

Empowerment and Effectiveness of School Committees in Tanzania

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Abbreviations

ACSEE: Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
BEDC: Basic Education Development Programme
CEO: Council Education Office
CSEE: Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
CSOs: Civil Society Organisations
D-by-D: Decentralization by Devolution
DEO: District Education Officer
EDSP: Education Sector Development Programme
FGD: Focus Group Discussion
HRM: Human Resource Management
LGA: Local Government Authority
LGRP: Local Government Reform Programme
MMC: Morogoro Municipal Council
MoEVT: Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
MPA: Master of Public Administration
MVDC: Mvomero District Council
NACTE: National Council for Technical Education
NECTA: National Examinations Council of Tanzania
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations
P/S: Primary School
PEDP: Primary Education Development Plan
PMO-RALG: Prime Minister Office, Regional Administration and Local Government
PO-PSM: President's Office, Public Service Management
PS: Permanent Secretary
PSLE: Primary School Leaving Examination
PTA: Parent Teachers Association
RAS: Regional Administrative Secretary
REO: Regional Education Officer
RS: Regional Secretariat
SGBs: School Governing Bodies
TQM: Total Quality Management
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
URT: United Republic of Tanzania
US: United States
VETA: Vocational Education and Training Authority
WEC: Ward Education Coordinator
WDC: Ward Development Committee

Definition of important contextual terms

- a) **Local Government Authorities (LGAs):** Are the urban and rural entities in the Local Government system meant for consolidating and giving more power to the people to competently participate in the planning and implementation of development programmes within their respective areas throughout the country; and in this work, LGAs include the District, Town, Municipal and City councils.
- b) **Pre-primary education:** Is an integral component of the formal primary education meant for children aged between five and six years to prepare them for the primary education.
- c) **Primary education:** Is a seven years compulsory education meant for all children from the age of seven, for the purpose of preparing them for the secondary education.
- d) **Secondary education:** Is the second level of education in the Tanzania's education system comprising of four years Ordinary level and two years Advanced level, meant to prepare students for working life and higher learning.
- e) **Tertiary education:** Is the third level of education or a post- secondary education meant for preparing individuals for specific work professions, usually offered by universities, higher learning and non-higher learning institutions; and Vocational Training Institutions.
- f) **School committee:** Is a group of elected members from the school community, with the responsibility of managing and overseeing the activities of a primary school and promoting participation of local community members in educational development at the local levels.
- g) **School community:** Is a specified group of people in a geographical location, with a vested interest on the day to day activities and performance of the school. Parents, local leaders and local NGOs/CBOs are examples of the stakeholders which constitute a school community.
- h) **The Ward:** Is an administrative area in both district and urban authorities responsible for coordinating LGAs' development programmes and service delivery activities.
- i) **The "Mtaa":** Is a sub-division of the ward in an urban authority, which is usually the smallest unit of the local government system in that area; with a fully elected leadership comprising of a chairperson, six members and an executive officer who is employed by the LGA.
- j) **The village:** Is a sub-division of the ward in a district authority (but not the smallest unit of the local government system in that area); comprised of a village assembly consisting of all persons aged 18 and above, village council comprising of a chairman or chairperson elected by the village assembly; and also village committees covering such matters as planning, finance, economic affairs, social services, security, forest protection, water resources.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to you my dear wife VICKY, for your unconditional love, support and inspiration during the entire period of my absence for studies in Norway. Thank you very much!

