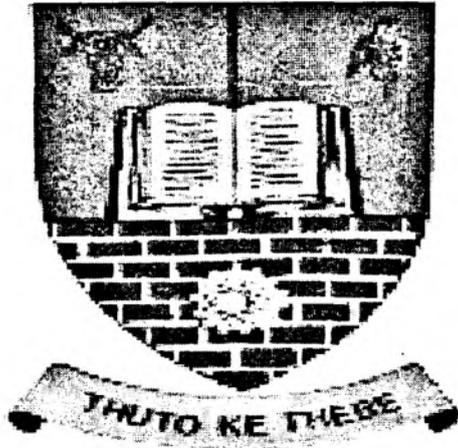


UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA



**A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF PARENTS' TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF THE SOUTHERN
PART OF BOTSWANA**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED
TO THE**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

By

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APPROVAL

This project has been examined and is approved as meeting the required standard of scholarship for the fulfilment for partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Education.

Supervisor

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Director of Graduate
Studies in Education

Date

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work contained in this supervised Research Project was completed at the University of Botswana between January and August 2003. It is original work except where due reference is made and neither has been or will be submitted for award of any other university.

Student's signature

Date

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ABSTRACT

The study looked at the roles performed by Parents' Teachers' Associations in primary schools in Botswana. It has been observed that some PTA members in most cases feel obliged to work tirelessly for the organisations because of the thought of improving schools for the education of their children. There had also been an observation that some of the parents just "dump" their children at the schools and seem to have little or no interest to participate in PTA activities. Some parents seem not to be interested because they did not know exactly what was expected of them and this has led to some PTA members performing well while others were not.

The study was mainly based on a mixed method design involving both quantitative and qualitative data as the two paradigms supplemented each other. For the quantitative approach the survey questionnaire was used while for the qualitative approach the semi-structured interview was used. Most of the data collection was done through questionnaires. The respondents were made up of head teachers, parents and teachers of both government and private primary schools in the southern part of the country.

It is evident from the study that PTAs play a very important part in the running of both government and private schools especially when they are given the mandate to participate. The study also revealed that there are some problems that PTAs are facing such as lack of guidelines on how to run the organisations and that some parents are far away from the schools and this prevents them to be more involved.

On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that guidelines on the roles of the PTAs be developed because it is evident that at present they depend on the Primary School Management Manual, which is not easily accessible to the PTAs. Another major recommendation of the study is that a forum for PTAs be established at district and national levels to encourage the sharing of ideas.

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to my mother, Mrs Tebogo Gaobepe who was always there for me and provided me with financial assistance. Even though not in good health she looked after the two girls, Atlang and Kao who were also my inspiration. Lastly to my nephews and nieces and my sisters Gadiitsiwe and especially Tduetso Tolo, the eldest, though in South Africa, always called to check how I was doing.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is a collaborative activity between parents and teachers and other government officials. Parents are encouraged to be partners in the provision and delivery of education and Parents Teachers' Associations (PTAs) have been put in place to enhance the partnership. Historically, in Britain parents were not included in decision-making matters relating to education but this changed due to the realization that schools were being deprived of powerful and dynamic resources of the communities (Gold, 2000: 71).

Most countries of the world encourage partnerships in education whereby governments and respective communities come together in the running of schools through Boards of Governors (BOGs) and or PTAs and this is the case with Botswana too. Parents show a lot of interest in the aforementioned governing bodies by attending meetings for the sake of their children's education but they seem not to understand what to do exactly. Worldwide, parents willingly become PTA members because they feel their children's education is also their responsibility. In Botswana too, parents also feel that

they have to belong to these organizations and this is the case in the southern part of the country where the researcher comes from.

For any PTA to function smoothly, one would expect some form of orientation as well as clearly stipulated rules and regulations. Unfortunately, as this study sets out to show, there are no clear guidelines nor is there any form of orientation that is provided for new PTA members. In Botswana some PTA roles are outlined in the Primary School Management Manual but whether the administrative staff shares such information with PTAs is questionable. Currently, the PTA depends on the school head for the roles that they have to perform and most of them seem to be operating on a wave of uncertainties. The study seeks to argue the importance of information dissemination and orientation that should be provided for the empowerment of PTAs.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Throughout the world there is a call to parents for their active involvement in the running of schools through PTAs. Unfortunately, books available on management are of little assistance to PTAs (Macbeth, 1989: 106). It is also evident that the material on PTAs in Botswana is not of much use because it

does not concentrate on the PTA roles. This therefore, makes it difficult for PTAs to be efficient or to work within given parameters. One will expect to find a lot of variations, problems and limitations. The study is going to look at:

- How PTAs function in general
- Factors that affect the level of involvement in PTAs
- Factors that contribute to effective PTAs

Parents were not involved in the running of schools in the United Kingdom before the 1960s and this changed after the Plowden Report in 1967, which was the first official recommendation on parental involvement (Lomax, 1990:82 & Sullivan, 1991: 100). The recommendation advocated for parents to be drawn into the school so as to be aware of what their children were doing at school. The report encouraged the head teacher together with teachers to create a conducive environment for parents to contribute to their children's education. It is believed that parents' involvement in their children's education produces better performance (Lomax, 1990: 82 & Sullivan, 1991:100).

In Botswana parental involvement is encouraged at all the different levels of the educational structure. At the lowest level of the structure are the pre-schools, which are all run privately by individuals or non-governmental organizations. The pre-schools are followed by primary schools, which comprise of private/ english medium schools and Government/ Council/ setswana medium schools. The duration for primary instruction for children at this level is 7 years. This is then followed by 3 years in junior secondary schools, which are either private or government aided. Senior secondary education lasts 2 years and afterwards children go to different institutions for their tertiary education. However, some schools especially private schools are integrated or unified, as the Ministry of Education (MoE) prefers to call them. After 5 years of combined junior and secondary school education they also go for tertiary education. Some secondary schools are private while others are government owned. At all the levels of education, parents are encouraged to be members of PTAs and to participate in activities for school improvement (Ministry of Education 1993).

At the primary school level PTAs are engaged in a lot of activities for school improvement, as most governments do not adequately finance primary schools but this is not the case at the secondary level, which enjoys better

financing (Perez, 1999: 55). In private schools, PTAs work hard for the development of the schools because they are not assisted in any way by the government. Even though most primary schools in Botswana are called government schools, they are really under the control of the local government. This has been so for quite some time after the Sargant Report of 1905. Sargant recommended that primary schools should be placed under the local authority instead of the central government. Sargant recommended this because he realized that communities could be used to raise more funds for school development, if they were actively involved (Coles, 1985: 9).

The Government of Botswana has long realized that involvement of parents in their children's education is very important as the first Education Commission of 1977 emphasized the importance of parental involvement (Ministry of Education, 1977). The commission further encouraged parents to participate in PTA activities by provision of labour and finance for the '*physical upkeep and maintenance*' of the schools (Education for Kagisano, 1977: 56).

Involvement of parents in school activities through PTAs is a challenging task for school managers, because parents do not seem to be interested in

these organizations. This is probably due to the fact that parents have not been fully involved in their children's education and they are not aware of how valuable PTAs are. PTA activities in schools have been looked upon as teacher-run ones because they feel that at meetings they are only told what to do by teachers. Parents were not given opportunities to say what they wanted (Mcloughlin, 1987:45). The running of PTAs is now in the hands of parents but still many do not feel obliged to participate because they are not convinced of the benefits of being members. This is supported by O'Donoghve et al (1998: 18) who note that:

Throughout much of the world public education traditionally has been the preserve of bureaucracies which have left little room for non-professional participation in shaping education policy and practice. Parental involvement where it has existed has been limited.

Worldwide, parental involvement was not seen as a necessity in their children's education because it was believed that the educators could do the job well without parents. In some instances where parents were involved it

was only at a minimum level but there is a belief that parents who are active in the education of their children produce long benefits for the society, as they also feel obliged to participate in their communities (<http://www.org/programs/Ldwk3.htm>).

