.88	3	0.69

5.2.6 Summary of responses of parents on the needs for the development of a model for parent involvement in education

Scale 1 and 2 were grouped together to determine the extent of disagreement and 3 and 4 were also grouped together to determine the extent of agreement.

In the following analysis responses 1 and 2 will be seen as "disagree" and responses 3 and 4 as "agree".

After a detailed discussion of the background of parents in section A and B it is necessary to analyze the results of section C. This section consists of 30 questions. Each of these questions will be analyzed individually and where necessary, explanations will be given.

Section C handles the views on the nature of parent involvement details of how parents are involved in their children's schools, how parents are familiar with school information and how well do they support their children's learning. Details of each of these views on the nature of parent involvement will be discussed separately.

The responses of parents are reflected in Table 5.8. The respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on a four point Lickert-type scale on both the actual and desired parent involvement in the education of their children.

For discussion purposes, however, responses are dichotomized into no involvement (strongly disagree and disagree) and involvement (agree and strongly agree).

5.2.6.1 Determination of school policy

Question C01 expected educators to either strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree to parent involvement in the determination of school policy.

A total of 70.87 % of the respondents disagree with the principle that parents and educators determine school policy jointly, whilst 27.30 % of the respondents agree with this principle. According to the responses in question

C01 appear that the majority of schools do not involve parents in the determination of school policy.

5.2.6.2 Parents want to discuss their children's problem with the school

In question C02 educators are expected to indicate if parents want to discuss their children's problems with the school.

Question C02 indicates that 64.45 % of the respondents state that parents do not want to discuss their children's problem with the school, whilst 33.03 % of the respondents state that parents want to discuss their children's problems with the school.

5.2.6.3 Parents are adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children

In this question (C03), educators were expected to indicate whether parents are adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children.

In question C03, 50.69 % of the respondents' responses indicate that parents are not adequately qualified to make valid contribution in the education of their children.

According to this response it is evident that most of the parents will not be able to contribute fruitfully towards the development of education or to understand the proceeding in school meetings. It is also evident that the most of the parents do not possess knowledge about how a school functions and thus cannot exercise their rights and responsibilities towards the education of their children properly.

5.2.6.4 Educators have been trained in parent involvement

This question (C04) expected respondents to indicate whether educators have been trained in parent involvement or not.

A total of 56.42 % of the respondents indicate that educators are not trained in parent involvement, whilst 39.22 % of the respondents agree that educators are trained in parent involvement

5.2.6.5 Parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education

According to question C05, educators were to indicate whether parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education.

Question C05, shows that parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education, as indicated by 57.79 % of the respondents.

5.2.6.6 Parents want to be invited to school extramural activities

Question C06 expected educators to indicate whether parents want to be invited to school activities.

From responses to question C06, it is evident that parents do not want to be invited to school activities as indicated by 56.89 % of the respondents. The majority of parents perceive themselves as being unwilling to be invited to school activities.

5.2.6.7 Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents towards the schools

In this question (C07) educators were requested to state whether unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents towards the schools.

According to question C07, 52.53 % of the respondents indicate that unhealthy socio-economic issues do not drive parents towards the schools. The majority of parents are of the opinion that parents from unhealthy socio-economic areas fail to feature properly in school activities. Poor and uneducated parents may assume that schools are a threat and their participation could be an embarrassment for educators.

5.2.6.8 Poor parents want to be seen with educated educators

Question C08 asked responding educators whether poor parents want to be seen with educated educators or not.

A total of 51.84 % of the respondents indicate that poor parents do not want to bee seen with educated educators. This may indicate that some of parents feel inferior to educators because they are uneducated and may not understand discussions on educational matters.

5.2.6.9 Parents fully understand their role in schools

Question C09 requested educators to indicate whether parents fully understand their role in schools.

Question 09 reflects that 52.98 % of the respondents disagree that parents fully understand their role in schools. This may make parents to be unable to provide their children with their basic necessities.

5.2.6.10 Schools have adequate time to involve parents in activities

Question C10 asked responding educators whether they agree that schools do have adequate time to involve parents in activities.

According to question C10, 49.09 % of the respondents indicate that schools do not have adequate time to involve parents in school activities, whilst 47.01 % of the respondents state that schools do have time to involve parents in school activities.

5.2.6.11 Parents determine the school curriculum with educators

Question C11 requested responding educators to indicate whether parents determine the school curriculum with educators.

A total of 49.54 % of the respondents indicate that parents do not determine school curriculum with educators. This indicates that parents may regard their involvement in curricular affairs as an intrusion because they may not be

qualified to know what is involved in the curriculum, and are not aware of the changes in the curriculum.

5.2.6.12 Educators communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply

Question C12 requested responding parents to indicate whether they do communicate with educators straightforwardly and simply.

A total of 51.61 % of the respondents indicate that educators communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply. This indicates that the majority of educators do share school information with parents and this makes it possible for parents to know what is happening at the schools regarding the education of their children.

5.2.6.13 Educators ensure that parents have regular access to clear and concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom

Question C13 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators ensure that parents have regular access to clear, concise, and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom.

A total of 50.23 % of the respondents indicate that educators do not ensure that parents have regular access to clear, concise, and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom.

5.2.6.14 Educators ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school and then address those concerns

Question C14 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school and then address those concerns.

According to question 14, 48.86 % of the respondents indicate that educators do ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school and then

address those concerns. This indicates a positive relationship between educators and parents in a learning environment.

5.2.6.15 Educators accommodate parents' work schedule

Question C15 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators do accommodate parents' work schedule.

A total of 48.85 % of the respondents indicate that educators do not accommodate parents' work schedule. This indicates that educators are less concerned about parents' availability in the school situation.

5.2.6.16 Educators accommodate parents' language and cultural differences

Question C16 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators accommodate parents' language and cultural differences.

A total of 49.09 % of the respondents indicate that educators do accommodate parents' language and cultural differences.

This indicates that educators are also concerned about parents' language and cultural beliefs. This could encourage effective communication between educators and parents and respect for each other and this could promote effective guidance and encouragement of parents on parent involvement in the education of their children.

5.2.6.17 Educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school

Question C17 asked responding parents to indicate whether educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school.

A total of 47.71 % of the respondents indicate that educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school, whilst 47.71 % disagree with this principle.

This indicates that educators are also aware of the effects of effective communication in the establishment of rapport and good relationships between educators and parents.

5.2.6.18 Educators promote and support parenting skills

Question C18 asked responding parents to indicate whether educators promote and support parenting skills.

According to question C18, 50.46 % of the respondents indicate that educators promote and support parenting skills.

This indicates that educators are willing to ensure that parents acquire the necessary parenting skills so that parents are involved in the education of their children.

5.2.6.19 Educators encourage active parent participation in learner learning

Question C19 asked responding parents to indicate whether educators do encourage active parent participation in learner learning.

A total of 49.77 % of the respondents indicate that educators encourage active parent participation in learner learning.

This indicates that some educators are willing to ensure that parents are involved in the education of their children.

5.2.6.20 Educators welcome parents as volunteer partners in school

Question C20 asked responding parents indicate whether educators do welcome parents as volunteer partners in school.

A total of 48.40 % of the respondents indicate that educators welcome parents as volunteer partners in school.

5.2.6.21 Schools invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families

Question C21 asked responding parents to indicate whether schools do invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families.

A total of 48.40 % of the respondents indicate that schools do invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families.

5.2.6.22 Educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools

Question C22 asked responding parents to indicate whether educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools.

In question C22, 48.40 % of the respondents indicate that educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools, whilst 48.40 % disagree with this principle.

5.2.6.23 Educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at child's grade level

Question C23 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at child's grade level.

A total of 53.67 % of the respondents indicate that educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at child's grade level.

According to the responses on this question, it appears that parents are provided with mastery skills for each subject in order to ensure that each parent is knowledgeable about the content of each subject taught at school.

5.2.6.24 Schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals

Question C24 requested responding parents to indicate whether schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals.

In question C24, 51.61 % of the respondents indicate that schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals.

5.2.6.25 Educators initiate classroom volunteer programs

Question C25 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators initiate classroom volunteer programs.

A total of 52.52 % of the respondents indicate that educators initiate classroom volunteer programs.

According to the responses volunteer programs are available, if parents wish to be involved in the education of their children.

5.2.6.26 Schools create a parent resource centre provide materials on issues of concern to parents.

Question C26 requested responding parents to indicate whether schools create a parent resource centre, provide materials on issues of concern to parents

A total of 52.98 % of the respondents indicate that schools do not create a parent resource centre; neither provides materials on issues of concern to parents.

5.2.6.27 Schools invite parents to present talks/or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills

Question C27 requested responding parents to indicate whether schools invite parents to present talks/or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills.

A total of 51.61 % of the respondents indicate that schools invite parents to present talks/or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills.

5.2.6.28 Schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills

Question C28 requested responding parents to indicate whether schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills.

A total of 49.77 % of the respondents indicate that schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills.

5.2.6.29 Educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one

Question C29 requested responding parents to indicate whether educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one.

A total of 54.13 % of the respondents indicate that educators ensure that the first contact with parents is a positive one.

5.2.6.30 Parents ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics

Question C30 requested responding educators to indicate whether parents do ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics

According to question C30, 57.57 % of the respondents indicate that parents do ask educators or counsellors about how to talk with their children about tough topics. According to this response parents do make use of other resources rather than educators only to obtain necessary information that could help them to be involved in the education of their children.

5.2.7 Discussion of measuring instrument

The questionnaire was designed on the basis of a literature survey related to the factors that impact upon effective parent involvement. Questions were formulated in such a way that respondents could indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements.

The following tests were used:

5.2.7.1 Cronbach Alpha test

According to (Maree, 2007:216 and Malhotra, 1999:126) Cronbach's alpha is defined as a test for a model or survey's internal consistency. Sometimes it is called a scale reliability coefficient.

- **Reason**

The reason of using the Cronbach's alpha test was to assess and determine the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument used to gather information from the respondents; the Cronbach Alpha test and Inter-Item Correlation were used which an average of all possible split-half coefficients is resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items. A score was computed from each test item and the overall rating, called a scale is defined by the sum of these scores over all the test items. This coefficient varies from 0 to 1 (Maree, 2007:216 and Malhotra, 1999:126).

Table 5.9: Reliability of measuring instrument

	Parents	Educators
Cronbach Alpha test	0.89	0.79
Inter-Item Correlation	0.21	0.14

The following key was used to interpret the reliability and consistency of the measuring instrument:

Cronbach Alpha: > 0.7 = Consistent and reliable

Inter-Item Correlation: > 0.15 and < 0.5 = Consistent and reliable

Interpretation

Based on the findings on table 5.9, by using Cronbach's alpha test the measuring instrument used to determine the response of parents and educators was found to be consistent and reliable.

5.2.7.2 MANOVA TEST

MANOVA test is defined (Burns and Grove, 2005:521, and Cohen, & Lea, 2004:37), as a technique for assessing group differences across multiple dependent variables simultaneously, based on a set of categorical variables acting as independent variable.

5.2.7.2.1 Performing a MANOVA

A MANOVA test was performed, using the Wilks – Lambda (Burns and Grove, 2005:521, and Cohen, & Lea, 2004:37) test which measures the degree of association between two nominal level variables. The value of Lambda can range from 0 to1.

Reason

The reason of this test was to determine whether there are differences between the two groups (educators and parents) for the 6 constructs

mentioned above. It was found that there are differences between the parents and educators ($p<0.05$).

Findings

It was found that there were differences between the parents and educators ($p<0.05$).

5.2.7.3 ANOVA test

Burns and Grove, 2005:521, and Cohen, & Lea, 2004:37, define ANOVA test as an analysis of variance, a statistical model meant to analyse data. Generally the variables in an ANOVA analysis are categorical, not continuous. The term main effect is used in the ANOVA context. The main effect of x seems to mean the result of an F test to see if the different categories of x have any detectable effect on the dependent variable on average.

Reason

The reason of performing ANOVA test was to determine the statistical significance of the differences between the constructs.

5.2.8 Descriptive statistics, using the constructs

In order to describe, perform and get findings of MANOVA and ANOVA tests the statistics using the constructs, questions were grouped into six clusters. Questions were arranged according to their ultimate goals, and the following constructs were decided upon.

- Decision-making
- Involvement
- Knowledge
- Communication

- Resources
- Status.

Table 5.10: Statistically significant differences for constructs

CONSTRUCTS	p-value
Decision	0.35
Involvement	0.00*
Knowledge	0.68
Communication	0.03*
Resources	0.00*
Status	0.62

* Statistical significant differences ($p < 0.05$)

5.2.8.1 Statistically significant differences for constructs

Therefore, there are statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) between parents and educators for the constructs: Involvement, Communication and Resources. In 5.2.8.3 the d-values for these three constructs are determined in order to establish what the size of the differences between educators and parents are for the three constructs.

5.2.8.2 Practically significant differences

Based on table 5.10, the d–values for the constructs

- Involvement
- Communication
- Resources

were determined in order to establish whether there were practically significant differences between parents and educators for these constructs.

In order to establish the practical significance of the differences between the following constructs, the d-value was computed by using the formula.

$$d = \frac{|x1-x2|}{\sqrt{MSE}}$$

where x1= mean score for parents

x2 = mean score for educators

MSE = mean squared error

Table 5.11: Practical significance of differences between constructs

Constructs	Mean parents	Mean educators	d- value
Involvement	11.0	11.9	0.38
Communication	11.6	12.3	0.24
Resources	9.3	10.4	0.51

The following key was used to interpret the differences:

d > 0.2 small effect size

d > 0.5 medium effect size

d > 0.8 large effect size

Discussion and findings

Based to table 5.11, there is a small difference (d = 0.38) between parents and educators for the construct: Involvement. The mean score for educators (11.9) is higher than the mean for parents (11.0); therefore involvement is seen to be more important to educators than to parents.

It was found that there is a small difference (d = 0.24) between parents and educators for the construct: Communication. The mean score for educators (12.3) is higher than the mean for parents (11.6); therefore communication is seen to be more important to educators than to parents.

For the construct Resources, it was found that there is a medium-sized difference (d = 0.51) between parents and educators. The mean score for educators (10.4) is higher than the mean for parents (9.3); therefore resources are seen to be more important to educators than to parents.

5.2.9 Conclusion

In this part of the chapter the researcher obtained a general view concerning perceptions of participating educators and parents pertaining to parent involvement in the education of their children in the Eastern Cape Province in the district of Lusikisiki.

The personal particulars of educators and parents gave the researcher the stand from which issues could be evaluated most objectively.

Using the Cronbach Alpha and Inter Item Correlation, the reliability and consistency of the measuring instruments were established and it was found, that the measuring instrument was consistent and reliable.