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Abstract

Empowerment of local communities and establishment of appropriate local level institutional frameworks have recently become important tenets for education management in the developing countries. Tanzania is also sailing on the same boat with other countries in that endeavour, where educational decision making powers have been conferred to the local levels. As of now, school committees have been empowered to take over the oversight and development roles in their respective schools. The study has been an attempt to assess the effectiveness of the primary school committees in Tanzania; focussing on two LGAs namely, the Morogoro Municipal Council (MMC) and Mvomero District Council (MVDC). Two primary schools (one from each LGA) were studied in detail to ascertain any significant differences between the urban and rural school committees with regard to capabilities and effectiveness in role accomplishment. The study approach was mainly qualitative, using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation and documentary analysis. The study involved 32 purposefully selected informants, comprising of Education Officers from the two LGAs, Village and 'Mtaa' Executive Officers, Head teachers, School Committee members, parents and pupils. Generally, it was found that majority (78%) of the two school committees members were primary school leavers or below, a phenomenon attributed to lack of interest of 'the educated' to become members of school committees. While there was trivial difference between the rural and urban school in terms of committee members' understanding of their responsibilities, the committee members from the two committees were adequately informed about their roles. In addition, there was high consistency between the level of education and role accomplishment capabilities. That is, members with fairly high educational qualifications indicated that they were competent enough to accomplish their roles; while those who had low educational qualifications declared that they were not competent enough to accomplish most of the skill-demanding roles like planning and budgeting. Inadequacy of financial resources was pervasive in either case, constraining successful implementation of school development plans. On these grounds, therefore, my conclusion is that not outstanding but impressive achievements have so far been accrued regarding the empowerment and effectiveness of the school committees. However, attainment of the real school committee empowerment and effectiveness calls for enduring and comprehensive capacity building efforts by multiple agents (the Government, NGOs, CSOs, Media, CBOs etc.) to develop knowledge, skills and financial resource bases at the local levels; and also create awareness to the people on the importance of their participation in educational decision making processes.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the key aspects (research problem, objectives and questions) from which the other chapters proceed. The chapter starts with an overview of the profile of Tanzania and the education system of the country to specify the type of school committees the study was focused to in the education system. After the overview, the chapter proceeds to highlighting the situation of educational management before and after the reforms and then to the statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study and research questions; rationale and scope of the study.

1.2 Tanzania: a brief country profile

1.2.1 Origin, location, area and political system

The official name for the country is *The United Republic of Tanzania (URT)*, which was found when the then Tanganyika united with the Zanzibar state (comprising of Unguja and Pemba isles) on 26th April 1964. Tanganyika got her independence on the 9th December 1961 and became a republic the following year. Zanzibar became independent on 10th December 1963, and the People's Republic of Zanzibar was established after the revolution of 12th January, 1964.

The United Republic of Tanzania is the largest of the east African countries, with a total area of 945,000km², where the Mainland covers 881,000 km², Zanzibar 2000 km² and the remaining 62,000 km² is covered by water. The country is located between latitudes 1⁰ and 12⁰ south of the Equator; and longitudes 29⁰ and 41⁰ east of the Greenwich. The country borders with Kenya and Uganda to the north; Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west; Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique to the south; and to the east is the Indian Ocean.

The country is a unitary republic, with 26 administrative regions known as '*mikoa*' in Swahili language. Out of these 26 regions, 21 are in the mainland and 5 are in Zanzibar. The regions

are divided into 130 districts, of which 120 are in the mainland and 10 in Zanzibar. The districts are further sub-divided into divisions, wards and villages/ 'mitaa' which are important administrative units in the Local Government Authorities.

1.2.2 Education and training system

Tanzania's formal education and training system takes the pattern of 2-7-4-2-3+. That is, two years of pre-primary education, seven years of primary education, four years of certificate of secondary education(junior/ordinary level), two years of senior/advanced level certificate of secondary education and a minimum of three years of tertiary education (URT 1995a.). This is to say in a nutshell that the education and training system has three levels, namely: Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Levels. Basic or first level education includes pre-primary, primary and non-formal adult education; whereas secondary or second level education has ordinary and advanced levels of secondary schooling. The tertiary or third level includes programmes and courses offered by non-higher and higher education institutions¹.

The pre-primary education is provided for children aged five to six years. Usually, there is no formal examination which promotes children from pre-primary to primary education. Instead, pre-primary education is formalised and integrated into the formal primary school system. Primary schooling in Tanzania is universal and compulsory for all children from the age of seven. The primary school cycle begins with standard one (STD I) on entry, and ends with standard seven (STD VII) in the final year. In standard IV, pupils sit for an intermediate national examination meant for assessing their performance. This examination however, does not stop a pupil from being promoted to standard V. Instead, pupils who perform badly in this examination are recommended for remedial teaching to fill in the identified gaps. At the end of standard seven, pupils sit for the National Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). This examination acts as a selection examination for entry to secondary education. A Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) is awarded to all children who complete standard seven (URT 2006). Those who qualify for secondary education are admitted and taught for four years, with an intermediate national examination at the end of Form II with similar objectives to that of standard IV in the primary education. At the end of Form IV, students sit for the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) which upon successful completion, a

¹ <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/educationf.html> (accessed on 14th March 2010)

national certificate is awarded. Candidates who satisfy set performance criteria are selected for the Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education (ACSE), which starts at Form Five and culminates at Form Six where students sit for the Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (ACSEE). Upon successful completion, they are awarded an advanced national certificate of secondary education. Students who meet set criteria higher education admission criteria are admitted to tertiary education that lasts for three or more years depending on the field of study.