In Botswana, parental involvement is not a new development just as it is the case with other countries. After the British acted on the Plowden Report which emphasized parental involvement in the education system this was also passed to Botswana which was a British protectorate and as one of the beneficiaries of the British education system. Parental involvement in the management of education is highly encouraged through Boards of Governors (BOGs), PTAs and other organizations, which are taken as partners in the running of schools (RNPE, 1994: 11). Generally schools make it a point that parents are involved through PTAs but usually it seems some of the parents do not exactly know what they have to do in the PTAs. This study therefore seeks to examine parental involvement with a particular emphasis on PTAs in primary schools in the southern part of Botswana.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although there is a call for stronger parental involvement, it seems their roles in Botswana primary schools are not clearly spelt out. Some parents seem to be well aware of what they are expected to do in PTAs while others do not have a clear direction. At present PTAs depend entirely on the head teacher whose source of information is the Primary School Management Manual to which PTAs have no access. Some PTAs are successfully running their organizations while others are failing. Unfortunately, little data if any exists on what factors contribute to effective PTAs.

Too much dependence on the head teacher on what has to be done can easily lead to the manipulation of the organization members by the head teacher. This in the end usually results in parents losing interest because of the feeling that they do not own decisions taken and this leads to mismanagement of PTAs. The purpose of the study is to find out if there are any guidelines on PTAs that exist or if every school has to follow its own set of guidelines. A study of this nature is very important because it would guide PTAs with what to do to make their schools more effective.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the head teachers', parents' and teachers' views on the role of PTAs in schools?
2. Are there any guidelines to assist PTAs and parents in particular to do their work more effectively?
3. What factors contribute to active PTA involvement?
4. What factors contribute to lack of PTA involvement?
5. What activities are PTAs involved in?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is important to undertake this study because it would help school administrators, teachers, parents as well as other stakeholders in the educational system on how PTAs have to be run. It would make it easier for parents to be sure of what is expected of them. The researcher has so far not come across any local study on the roles of PTAs in primary schools, so this study will be helpful in providing lots of relevant background information on PTAs in Botswana. A study of this nature should help the Ministry of Education in developing guidelines for PTAs. All stakeholders should be

clear on what their roles are to avoid complacency and confusion but also to encourage better effectiveness in their contribution.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There is not enough literature on Parents Teachers Associations, so it is not easy to get relevant information. There is only one study, which has been done on PTAs in Botswana on community junior secondary schools by Toteng (1999), but none has been done on the roles of PTAs in primary schools in Botswana. Due to lack of funds and time the study will cover only six (6) schools in the southern part of the country. Lack of literature especially on the roles of PTAs in Botswana is a major limitation of the study. The findings of the study need to be read and understood in the light of the main limitation of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review has been divided into sub-topics namely: The Role of Parents Teachers Associations in Schools; Factors that Contribute to Active Participation of PTA Involvement; Factors that Contribute to Lack of PTA involvement; Activities of Parents Teachers Associations and Accessibility of PTA Guidelines to PTA Members. At the end of chapter, the main points raised in the literature will be highlighted in relation to the research objectives of the study.

2.2 ROLES OF PTAs IN SCHOOLS

Parents Teachers Associations play a very important role in the running of schools because they are part of school governance. School governance is of great importance because it allows all stakeholders to be fully involved in schools thus benefiting the whole educational system. All primary schools in Botswana are required to have governing bodies, especially PTAs management teams are encouraged to establish one if it does not exist in that particular school (Ministry of Education, 2000: 80). Senior secondary

schools have PTAs; junior secondary schools have both PTAs and BOGs; and primary schools have PTAs while most private schools also have governing boards. Governing bodies have to be in all schools and their presence should be felt through their provision of material and moral support and other forms of assistance. The school can benefit from all the stakeholders who should be committed to their respective schools (Kogan et al, 1984: 29). School governance has to be done in a team-like manner, whereby those involved should try to work harmoniously together without manipulation of others unnecessarily. It is about selling ideas to some and buying ideas from others that one finds out which of these would benefit their organization and not that particular individual or a few individuals (Pughs in Lumby and Fosket, 1999: 113).

PTAs are governing bodies in schools and this makes it possible for all the stakeholders concerned to improve education by assisting that particular school with what they can manage or afford. Parents Teachers Associations are a group of parents of students or pupils attending school and teachers of the concerned schools. Macbeth (1989: 113) says:

A PTA is a group of people who recognize that the

education of a child is a process of partnership between parents and teachers and who wish to take a joint action to improve the quality of the partnership. The PTA is the starting point and central link of developing the school and the community.

Parents-teacher partnerships help children to get maximum benefit from their schooling because parents and teachers work together towards the education of their children unlike the case whereby children are left in the hands of teachers alone. PTAs make it possible for parents to be involved in the education of their children not leaving everything to the teachers but the two groups have to work harmoniously together. There is a lot of emphasis on partnership when it comes to school management, so this means that all stakeholders of a particular school should work cooperatively together for the well being of that school. Pughs in Lumby and Foskett (1999: 113) defines partnership as:

... a working relationship that is characterized by a sense of purpose, mutual respect and the

willingness to negotiate. This implies sharing information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.

Partnership is whereby those involved should have focus on why they exist and exactly what they have to do. They should also work harmoniously together and they should all be accountable of what is happening in the group and to avoid disassociating themselves from the group if things are not going well. Those involved in the partnership should be free to air their views and should not fear to be ill treated by other members because as a group it would not be natural to have no differences. Most importantly, a PTA should comprise more parents than teachers to indicate that they play an important role in their children's concerns (Petso, undated: 12). PTAs play a very important role in running of primary schools to the extent that our primary schools would be less exciting without PTAs. PTAs perform some roles, which are common, but there are some, which differ from one school to the other depending on how the organization understands what it has to do and putting it into practice. In some instances they act as a lifeline to schools, which would therefore appear dead without them. Many schools owe the development of many projects to PTAs. This includes the

purchasing of teaching equipment, sports equipment and putting up of laboratories and halls.

PTAs are very important in the running of schools throughout the world. It is of great importance for parents to be involved in their children's education. There is a belief that active participation of parents on issues related to their children's education greatly contributes to achievement academically (Perez et al, 1999: 54). A lot of attempts have been made to increase parental involvement in the running of schools and this was encouraged by the recommendation of the Taylor Report of 1977. According to O'Donoghve, (1998: 33)

...Schools needed a body of locally concerned people to ensure their responsiveness to those they serve and those parents should be equal partners.

Parents should realize that their participation in school affairs is highly appreciated and they should not be let to remain behind by only consulting them when money is needed from them. Parents have to be viewed as

important partners in the education of their children because they are the first educators of their children when still very young and if they are fully involved it makes formal schooling effective (Burke and Picuss, 2001: 5 and Lumby and Fosket, 1999: 111). Using parents for financial reasons results in parents looking at schools as being only interested in their money and not giving them enough opportunity to participate more widely while only teachers are active. Most schools have now realized the importance of parents by allowing them to participate in some roles especially decision-making, because they have realized that with parent's support, it is easier to run their schools (McCloughlin, 1987:98).

Parents' involvement is a two-way process because it needs active participation by both parents and teachers and this has to start with changing the behavior of both parents and teachers. To show that change of behavior has occurred, parents have to do some voluntary work at school and help children with their schoolwork, while on the other hand teachers as well as school heads should see to it that they communicate well with parents and include them in decision-making matters (Mattingly et al 2002: 549).

In Botswana, after the Education for Kagisano Report of 1977, which, touched very little on PTAs, another education commission was set up and came up with The Report of the National Commission of 1993. This commission indicated that it was not impressed by the impact and status of PTAs although they are assets in the development of education. The commission recommended that there should be association of PTAs at District and National levels after being impressed by PTAs in Mauritius and Ireland where PTAs also have a national structure (Ministry of Education, 1993: 379). The recommendation of the commission was not given much weight as it was deferred in the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) (Ministry of Education, 1994: 86).

The researcher is of the opinion that if the association of PTAs at district and national levels were in place, it would help in the way PTAs are run because they operate differently. One would expect that PTAs in government schools operate in the same way but this is not the case. Private schools operate differently from others, but one might consider that they have a form of association so as to share ideas. The association of all PTAs at district and national levels is very important because it would share the experiences and

ideas from both government and private schools, which would help improve the way PTAs, operate.