In order to determine the differences between parents and educators, using the Wilks Lambda test performed a MANOVA test, and it was found that there are differences between parents and educators.

An ANOVA test was performed and there were some statistical and practical significant difference between the constructs between the means of parents and educators and the effect size was also established.

This part of the chapter outlined the findings of the empirical research that was initiated in order to compare how educators and parents perceive parent involvement, and to determine the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in the education of their children, as these having been identified before hand in the literature study.

It has, however, been found that the following problems seemed to be experienced by the majority of school educators and parents.

- Parents are not involved in school activities, due to lack of time. This factor of time could be ascribed to the school and home programmes that clash.

- It was vividly indicated that parents and educators have various misconceptions about parent involvement in the education of children. Some feel that education is for educators and those parents may act as intruders in education.

- Although parents are not involved in the education of their children, the findings revealed that the majority of parents want to be involved but do not know how.

- It is apparent that parents from the low socio-economic group may have difficulties in featuring in school activities due to unhealthy socio-economic factors and fear that they may be required to contribute financially to schools. Parents, therefore, are driven away from school because they are unable to meet all the requirements of the school.

- Lastly, parents in low socio-economic status, fail to attend school meeting due to lack of transport since school meetings are held in the evenings and parents have to walk long distances while transport is not available in the evening. Only those parents who have transport which are few; can attend this is why meetings are poorly attended.

Matters such as poverty, unemployment issues, unhealthy conditions, illiteracy and other social changes greatly affect the preparedness of parents to be involved in parent involvement in the education of children.

After an empirical investigation in which the theoretical principles, and identified problems were verified, the next section of this chapter will be devoted to qualitative research design in order to investigate the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools.

5.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous section of this chapter briefly outlined the findings of the empirical research initiated in order to compare how educators and parents perceive parent involvement, and to determine the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in the education of their children, as these were identified beforehand in the literature study.

In this section of this chapter, qualitative data collection strategies are used. However participant observation, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews will be discussed, since these are the dominant strategies employed in the current investigation. The reason for choosing these qualitative research strategies is to extend understanding within the context of a particular situation, to obtain rich data in order to build theories that describe a setting or explain a phenomenon.

This research is aimed at elucidating parents' and educators' experience of parent involvement, as well as the context in which this takes place.

5.3.1 Data gathering and problems encountered

The complexity and variability of human life in its natural inhabitant mandates that those who study it must collect rich and diverse data on whatever they study. This is one reason why more than one data collection strategy was used in this research.

5.3.1.1 Participant observation in schools

During October and November 2006, the researcher spent time as an observer in each of the three selected schools, in the district of Lusikisiki after permission had been obtained from the district manager of schools.

During the observation, the researcher noticed that the schools visited were in the low socio-economic group, the structure of school buildings were old, made of mud and the floor cleaned with cow dung. While the researcher was outside, he could see children and educators inside while the lecture was in progress.

The researcher observed the children cleaning the school; meeting for assembly; practising for a choir competition; attending lessons; receiving food during break as part of the government's feeding scheme, etcetera. Parents selling food on school premises for own income and helping to prepare food were also observed. In most cases the only problem was the hospitality of the staff, who felt that the researcher should be accompanied during observation at all times.

The researcher provided refreshments for the staff of all schools involved in this research, as a token of gratitude for allowing the researcher into their classes and sharing some of their experiences. Conversations during tea-time were noted as fully as possible and proved to be a rich source of information.

5.3.1.2 Unstructured interviews with principals

Interviews with principals in each of the three selected schools were conducted and did not present any problems, except in one school where the principal has no phone and where a supply of milk for the school feeding scheme valued at R 3000.00 - R4000.00 had gone missing. The interview was interrupted because the principal had to return to his own home to phone the suppliers at his own expense to try and sort out the problem. Eventually the interrupted discussion was continued with the head of department at the school.

5.3.1.3 Focus group interviews with educators

On the whole, focus group interviews proceeded smoothly. The educators were able to speak English with only occasional lapses into the local vernacular. When this occurred, it did not create a problem because the researcher could speak their vernacular and hear what they say. The only problem was an ethical one. Unfortunately the educators were unwilling to be interviewed after school hours, and the researcher was acutely aware of the fact that the schooling of many children was being disrupted as a result of the interviews. The researcher could never resolve the problem, but disrupting classes did not appear to bother the educators in any way, as many educators stayed to talk to me after the interviews had been completed.

in the data analysis. In total, eleven parents/grandparents took part in the four interviews.

5.3.2 Transcribing the data

To facilitate analysis of the data, all taped interviews were transcribed. There is however, always the danger that transcribed words may lose some meaning as tone, volume, emotionality, and accompanying facial and body gestures and disposition cannot be portrayed. In order to minimize this loss of expression in the present study, a diary was kept to record many of these aspects, during and immediately following the focus group interviews. Recapturing and conveying those perceived meanings to outsiders are innate to the nature of qualitative research at the point of analysis and writing (Patton, 1997:351-352).

While it is argued that only relevant materials should be completely transcribed, because of the expense and time involved (Patton, 1997:347), it was decided that all interview data in the present study would be transcribed in order to ensure that the data were fully accessible. Transcribing data is also important in ensuring reliability and validity.

5.3.3 Analysis of data

The process of data collection is not an end in itself. The culminating activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings (Patton 1997:371).

Knodel (1993:44) points out, that there are two basic sides to the analysis of data: a mechanical one and an interpretive one. The mechanical part involves physically organizing and subdividing the data into meaningful segments. The interpretive part involves determining criteria for organizing the textual data into analytically useful subdivisions and the subsequent search for patterns within and between these subdivisions so as to draw substantively meaningful conclusions (Knodel 1993:45).

In one school, educators asked the researcher why their particular school had been singled out for research, implying that the researcher was in some way 'spying'. The researcher explained that many schools had already been involved in the pilot study, naming some of them and that new schools had to be found where the researcher would be welcome and where the researcher could learn something. This apparently satisfied them, and they cooperated fully in the interview. In total, eleven educators took part in the three focus group interviews.

5.3.1.4 Focus group interviews with parents

A problem in the focus group interviews arose with parents pertaining to language. The majority of parents in school A could not speak English, the focus group interviews had to be conducted in Xhosa because that was their vernacular. This did not cause a problem, because the researcher could speak Xhosa well.

In school B the three parents participated in the focus group discussion. The participants spoke Xhosa during their discussions.

In school C only one parent arrived for the interview.

Because only one parent had arrived for the discussion at school C, and because the researcher was not convinced that the data were saturated, the researcher decided to arrange another focus group interview with other parents. As working mothers had, thus far not been included in any of the focus groups, the researcher decided to ask women employed by a local supermarket to participate in a focus group interview. Permission was obtained from the manager of the supermarket and contact was made with one employee. With her help, another three more women were identified. Because of a lack of privacy at the supermarket, the researcher brought the participants to the researcher's home where the interview was conducted. Although the gatekeeper had been asked to invite women with children in high and primary schools, one of the four participants had a daughter at university. Although she participated in the discussion, her comments were not included

The main form of data analysis used in the present study, was that of content analysis. Content analysis is the process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data (Patton, 1997:381). In this case the data consist mainly of transcribed interviews, and was analyzed in order to understand parent involvement in the disadvantaged rural areas in the Lusikisiki district in the Eastern Cape Province. Since communication is the most basic form of human interaction, it follows that the analysis of the content of this communication is a justifiable basis from which to understand human activity and behaviour.

Initially the scripts were read over and over again in order to gain familiarity with it. Likewise, the researcher listened to all tape recordings of the interviews, at the same time checking the accuracy of the transcriptions, whether anything conspicuous stands out as interesting or puzzling. The results were analyzed and interpreted.

In this way sub-categories start emerging. The categories and subcategories were identified as natural themes, rather than on the basis of an a priori category system. As categories and themes emerged, they were colour-coded. Each category was filed separately and data stored under these different headings.

Parent involvement in rural disadvantaged communities has not been extensively researched. Moreover, most research limits parent involvement to activities relating to governance (Chisholm & Vally 1996; Mkwanazi 1994).

5.3.4 Presentation of the data

A key issue already suggested in the presentation of the data, is the inclusion of numerous examples of raw data and original discourse. Description is the major purpose of ethnographic type study (Patton, 1997:381). The collected data are organized into readable, narrative descriptions with major themes, categories and illustrative case examples extracted through content analysis.

5.3.5 Issues of reliability and validity in the present study

Issues of reliability and validity applicable to this study are discussed below.

5.3.5.1 Reliability in data collection

Qualitative researchers commonly use a combination of possible strategies in order to reduce threats to reliability (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:391). The following were adopted in this research.

- **Verbatim accounts**. Verbatim accounts of conversation, transcripts, and direct quotations were used in this research.
- **Low-inference description.** Concrete, precise descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations were used when the data were analyzed.
- **Mechanical recorded data.** A tape recorder was used during individual and focus group interviews in order to ensure accuracy.
- **Negative cases or discrepant data.** Researchers actively search for, record, analyze and report negative cases or discrepant data. This process was also followed in this study.

5.3.5.2 Internal validity:

The following are recommended by Schumacher & McMillan (1993:391-392) to improve internal validity

5.3.5.2.1 Lengthy data collection period

This is said to provide opportunities for continued data analysis, comparison, and corroboration in order to refine ideas and to ensure the match between research-based categories and participant realities. The present research was conducted over a period of four weeks. The pilot study took place over a period of one year. In short, the total period during which parent involvement was researched in a disadvantaged rural community conforms to the criteria.

5.3.5.2.2 Participant language

In this research participants were encouraged to tell their stories in their own words, thereby contributing to the internal validity of the research.

5.3.5.2.3 Field research

The participant observation and in-depth interviews took place in a natural setting; all taking place in the schools involved in the research. Parents were not, however, interviewed in their own homes.

5.3.5.2.4 Disciplined subjectivity

Researcher self-monitoring, subjected all phases of the research process to continuous and rigorous questioning and re-evaluation. This was done throughout this research.

5.3.5.2.5 Triangulation

Although Schumacher and McMillan (1993:498) suggest triangulation as a technique of pattern-seeking, most researchers use it to increase the validity of their research (Patton, 1997:187).

There are two recognized forms of triangulation relevant to this study. In the first place a form of triangulation occurred by comparing data from focus group interviews with educators, with data drawn from educator practices in the classrooms. Secondly, a comparison of educator interview data was also made with interview data from the principal in each school. Moreover, a comparison could be made between the interviews data obtained from the focus groups with educators, with that obtained in the group interviews with parents.

5.3.6 Limitation of the qualitative inquiry

Educational provision, and thus parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities, is beset by many problems, which the researcher found varied, according to the specific school community. This qualitative inquiry, therefore, does not claim to identify all issues associated with parent involvement in

disadvantaged rural communities; neither does it proposed to isolate causes and effects. The qualitative inquiry aims only at gaining some understanding of the complexity of the problem and issues, and of the need for the development of the model for parent involvement as seen through the eyes of the participants. In this way, some of the gaps in the knowledge concerning parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities can be filled.

5.3.7 Summary

This part of the chapter describes the rationale for the choice of qualitative approach for the study of the need for the development of the model for parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities in the Eastern Cape Province in the district of Lusikisiki. It also describes the methods used to obtain data, i.e. observation, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews, for this study. An explication of the design of the study includes the selection of participants, the problems encountered in the field, and the data analysis procedure. In the next section of this chapter the data generated and analyzed, will be presented and discussed.

5.4 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF KEY THEMES

As the result of the literature study, the key themes were identified and will be discussed below.

5.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous part of the chapter described the rationale for the choice of qualitative approach for the study of the need for the development of the model for parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities in the Eastern Cape Province in the district of Lusikisiki. It also described the methods used to obtain data, i.e. observation, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews, for this study. An explication of the design of the study includes the selection of participants, the problems encountered in the field, and the data analysis procedure.

In this section of this chapter, the data generated during in-depth and focus group interviews and with three principals, eleven educators and eleven parents, will be presented and discussed.

Unstructured interviews and focus group interviews with parents were conducted in their vernacular, which is Xhosa, and this created no problems as the researcher is very fluent in the language, while with principals and educators, English was used.

5.4.2 Characteristics of informants and background data

This section presents responses by informants which are related to personal characteristics. Attention is also given to possible effects of birth cohort, particularly as this relates to the period during which the youth were active in the liberation struggle. The characteristics of the schools involved in the research, are summarized.

5.4.2.1 The principals and educators

Relevant background information needed to understand the informants' responses to questions, are included in Table 5.12, through to Table 5.15. All informants, with the exception of the principal of school C, and two educators from school B (as indicated in Table 5.14), are women.

Table 5.12: The principals

PRINCIPALS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Gender	Female	Female	Male
Age	60	52	49
Teaching experience (years)	13	20	21
Years as principal	5	6	2
Marital status	Married	Widowed	Married
School attended by own children	University/ working	Multiracial school	Multiracial school

Table 5.13: Educators in school A

EDUCATORS	I	II	III	IV
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	50	46	51	42
Teaching experience (years)	15	23	26	21
Children	3	5	3	3
Marital status	Divorce	Married	Married	Married
School attended by own children	Technikon/ working	Multiracial school	Multiracial school	Multiracial school

Table 5.14: Educators in school B

Educators	I	II	III	IV
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male
Age	38	Unknown	42	24
Teaching experience (years)	16	26	19	3
Children	4	1	4	0
Marital status	Married	Widowed	Married	Married
School attended by own children	University/ working	Multiracial school	Multiracial school	_

Table 5.15: Educators in school C

Educators	I	II	III
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Age	42	39	33
Teaching experience (years)	11	6	2
Children	1	3	2
Marital status	Married	Divorced	Married
School attended by own children	University	Multiracial school	Multiracial school

The majority of principals and educators fall within the age group of 38 to 60. The exception is one male educator aged 24. Moreover, the majority of the educators interviewed, have many years of teaching experience and are able to give a perspicacious account of child-rearing practices, educational provision and community life against the background of the recent changes in South Africa.

Although not referred to in Table 5.12 through 5.15, only one person, a principal lives in town, while others live in the village. However, of the eight educators/principals with school-going children, seven have enrolled their children in multiracial schools, where the vast majority of educators and pupils are white.

5.4.2.2 The parents and grandparents

Both parents and grandparents were interviewed as part of the research. Information relevant to the discussion of the data in subsequent sections is included in Tables 5.16 through 5.19.