1.2.3 Complementarities between formal and non-formal education

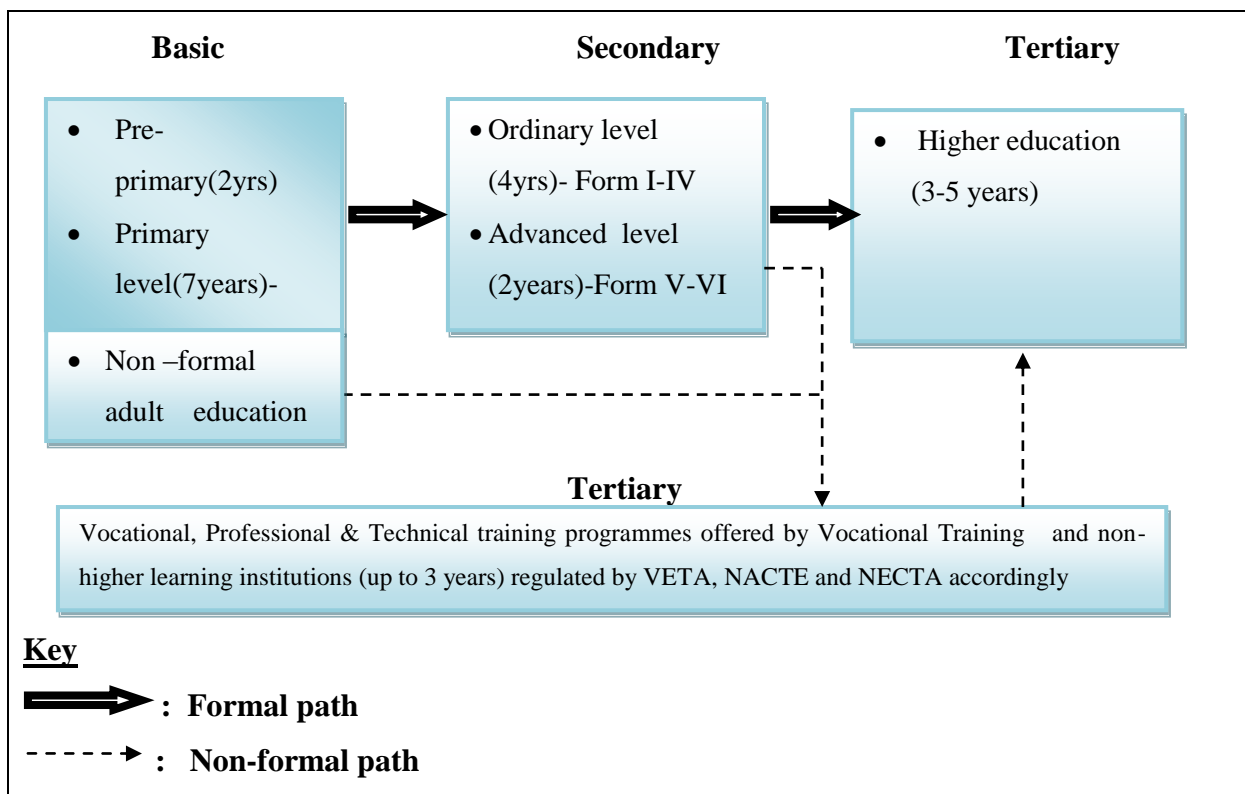
The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is committed to promoting and strengthening linkages between formal and non-formal education and training. Non-formal education can be generalised as an out of school education as distinguished from formal education which is mainly in school education. However, complementarities do exist between the two forms of education and training in that one may include at certain stages some aspects of the other. Many Ministries are responsible for providing education and training in Tanzania. The key ministries involved in formal and non-formal education and training are the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Prime Minister's Office (Regional Administration and Local Government). All other ministries are responsible for sector-specific professional education and training in such fields as Agriculture and Natural Resources, Business and Management, Engineering and Other Sciences, Health and Allied Sciences, Planning and Welfare. In addition, formal and non-formal education and training are provided by organized communities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and individuals².