Even though Parents Teachers Associations are important, they are of greater importance in primary schools than in secondary schools. In primary schools they carry out a number of activities because the schools are poorly financed and their needs are usually more than those of secondary schools. Worldwide, parents in primary schools usually raise funds for materials, trips and purchase of supplies while in secondary schools government provides most of what they need (Perez, 1999:55). Generally PTAs spend a lot of their time in fundraising activities and development projects. PTAs enable parents to be more involved in school activities and school administrators are urged to establish them where they do not exist. This applies to Botswana too as it is stated in Ministry of Education (2000: 80) that:

*Government strongly recommends that
the community must as much as possible
participate in the development and
management of education, in respect*

*to this educational partnership brings
parents closer to the school through PTA.*

Parents are encouraged to participate actively in their children's education universally and top government officials do this in most cases and some set examples by participating in meetings and fundraising activities such as sponsored walks. In Zambia the Education Minister urged parents to actively participate financially and in kind in running of schools through Parents Teachers Associations (<http://allafrica.com/stories2002022601>). In Nigeria PTAs are involved in a number of activities such as improvement of school performance and attendance and regulation of school facilities used by the public, organizing and sponsoring competitions as well as induction programmes for newly employed teachers (Francis et al, 1998: 43). This indicates that Nigerian PTAs have many different activities and not just fundraising which is what most PTAs are associated with.

Parents in Botswana have a long history in playing an important role in education. This is shown in the case of Bakgatla of Mochudi in 1920 who under the leadership of Isang constructed the first non-mission school in Botswana. Bakgatla made financial contributions and built the school

themselves (Grant, 1973: 10). This was the first school to be built by a tribe through the kgosi initiative; later other tribes too built schools through their own initiatives because they were always in conflict with the church and colonial government who were in charge of the education system (A:/Newsletter Volume -10 No-1 Community Financing of Education in Botswana.htm). At present the Botswana government is encouraging parents-teacher relationships, which is for the goodness of children's learning needs, and interest in schools (Toteng, 1999).

2.3 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT BY PTAs

It is unusual to find all PTAs being active. There are usually some, which are active, and others, which are very weak, and this is in most cases dependant on the skills and attitudes of the head teacher (Bray and Lillis, 1988: 18). The most contributory factor is the active participation of parents, the head teacher and teachers in the running of the PTA but the head teacher should be at the forefront because he/she is the leader and spokesperson of his/ her school and the community. ([Http://www.pta.org/programs/edulibr/peprincl.htm](http://www.pta.org/programs/edulibr/peprincl.htm)). If any of the three

stakeholders relax in their participation in that particular school it would have an impact on the PTA that is, it would weaken the overall performance.

For a progressive school one would find that there is a spirit of teamwork. It has been realized that most of the parents fail to participate actively because they do not understand why their participation is of great value and why they should participate in the organization (Macbeth, 1989: 106). School leaders should see to it that they make parents aware of the usefulness of the organization and why they should perform certain activities in schools (Fullan in Perez et al, 1999: 55).

Parents cannot participate actively unless the school is open to them. At least things have changed these days because parents are given the opportunity to have access to schools. Parents are free to advice and participate in any activity they feel comfortable with. All schools are expected to have PTAs. This is supported by Morris et al (1984:119) that:

Opportunities for parental access to schools have expanded. Formal structures of parental involvement, in an advisory

capacity, are now part of the procedural requirement....

For PTAs to be successful the head teacher has to support and guide the organization fully. Some studies which have been done indicate that the success and failure of PTAs rest entirely on the head teacher so PTAs cannot run without active participation of the head teacher (Goldring, 1986: 116). The head teacher should be the leader in the partnership (Wherry, 2003: 6). Both teachers and parents look upon him/her as one who knows the direction (Kaiser, 1985: 219). High levels of parental involvement are believed to lead to the success of schools in a number of aspects to an extent that those who do not want to involve parents are usually left behind. Some schools believe in keeping parents out because they believe they can do better without their interference. Teachers in most cases encourage heads to keep parents out, but now it is changing due to the latest educational developments (Morris et al, 1984:110).

PTAs are greatly valued in schools to an extent that all schools have them and cannot do without. Even in cases where PTAs are viewed as not being active enough, they still play some roles, which benefit the school. The head

should see to it that parents feel welcome in the school and they should be involved a great deal. Interaction between parents should be a sound one, orientations on how to care for their children and how to help them with school work, involvement of parents in decision making and the use of community resources by the school will help draw the community closer to the school (Wherry, 2002: 53).

For the success of PTAs, head teachers have a very important role to play because for parents and teachers to participate actively in the organization he/she has to be exemplary. He/she also has to make sure that he/she does not become popular with one party at the expense of the other but has to help teachers carry their work and cater for the expectations of parents (Goldring, 1986: 116). Parents and teachers need to be very active because the head cannot run the organization without their support.

2.4 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO LACK OF PTA INVOLVEMENT

The head teacher should be at the forefront in providing a conducive environment for PTA members, especially parents as they have been comfortable enough when working with school authorities because if they

feel threatened they will not give the schools the necessary support they can afford. If parents feel unwelcome in the school they would sit back and wait for the school to do the work on their own, which would make teaching and learning very difficult. In Botswana, the head teacher plays a very important role in the way the PTA has to be run especially in government schools unlike in private schools where they operate at an advisory level. Some parents do not participate actively in PTA activities as they are working full-time and some do not have the knowledge of what to do to help in PTAs (<http://www.serve.org.UCR/UCR.CompSix:htm>). Some teachers' attitudes towards poor parents contribute towards parents' lack of involvement because they are often associated with not caring for their own children and do not want to be involved in their children's education (<http://www.serve.org.UCR/UCR.CompSix:htm>).

Some other factors which contribute to lack of parental involvement are the schools not welcoming and supporting parents; negative experiences of parents when they were still at school and they usually think that they cannot do enough because of not being educated enough (<http://www.casey.org/whatworks/2000/11/focus.htm>). Other contributory factors are that some children do not attend schools near their homes due to

transfer in jobs of their parents resulting in parents not being actively involved in school activities ([http: www.mstl.org/education/parental/involvement.htm](http://www.mstl.org/education/parental/involvement.htm)). Schools have to make sure that they do not contribute to parents' lack of involvement and if they are not satisfied with parents' participation, they have to find out and remedy the situation. In other words the schools per se should not be the reason why parents are not interested. This then puts the ones on schools to be attractive and reaching out to their communities.

2.5 ACTIVITIES OF PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS

Orientations of PTA members especially the committee is of great importance because they hold the reins of the organization. The head teacher should be well conversant with how the organization has to be run because he/she has to guide the organization. Macbeth (1989: 109) has a view that:

*Sometimes a PTA is established on a wave
of enthusiasm, but once it is in existence the
members are not sure what to do and they
fall back to fundraising.*

Parents are always willing to be partners in education by their involvement in PTA activities and in most cases when they expect to contribute to the effectiveness of education in that particular school they do more of the fundraising activities instead which usually discourages them. This happens because there is not much guidance on how PTAs have to operate and the available resources for head teachers is not enough.

In Botswana, The Primary School Head Teachers Manual which has a section covering PTAs shows who should be in the executive committee and the different activities to be performed by PTAs (Ministry of Education, undated: 23). The manual has now been replaced by The Primary School Management Manual, which has limited guidance on the roles of PTAs. The new manual has the necessary activities but the different posts of PTA members have been overlooked. Some activities of PTAs are stipulated in The Ministry of Education (2000: 80) as:

- Involving parents in raising funds to support or administer among others:
 - School feeding program
 - Purchasing cooking utensils/ facilities and firewood
 - Payment of cooks

-Library equipment etc

- Determining the school uniform
- Supporting teachers in ensuring that pupils get adequate and quality education
- Inviting PTA executive to train and advice parents on how they can support their children on academic matters
- Supporting co-curricular activities
- Taking a vital part in organizing educational tours
- Supporting teachers in guiding and counseling pupils on anti-social behaviors and provide information that is socially and culturally acceptable
- Involving PTA executive in the development of action plans and project memorandum and in explaining policies/objectives to the parents.