Table 5.16: Parents at school A

Parent	I	II	III
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Age	34	23	31
Highest qualification	Grade 11	Grade 12	Grade 11
Children	3	1	3
Marital status	Single	Single	Single
Presently employed	No	No	No

Table 5.17: Parents at school B

	Parent I	Grand-parent II	Grand parent III	Grand parent IV
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female
Age	40	72	68	66
Highest qualification	Grade 6	-	-	-
Children	5	Grand children	Grand children	Son, daughter and grand-children
Marital status	Married	?	Married	Single
Presently employed	No	No	No	No

Table 5.18: Parent at school C

Gender	Female
Age	36
Highest qualification	Could not determine, appears illiterate
Children	4
Marital status	Married
Presently employed	No

Table 5.19: Parents working at supermarket

Parent	I	II	III
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Age	24	42	28
Highest qualification	Grade 11	Grade 11	Grade 11
Children	1	3	1
Marital status	Single	Widow	Single
Presently employed	Yes	Yes	Yes

The eight parents include one father and eight mothers. Of the eight women, seven are single parents. Except for the father, who completed Grade 6 and the mother at School C, who appears illiterate, all informants passed Grade 11. The three grandparents (Table 5.17) are illiterate and are on state pension.

5.4.2.3 The significance of the respective birth cohorts

The principals and educators fall within the age group 38 to 60 and as such, some were already teaching during the years of the freedom struggle. This implied that they had to make a decision regarding their own role and that of education in the struggle. Consequently, they were neither willing participants or forced to take part in strike action during those years; this was revealed by the principals and educators during the interviews. This could have had an influence on the culture of teaching. Strikes in the rural area schools were not so much demonstrated as in townships.

Educators in this age group some had both experience of teaching under the previous racially divided education system, as well as under the new government. This places them in the unique position of being able to compare both systems, although cognizance is taken of the fact that the government has as yet not been able to implement all its proposed changes in education in disadvantaged rural communities.

The parents interviewed, mostly fall within the age group 23 to 36, with one parent 40 and another 42 years. Thus, most of parents had not yet been born during the years of the freedom struggle which already began during the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 becoming more intense in 1912 when the ANC was formed, up to the end of 1993, as the ANC took over as a ruling party in 1994 (Mandela, 1996:51-67). The parents did not appear to be politically active; they are aware of the changes in the country and have opinions regarding their future and that of their children.

The three grandparents interviewed, are at present, caring for their grandchildren, and the offspring of young people who grew up during the years 1976-1994. In contrast to that generation, the grandparents represent a

generation which spent almost their entire lives under "apartheid", and rose according to traditional ways and now have to raise their grandchildren in a world that has changed dramatically.

The importance of considering the birth cohorts of the informants as well as the people discussed by them, relates to what was discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Further reference to the importance of the age group to which a person belongs, will be made later in this chapter.

5.4.3 The rural disadvantaged community and its people

5.4.3.1 Housing and infrastructure in Lusikisiki rural areas

Lusikisiki is a town in the Eastern Cape Province with 34 villages under chiefs in the Qaukeni region. Some people of Lusikisiki live in own-built three-bed roomed houses, while others are living in old one thatched roof rondavels or small shacks. There is only one main tarred road from Lusikisiki to Umtata. Some of the dirt roads leading off the main road are heavily littered. The nearby houses have electricity but no water supply. Water is obtained from rivers which are easily polluted.

The small yards surrounding the houses, are kept clean, but the overall impression is of a poor neighbourhood, with people living in overcrowded conditions. Only one parent interviewed, lives in a house with inside plumbing in the town village. The houses near the town village have government-subsidized electricity. All parents and grandparents interviewed are sharing a house with other family members. Eight to ten people commonly share a one, two, or three bed-roomed house. One parent employed by the supermarket said: "We cannot live the way you are living. It is expensive to have a house like yours. We cannot afford this. Like myself, I am living with my parents and I have a child "

Although there are advantages if one is supported by one's family, an informant mentioned the disadvantages: "May be where you stay, there are 8 or 10 of you and maybe we are not cooperating. You see, it is difficult."

There are many problems relating to childcare, associated with living in such crowded conditions. Educators from school C mention, that children are witness to their parents' fighting, making love, and excessive drinking. One educator explains:

> "But to be honest with you, there is no privacy, so the kids are exposed to many things which maybe are not good for them. They see their parents drinking: the whole family".

Another educator adds as follows.

> "That kind of child who comes from such a family, always use vulgar language when talking to other kids, and even when coming to dressing, the child is not neat and sometimes he or she does not even wear a school uniform".

In school A, educators are concerned about the lack of privacy and all the noise in overcrowded houses, which means that the child does not have time for herself or himself just to rest. This adversely affects the child's ability to concentrate in school.

Parents and grandparents interviewed, indicated their children do not have a specific area to study. The principal in school A mentioned that some children stay in school to complete their homework because their parents or grandparents sell liquor at home and there is no place to study. However, educators maintain that the deserted school premises are not safe.

Poor and inadequate housing, deteriorating public services and a shrinking job market are adding fuel to the fire of social disintegration (Ramphele, 1992:25).

Another factor, which needs consideration, is that the house or other structure in which young people grow up is the most important space in their lives. It may provide the family with a living environment; a sense of security and stability; a socio-cultural context; a place to study and the privacy of one's own room; media such as television, books, newspaper, magazines and so forth.

However, for a young person living in an overcrowded rondavel or council houses with no real family life, security or personal space, these commonalities in an affluent society are unknown.

5.4.3.2 Conclusion on the rural disadvantaged communities

The rapid population increase in rural communities, create numerous social and educational problems. In the first place, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide essential amenities such as housing, recreational and educational facilities. In the second place, given the economic demands faced by many rural disadvantaged families, a large number of children are likely to grow up in an environment, which lacks adequate care.

Although this research does not prove widespread parental neglect, it does indicate that many children are not growing up in a nurturing environment, and lack adequate physical care and emotional support. Therefore, there is a need for educational programmes, which can provide supportive guidance for parents with regard to child- rearing and parent involvement in education. Such programmes could assist parents in adequately fulfilling their formative task.

The effects on children of growing up in an environment that is characterized by low economic and social status; a low level of educational provision; unemployment and limited community involvement in education are profound. These children are environmentally handicapped and are characterized by the display of a poor self-concept, limited motivation, perceptual deficiencies, poor creativity, obscure future perspectives, confusion about moral and cultural norms, rejection of authority and the establishment, and alienation from their parents (Van Greunen, 1993:92). These needs will have to be addressed in educational programmes aimed at the youth. Moreover, the role of parents in this educational process must be emphasized.

5.4.4 Educational provision in rural disadvantaged schools

5.4.4.1 School facilities and staff

5.4.4.1.1 School buildings and administrative staff

Schools A and B are reached via very poor, untarred roads. The school buildings are old, except for the administration building at school B. Neither, do schools have suitable playing areas for children. Although the schools are fenced, the fences are broken and do not serve to separate the school from the rest of the community. The school grounds are clean and in both cases a small garden has been laid on in front of the offices. The principal of school B expresses the wish that rural area schools could have the same facilities as White schools in urban communities, so that children will enjoy coming to school.

Toilet facilities at both schools are inadequate. Facilities for children to wash their hands are lacking.

At school A the principal describes the lack of facilities as follows.

> "We do not have a staff room where educators relax and have their tea. We do not have a sick room. If a child is sick, sometimes I just take the child here into the office. Parents come in and out".

One of the working mothers describes how poorly resourced schools affect learning:

> "It is difficult, because at our schools where our children are, sometimes there is no electricity, and when it is raining you see, in the house it is a little bit dark and they can not see clearly on the board where the educator is writing".

Both schools A and B have clerical staff and both schools have a telephone and a photocopier. School A raised money to purchase the copier.

School C has no administrative building, no telephone and no clerical staff. In spite of this the principal is expected to manage the school and its 2138 pupils.

5.4.4.1.2 Classrooms and teaching staff

In schools A and B there are sufficient classrooms and approximately 40-50 children per class. School C does not have enough classrooms, in spite of using the store room as a classroom and dividing the school into two groups: one group attending school at 08:00 to 11:30, the other from 12:00 to 16:00.In most classes there are 50-60 pupils.

5.4.4.2 Support services and administration

5.4.4.2.1 Support services to learners

The schools in the rural areas in Lusikisiki have few support services to assist in meeting the various needs of the pupils and educators. For example, none of the schools visited, have libraries; at best they have a few books which are kept in a box in the principal's office.

5.4.4.2.2 Department support

Although schooling is now compulsory and free, parents are still asked to pay a small amount per year to cover certain costs. The money thus collected, is used to buy extras for the school, such as uniforms for the choir or athletic gear.

5.4.4.2.3 In-service training of educators

All schools visited, mentioned that in-service training is provided, but feel that it is insufficient, because presently it is based on Outcome Based Education (OBE) and other fields such as parent involvement are left out.

One parent from school C stated that there is a great need for educators to be trained to meet the challenges of a new political dispensation and restructured education system. Moreover, this training must be suited to the needs of the educators and the community they serve.

Educators need to be competent regarding their academic tasks, as well as to be able to deal with the complexities of problems their pupils bring with them from home. However, an educator at school B feels that his training did not prepare him for these different roles:

> "The training that I had was more designed to suit a situation that is conducive for progressive education. But if you come to the practical situation here, you find that the situation is completely different from the textbook situation of what a school should be".

Educators mention how difficult it is to work with children coming from different homes. As one educator states as follows:

> Other parents are ignorant they do not help their kids. [Her colleague agrees] "Yes, and especially in broken families where you find that maybe their families and parents are fighting each other in front of their children, or maybe they do not love their children".
>
> How can you educate the child if he/she must spend more than three weeks at home because of family problems? Can you see that when a child comes back to school, it seems that you have to start afresh? So you sometimes do not know whether you are going forwards or backwards.

5.4.4.3 Conclusion on education in rural disadvantaged schools

The breakdown of a culture of teaching and learning in South African schools is, according to Meyer and Follentine (1994:ii), the outcome of at least four sets of factors, which interact differently in different schools, depending on the local and institutional dynamics.

- Inadequate facilities and resources.
- Administrative and managerial problems affecting most interest groups, at micro and macro governance levels.

- Pedagogical factors such as educator and pupil demotivation, inadequate teaching and learning methods, difficulty with the language used as medium of instruction and an irrelevant curriculum.

- Socio-political factors, particularly demographic changes, poverty, turmoil in civil society and a high incidence of criminal and political violence in many areas.

The interviewees confirmed these factors. Therefore, solutions must be sought on a wide front, many of which are beyond the scope of this research. However, judging by the advantages of parent involvement discussed in chapter 2, many problems can be alleviated if more effective parent involvement could be established in schools. This has the added advantage that strategies chosen will correspond to the situation in the particular school. This needs to be stressed as solutions, which do not take into account local complexities, and particularities are bound to fail.

5.4.5 Home-school-community relations

5.4.5.1 The perceived benefits of parent involvement

Although their knowledge of parent involvement seems to be limited, educators and principals do list benefits of parent involvement in their schools. In most cases the benefits apply to what they believe would happen if parents were involved, not to what they have experienced in practice. Educators mentioned the following benefits.

5.4.5.1.1 Parent involvement lightens the workload of educators

The principal at school B says that parent involvement is the school's priority. He argues that improved parent involvement will lighten the workload of educators.

> "We think if we could work along with the parents, and they could have an interest in the kids, our work will be easier. If a parent is helping you with a kid, your work becomes lighter and you are not burdened with a lot of things if the parents are there".

5.4.5.1.2 Greater control over children

Parent involvement is perceived to be a strategy to improve discipline. The principal at school C says that if parents and educators work together, children will realize "I have no room for playing. At home my parents know the educators and my educators know my parents". Educators at school C agree, stating: "that the child must not only be supervised here, they must also be supervised at home."

5.4.5.1.3 Parents' contribution to problem-solving

Parent involvement is seen as a means whereby parents can help educators solve problems, as one educator explains:

> "I think if parents are involved in school, we can share ideas with them. Some of the parents maybe, know better things than us. We can help each other so that we give their children a good upbringing".

5.4.5.1.4 Parents' contribution to a child's schooling

Educators recognize a parent's role in home learning. In most cases the educators state that parents should check the child's homework regularly. An educator at school A elaborates as follows.

> "Otherwise, if it is only the educator and the pupils, they will never come right. The parents must be involved in their children's education. They must be; they must support the child".

The principal at school C agrees, adding that parents who check their children's schoolwork, have brighter kids.

5.4.5.1.5 Parents' provision of insight into the child's problems

Educators believe that parents can explain situations at home, which make it easier for the educator to handle the situation in the class. An educator at school C stated the following.

> Some of the pupils have problems at home that he/she brings to school. The parent can better explain this, because we only see the results of the child, not knowing what had happened before; the family background we do not know.

The parent can supply information needed to understand the child's behaviour.

The advantages of parent involvement as listed by educators are limited when compared with the literature in Chapter 2: improved learners' academic performance, decreased truancy and decreased drop-out rates. These are the advantages of parent involvement, which need to be stressed in the South African context.

5.4.5.2 School policy on parent involvement

None of the schools visited, have a written policy on parent involvement. Moreover, in spite of professing to believe in parent involvement, none of the schools have discussed parent involvement as a way of improving schooling and none have any clear idea of what they want from parents, or what they, in turn, are willing to offer.

According to Epstein (1995:61), a formal policy on parent involvement, as well as school and educator practice, is the strongest predictors of parent involvement in school and at home. The fact that no school has moved beyond a general desire to have more parent involvement, indicates that the situation will, in all probability, not improve in the near future.

5.4.5.3 Communication between home and school

5.4.5.3.1 Parent meetings

In the schools observed, parent meetings are the main ways in which contact between parents and the school takes place. All schools hold these meetings during the weekend, usually on Sunday mornings.

According to the interviewees, the meetings are well attended, although educators at schools A and B complain, that the majority of people at the meetings are grandparents. The principal at school B admits to using any means to get parents or grandparents to attend meetings.

At school C the educators relate that they experience problems with parents at some of the meetings held at school.

On the whole, parents report that attending meetings is of some help. One remark:

> "When parents come for the meeting at the school, the educators may talk about the children not attending school properly or something like that. These meetings sometimes help".

5.4.5.3.2 Home visits

At school B the principal usually visits children's homes when there are serious problems. The principal explains that this could include family problems or when the school nurse has diagnosed health-related problems while examining a child. He explains:

> "But in severe cases where maybe a child has lost a parent or something has happened to a child that has been raped, we go, we go personally to be there.

5.4.5.3.3 Written communication

Schools A and B are able to duplicate letters and are in the position to send out letters to parents to inform them of meetings. These letters are written in the local vernacular as well as in English. No one provided examples of any other types of letters being sent to parents in the school, such as information regarding school activities or invitations to attend a choir recital. The majority of letters sent to individual parents relate to problems a child may be experiencing or causing at school. In exceptional cases again usually related to problems, the parent might be contacted by phone.