Generally the Primary Management Manual has some of the activities, which if were effectively adhered to could be of great importance to PTAs. Unfortunately in most of the schools the PTAs do what is usually at the top of their agendas, which is fundraising. Even though the above guidelines are for the benefit of PTAs some of the head teachers keep them for themselves

and only share with PTAs those points, which are of their interest especially the fundraising one. The head as well as his/her staff usually put a lot of emphasis on the fundraising activity because it helps in a number of school affairs.

In Botswana, PTAs spend most of their time in fundraising activities because all along they have been required to participate actively in the school-feeding program, by payment of cooks and if there were any surpluses they bought cooking utensils and firewood. The payment of cooks has now been taken over by the government and most of the schools have now renamed feeding fees as development fees. Most of the PTAs countrywide have a problem with raising money because some parents are not able to contribute enough money for the development fees. PTAs in government schools do not pay much attention to equipment of the library, as this is more on the government's side. PTAs in private schools have more responsibilities than those in government schools because their schools are independent and this makes them more accountable. The range of activities they may be involved in ranges from payment of staff to the smallest thing the school might be in need of. Private schools depend more on tuition, and development fees as well as funds raised by PTAs or donations. In some

instances the PTAs have their own constitutions and have a series of events that keep their schools alive.

Even though there is a guide for the running of PTAs, it seems government schools do not implement what is in the manual as compared to private schools. In private schools parents are more actively involved in ensuring that their children get adequate and quality education because children are given assignments so as to be helped by their parents who have to endorse their signatures to show that the work has been done under their supervision. In government primary schools some teachers may be keen to involve parents but some parents might not be interested while in other instances parents would be interested but teachers may not be reaching out to them. Parents in government schools are in most cases uncertain of what to do in their PTAs to the extent that their participation in curricular and co-curricular activities is at a minimum. However, parents can be applauded for their active participation in organizing educational tours because all along it had been the duty of the PTA to organize everything including transport, which is now the responsibility of government in its schools. Parents are involved in determining school uniforms because they have to agree on the uniform as well as the supplier.

Some of the activities in the manual are not easy to carry out because most PTA members' have low levels of education and this makes it difficult for them to come up with programs, which could raise the standard of education in their schools. For some of the activities of PTAs that have to be carried out there has to be some guidance but the administrative staff which has to be at the lead may not know how to assist the PTAs in explaining policies or objectivities and development of action plans. The execution of the stipulated activities in the manual depends on how much the head teacher; parents and teachers all know what is expected of them.

Thus the Botswana Parents Teachers Associations do not seem to have much in terms of policies and guidelines that may help them on how to run their organizations. The Ministry of Education provides the school management team with a manual, which leaves the PTAs under their mercy for guidance on how they should operate. If the head teacher does not want to share what is in the manual, the PTA especially the executive find it hard to run the organization. The absence of a source of information that is directed to PTAs leads them to be over dependent on the head and this has lead to some PTAs performing better while others are lagging behind.

2.6 ACCESSIBILITY OF PTA GUIDELINES TO PTA MEMBERS

Availability of guidelines to PTAs is a bit questionable especially in government schools because at present the researcher has not come across any document, which fully guides the PTAs. There used to be the Head teachers' Manual, which stipulated some roles and different posts to be held by PTA members (Ministry of Education, undated: 23). After realizing that the head teachers' manual did not cover enough there was a document published to supplement the manual (Petso, undated). It seems the supplementary document still has something lacking on how to run PTAs and most of the schools seem not to be aware of such a document. Of late, the Primary School Management Manual has been distributed to the schools, which has a small portion on the roles of PTAs (Ministry of Education, 2000: 80). This manual is given to school heads as it covers school management more broadly. It is not really directed to PTAs who have to rely on the head teacher on the roles they have to perform.

2.7 SUMMARY

According to the literature, all primary schools have PTAs, so one of the objectives of the study is to examine if this is true. The researcher has noted from the literature that PTAs are a very important mechanism in school governance because they are also stakeholders concerned with the role on how the school has to be run. For their success, partnership in PTAs has to be nurtured by all those concerned that is: the head teacher, parents and teachers. There is a need for parents to be brought closer to the school especially when it is evident that they are a bit withdrawn because teachers would not succeed if the education of the children does not involve parents. It is evident that PTAs do not perform the same roles and that some PTAs develop their schools far much more than others and this is mostly the case in private schools because their PTAs seem to have some direction on how to run the organizations. This study therefore seeks to examine the different roles of the PTAs.

On factors that contribute to active PTA involvement, all the stakeholders should be involved in the running of PTAs, such as the policy-makers, head teachers, parents, teachers and the communities. These concerned groups have to be well conversant with what PTAs have to do because the success

of these organizations lies entirely on them. The stakeholders should work in a team-like manner whereby all have to show that they are concerned. They all should feel that it is their duty to make PTAs successful.

The third research objective about factors that contribute to lack of PTA involvement aims to find out why some PTAs are functioning well while others are not. From the literature it is evident that if parents are left behind not knowing what is expected of them, it is not 'healthy' for a school. It is indicated that a number of factors could result in this, such as parents feeling unwelcome or even thinking that they are not educated enough or being of a lower economic status. To remedy this all parents and children should be treated the same way because this would allow them to open up. The role of how parents should participate should be well stated and should be what the school and parents have agreed upon.

The fifth research objective looks at the activities PTAs engage in and it is evident that the organizations engage in a number of activities. In Botswana, in most cases PTAs in private schools seem to be more involved because they are not dependent on the government to support them in any way. The other thing might be because parents in private schools are perceived to have

better educational levels as well as higher economic status than those in government schools. It is evident that at the end of the year, private schools do more projects and achieve better academically, as compared to their government run counterparts. If PTAs in government schools were to meet with those in private schools to share ideas the researcher has a view that we would have better-run organizations due to this exchange of ideas. This study therefore seeks to examine the prospects of getting PTAs to work together to achieve this end.

The last research objective looks at the accessibility of guidelines to PTA members; it is not easy to tell if PTAs have access to the guidelines in council primary schools, as there are no documents at present which directly guide them on how they should be involved. In private schools such as Thornhill School in Gaborone, parents sit down and discuss what they would like to do for the school in that particular year. There is also no forum for all PTAs to come together to share their experiences by meeting at district and national levels, although this was a recommendation of the Ministry of Education (1993), it was deferred in the RNPE (1994). This study will therefore look at the issue of guidelines in the different schools.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in the study that is the method, which was used to collect data and its analysis. The chapter covers the following: Research Design; Target Population; Sampling Procedure; Instrument for Data Collection; Research Framework; Data Collection; Validity and Reliability of Instruments and the Analysis Procedure.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is a case study involving some primary schools in the Southern District. The researcher used a mixed methodology design whereby both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to investigate the problem, as the paradigms supplement each other. Both the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used. Most of the data collection was done through questionnaires. The head teachers, parents and teachers were used in the study. This enabled the researcher to triangulate data from questionnaires and interviews on Parents and Teachers Association roles. The researcher administered some of the questionnaires to explain what had to be done and

made clarifications where necessary so as to help those who could not complete the questionnaires on their own as suggested by Barbie et al, (2000: 258). Other questionnaires were distributed and collected later.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

The study was conducted in six primary schools in the Southern part of the country. The schools were Forest Hill English Medium and Segopotso Primary Schools in Kanye; Saint Martin's (Papatlo) and Metlojane Primary Schools in the Barolong Area; Crescent English Medium and Ipeleng Primary Schools in Lobatse. Whilst some parents and teachers in the above mentioned schools were given the questionnaires to complete others were interviewed orally.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The study used convenience/ accidental/ haphazard sampling which depends more on the availability of subjects (Gay & Airasian, 2000: 137). The researcher used five (5) parents and five (5) teachers in each school to answer the questionnaires. For head teachers, as schools were closing, it was not easy to give them questionnaires as they were very busy, so only two (2) were given the questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews were held with

two (2) parents, two (2) teachers in each school and one (1) head teacher. A total of eighty-seven (87) respondents were used and this presented a fair representation of all primary schools in the region.

3.5 INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. For interviews a tape recorder was used as a back up for the notes, which were taken.

3.6 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview items were matched to the research questions to show clearly who will be providing the answers and whether it will be through the questionnaire or the interview schedule. Figure 1 below shows how the questionnaire and interview schedule items were matched to the research questions.

Figure 1: Research Framework

Research Questions	Source of Data Collection	Means of Data Collection	Questions
1. What are the head teachers', parents' and teachers' views on the role of PTAs in schools?	Parents Teachers Headteachers	Questionnaire Interview Schedule	2.1.4 2.1.5 1 3
2. What factors contribute to active PTA involvement?	Parents Teachers Headteachers	Questionnaire Interview Schedule	2.9 2.1.1 2.1.2 2 4 8 9
3. What factors contribute to lack of PTA involvement?	Parents Teachers Headteachers	Interview Schedule	2.5 2.8 5 10 11
4. What activities do PTAs involve in?	Parents Teachers Headteachers	Questionnaire Interview Schedule	2.3 2.4 2.2 2.6 2.7 2.1.3 6
5. Do PTAs have access to guidelines?	Parents Teachers Headteachers	Questionnaire	2.1 2.1.0 7 2.2

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

For questionnaire items both open and closed ended questions were used.

For semi-structured interviews head teachers, parents and teachers were asked the same questions individually and were probed where necessary.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

The validity of a measuring instrument means that the instrument has to do what it is intended to measure and bringing the same or similar results each time it is used. Reliability refers to the extent to which the administration of the same or similar instrument would give same results (De Vos, 2000: 83). For checking validity and reliability of measuring instruments the researcher used the test-retest method whereby the questionnaires were piloted on a few parents and teachers at one of the primary schools in Gaborone before actual administration. Some participants in the piloting process indicated there should be one other option of 'not applicable' in the academic level of education, which the researcher included. The other correction was done on a question on the estimation of men and women in the PTAs, which was deleted because it seemed to have given participants a problem because most of them failed to give answers.

3.9 ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data analysis depended on data collected through the questionnaires and the semi-structured interview. The analysis was done using the SPSS for the questionnaires and by manually tallying responses from interviews and

open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The findings were organized according to the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATIONS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion. The main findings of the study are discussed and related to the research questions in Chapter 1. The data was obtained mainly from the questionnaire and the interview schedule.

This study was meant to find out:

1. What are the head teachers, ' teachers' and parents' views on the roles of PTAs in primary schools?
2. What factors contribute to active PTA involvement?
3. What factors contribute to the lack of PTA involvement?
4. What activities are PTAs involved in?
5. Do PTAs have access to PTA guidelines?

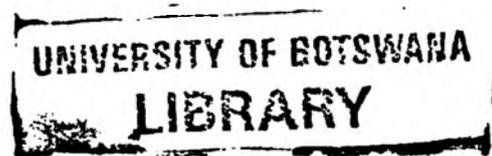
Six primary schools in the Southern part of the country were used which comprised of two (2) English Medium Schools and four (4) Setswana Medium Schools. Each school was given ten (10) questionnaires, five (5) for teachers and the other five (5) for parents. In the six (6) schools only two (2) questionnaires were distributed to the head teachers because they were too

busy preparing for term ending. In all sixty-two (62) questionnaires were distributed and the return rate was 54 (87.1%). Most of the unreturned questionnaires were those, which were given to parents because it was not easy to follow them up at their homes and workplaces. For the interview the researcher had 22 respondents instead of 29, because it was not easy to get head teachers because of their tight schedules and only one head teacher was interviewed. In one of the schools the researcher could not interview teachers because of their tight schedule as schools were closing.

The data has been analyzed from both the questionnaire and the interview schedule and it is presented in two parts, which are: demographic information of respondents while the other part is an analysis of the responses on the roles of PTAs from both the questionnaire and the interview.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

This section begins with the presentation of demographic information from the questionnaire that was administered to find out the roles of PTAs in primary schools.



4.2.1 Age

Figure 2 below shows the age range of respondents. The age of respondents ranged from 20-51+. The age range of 31-40 was the largest with 25 (46.3%) respondents, followed by 41-50 with 18 (33.3%). This shows that most of the respondents were middle aged.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30	8	14.8	14.8	14.8
31-40	25	46.3	46.3	61.1
41-50	18	33.3	33.3	94.4
51+	3	5.6	5.6	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

4.2.2 Gender characteristics

Figure 3 below shows that the total number of respondents was 54, of whom 42 (77.8%) of the respondents were females while 12 (22.2%) were males. The reason for this big disparity is that most of the primary school teachers are females. In 1995 the statistics for teachers in Botswana showed that there were 17.8% males and 82.2% females in primary schools; 56.3% males and 43.7% females in secondary schools; 64.5% males and 35.5% females in colleges (Central Statistics Office 1988: 15). On the side of parents most of the respondents were mostly women because most of them do not work and the other thing is that there are a lot of single mothers. Furthermore it is

indicated that there were more women than men as heads of households in both urban and rural areas (Central Statistics Office, 1988: 10).

Figure 3: Gender Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	12	22.2	22.2	22.2
Female	42	77.8	77.8	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

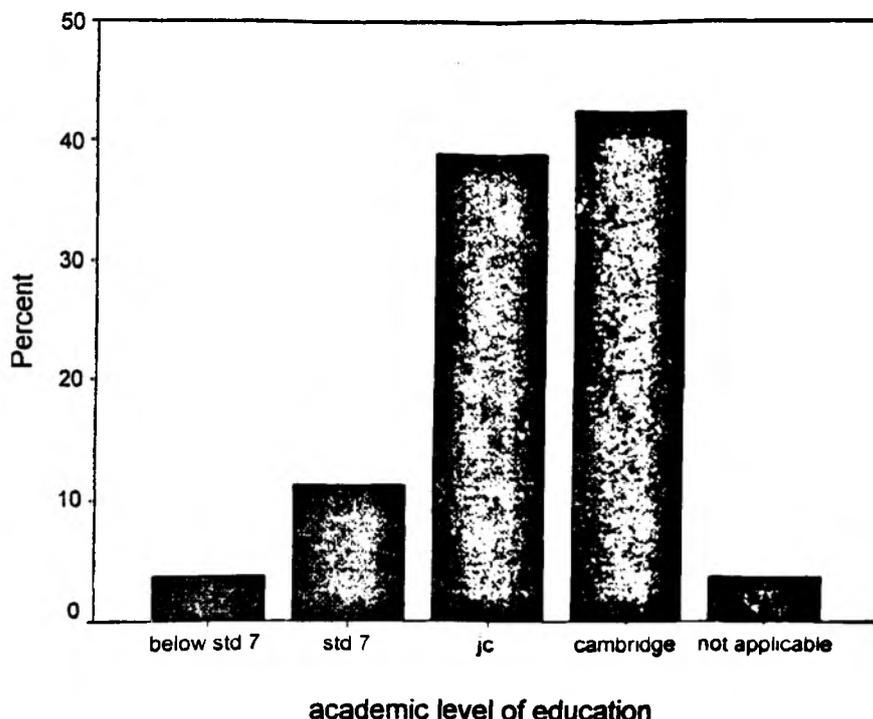
4.2.3 Position of Respondents

Out of the 62 respondents, 30 parents were given questionnaires, 22 returned the questionnaires; out of the 30 teachers, 27 questionnaires were returned of which only 2 questionnaires were given to head teachers and were both returned. Parents returned fewer questionnaires than the rest because they were not easy to follow up and as for the head teachers most of them were busy preparing for term ending and most of them were not given questionnaires.

4.2.4 Academic Qualifications

Graph 1 below shows the academic qualifications of all the respondents that are: parents, teachers and head teachers. The results have indicated that 23 (42.6%) of the respondents have gone through Cambridge, and those with Junior Certificate (JC) at 21 (38.9%). This shows that a good number of respondents were literate as those who have not gone to school were 2(3.7%). There is an indication that most of the respondents were literate enough and the assumption being made here is that if they were active enough they would be easy to work with because of not being pulled back by the fact that they were not educated.