5.4.5.3.4 Communication between class educator and parents

All educators state, that they invite individual parents to come and speak with them. In most cases it concerns a problem regarding the child. Educators at school A say they write a note asking the parent to come and see them, or they tell the child to tell the parent that they are to come to school. In some cases they phone the parent. Educators say some parents will respond, others not.

For effective education to take place, good communication between educators and parents must take place (Vollentine, 1994:7). Although the success of parent meetings in the schools visited is to be commended, much still needs to be done in order to establish two-way individual communication. Epstein (1995:74) suggests the following aspects related to communication: interviewing every parent at least once per year, with follow-ups as needed; using language translators to assist parents as needed; providing weekly or monthly folders of learner work for review and comments; arranging parent/learner pickup of the report card, with discussions on improving grades; providing a regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications; providing clear information on choosing schools or courses, programmes ,and activities within schools; circulating information on all school policies, reforms, and transitions. Seen in the light of this, many aspects can be improved.

5.4.5.4 Parenting skills

5.4.5.4.1 Educators' attitudes and experiences

Educators at school A have very definite ideas of what constitute good parenting. However, they do not attempt to share these skills with parents. Some characteristics of a good parent according to Educators at School A include the following.

- Someone who looks after his or her children, especially after dark.

- She must see to it that the child goes to school regularly and be interested to look their books and see what they have done during the day.
- A parent should also care for the physical needs of the child. She must be interested to see that they have something to eat and to wear.
- A good parent must have some responsibility and must be an example to the child.
- A good parent should also give her children love. Children need love from the parents.
- A parent must be available for a child to discuss his/her problems with. Children must not have fear about going to their parents. They must be free so that they can tell their parents everything.
- A good parent must participate in his/her child's education. She or he must be supportive to educate the child.

Interestingly, most educators referred to a good parent as "she". This could be a result of common confusion of pronouns or it could suggest that the primary responsibility of parenting is seen to be that of the mother.

Although this list could form the basis of an educational programme aimed at parents, it has never been realised.

At school B the educators felt that only educating parents and improving their parenting skills could address the culture of learning and disciplinary problems. One educator expressed it as follows:

> "I should think by starting to educate parents; it is our most focal point. Parents need to be educated and motivated to be involved in the education of their children".

At school C the feeling is that parents require considerable help in coping with their tasks as parents. One of the educators emphasized this:

"I think that this illiteracy costs a lot, because if, maybe, the parent does not understand, they need more guidance, just like their kids. They need to be guided, somehow, so that they can understand what is good and what is bad and what the school needs from them".

5.4.5.4.2 Determining responsibility

When asked who should educate the parents, informants differed in opinion. At school B some felt that educators could not educate parents. One educator explains as follows.

"If we meet them as educators, it is difficult to have them (parents) comprehend suggestions we make. Only a few will, but a large group of parents do not like it".

She felt that some parents would respond by saying that it is the duty of educators to educate the children. She also suggested that the government should become involved. The same educator believed that if there had been one Department of Education, the illiteracy rate would not be so high. She argued that if parents were educated, they would have seen things differently. She therefore suggested "adult schools" where parent involvement could be made a subject. She continued to explain.

The government can just make it like the Aids Project. They can make it "Parent Involvement Projects" where parents are trained to cope with the child who is delinquent; and the child does not attend school. Parents will then be in a position to address the different situations, but right now, they are confused. When we call them to meetings, they just say, "I do not know what is happening to my child. I can no more control him/her." So now they are trying to push everything back to the educator.

5.4.5.4.3 Parents' attitudes and experiences

Parents and grandparents at school A and B admitted that training sessions to improve parenting skills would only be attended by a few parents. They felt

that some parents will have the attitude that their children are attending school regularly and are doing well and therefore do not need advice on how to help their children. Moreover, parents of problem children seldom attend such meetings.

The parents at school C contended that some parents might feel offended because of the implication that they are unable to raise their own children. No one argued that strategies to improve parenting skills could be of benefit to all parents, and that attending such classes did not imply that one was unable to care for his/her child.

Judging by the information discussed above, it seems as if there is a need to help parents in rural disadvantaged communities cope with the demands of their parenting tasks, which are mainly due to the shifting relationships between children and parents, both at home and in the broader community. This can be addressed as part of a comprehensive parent involvement programme organized at school level, such as the Comer Approach discussed in chapter 2, or implementing the Epstein Model also discussed in chapter 2. However, it can also be addressed at regional or national level by using programmes such as the Gordon's Family Impact Model discussed in chapter 2.

5.4.5.5 Homework policy and practice

5.4.5.5.1 Educator/parent attitudes

Educators interviewed at schools A, B and C agreed that parents should be involved in their children's homework. Parents at school A felt that one should ask one's child about homework every day. They felt strongly that parents should be involved in children's homework.

5.4.5.5.2 Involving parents in home learning

The principal at school B said that educators speak to the parents about the importance of homework at parent meetings. He elaborated further:

"Well, they come to parents' meetings and you always tell them about the importance of examining the children's work and supervising them, and we request not to let the children be over-ruled by TV."

No specific guidance on how this should be done is apparently given. Moreover, none of the educators interviewed has ever given parents advice on how to help children with homework.

One of the working mothers interviewed said that she helps her child with homework, but has not been given advice on how this should be done. She said "I and my child are just doing it on our own".

The problems experienced by parents, especially by those who are uneducated, in trying to supervise their children's homework are illustrated by the story one of the grandparents tells. He is concerned about being asked to sign his grandchild's books, because the educator has not marked them. He argued that he might be signing something, which is incorrect. It is obvious that he does not know whether his signature is needed to indicate that he has seen his grandchild's work or whether he must sign to show he has seen how the child is progressing at school, as indicated by the mark the educator has given the child.

5.4.5.5.3 The extent of cooperation

Educators interviewed were not very positive about the degree of cooperation they get from parents regarding homework assignments. The principal at school A explained: "The literate parents are the ones who look at books, but the illiterate ones do not care". A parent at school C felt that educators should not presume that parents are not interested in helping their children at home. She felt that all that is needed are some guidelines from educators. According to her, such help is never given.

Parents' assistance in home learning is a vital means of improving school performance. However, interviews showed that both educators and parents need information on the advantages of parents helping children with homework. Moreover, both groups need advice on how this should be done.

South Africa has a very high illiteracy rate which makes it difficult for parents to be involved in their children's homework - but not impossible. However, educators will need to be taught strategies of ways of involving parents in children's homework. This training can be included in educators' basic training or as part of in-service training courses. The result could be better learner grades and decrease in the dropout rate in rural disadvantaged schools.

5.4.5.6 Barriers to parent involvement in rural disadvantaged schools

School personnel may either facilitate or inhibit parent involvement by their own beliefs and attitudes about parent involvement. This appears to be especially true of the low-income neighbourhood where parents are seen as part of the problem in educating their children, rather than a source (Eccles and Harold 1996:11). This appears to be true of this study as well.

Parents and educators both observed a lack in one another's behaviour and responsibility. Many points refer to a lack on the part of parents, as identified by educators. It is recognized that these reflect the lack of communication and trust between parents and educators who tend to view their roles as exclusive of each other. Moreover, where educators hold negative perceptions of parents' desire for involvement, it should be noted that these are the very areas the school should be addressing if they are committed to a policy of parent involvement.

Moreover educators appear to have an unrealistic notion of what constitutes successful parent involvement. For example they are disappointed when only half the parents arrive for a class meeting or when the child's grandparents come to school rather than the biological parents, or when the parents who arrive are illiterate. In this regard educators will have to be shown that these are not barriers, but opportunities, and that even five parents/grandparents who are committed can make a difference.

The ensuing section summarizes some of the main barriers to parent involvement mentioned by the educators interviewed.

5.4.5.6.1 Parents' disinterest

Principals and educators interviewed expressed the opinion that parents are not interested in becoming involved in the education of their children or that they do not care about their children.

An educator at school A gave an example, "Some of them will come to the classes, but some of them, up to now, you never meet them, up to the end of the year."

5.4.5.6.2 Parents' negative attitudes

Principals and educators interviewed also described parents as negative, or uncooperative. An educator at school A stated that if you tell children to ask their parents to help them, their parents normally tell them that they must tell their educators that they are earning money for teaching them.

The principal at the same school felt that this negativity prevents the development of a partnership.

5.4.5.6.3 Parents' fear of the school

Most educators linked the fact that parents feel intimidated by the school to the parents' lack of education. An educator at school B argued that parents feel so belittled by the fact that they do not understand what is happening in school that they withdraw from all school related activities.

The principal at school A also mentioned parents being afraid of coming to school:

> "Some parents are afraid to come, they are afraid of educators and they want to keep in their own cocoons. You know those who are afraid are those who are illiterate."

5.4.5.6.4 Limited opportunities for involvement

In the above sections it was noted that parents are not given many opportunities to become involved in their children's education. Mention was

made of the fact that they are expected to do little else other than sign children's homework. Except for members of the School Governing Body, few parents are involved in decision-making. Parents are also not given any tasks when accompanying the pupils on any trips, neither are parents used as 'aids' in the classroom. It seems as if very few opportunities are extended to parents to become involved in aspects affecting their children's learning. A parent described the role ascribed to her as follows: "And then you will find that maybe every week they will tell us, 'come on Saturday and clean the school."

In many cases it seems as if parent involvement is seen as only the paying of school fees. A parent at school A finds this embarrassing. She said: "The educators must understand, maybe it is not that I do not want to pay, maybe I do not have the money to pay." She is very willing to become involved in other ways.

5.4.5.6.5 Lack of educator preparation for parent involvement

The staff at school A claimed that educators of this school attended a course in parent involvement some time ago. The course was presented by a private organization. The educators were unable to provide this researcher with a copy of the course notes, and it is therefore impossible to comment on the approach taken. However, no difference was seen in the attitude to, or practice of parent involvement in this school when compared with other schools visited. The educator in this school also mentioned the fact that their basic training did not include techniques to involve parents. They are of the opinion that this is now being addressed in present day educator training. The researcher found no evidence of this in interviews with younger educators.

On being asked whether he or his staff had been trained to implement parent involvement, the principal at school B said: "No training whatsoever. I wish I could be able to get parents more involved. I wish I could get some training, some strategies."

An educator from the same school also sees the lack of parent involvement, as stemming from the fact that educators are not trained to work with parents. He explained this as follows.

"We are only taught to manage a class and control books. The part of where the parent comes in, is not there; only the scope with the children and books. So, parents are not part of the package of management. I think that we basically need workshops."

The educator at school C also admitted to never having been trained to implement parent involvement. They felt that this is necessary as they are of the opinion that the school should take the lead in establishing parent involvement. An educator explained as follows.

"The school must first invite the parents just like the way they call a parents' meeting. We can look at the parents who are interested."

5.4.5.6.6 Limited time

Most studies on parent involvement point to the limited time available to most people today as one of the barriers of parent involvement. An educator in school B whose child is in multiracial school said that parent meetings at this school can be held during the week. He explained why this is not possible in a rural disadvantage school:

"Here we can not do it, because the parents knock off very late. The Whites travel short distances to work and most of them have cars, but we in rural communities travel many kilometres on foot. That is why things have to be done over a weekend. It is very, very busy weekends. On weekends they have also have weddings, funerals and all these things."

An educator at school A confessed that she does not communicate with parents as much as she should be doing. She expressed it in this way.

"We do not have time sometimes. When we have children here, we forget about the parents sometimes, that they will help us."

An educator at school C also finds the lack of time and opportunity to meet with parents frustrating, as this comment shows:

"We do not have enough time to come together with parents to discuss their children's problems, and also to ask them to help us in the development of the child. It is difficult."

5.4.5.6.7 Lack of implementation of ideas

Educators interviewed, had many suggestions regarding ways in which parents can be involved at school. These suggestions included the following.

- Helping at school functions. "When we have got functions, parents must come and help us; the educators.
- Accompanying the children when going on trips.
- Helping with fund-raising: "They can help in fund-raising. Right now sometimes you find that we do not even have brooms in classes. And you find yourself taking money from your pocket and often you do not have that money, but for the sake of a clean class, you do it."
- Help with homework: "If you give the child homework, the parents must help them with this, or at least supervise. Make them do their homework, even if you do not know the work, supervise them."
- Assist the school by donating paper, drawing pins etcetera, things the educators feel the parent could perhaps get at their place of work, or things that they can afford.
- Improve the school grounds: "The parents can come to the school and plant some trees, flowers and grass."
- Assist in serving food to the children during break: "Maybe when we have a feeding scheme, they can come and do the work and give the children some food so that the educators do not have to do it."
- Cleaning the school: "Even cleaning the schools, maybe over weekends."

- Assist in disciplining the child: "Parents can also help by helping in the development of their children, especially with discipline from home to do their school work and to exercise neatness."

- Help in solving problems: "If we have problems we could call the parents and talk about it, and maybe after that the child is satisfied, even the parent."

All these suggestions are positive and could serve to bring parents into the school. Very few of these suggestions are, however implemented. Reasons given are lack of time, lack of knowledge on how to implant the suggestions, lack of a school policy on parent involvement, and the perception that the parents are negative, uninterested, uneducated, and illiterate. Another reason often listed is that grandparents come to meetings.

5.4.5.6.8 Grandparents not accepted as surrogate parents

Educators and principals complained that when parent meetings are called, one sits with grannies only. Educators were asked whether the school could not work with grandparents instead of with parents. The principal at school B responded as follows.

> "Yes, we are working with them now but we know the situation with the granny. If we say, 'look, the school wants this for your child, you have got to pay this', they just tell you that it is impossible, because the people who should be doing that, are not there."

Educators at the same school said that the vast majority of people who come to meetings are grandparents, adding that the "real parents are not involved."

Educators at school A also mentioned the presence of grandparents at meetings and are even more outspoken in their opinion that this is of no help. One remarked:

> "I do not know what is wrong. Three-quarters of the attendance at meetings are grandparents. Most of them cannot read or write. So what support do you have from them?

5.4.5.6.9 Conclusions on parent involvement in rural disadvantaged schools

This research indicates that many factors are impeding parent involvement in rural disadvantaged communities. These include a lack of school policy on parent involvement; illiteracy of many parents in the community; the fact that many parents seem ill-equipped to deal with their parental duties; time constraints; and the fact that it is unsafe to venture out after dark, thus limiting all school activities to the already overcrowded weekends. Moreover, because educators have not been trained to implement parent involvement or even to work with adults, they do not offer parents a variety of ways in which to become involved at school. Neither do they assist parents to improve their parenting skills.

Parents are their children's first, and in many cases, most influential educators. The home efforts greatly improve learner achievement. However, when parents find themselves in a vulnerable position or with handicaps, they should certainly be helped, so that they may be able to meet the challenge of providing the support their children need to succeed in life (Carrasquillo & London, 1993:109). Grandparents caring for children are even more in need of advice and support. Moreover, parent involvement programmes should take cognizance of this group, assisting educators in adapting strategies for parent involvement to the needs of grandparents.

The difference in attitude of educators and parents suggests that schools and families need a better understanding of each other, what they are currently doing to help children, and the role each expected of the other to fulfil. Only then will schools and parents be able to work together to meet children's needs, regardless of any family background.

Schools are neither homogenous nor free of context. Besides the general recommendations made to implement or improve parent involvement, clear and tailored strategies corresponding to the specific problems and dynamics of each school are required.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented characteristics and background data on the informants and the context in which this research takes place. The data collected during observations and an in-depth individual and focus group interviews are presented and discussed under three key thematic areas: the rural disadvantaged community with its people; educational provision in rural disadvantaged schools; and home-school-community relations. The data collected during observations and an in-depth individual and focus group interviews indicated the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in rural disadvantaged communities. The next chapter is based on the development of a model in order to help parents and educators with strategies and methods to implement parent involvement in South African schools.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been largely acknowledged that schools can be more effective, if parents participate more actively in the education of their children (Barlow, 2005:228). Research from the past decades still shows the benefits of well-designed practices to parent involvement (Epstein, 1996b:345). According to Epstein (1996b:345), parents are included in the four key ingredients: teaching, curriculum, setting and parents for better and improved education.

Parent involvement in schools has become a major educational issue in the 1990s. This always was an era of increasing concern about the quality of education in disadvantaged rural schools in the country (Cotton, 2005:15).

According to Cotton (2005:18) the minority of low-income parents are often underrepresented among the ranks of parents involved with the schools. There are numerous reasons for this: lack of understanding or information about the structure of the school, lack of time or energy (due to long hours of heavy physical labour), embarrassment or shyness about one's own educational level or linguistic abilities and accepted communication channels, perceived lack of welcome by educators and administrators' assumptions of parents' disinterest or an inability to help with children's schooling.

One of the most important findings of the research, however, is that parents of disadvantaged children can and do make a positive contribution to their children's achievement in school if they receive adequate training and encouragement in the types of parent involvement that can make a difference. Even more significant, the research dispels a popular myth by revealing, as noted above, that parents can make a difference, regardless of their own levels of education. Indeed, disadvantaged parents and children have the most to gain from a parent involvement model because of the complexity of

the constant updating and renewal of the South African education system - especially the expectation of parent involvement in the education of their children. It is clear, from the literature study, that the positive attitude of parents in the education of their children must be adjusted accordingly by the development of a model and implementing it (Cotton 2005:25).

The participation of parents as partners in the education of their children is important for the efficiency of education and achievement of the academic goals of the country; the more so, as more parents get involved in the activities of the school. It is, therefore, necessary that a model is designed that will enable parents and educators to take part in the education of learners, according to the educational laws and guidelines for parent involvement in the education of the child. This model must, at the same time, be open enough to be able to accommodate new developments in parent involvement in the education of the child.

Questionnaires for quantitative research were sent to secondary schools to be completed by educators and parents and unstructured interviews with principals and parents, as well as focus group interviews with educators and parents of children of identified schools and a literature study were conducted in order to get the information necessary to compile a model for parent involvement in the education of their children.

Before the development of a model for parent involvement can be discussed, one must look at the nature of the concept "Model", and also at the research that went into this. It will be focused on principles, such as model and typical model, while it will also be focused on the characteristics and advantages of models, as well as the steps leading to the development of a model.

In accordance with the above, a model will be compiled and discussed for parent involvement in the education of their children.

6.2 THE CONCEPT: "MODEL"

According to Barlow (2005:18), a model is a simplified representation of a real situation. It can be regarded as a substitute for the real system, stripping away

a large degree of complexity to leave only essential, relevant details. A model is used to facilitate understanding of a real object or situation.

Garbers (1996:16) explains that scientific knowledge as a product or outcome of scientific research can be defined as the body of propositions (factual statements, hypothesise, models, theories, laws, etc.), accepted by the scientific community at a given time. Bhola (1990:302) defines a model as a design, description or analogy used to help visualise or make understandable something that is more complex. Van Dyk, (1997:239-243) point out, that the designer of a training and development programme has a variety of conceptual models which can be explored in the development of training programmes. These models are seen as extremely useful and as enhancing the chances of success in training design. Mouton (2001:176-177) points out that theory building or model-building studies are aimed at developing new models and theories to explain particular phenomena. According to him, the building of theories or models occurs mainly through two strategies. The inductive mode of thinking strategy is constructed to fit certain empirical data. A construction of this model is based on its similarity to another phenomenon. The deductive model construction strategy postulates or formulates an action to be taken as true. Wisniewski (2002:7) points out, that models come in variety of forms and that they are not only quantitative. Any model, no matter what its form or purpose, has one distinctive feature of attempting to represent a situation in a simplified form.

A model must be able to supply answers to the following (Fourie, 2000:252).

- What is the purpose?
- Does it give an indication to what is being required?
- To what kind of study does it apply?
- Does it help the user to anticipate what he/she is looking for?
- Does it offer alternatives?

Models emphasise certain aspects of a complex process and offer simplistic representation of those aspects. The purpose of this is to emphasise certain aspects in order to reach a certain goal (Jansen & Steinberg, 1991:9). This explains the importance to consider the purpose of a model, and then to apply the model for this specific purpose (Fourie, 2000:249-250).

A model is, therefore, a constructive introduction and explanation of where it can practically be applied, and what should happen if the model is followed. Models have various characteristics that will now be discussed.

6.2.1 Purposes and characteristics of a model

Van Dyk (1997:239-240), identify four purposes of instructional design models as follows:

- Improving the learning and instruction by means of the problem-solving and feedback characteristics of the systematic approach.
- Improving management of instructional design and development by means of the monitoring and control functions of the systematic approach.
- Improving evaluation processes by means of the designated components and sequence of events, including the feedback and revision events inherent in models of systematic instructional design.
- Testing or building learning and instructional theory by means of theory-based design within a model of instructional design.

According to Mouton and Marais (1990:14) and Vermaak, (1999:207-209) the following are characteristics of an effective model.

- The main models must identify the problems and questions regarding the appearance of what must be investigated.
- The domain, which has to be managed, is restricted, isolated, systemised and simplified.

- Models supply a new dimension wherein the appearance can be discussed.

- Models supply the text through which forecasts can be made.

6.3 CONTEXT OF A MODEL

Models represent the complexity of information to an understandable appearance of reality. This fundamental characteristic is confirmed by the following (Vermaak, 1999:207-209).

- Reduction: Models reduce the complexity of reality to an understandable schematic reality.

- Emphasizing: Because the components of a relationship are emphasised, there can be no comparing, repeating or quantifying.

- Comprehensibility: Through reduction, the overall complexity becomes more understandable.

- Perspective: Other insights and approaches are possible, as models maintain the same perspective.

- Productivity: As models emphasise only certain aspects of reality, one can apply several models to one specific model. Models have therefore huge values.

The different existing models will be discussed as follows.

6.4 KINDS OF MODELS

According to Jonker (1994:138-139), models are classified as follows:

- Physical models: Physical models are three-dimensional presentations of the reality - they are concrete and highly specific.

- Verbal model: Verbal models are written or verbal, abstract information regarding reality and leave room for incorrect interpretations.

- Graphic models: Graphic models are concrete presentations consisting of lines, symbols and shapes and are supported by verbal explanations.

- Mathematical models: With the mathematical model, reality is expressed as mathematical comparisons or expressions, and is ideal to solve a problem, which is interdependent and changing.

- Conceptual models: Conceptual models represent reality and show how something in general should look, and how it should work. These models have few details, because it is generalised.

Characteristics and features of models have been discussed. The focus will now be on the advantages of models.

6.5 ADVANTAGES OF MODELS

The following are the advantages of models, according to Fourie (2000:250-251).

- A model represents research results in text form, within a specific framework.

- A model can represent a reduced overall image of the borderline problem on which research has been done.

- The sense of the research results can be established within a specific frame, and can be evaluated.

- A model bridges the existing gap between the investigation and theory.

- It is easy for the decision-maker to understand.

- It can be modified quickly and cheaply.

- There is less risk when experimenting with a model than with the real system.

Now that the concept, characteristics, advantages and features of the model have been discussed, attention is paid to the development of models before

looking at the implementation of a model for the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

The Educator-Parent-Community-Learner partnership model that is aimed at equipping educators, parents, community members and learners with knowledge and skills of how to participate in the education of children so that parent involvement in the education of children is increased and learner performance is improved. The model that will be discussed, is conceptual, and will be a representation of reality, indicating how integration and optimal involvement of parents in the education of children develops, without too much detail.

6.6 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MODEL

The Educator-Parent-Community-Learner Partnership Model is the inductive model of instruction, a method of instruction where educators use powerful examples to help learners learn concepts, principle, generalisation and academic rule, so that when presenting examples, the educator guide learners' thinking through series of open-ended questions, the learners can induce the concept, principle, generalisation or academic rule.

Inductive model of instruction will help learners to construct a deep and thorough understanding of specific topics and actively involve learners in the process of constructing that understanding. By doing so learners gain skills and confidence in making sense of their own environment.

The inductive model of instruction is important because it uses high quality examples so that learners do not have to depend on background knowledge, and teaches higher order thinking skills in a motivating and explicit way.

The inductive approach, instead of basing on a teacher-fronted transmission-style classroom, is learner-centred and allows learners to be deeply involved in the context they are studying and offers potential for reflection. In the process of experiential learning they feel more important, less passive, and do not get bored so easily during the lesson (Paradowski, 2007:110-114).

Van Dyk (1997:239-243) explain, that the designer of training or human resources development programmes, has a variety of conceptual models which can be explored in the development of programmes and which can be explored, based on the systems approach. A designer can either choose a model that would be most appropriate to his/her needs, adapt a model to suit the unique needs of an institution or utilise some of the existing models. The choice of a model will be determined largely by the situation within each institution. Van Dyk (1997:240-241) refer to five common elements that most training programme designs are comprised of, namely data collection; assessment of learner entry skills; specification of behavioural objectives; a procedure for selecting presentation methods and media; implementation, evaluation and revision procedures.

The validity of a model's results will depend on how accurately the model represents the real situation. The ideal model is one that is neither too trivial in its representation of reality nor too complex to implement.

In facilitating the design of a training programme for the training of parents and educators in parent involvement, a model was developed, comprised of the following steps.

- Organisation analysis
- Determining training needs
- Training objectives
- Training resources
- Programme design
- Selection of instructional strategies
- Support services
- Programme advocacy
- Conducting training

- Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

While evaluation and feedback are placed last, this should be seen as a process that will take place after each step in order to ensure that the final product of the programme will meet the holistic needs of the target group.

6.6.1 The roles of the role players in the model

From the literature study, empirical and qualitative findings, the following roles of the four role players were identified for an effective learner outcome. This will form the model.

6.6.1.1 Educator

The educator determines parents and members of the community who can influence other members in the community to participate in the training programmes of parent involvement and involve them in determining the programme to be followed when equipping the role players in parent involvement in the education of their children and suitable venue for the implementation of the training programme.

6.6.1.2 Parents

Parents who skills and knowledge in matters related to education must acquaint themselves with the available community resources for their personal development and knowledge by attending career exhibitions and seminars as arranged by the community/employers in order to be able to encourage interested parents without knowledge and skills to be involved in the development of a training programme.

6.6.1.3 Community

The community is responsible for the availability and accessibility of schools for all learners for different levels of education and encourages involvement of the community itself in the affairs of the management of the school, like religious aspects, fund-raising and selection of educators.

For effective involvement of the role players in the development of a training programme the community must provide educational resources like libraries for educators, parents and learners.

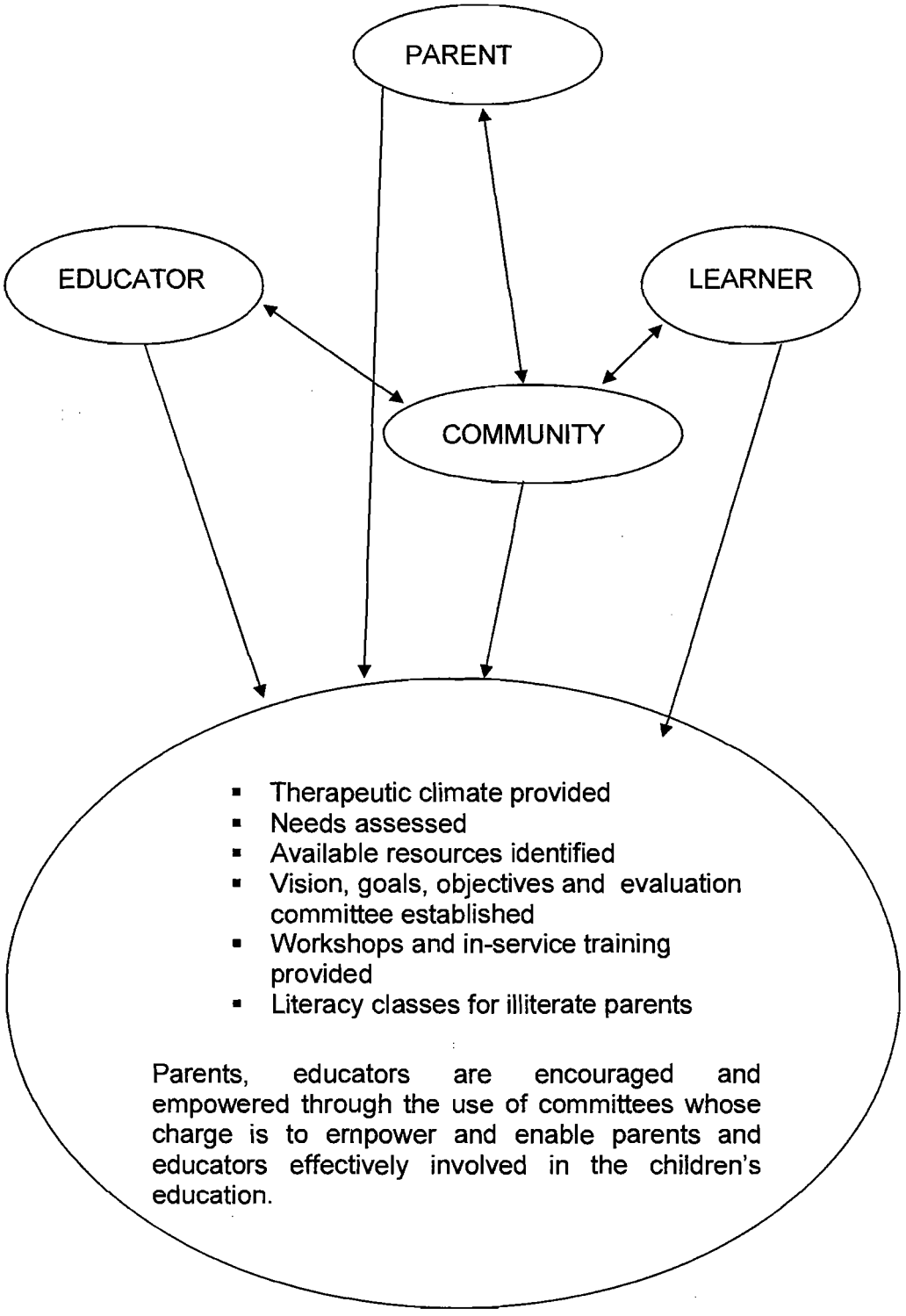
6.6.1.4 Learners

Learners are responsible for making good subject choice; attend school fully and effectively according to school calendar making use of community resources such as libraries.