Figure 4: Academic Level of Education



4.2.5 Professional Level of Education

From all parents, teachers and head teachers respondents, 18 (33.3%) were PTC holders; followed by 17 (31.5%) with a Diploma; 1 (1.9%); with a first Degree; 1 (1.9%) with a Post Graduate Diploma and 3 (5.6%) with a Masters Degree. More than half of the respondents have some form of professional qualification, which is a clear indication that they can be helpful in running of PTAs.

4.3 THE ROLES OF PTAS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

This part looks at the findings of the study based on the research questions and the information obtained from the questionnaire (Appendix A) and the interview schedule (Appendix B). This part has both the quantitative data analysis as well as the qualitative one.

4.3.1 What are the Head teachers', Parents' and Teachers' views on the Roles of PTAs in Primary Schools?

The respondents who were head teachers, parents and teachers indicated that their PTAs play an important role in primary schools.

A number of roles are performed by PTAs in primary schools concerning the overall welfare of the schools, for example, the general management of the school. PTAs also act as advisory bodies to school boards and they are also responsible for determining the school uniform. PTAs are a very important resource (Gold, 2000: 71) if used accordingly they could upgrade the level of education. All the primary schools that were studied had PTAs as governing bodies but in the case of Crescent Primary School, the PTA is an

advisory body to the school board, which has all the responsibilities of running the school. In this case therefore the PTA's role is just advisory.

32 (59.3%) of the respondents said that they did not think PTA roles were limited because they could even volunteer their services in areas, which were not covered in their action plans. However 15 (27.8%) of the respondents said that the roles were limited as they were always told what to do by the school and the executive committee.

From the interviews there is a clear indication that PTAs are important in school governance. All the respondents indicated that school governance was very important in running of primary schools because it enables parents to play a part in their children's education. They further indicated that it makes parents realize that without their help, teachers cannot manage to do the work without their assistance. They cited a number of things that PTAs do for their schools like raising funds, helping in cleanliness of children and the school in general. Some indicated that school governance enables parents and teachers to meet and think of ways they could develop their schools. This point is very supported in the literature. Clearly, schools cannot operate without PTAs (Mcloughlin, 1987: 98).

The results show that PTAs are a backbone in primary schools because they enable parents to realize the importance they play in their children's education. PTAs provide schools with a special resource which government does not provide in the schools. This resource is that of parental care and support.

4.3.2 What Factors Contribute to Active PTA Involvement

A number of factors could contribute to the active participation of PTA members. The way meetings are held and their occurrence could contribute in a way. The study revealed that 26 (48.1%) of the respondents indicated that their general meetings were held once a term, followed by 22 (40.7%) respondents who indicated that their meetings were held twice a term. The rest of the respondents indicated that they hold meetings twice or once a year. When looking at whether respondents were given opportunities to comment in meetings, 53 (98.1%) of them indicated that they were free to make comments, while only one did not give any response. Surprisingly it seems there are things they were not pleased with but have not used the opportunity of freedom to make comments to correct things they thought were not done the right way. According to the respondents this showed that they are the ones denying themselves to have well-functioning PTAs

because they did nothing to correct the mistakes their PTAs were making but instead decided to keep quiet even though they were not satisfied.

Results from the interviews indicated that in most of the schools meetings were held regularly even though there were some instances where it was not the case. Some parents indicated that they wanted to be called for meetings instead of being notified by newsletters the views of the PTA executive and the school. There is an indication that in some schools parents were denied the opportunity to attend meetings to share ideas with the school on how they could develop the school for the benefit of the children. Meetings are very important because they enable all the stakeholders to discuss matters and come up with resolutions, which are of all the parties concerned, and so meetings should be held regularly, at least once a term (Petso, undated: 23).

One other factor is that PTAs could function well if they have some sub-committees because the workload would be divided among a number of people. The study indicated that 28 (51.9%) of the respondents indicated that their PTAs had sub-committees, while 25 (46.3%) said that they did not have any sub-committees.

The interviews also indicated how useful sub-committees are in running of PTA activities and they ease the workload, which is usually carried by executive committee members. A well-functioning PTA should have as many sub-committees it could handle because this helps the work to be distributed among more members.

In the interviews 11 of the respondents said that all PTA stakeholders should be more active because they have to all feel that, that they are equal partners in educating children. One of the respondents even indicated that, "*fa e nngwe e reketla ga gona se se ka diragalang*", meaning that if any of the stakeholders relaxes nothing could happen. Only one respondent indicated that parents should be more active because the school is always active. The respondent further lamented that if the school becomes more active they would end up using parents as their 'puppets', "*ba utlwa ka rona*", and meaning that parents will be lead by the school.

The study revealed that some of the respondents believed that head teachers should be more active as they are heads of the organizations, while others indicated that all the stakeholders should be equally active. There was also an indication that parents should be more active as the school is always

active. This shows that all stakeholders should be equally involved and none of them should try to manipulate others for his/ or her benefit. For the well functioning PTA all the stakeholders should be active, as the head teacher has to make sure that teachers are doing their work and that parents are also given some opportunity to participate (Goldring, 1986: 116). Goldring (1986) is also strongly supportive of the view that all stakeholders should be equally involved. Where stakeholders are equally involved, there is a common sense of ownership, which is very supportive to the development of the school and that is what partnerships are all about (Bray and Lillies, 1980).

4.3.3 What factors Contribute to the Lack of PTA Involvement

From the interviews the study revealed that a number of factors could contribute to lack of PTA involvement. The results revealed that 11 (44%) respondents said that lack of cooperation between parents and teachers as well as the executive and other parents could lead to a PTA not functioning properly. The results further indicated that 4 (16%) of the respondents said that lack of consultation lead parents to feel out of place because they could realize that they were not of any importance to the school because teachers dominate. The remaining respondents said that gossip was a great concern

especially on the side of parents. One of the respondents even indicated that parents could easily attack others verbally in meetings and utter words like, “*ke mo tlhoile gale*” that is, I had no real confidence in this person.

One of the respondents who was a head teacher said that she was once called when she was still helping some visitors to assist in a meeting, which was addressed by the Principal Education Officer (PEO) II. When she got to the meeting she found that one of the parents was saying that the meeting could not go on until one of the executive members could step down because she did not know why she was included in the executive committee. Once there is this element of mistrust it leads to a very poor relationship of the PTA. Clearly the need is there for good leadership to keep everyone together.

There were a few instances where some respondents said that head teachers sometimes were not in good terms with parents, “*bomogokgo ba gotlhagotlhana le batsadi*”. One of the respondents lamented that if parents have a negative attitude towards the head teacher things would not go well. The performance of PTAs depends much on how the head teacher is managing it, so the head teacher has to be in good terms with parents for the organization to be effective (Bray and Lillies, 1988: 18). Some respondents

said that the executive committee members did most of the PTA work and they wanted to see other parents involved. One respondent was concerned that consultation was lacking in their school, as they have never been involved in decision-making matters but only informed on what has to be done through newsletters.

The study showed that a number of things like lack of cooperation, communication and consultation between the school and parents and between parents themselves could lead to dysfunctioning of PTAs. It was also indicated that in most cases the problem could be with the parents but in a few instances the head teacher and teachers could also be contributing to this.

The study also found out that the location of the school could have some negative impact on the performance of PTAs, even though only a few of the respondents indicated this. Some respondents said that if households were far from school it could result in parents not participating actively because of the distance. In support of the latter statement Toteng (1999: 29) indicated that, '*distance from school is one other factor inhibiting parents from attending PTA meetings*'. Some of the respondents indicated that lack of

resources due to limited jobs in their places also contribute because some of the parents could not abide by all the schools' needs. Poverty is one of the factors that hinders active participation because for the organizations to function funds have to be available (Toteng, 1999: 26). Moorad (1989) identified the problem of distance as a major factor that affects the functioning of School Boards in terms of attending meetings as well as contributions.

4.3.4 What Activities are PTAs Involved in?

Figure 5 below shows some of the activities carried in both private and government primary schools. The study has revealed that PTAs were involved in a number of activities and that all the PTAs have fundraising as the main activity because it helps in financing different activities in their schools.