Learners should attend educational seminars, other extra-curricular activities for personal development, and also attend career exhibitions as arranged by the community and prospective employers.

The four role players may be schematically presented as follows:

Figure 6.1: Parent-Educator-Learner-Community Partnership Model



6.6.2 Model for parent involvement in disadvantaged South African schools

The following model as designed by the researcher will be used for training parents and educators in parent involvement in education in South African disadvantaged schools. The model is constituted of four stakeholders (parent, educators, learner and community) and comprises ten steps, as indicated earlier in this study (*cf.* 6.6). Four stakeholders and then ten steps will now represent the model. The model will then be presented as an integrated model (Figure 6.2).

6.6.2.1 Introduction

In developing the model presented (Figure 6.1), the researcher built on work examining specific aspects of parent involvement, as well as work focused on identifying and describing schematically and to some extent, causally, the wide range of parent, child, school and community variables that may be related to parent involvement and its outcomes. The information included in the Parent-Learner-Educator-Community *Partnership Model*, in particular distillation of factors that are possible links to both parent involvement and a variety of related educational outcomes for children. Although the development of this model is to understand processes that underlie parent involvement, the influence of parents and schools on children's performance, and the barriers to parent involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1994:568-587), the researcher construed this model as a more specific and delimited approach to the following questions.

- How can an inadequate and poor performance of learners in the milieu-deprived rural community be improved?
- How to increase parent-learner-educator-community involvement for the specific purpose of increasing the learning of children?
- How schools can promote parent involvement?

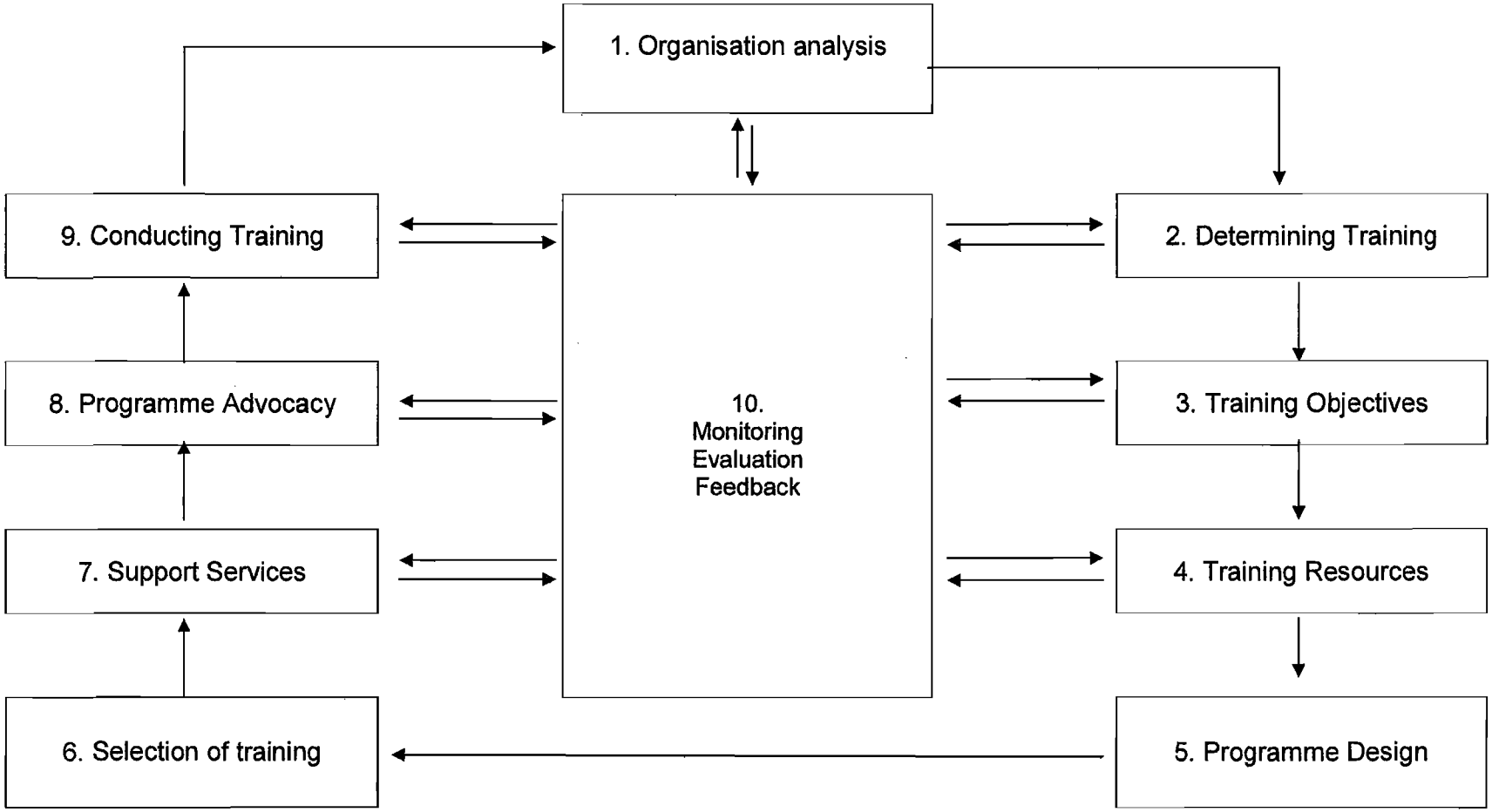
The researcher has chosen to focus on these questions in the development of a model (parent-learner-educator-community partnership) so as to ensure effective participation of parents, learners, educators and community in the education of the child.

Given the numerous barriers to parent involvement mentioned in previous chapters, educators and parents might ask; "Is there a disadvantaged rural community way of involving parents in their children's education?" To investigate and answer this question, the Parent-Learner-Educator-Community *Partnership Model* has been identified and seems to be effective in increasing parent involvement in education. The model suggests that parent involvement then influences children's developmental and educational outcomes through modelling, reinforcement and instruction.

6.6.3 Model

The following is a model for parent involvement in the education of their children. The elements of the model will now be presented and discussed as an integrated model in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: The integrated model for parent involvement in the education of their children



6.6.3.1 Organisational analysis

Organisational analysis helps in the assessment and identification of managerial and systems problems which may hamper the parents, educators and learners in reaching the goals of the schools and the institution to recruit educators with skills that will enable them to manage resources effectively.

6.6.3.2 Determining training needs

Determining training needs is important and indeed for the following reasons.

It will help the training programme designer to know exactly the areas in which parents, educators, learners and community will need training so that the training programme is more relevant to the training needs of the target group rather than using programmes which do not address the particular needs of the target group and will also help the training programme designer to identify the prior experience of parents, educators, learners and community which will have to be recognised and be built upon when teaching new content.

6.6.3.3 Training objectives

It is important for a training designer to determine objectives of training, for the following reasons:

The objectives of training will serve as radar to direct the trainer during training so as to ensure that by the end of training, the training programme shall have accomplished its mission and will also help the trainer to evaluate the training and to see whether its goals were achieved.

6.6.3.4 Training resources

It was indicated that proper training needs to be conducted in an environment that is conducive to training, by using relevant equipment. The identification of training resources will ensure that the relevant human resources, financial resources, relevant equipments, relevant venue are booked on time and support services are in place.

6.6.3.5 Programme design

In order to ensure that the objectives of training are reached, it is important for the trainer to determine the content of training. Designing the content of a training programme helps the trainer to get specific information to train the target group in order to meet the training needs of the target group and to sequence information in such a way, that the target group will easily comprehend it.

6.6.3.6 Selection of training programme methods

The selection of instructional strategies will ensure that the instructional strategies/methods used by the trainer, will be commensurate with the target group's learning styles for both learners (parents, educators and learners) and the trainer, and will also ensure that the right teaching media are selected, as the methods will determine the particular media, which the trainer will use during training sessions.

6.6.3.7 Support services

Effective training requires support services. Support services will ensure that the library, catering and accommodation services are identified and provided during training, and psychological services are in place in case of need during training.

6.6.3.8 Programme advocacy

The process of programme advocacy may be schematically presented as follows.

For the training programme to be successful there is a need for the support of trainees. The advocacy of the programme will assist the trainer to consult the different stakeholders to "buy in". This would ensure that everyone supports the training programme, so that it runs smoothly.

6.6.3.9 Conducting training

The advantages of conducting effective training are to help the trainer to reach the objectives of training and school educators will be skilled enough in encouraging parents to take part in the education of their children.

6.6.3.10 Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

Although this stage is the last, it takes place during all the previous stages. After each stage, evaluation will be done before a next/following stage is explored.

Evaluation will be done in the following two ways.

- Formative evaluation which will ensure that the training design is directed in such a way, that it is geared to succeed.
- Summative evaluation will ensure that the outcomes of training have been attained.

6.6.4 The purpose of this model

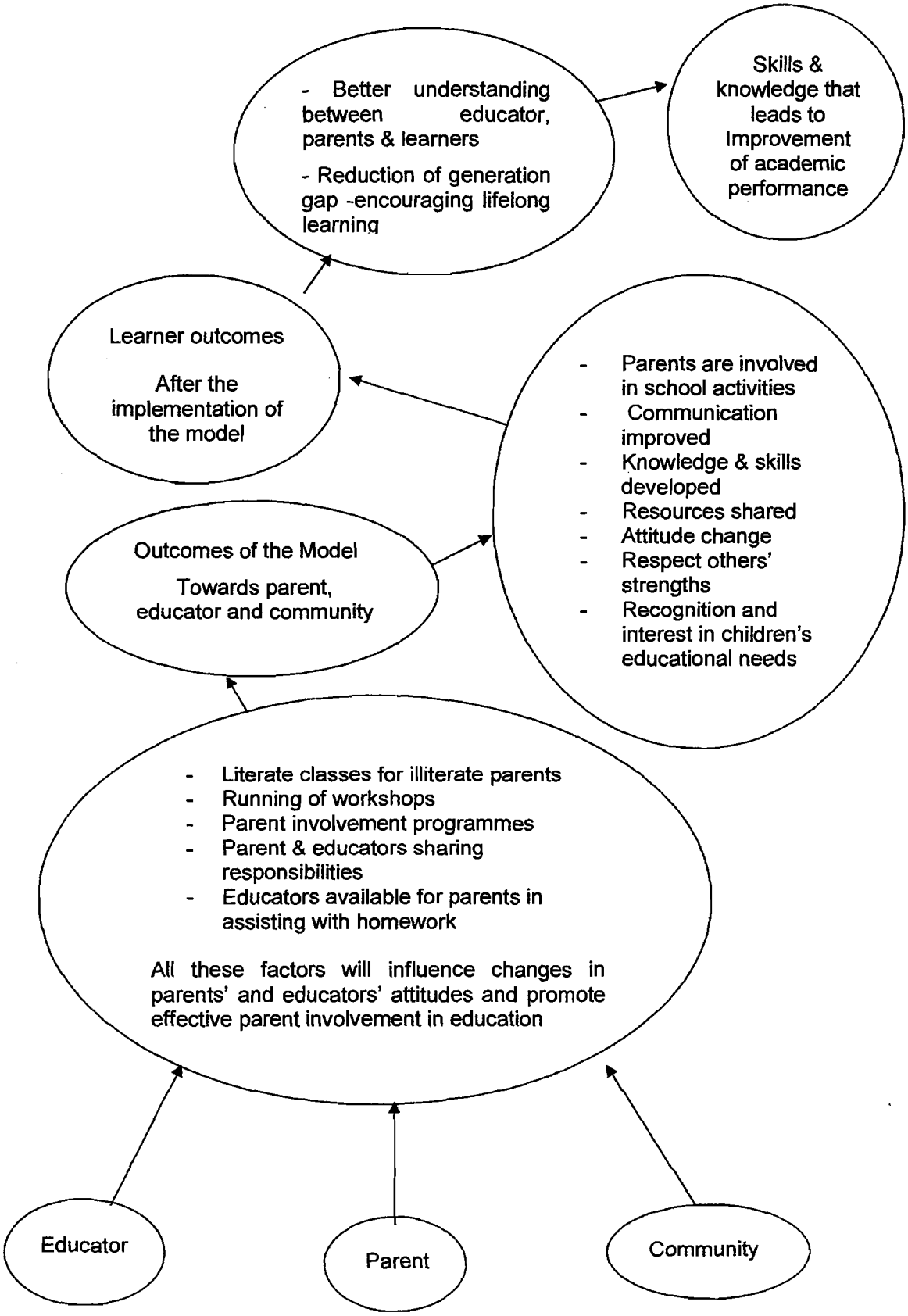
The purpose of this model could be succinctly be defined as the action to -

- Explore how the parent-learner-educator-community *Partnership Model* of parent involvement might be an appropriate means by which rural disadvantaged school communities can improve their educational processes. Such a model capitalises on a community's sense of place and other distinctive features of rural school communities;
- Increase parent and community involvement for the specific purpose of increasing learning and accountability for learner performance.

6.6.5 Anticipated outcomes of the model

After proper planning and effective implementation of the model the following anticipated outcomes would be observed as illustrated in Figure: 6.3

Figure 6.3 Learner outcomes



As indicated, this model has positive outcomes for educators, parents, learners and community and ultimately has a positive influence on the learners' academic performance and achievement.

6.6.6 Plan of action

The following actions or activities should be pursued.

- Create a physical location and psychological space for parents, educators and learners to come together to voice their needs, wants and concerns.
- Recognise and assess the strengths and resources in the community by surveying funds of knowledge.
- Develop strategies that address and respect the needs of parents, educators and learners.
- Eliminate mistaken assumptions parents and educators may hold about one another's motives, attitudes, intentions and abilities.
- Establish the available resources such as libraries in the community that could be used by parents, educators and learners in order to improve parent involvement.
- Establish support groups for educators and parents, as well as for learners.

6.6.7 Implementation

The following steps in the implementation of this model that emanate from both literature study and empirical research will be followed:

- Schools should run workshops for parents on creating home conditions for study and must be given an opportunity to ask educators what their children are expected to learn.
- Literacy classes for illiterate parents that include topics on parent involvement should be provided.

- Parents and educators should share responsibilities. Exchange expertise and abilities, and promoting better opportunities for successful learning
- Educators must be more available to parents by assisting with homework, and developing activities that support school learning.
- Communicate to parents that their involvement and support make a great deal of difference in their children's school performance, and that they need not be highly educated or have large amounts of free time, for their involvement to be beneficial.
- Develop parent involvement programmes that include a focus on parent involvement in instruction-conducting learning activities with children in the home, assisting with homework, and monitoring and encouraging the learning activities of older learners.
- Provide orientation and training for parents, but remember that intensive, long-lasting training is neither necessary nor feasible.
- Make special efforts to engage the involvement of parents of disadvantaged learners, who stand to benefit most from parent participation in their learning, but whose parents are often initially reluctant to become involved.
- Continue to emphasise that parents are partners of the school and that their involvement is needed and valued.
- Provide materials to help promote effective parent involvement.
- Develop appropriate roles for community-based organisations and businesses in parent involvement activities.
- Provide home visits in all programmes.
- Host an annual meeting of parents, school staff members, and appropriate support staff to share effective strategies for increasing parent involvement.

- Provide activities that build capacity for parents to assist learning and participate in school processes, such as academic celebrations.
- Invite parents to present talks or demonstrations about their specialised knowledge or skills.
- Offer workshops on improving grades and study skills.
- Establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school and ensure that language and cultural differences are accommodated
- Invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families.
- Establish a committee that is going to monitor the functioning of the model and evaluate the anticipated outcomes.
- Arrange school meetings at a variety of times or conduct in-home conferences between educators who work directly with participating children in order to maximise parent involvement and participation.
- Participate in district-wide parent advisory councils to provide advice on all matters related to parent involvement in programmes supported by law.

6.6.8 Uniqueness of the model

There are studies done on parent involvement, but based on the literature and empirical studies the researcher considers that this model is unique, because no model has been designed for the disadvantaged rural communities to help parents, educators, learners and community members. The thesis and the model furnish a valuable contribution not only for the improvement of parent involvement in South African schools, but specifically for the improvement of parent involvement in schools situated in disadvantaged communities.

6.6.9 Testing of the model

The model was tested to the twenty (20) grade 12 learners. These families were randomly selected. These parents of the families that were chosen were

exposed to the programme of training using the principles of the model for a period of three months, to test the validity and reliability of the model and whether it is suitable for the identified community.

Learners were taught and given homework and assignments during this three months period by the class educators and parents were expected to help their children as it was explained to them during the training programme that they were exposed to. After three months two class tests for a class of 30 grade 12 learners were set by class educators. The scripts were marked by class educators and moderated by chosen internal moderators.

Findings

The participation in the class by the children from the twenty homes were observed, assignments and homework were done properly as indicated by class educators.

Performance in the class was good and an average of 60 % in the tests were achieved.

Conclusion

One could conclude that the model was relevant, valid and reliable and could be recommended for implementation.

6.6.10 *Benefits of the model*

Quality education for the future generation of the disadvantaged children in rural communities, parent involvement in the education of their children has been improved and academic achievement of learners increased and the study unfolds a very relevant and much needed issue in education.

There are studies done on parent involvement, but based on the literature and empirical studies the researcher considers that this model is unique, because no model has been designed for the disadvantaged rural communities to help parents, educators, learners and community members. The thesis and the model furnish a valuable contribution not only for the improvement of parent

involvement in South African schools, but specifically for the improvement of parent involvement in schools situated in disadvantaged communities. Some valuable articles may follow from this thesis

6.7 CONCLUSION

The researcher believes that the model identifies the most significant variables in parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education, their choice of specific involvement forms, and the influence of their involvement on their children's educational outcomes.

The researcher believes that the model offers specific advantages over many other discussions of the role and function of parents in their children's educational lives. The model identifies parent involvement as a process that occurs over time and is dynamic. It also suggests that parent, educator, child and community contributions taken together, constitute the involvement process.

In this chapter the researcher looked at the concept "model" and specifically focused on the characteristics, features and advantages of models. Different types of models have been discussed in order to obtain a holistic model for parent involvement.

Step-by-step development of a parent-educator-learner-community *Partnership Model* was discussed in details.

The next chapter will focus on the summary, findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter opens with a general overview of the investigation in order to show that the aims originally expressed, have been addressed and achieved.

The theory underlying parent involvement and models of parent involvement, as well as an overview of provision for rural disadvantaged people in South Africa in historical perspective, has been integrated with the experience of educators and parents concerning parent involvement in the rural disadvantaged community of Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape Province.

A brief summary of the study is presented in this chapter. A vital reflection on the major findings of the study is provided. A synthesis of the main findings is given. Finally, recommendations for improving parent involvement derived from the research are briefly set out. The identification of possible areas for further research concludes the chapter.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION

What constitutes parent involvement is often difficult to determine as the term is used to encompass a broad spectrum of activities. However, a common theme is that all activities relating to parent involvement bring together the separate domains of the community and school. Central to the success of the plethora of parent involvement programmes is that, the school should know the parents, understand the circumstances under which they live, and provide as many options for involvement in a school's repertoire as is possible.

7.2.1 Parent involvement: A theoretical basis

In order to determine the place and role of parents in education, a literature study, as well as an exploratory fact-finding visits to the Lusikisiki district, the most disadvantaged rural community was undertaken in October-November

2006. The emphasis throughout was on parent involvement within disadvantaged, rural communities.

The barriers to parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities are discussed in Chapter 2. The findings emphasize that the main barrier is the lack of school policy and practice of parent involvement. This endorses the literature in Chapter 2 which stressed, that school practices, not just family characteristics, make a difference in determining whether parents become involved in, and are informed about their children's education.

The advantages of parent involvement for learners, parents, educators and communities in South Africa, is the well-documented evidence in literature that parent involvement improves learner achievement, leads to the decrease of the dropout rate, decreased behavioural problems and increased parent self-esteem.

Although there is no single empirically based theory or model of parent involvement, a number of evolving theories or models are widely recognized and applied in schools overseas. These were discussed in Chapter 2 and can be useful if judiciously adapted to the South African context.

7.2.2 The research design

Chapters 2 and 3 provided a useful and necessary background to parent involvement, as well as educational provision for people in South Africa. However, they did not provide a detailed account of parent involvement in disadvantaged rural schools or of factors in the communities and schools affecting such involvement. As few studies have investigated the former; a quantitative and a phenomenological qualitative approach was considered appropriate for an exploratory study of parent involvement in the rural disadvantaged community of the Lusikisiki district in the Eastern Cape Province.

In the Lusikisiki district, 15 secondary schools were identified with the help of the education district manager and a period of one hour was spent in each as a participant observer. Questionnaires were distributed to parents and

educators and in-depth interviews with principals, as well as focus group interviews with educators and parents as part of the data gathering. The data were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis and organized according to emerging key themes. The themes related broadly to the context within which education takes place, educational provision, and home-school-community relations.

7.3 SUMMARY

The first chapter serves as a blueprint of the research project. It sets out an introductory motivation why the research was carried out, defines the aims of the research, explains how the data were collected, which population was involved and stipulates the headings of the chapters. In this way, the chapter guides the readers irrespective of what is contained in the research project.

In chapter 2 a theoretical basis of the field of the investigation is made. Parent involvement as a theoretical framework, for the discussion of parent involvement in education of their children was dealt with. Consideration was given to an explication of the definition of parent involvement, nature and scope of parent involvement, reasons for parent involvement, advantages and disadvantages of parent involvement, ways in which parents become involved in the education of their children, reasons for non-involvement of parents in education, and a description of various models of parental involvement which serve as a framework for the development of a model and strategies that will be used in the implementation of the model.

It was unequivocally indicated by the literature study, that the parents as the main stakeholders have both the obligation and right to determine the direction of their children's education. Parental rights in education are not absolute, but imply that parents and educators have to work jointly in the interest of the child.

In Chapter 3 the nature of disadvantaged schools in South Africa was discussed and the poor socio-economic position of parents in disadvantaged rural areas showed the greatest impact on the lack of preparedness of parents to be involved in school activities. Principals working in rural disadvantaged

areas do not have powers to turn parent involvement in education into financial support for schools. The parents have difficulty in acquiring books or fail to pay school fees and principals cannot either refuse them admittance at school or send them home to fetch the required money.

The literature study showed that, poor and uneducated parents have the tendency of being reluctant to get involved in school activities. This is due to the fact that they feel inferior before the highly educated, knowledgeable and rich educators. Such parents would feel out of place among such persons and the only way out would, to distance themselves from school activities.

In Chapter 4, an overview is given of the research design, which is composed of the quantitative and qualitative phases of research. In the planning for the quantitative research, the aims and construction of the questionnaire were investigated. This was followed by a description of a pilot study to finalise the questionnaire and an explanation of the population and sample, statistical analysis, administrative procedures and data analysis. The qualitative research was described in terms of the aims of the study, the collection of data via focus group and individual interviews and the data analysis.

In Chapter 5, the quantitative data were analysed and ranked in a descending order, according to the mean scores of all items. Particulars of educators and parents gave the researcher the stand from which issues could be evaluated most objectively. The data were analyzed and briefly outlined the findings of the empirical research initiated in order to compare how educators and parents perceive parent involvement, and to determine the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in the education of their children, as these were identified before hand in the literature study. It was found in this study, that the findings that were identified could not be generalized as each school was peculiar and unique. Some schools are not experiencing all the problems that have been identified, while others have more acute problems. It was found that, while the majority of problems could be ascribed to socio-economic related issues, others were created by schools, due to the educators' attitude or to overpopulated schools.

Validity and reliability of the measuring instrument was determined by the use of Cronbach Alpha, while Inter-Item Correlation was used and found reliable and consistent. Questions were grouped into six constructs and the Minova test was performed by using the Wilks-Lambda test which measures the degree of association between two nominal level variables to determine the differences between educators and parents for the constructs.

The qualitative research data were analysed and presented a back ground data on the informants and the context in which this research takes place. The data collected during observations and an in-depth individual and focus group interviews, are presented and discussed under three key thematic areas: the rural disadvantaged community with its people; educational provision in rural disadvantaged schools; and home-school-community relations. The data collected during observations and an in-depth individual and focus group interviews indicated the need for the development of a model for parent involvement in rural disadvantaged communities.

It became quite evident from the data collected that, there is a dire need for the design of a model for parents and educators regarding parent involvement in the education of children.

In Chapter 6, the information gathered from the literature review, and the quantitative and qualitative data were used to develop a model and strategy for the implementation of a model in rural disadvantaged community schools. The model was designed for the training of parents and educators for effective parent involvement in the district of Lusikisiki for disadvantaged South African rural community schools.

The phases and principles for the development of a model were discussed. The model and strategy will serve as guidelines for the effective implementation of parent involvement in the education of the child.

The next section contains findings to indicate how the research aims were achieved.

7.4 FINDINGS

7.4.1 Findings resulting from literature study

Findings with regard to literature study on the nature of parent involvement in the education of their children are as follows:

- Parents as primary educators have the right and obligation to feature in curricular and extracurricular activities. In their involvement, they should also acknowledge the operational areas of the school and contribution each party has made in education. By doing so, they will ensure that the education of the non-adult is not unduly disturbed.

- Because parent involvement is a worldwide phenomenon, the South African approach should be redefined so that it can be enhanced. Parents as individuals and in groups should be encouraged to get involved in school matters that affect the future of their children.

7.4.2 Findings resulting from the empirical survey

With regard to the empirical survey on parent involvement in the education of children, the following findings were made.

- Empirical findings point out that, the majority of parents are unable to assist their children with educational matters as they lack the educational knowledge and skills to assist their children, where they may have learning problems.

- Parents are not involved in school activities, due to lack of time. This factor of time could be ascribed to the school and home programmes that clash.

- It has been vividly indicated, that parents and educators have various misconceptions about parent involvement in the education of children. Some feel that education is for educators and parents may act as intruders in education.

- By means of the Manova and Anova tests, it was found that there are statistically and practically significant differences between parents and educators for the constructs involvement, communication and resources.

- Although parents are not involved in the education of their children, the findings revealed that, the majority of parents want to be involved, but do not know how.

- It became apparent in this study that most parents do not see discussing their problems with the school as being meaningful. This misconception has come about as a result of parents' conviction that the educators are adequately qualified to handle all educational affairs without parental assistance.

- It is apparent that parents from the low socio-economic group may have difficulties in featuring in school activities, due to unhealthy socio-economic factors and fear that they may be required to contribute financially to schools. Parents therefore, are driven away from school, because they are unable to meet all the requirements of the school.

- Lastly parents in low socio-economic status fail to attend school meetings due to lack of transport, since school meetings are held in the evenings and parents have to walk long distances while transport is not available in the evening; only those parents who have transport, which are few, and that is why meetings are poorly attended.

Matters such as poverty, unemployment issues, unhealthy conditions, illiteracy and other social changes greatly affect the preparedness of parents to be involved in parent involvement in the education of children.

7.5 FINDINGS BASED ON THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

7.5.1 Based on the first aim

Parents are unable to assist their children with educational matters as most of parents from the disadvantaged communities lack the educational knowledge and skills to assist their children where they may have learning problems.

Recommendation based on aim one

Principals and educators in disadvantaged schools should provide parents with a training programme highlighting the strategies of how parents should get involved in the education of their children in order to improve their children academic achievement.

Motivation

Very little is being done by the school principals and educators to disclose to parents what they have to do and how they should feature in school activities. It is not surprising that most parents are not aware of the nature, purposes and organisational structure of the schools. If parents are shown the need to get involved in school affairs, they will continue to shun the school and all its programmes.

7.5.2 Findings based on second aim

The literature study showed that, there are various models related to parent involvement but these models were not designed to educate parents how to get involved in their children's education.

Recommendation based on second aim

A model should be developed, and educational resources made available to equip parents, educators and learners as well as the community with knowledge and skills so that parents and educators can be effectively involved in the education of children.

Motivation

From literature study and empirical research it has been revealed that teacher training institutions do not include parent involvement in their curriculum, this make it impossible for educators to encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children it is therefore important that teacher training institutions should include parent involvement module in their curriculum.

7.6 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The significant themes uncovered in the qualitative investigation, are synthesized here and integrated with prior research and theory, as reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3.

7.6.1 Significance of learners' home circumstances

The investigation suggested that, many families in rural disadvantaged communities are living in poverty and have low socio-economic status. Eight to twelve people typically share a one-to four-roomed home. Amenities such as electricity, water and sewerage and refuse removal are under-provided. Privacy and place for children to study are frequently lacking.