Figure 5: PTA Activities

Government Schools	Private Schools
Concerts	Cake sales
Organization of prize giving days	Braais/ Fetes
Civic days	Open days & Civic Days
Cleaning school yards	Payment of teachers
Decision on school uniform	Running of tuckshops

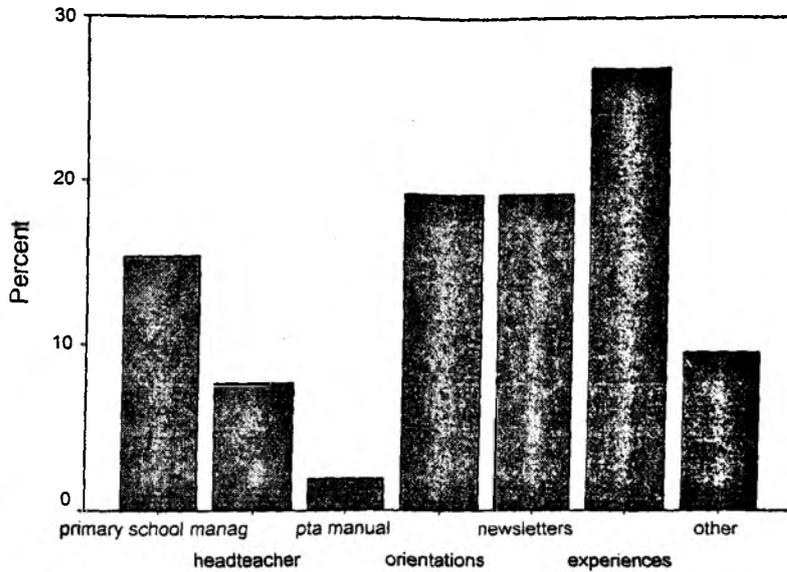
From the interview 13 (52%) respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the way their PTAs were doing even though some were concerned that most of the workload was carried by the executive. The results also show that 6 (24%) indicated that they were not satisfied with their PTAs performance; some even commented that in their case it was common that different parents attended meetings at different times and that sometimes they disagreed with what was agreed in the previous meeting. The remaining 5 (20%) respondents said that they were not sure if their PTAs were performing well because they were still new in their schools.

The results of the study show that some of the respondents were satisfied with their PTAs' performance while others indicated that they were not satisfied. There were also some instances where parents indicated that they were not at all involved as their schools denied them that.

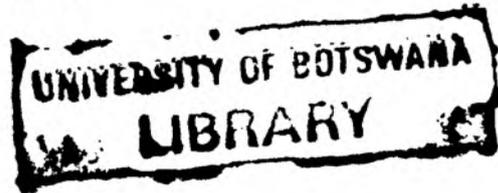
4.3.5 Do PTAs have Access to PTA Guidelines

Figure 6 below shows that 14 (25.9%) of the respondents depended on each other's experiences on the roles they have to perform. For those who depended on newsletters and orientations were 10 (18.5%) each. Those who depended on the Primary School Management Manual for the roles they have to perform for their PTAs were 8 (14.8%) and those who depended on the head teacher were 4 (7.4%). This is a good indication that PTAs are not run the same way because they do not have a common source of information. The real issue is not really one of uniformity but that of active involvement.

Figure 6: Information on PTA Roles



information on pta roles



Results from the interviews indicate that 10 (40 %) respondents said that workshops could be used to inform PTA members on the roles they have to play for the development of their schools. Some said that meetings were so far used to inform PTA members of their roles, while others believe that orientations by the old executive committee as well the head teacher, PEOs and Principal Education Secretaries (PESs) could also be used. Others indicated that a guide on the roles of PTAs should be available as there was no way an organization could run without anything to give it direction. One of the head teachers indicated that each time a new PTA executive

committee comes into office, she calls them and informs them of their roles from the Primary School Management Manual. Other respondents indicated that PTAs should not be isolated but should be given the opportunities of attending meetings in other schools so as to learn from each other.

The results of the study show that there were no real documents or guidelines at present, which were directed to the running of PTAs. There are usually some concerns that things like misappropriation of funds is usually done out of ignorance and to remedy this, workshops on bookkeeping and other important issues on how to assist in educating their children be conducted for members (Bray and Lillies. 1988: 168). Thus, there is a need for some guidelines to help give some direction especially when it comes to any new inexperienced members.

4.4 DISCUSSION

4.4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

The results revealed that most of the respondents were middle aged and if the respondents were the ones who participated actively in PTAs, looking at

their strength the researcher has a view that PTAs were going to benefit a great deal.

The results also revealed that more women participate in PTA activities as opposed to a handful of men who participate and this is supported by Mattingly et al (2002: 549). Some of the respondents even indicated that they do not have men in the executive committee and even when selected they do not participate. It is not very easy to expect more men participating in PTAs because most of the parents who participate were single mothers or those who have been left behind by their husbands who work outside the villages, which in most instances was the case.

On the qualifications of the respondents there is a clear indication that most of them have some form of qualification and if they were used in PTAs to their maximum they would lead in a better way. At present there are some complaints that some of the executive committee members are illiterate or have low levels of education and schools easily drag them around and Seisa and Youngman (1995: 119) are in support of this. It is not good for a school to have parents who are afraid of disagreeing with the teachers and the head teachers on some issues which they think could not lead the school to do better or on things which the PTAs cannot afford. Parents should not rely

too much on the teachers and the head teacher but should consider themselves equally important for the progress of their schools (Partington and Wragg, 1989: 34).

4.4.2 Roles of PTAs in Schools

The results revealed that PTAs play a very important role in primary schools and that all the schools in the study had PTAs while one of the schools also had a board as well, which has more powers than the PTA. The respondents were parents, teachers and head teachers.

Parents who participated in this study indicated that PTAs were important because they enabled them to discuss ways in which they could make schools conducive environments for their children's learning. It was clear that parents have been given the mandate to air their views freely, come to school at any time and are even free to volunteer their services. Only in a few instances parents said that they were denied that mandate of being involved in the education of their children because it seemed teachers and the executive committee members were the only ones involved. They indicated that they were only notified by newsletters on what they were supposed to do.

Teachers said that PTAs were important in primary schools because they assist in a number of ways but they seem to be failing because in most cases they do not know exactly what to do. They indicated that some parents were very much interested in helping their schools while others 'dumped' their children in schools and never cared to find out what their PTAs were doing ([Http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/msasub.asp?mid=3&sid=22](http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/msasub.asp?mid=3&sid=22)). There is an indication that head teachers play an important role in PTAs, as at present there is nothing, which guides PTAs. Thus PTAs rely for head teachers on their roles. The results also indicate that sometimes parents would not be willing to work with the head teacher, which unfortunately could lead to the downfall of PTAs.

4.4.3 Factors that Contribute to Active PTA Involvement

The results revealed that if parents realized that they were welcome in the schools, it would be easy for them to come to the schools at any time to assist or to be assisted on matters relating to their children's work (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1997: 17). The nearness of parents to the school also enables parents not to be discouraged by distance (Toteng, 1999). If parents are involved in decision-making on some matters, which

they could handle thus, gives them some encouragement and or motivation to continue supporting schools.

4.4.4 Factors that Contribute to Lack of PTA Involvement

The results indicated parents who live far away from the school find it difficult to participate actively. It has also been revealed that some parents feel that they are called for meetings to rubberstamp what the teachers have already agreed instead of the process of involving all parties in the decision-making (Mattingly et al 2002: 552). If the PTA and the executive make decisions on their own leaving out other parents and informing them by newsletters, this could also discourage parents. If only a few and the same parents participate while others seem not to be interested this too, could lead to some parents wanting to withdraw. Gossip on parents' side has also been cited as a way that could discourage those who have been participating.

4.4.5 Activities of PTAS

The results have revealed that PTAs are involved in a number of activities such as: buying some equipment for their schools, construction of some buildings, organizing educational tours and preparing for various celebrations. For PTAs to do all these, they have to raise funds in a number

of ways. These range from the selling of cakes to sponsored walks. PTAs also assist teachers by teaching subjects like Home Economics and by assisting their children with their schoolwork at home.