Recommendations

Children learn, grow and develop both at home and at school. There is no clear-cut boundary between the home and school experiences of children and youth; rather home and school experiences are reciprocally influential. It is therefore, recommended that educators of children from deprived communities are made aware of the prevailing conditions under which families are living. Colleges and universities involved in educator education should also adequately prepare educators to work in schools serving these communities through the presentation of relevant courses.

However, although the socio-economic and political context plays a major role in the character of schools, this alone does not determine school effectiveness or school quality. Both effective and troubled schools can and do co-exist in the same socio-economic context. This is equally true of families. In this regard Swap (1992:57) states: "Often educators think of low-income/low-status families as being 'deficient' and many dwell on family problems while ignoring family strengths." Most parents are generally interested in methods to help their own children, especially strategies that are relatively easy, fast and linked to their children's school environment (Carrasquillo & London, 1993:85). Thus, schools in low socio-economic neighbourhoods should explore ways of involving parents which do not incur expenses on the part of

the parents. The fact that many caregivers in these communities are unemployed, and thus have time during the day to become involved in school projects should also be explored. Moreover the number of adults sharing a single home should be utilized positively. For example, a person who is literate in the home may, therefore, be able to help a child with homework activities.

7.6.2 Lack of resources and facilities in schools in rural disadvantaged communities

Most rural disadvantaged schools are housed in old buildings, have no play-grounds, virtually no proper teaching aids, or any library books or administrative help. Moreover, frequently neither educators nor learners have access to support services. This was borne out by both participant observation and comments of informants during this investigation.

Recommendations

The morale of educators and learners are deeply influenced by the physical environment in which they work. However, given the fiscal constraints, it is unlikely that much will be done to improve these conditions in the near future. Schools, together with parents, should determine needs and make plans to address them together. In this they require guidance and training. The proposed capacity building of new governing structures could help to prepare the governing body to make decisions and prioritize the school's needs.

The lack of support services is even more crucial than the state of the school buildings and more difficult to resolve. Improved communication between provincial departments of education and schools is essential, so that the former can be made aware of the needs at grassroots level.

7.6.3 Inadequate school readiness of learners

In rural disadvantaged communities there is a severe lack of pre-school facilities, particularly in poverty-stricken communities. Moreover, relatively few of these facilities are able to provide the kind of educational programmes,

which disadvantaged children need. Educators of Grade 1 learners observed during participant observation in the schools visited, experienced this problem. Children who came from low socio-economic backgrounds and who had illiterate parents were likely to be unprepared for school.

Recommendations

Schools could consider offering advice to parents on how to prepare their child for school prior to their enrolment at the beginning of the year. If there already are older siblings at school, they could also be asked to help by demonstrating skills such as how to hold a pencil, cut with a scissors and tie his/her own shoe laces.

7.6.4 Lack of school policy on parent involvement

None of the schools visited, had developed a written policy on parent involvement. Moreover, the schools also lacked and agreed upon a written policy for the role they wished parents to play in the school and the steps they were planning to accomplish this.

Recommendations

As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, a lack of a school policy is a major barrier to parent involvement. It is recommended that schools, particularly those in deprived communities, formulate a policy, which will address all aspects of parent involvement.

7.6.5 Communication between the school and the home

Informants reported that, meetings at schools are fairly well attended and are a well-established practice in both the primary and secondary schools. However, this does not appear to be true of secondary schools, as confirmed by Maya (1993:17). Furthermore, although educators profess to inviting parents to visit them at any time regarding their child, this does not always realize in practice. Educators interviewed, admitted that parents may be afraid of coming to school.

Recommendations

School meetings could be made more effective and used to discuss many issues, not only the non-payment of school fees and administrative matters. The needs of parents should be assessed by the school and addressed at the meetings. Thus issues such as child motivation to learn or increasing a child's self-confidence could be discussed. Experts could be invited to address parents. Moreover, parents should be given an opportunity to speak with their child's class educator after the general meeting has been closed.

7.6.6 Homework policy and practice

In most cases educators limited the parents' role in homework activities to that of uninvolved supervisors. Educators admitted to neglecting to give parents guidelines on how to assist children in their homework.

Recommendations

Schools should provide parents with information and ideas on ways for helping their children at home with homework activities and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning. This could include the designing and organizing by the school of a regular schedule of interactive homework that gives learners the responsibility for discussing important things they are learning. This would also help families stay aware of the content of their children's work class. Emphasis should be placed on the role of parents in helping at home by encouraging, listening, reacting, monitoring and discussing, but not educating school subjects. This makes home learning more acceptable to educators and less threatening to parents. Moreover, educators should realize that children from economically or educationally disadvantaged families face, a number of ill-defined obstacles in the learning process; consequently, they may depend more than usual on support from their parents. Parents need to be helped to fulfil this role.

7.6.7 Lack of knowledge about parent involvement

From literature and empirical studies, the researcher discovered that, the majority of parents and educators seem to lack knowledge about how to get involved in parent involvement in the education of the children.

Recommendation

Development of a model for parent involvement stipulating strategies, to be used in order to increase parent literacy and including topics on parent involvement in the programme of educator training.

7.7 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this research study on parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities, suggest the following priority areas in the search for further knowledge.

Because of the lack of research on parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities, particularly if parent involvement is defined more broadly than participation on governing bodies, this research attempted to investigate different types of parent involvement, as well as place it within the context of disadvantaged rural schools and communities. However, many aspects relating to parent involvement in disadvantaged rural communities requires more detailed research, such as the following.

- The effect of parent illiteracy on learner achievement.
- Strategies to involve illiterate care-givers in their children's schooling.
- Strategies of improving the parenting skills of under-age mothers.
- Combining adult literacy classes with children's homework activities.
- Finding ways of adjusting parent involvement strategies to the different school levels.

- Determining how parent involvement can be included in the content of educator education programmes.

- Determining the effects of an effective parent involvement programme in a disadvantaged rural school on parents, educators and learners.

7.8 FINAL REMARKS

An attempt has been made in this chapter to summarize all relevant issues discussed in the previous chapters.

The recommendations flowing from the findings of the investigation have been suggested.

It is hoped that recommendations made in this research, will contribute to a more sound and scientific method of parent involvement in the education of their children.

Finally, a few fields of further research have been recommended.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE: PRINCIPAL

A INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the parents of this community?

B GENERAL INFORMATION ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT

1. School policy on parent involvement

- What is the policy of this school on parent involvement?
- Is it a written policy/unwritten policy?

2. Communication between the school and family

- How do you pass information on to parents/guardians?
- Are there any opportunities for parents to come to the school and talk with educators?
- How often are such opportunities created?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE: EDUCATORS

A INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- Describe what it is like being an educator in rural schools

B PARENTING

- How would you describe a good parent?
- To what extent are parents in this community involved in the lives of their children?
- How would you describe the relationship between parents and their children in this community?
- How do parents generally discipline their children?

C FAMILY STRUCTURE AND HOUSING

- What is the composition of the average household in this community?
- What is family life like in your community?
- What influence does the structure of the family and the circumstances, under which they live, have on the child?
- What is the status of the child in the home?
- Who generally looks after the child after school hours?

D GENERAL UPBRINGING/EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

- What is the role of the family in the upbringing and education of the child?
- What is the role of the school in the upbringing and education of the child?

- If the child is not living with the parents, how do you see the role of the guardian?

E PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

- In your opinion, what is the role of the parent in education?
- How would you define parent involvement?
- What experience did you have of parent involvement?
- What do you as an educator do to support parent involvement?
- In what ways are parents involved in your class?
- In what ways are parents involved in this school?

F COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- How often do you contact parents?
- Why do you contact them?
- How do you contact them?
- When are parents able to speak with you about their child?
- How often does this occur?

G ADVANTAGES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Do you think parent involvement could be of benefit to pupils, schools and the educators?
- In what way?

H BARRIERS TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- What are the barriers to parent involvement in this school and in this community?

I EDUCATOR TRAINING AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- In what way did your basic training equip you to work with parents?
- What have the years of experience as an educator taught you in this regard?

J THE SCHOOL AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Who should initiate parent involvement – the school or the parents?
- What role does the principal play in school-home relations?
- In what ways can parent involvement be improved?
- What role would you like parents to play in this school?
- Do you feel that parents need to be trained to fulfil this role?

K CONCLUDING REMARKS

- What do you think could bring about a change in the attitude irrespective of parent involvement in schools and parents?
- How do you see your future as an educator?

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDE: PARENTS

A INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

- Describe what it is like being a parent in a rural disadvantaged community.

B HOMEWORK, EDUCATION AND PARENTS

- Do children get homework to do in the afternoon? Do they have tests/examinations to study for in the afternoon?
- How is this homework controlled?
- In what way do you think parents should be involved in the education of their children?
- Would you like to be more involved? Explain.
- What prevents you from being more involved?

C PARENTS AT THE SCHOOL

- Are parents asked to help at school?
- Do parents help in the classroom? Explain.
- Do you think the school arranges enough opportunities for parents to be come involved in the schooling of their child?
- What else should the school be doing about this? Give suggestions.
- In what ways are you involved in the school?

D COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE HOME

- How do you find out what is happening at school?

- How do you find out how your child is doing at school?
- When you speak to your child's educator, what does he/she tell you?
- Have you attended a class meeting at the school?
- How are you treated when you go to the school, or phone the school, or written to the school?

E SCHOOL MEETINGS AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

- Does the school present concerts or sports days or any other social functions?
- How often do these take place?
- Do you attend? How often?
- When are parents' meetings held?
- What happens at parent meetings?
- Do parents play a role at any of these functions or meetings?/Do parents help to plan parents' meetings?/ Do they address parents at these meetings?

F CONCLUDING REMARKS

- In what way would you like to be involved in the education of your child/children?
- How do you see the future of your child in South Africa?

APPENDIX IV

An investigation on the nature of parent involvement in the education of children in disadvantaged South African schools and need for the development of a model

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EDUCATORS

Instructions

1. Your name must not appear on this questionnaire.
2. Kindly answer the questions by making a cross in the appropriate block.

SECTION A: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Age

Less than 30 years		30-39 years		40-49 years		50-59 years		60 and above	

2. Gender

Female		Male	

3. Highest Academic Qualifications

Less than matric		Matric		1 year post matric		2 years post matric		Masters Degree	
3 years post Matric		BA Degree		B.Ed Degree		Honour's Degree		Doctorate	

4. Experience as an educator

Less than 3 years		3-5 years		6-8 years		More than 8 years	

SECTION B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Predominant Socio-Economic Status of school Area

Lower Income Group		Middle Income Group		Higher Income Group	

2. Predominant Socio-Economic Status of Area where they live

Lower Income Group		Middle Income Group		Higher Income Group	

SECTION C:

Read each of the following statement and then rate them as follows:

1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Agree	4 = Strongly Agree			
			1	2	3	4
1	Schools and parents determine school policy jointly					
2	I want to discuss my children's problems with the school					
3	I am adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of my children					
4	Educators have been trained in parent involvement					
5	I am aware of the ever-changing nature of education					
6	I want to be invited to school extramural activities					
7	Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive me towards the school					
8	Poor parents want to be seen with educated educators					
9	I fully understand my role in schools					
10	Schools have adequate time to involve me in school extramural activities					
11	I determine the school curriculum with educators					
12	Educators communicate with me straightforwardly and simply					
13	Educators ensure that all parents have regular access to clear, concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom					

		1	2	3	4
14	Educators ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school, and then address those concerns				
15	Educators accommodate parents' work schedules				
16	Educators accommodate language and cultural differences				
17	Educators establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school				
18	Educators promote and support parenting skills				
19	Educators encourage active parent participation in learner learning				
20	Educators welcome parents as volunteer partners in school				
21	Schools invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families				
22	Educators reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools				
23	Educators provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at your child's grade level				
24	Schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals				
25	Educators initiate classroom volunteer programs				
26	Schools create a parent resource centre, provide materials on issues of concern to parents				
27	Schools invite parents to present talks /or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills				
28	Schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills				
29	Educators ensure that the first contact with parents, is a positive one				
30	I ask educators or counselors about how to talk with their children about tough topics				

APPENDIX V

An investigation on the nature of parent involvement in the education of children in disadvantaged South African schools and need for the development of a model

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PARENTS

Instructions

1. Your name must not appear on this questionnaire.
2. Kindly answer the questions by making a cross in the appropriate block.

SECTION A: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Age

Less than 30 years		30-39 years		40-49 years		50-59 years		60 and above	

2. Gender

Female		Male	

3. Highest Academic Qualifications

Less than matric		Matric		1 year post matric		2 years post matric	
3 years post Matric		4 years post matric					

SECTION B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Predominant Socio-Economic Status of school Area

Lower Income Group		Middle Income Group		Higher Income Group	

2. Predominant Socio-Economic Status Area of they live

Lower Income Group		Middle Income Group		Higher Income Group	

SECTION C:

Read each of the following statement and then rate them as follows:

1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Agree	4 = Strongly Agree

		1	2	3	4
1	Schools and parents determine school policy jointly				
2	Parents want to discuss their children's problems with the school				
3	Parents are adequately qualified to make valid contributions to the education of their children				
4	I have been trained in parent involvement				
5	Parents are aware of the ever-changing nature of education				
6	Parents want to be invited to school extramural activities				
7	Unhealthy socio-economic issues drive parents towards the school				
8	Poor parents want to be seen with educated educators				
9	Parents fully understand their role in schools				
10	Schools have adequate time to involve parents in school extramural activities				
11	Parents determine the school curriculum with educators				
12	I communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply				
13	I ensure that all parents have regular access to clear, concise and easily readable information about their children's school and classroom				
14	I ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about school, and then address those concerns				
15	I accommodate parents' work schedules				
16	I accommodate language and cultural differences				
17	I establish regular, meaningful communication between home and school				

		1	2	3	4
18	I promote and support parenting skills				
19	I encourage active parent participation in learner learning				
20	I welcome parents as volunteer partners in school				
21	Schools invite parents to act as full partners in making school decisions that affect children and families				
22	I reach out to the community for resources to strengthen schools				
23	I provide parents with a list of required mastery skills for each subject taught at your child's grade level				
24	Schools invite parents to share hopes for and concerns about children and then work together to set learner goals				
25	I initiate classroom volunteer programs				
26	Schools create a parent resource centre, provide materials on issues of concern to parents				
27	Schools invite parents to present talks /or demonstrations about their specialized knowledge or skills				
28	Schools offer workshops or seminars to parents on various parenting topics to improve grades or study skills				
29	I ensure that the first contact with parents, is a positive one				
30	Parents ask educators or counselors about how to talk with their children about tough topics				