4.4.6 Accessibility of PTA Guidelines to PTA Members

The results revealed that at present there is nothing that guides PTAs on their roles. At present some of the PTA roles are outlined in the Primary School Management Manual to which the PTAs have no access. PTAs depend on a number of things on their roles such as: orientations, others' experiences, workshops and the head teacher (Bray and Lillies, 1988: 168).

It is evident that PTAs play a very important role in the development of primary schools especially those, which are in most cases not satisfactorily financed. In private schools too especially where there are no school boards they provide everything for their schools. PTAs are in most cases involved in fundraising activities because it would be difficult to run the organizations with insufficient funds.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. Conclusions are based on the findings of the study, while recommendations are based on the conclusion and the strategies suggested for improving the way PTAs have to operate for the development of their schools.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study have revealed that PTAs are very important in running of schools especially primary schools in Botswana, as parents are encouraged to participate actively towards the education of their children. Parents are urged to be self reliant, which is one of the national principles of Botswana by providing some of the things which government does not provide. Generally government primary schools are not well equipped, as one would expect, as it is the case with secondary schools but which are far much better. Parents are usually at pains trying to meet the needs of primary schools for improvement of their children's education. For private schools they have to fend for themselves in everyway as the government does not

assist them in any way and even though they are a bit burdened they are in most cases far much better equipped than government ones.

PTAs in most cases look forward towards working very hard for their schools but the hindering factor is that they do not have any clear direction. PTAs operate with very little guidance that is provided in the Primary School Management Manual, which does not have much and to which they do not have access. PTAs in government schools rely on the head teacher on what they have to do, whereas in private schools at the beginning of each year, activities for that year would be listed and each parent sent a copy.

One other concern is that some of the schools do not have action plans nor constitutions which is a clear indication that they can be easily derailed off their intentions. This was the case with one of the schools where it was indicated that what was agreed in the previous meeting could easily be cancelled at the next meeting. The PTAs are not to be blamed for not having constitutions nor action plans because they are not guided in any way.

There is a concern that PTAs especially in government primary schools could easily be manipulated in any way the schools would like because from

the Primary School Management manual the head teacher can easily pick out some things, which are of his/her interest to share with the PTA. One other thing is that PTAs may end up doing things, which they are not supposed to do because the head teacher may not inform them properly or the head teacher may also not know some of the limits of PTAs.

All the schools studied indicated that they had PTAs and this is a clear indication that PTAs are important, as they are involved in a number of developments in their schools. The PTAs need to be nurtured by all the stakeholders so that they continue with the good work they are doing for the schools. The literature review has also revealed the importance of PTAs for the well functioning of schools, as parents worldwide are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children. There is a general belief that where parents are actively involved in their children's schools this leads to better performance academically.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

After looking at the primary school PTA functions in this study the researcher has come up with the following recommendations:

1. The government should provide all schools with a PTA handbook that has clear guidelines on PTA activities, roles and functions.
2. There should be training of PTA executive committee members in order to empower them with the knowledge and skills relevant to the needs of schools.
3. There should be some incentives for PTA executive members so as to attract capable individuals and which can also be some form of encouragement.
4. There should be some set criteria for the selection of PTA executive members.
5. There should be an association of PTAs at district level and national level so that PTAs could have a forum to share ideas on how to run their organizations.

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APPENDIX A

PARENTS AND TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

The study on “*The Role of Parents Teachers Associations in Primary Schools*” needs your support for it to be successful. Please give your full assistance by completing the following questionnaire. All the information collected will be treated as confidential.

SECTION ONE: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please answer this section by ticking the correct answer or by filling in the required information where necessary.

1.1 Please indicate your position

Parent

Head teacher

Teacher

1.2 Age Range:

- 20-30 []
- 31-40 []
- 41-50 []
- 51+ []

1.3 Gender:

- Male []
- Female []

1.4 School _____

1.5 Level of Education:

Academic:

- Below STD 7 []
- STD 7 []
- JC []
- Cambridge []
- Not Applicable []

Professional:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| PTC | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dip. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PGDE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Masters | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not Applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Specify) | _____ |

SECTION 2: THE ROLE OF PARENTS TEACHERS

ASSOCIATIONS

Please answer the following questions by ticking the correct answer or writing the answer in the space provided.

2.1 How is your PTA informed on how to run the organisation?

(You may tick more than one)

Primary School Management Manual []

Headteacher []

PTA Manual []

Orientations []

Newsletters []

Experiences []

Other (Specify) _____

2.2 Which activities is your school involved in? Please list them:

2.3 Which activity takes most of your PTA time?

2.4 In the past year what has your PTA done for your school?

2.5 Are you free to make comments in PTA meetings?

Yes []

No []

2.6 Does your PTA manage to do activities on their action plans in time?

Yes []

No []

2.7 List sources of funding for your PTA:

2.8 Your PTA executive comprises of how many people?

Men []

Women []

2.9 Apart from emergency meetings, how often does your PTA hold meetings?

Once a year []

Twice a year []

Once a term []

Twice a term []

2.1.0 Does your PTA have a constitution?

Yes []

No []

Not sure []

2.1.1 Does your PTA have any sub-committees?

Yes []

No []

2.1.2 If yes list them

2.1.3 Which other roles do the PTAs play?

2.1.4 Do you think the roles are limited?

Yes []

No []

2.1.5 If yes which other roles would you like to see PTAs involved in?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Tell me a bit about your PTA. The size (In your opinion is it a good number or would like to see more people)
2. Who is in your PTA (background of parents). Are you happy with this composition? Who else would you like to see involved?
3. Do you think the PTA is important in school governance?
4. What do you expect from a well-functioning PTA?
5. What things do you think can discourage a PTA from functioning properly?
6. Are you satisfied with the way your PTA is performing? If yes/no why?
7. What do you think would be the best way for PTAs to know what they are supposed to do? (For example, workshop or newsletters)
8. PTAs comprise of head teachers, parents and teachers, who do you think should be more active and why?
9. What kind of PTA would you like your school to have in future?
10. Do you think the location of the school has impact on the type of PTA?
If yes/no why?
11. Do you think the school head can influence the way in which PTAs perform?

APPENDIX C

School of Graduate Studies
P/ Bag UB 00706
Gaborone

27 March 2003

The Principal Education Officer
South Region
P O Box 429
Kanye

Dear Sir

I am a Master of Education Student at the University of Botswana in the Faculty of Education. I am currently doing a study on " The Role of Parents' Teachers' Associations in Primary Schools.

I am collecting data for this study. I will be using a questionnaire to be completed by five (5) teachers and five (5) parents. For the interview, I will be using three (3) teachers and three (3) parents. Head teachers will be used as well.

I therefore, request for your permission to administer the instruments (questionnaires and interviews) at the following schools: Ipeleng Primary School in Lobatse; Segopotso Primary School in Kanye; Saint Martin's Primary School in Papatlo and Metlojane Primary School in Metlojane. Please be assured that the information collected will be treated with confidentiality.

Thanking you in advance

Yours truly
Student

Malebogo M Gaobepe

Supervisor

Dr F Moorad

APPENDIX D

School of Graduate Studies
P/ Bag UB 00706
Gaborone

27 March 2003

The Headmaster
Crescent School
P O Box 102
Lobatse

Dear Sir

I am a Master of Education Student at the University of Botswana in the Faculty of Education. I am currently doing a study on " The Role of Parents' Teachers' Associations in Primary Schools.

I am collecting data for this study. I will be using a questionnaire to be completed by five (5) teachers and five (5) parents. For the interview, I will be using three (3) teachers and three (3) parents. The head teacher will also be expected to participate.

I therefore, request for your permission to administer the instruments (questionnaires and interviews) in your school. Please be assured that the information collected will be treated with confidentiality.

Thanking you in advance

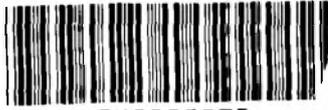
Yours truly
Student

Malebogo M Gaobepe

Supervisor

Dr F Moorad

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