The inter-linkage between the two forms exists in various ways. While most of the professional training institutions depend largely on the outputs from the formal secondary education for suitable candidates for admission; the higher learning institutions and universities (formal education system) obtain a good number of qualified candidates for admission (on equivalent qualification basis) from the professional training institutes and colleges (the what I call 'non-formal path') as illustrated in figure 1 below. An important benefit that is enjoyed by many Tanzanians from the co-existence of the formal and non-

² http://www.tcu.go.tz/documents/NQF_Report_Sept%2009.pdf (accessed on 20th March, 2010)

formal education systems is that on the course of career development, one can enter and exit either of the two systems at any time given that s/he satisfies certain set criteria. For example, a person who fails to join Advanced Secondary Education as a result of failing to meet the minimum qualification can go for a professional training in a college and obtain equivalent qualifications for a higher learning /university education. If this provision was not there, the person would have been denied the opportunity for higher learning.

Figure 1: The education system in Tanzania: Formal and non-formal paths



Source: Author's conception from the review of the Tanzania's education system, March 2010

1.2.4 Medium of instruction

Tanzania's education system follows a bilingual policy, which requires children to learn both Kiswahili and English languages. English is essential, as it is the language which links Tanzania and the rest of the world through technology, commerce and also administration. The learning of the Kiswahili enables Tanzanian students to keep in touch with their cultural values and heritage. On the basis of these grounds, English is taught as a compulsory subject in the primary education whereas at post primary education it is the medium of instruction. With regard to Kiswahili, it is the medium of instruction at the basic level education. In

addition, it is a compulsory subject at ordinary level secondary education and as optional subject at the advanced level secondary and tertiary education.

1.3 Background to the study

1.3.1 A Scenario of educational management before the reforms

Management of primary education in Tanzania had for a long time been centrally done through the ministry of education. For example, procurement and supply of school materials was done by the ministry and through the REOs and DEOs, schools were supplied with these materials. Taking the scenario of centrally controlled procurement and supply of school materials as our point of departure, we get an impression that during those days, things were planned centrally and implementation was at large coordinated at the ministerial level. The centrally procured school supplies were then distributed to individual schools countrywide by the District Education Officers (DEOs) under the coordination of REOs. The mode of distribution to individual schools was through 'door-delivery' if funds were available to cover transport costs (Mushi 2006). It was usual to see pupils carrying school supplies such as exercise books, text books, boxes of chalk and other items from the district offices to their respective schools because the district education offices had no funds to cover transportation costs. With this bureaucratic system, there were lot of delays in distribution of the school materials to their respective destinations, pupils missing classes to ferry school materials from the district headquarters and so on. In addition, the exclusion of people at the grassroots made them feel that they were not part of the development programmes. In other words, it resulted in lack of 'ownership' and commitment because the plans were imposed to the people rather than being developed from them through participatory planning. The government was seen as the only actor responsible to 'bring' education, health care services, water and other essential services to the citizens as 'recipients' and not as 'participants'/ actors in the process. This consequently led to excessive workload and financial burden to the government. Yet, the availability and quality of the essential social services to the public persistently deteriorated as the time went by due to the amplified burden that the government had to shoulder. It is due to the deterioration of service provision sectors that drove the governments of the developing countries in the 1980s to embark on efforts to transform their governance processes into more participatory and inclusive forms as an attempt to increase resource availability and promote ownership among citizens at the grassroots level. Through the scenario of procurement and

supply of school materials among many others, we can describe the management and administration of education system as being highly centralized and bureaucratic. Individual schools were left with little choice and flexibility over their local needs and preferences, which signifies lack of decision making power at the grassroots level. This was happening while the government was implementing the decentralization by de-concentration policy that was formulated in 1972 and abolished the weak local government system that was established after independence of the then Tanganyika in 1961. The policy was meant to exercise a centralised control of government decision making authority through the administrative regions. Therefore as a result of the decentralization programme, the management of primary education was brought down to the districts under the coordination of the Regional Education Offices. However, this approach did not bring about enough control powers to the schools and the people at the local level as things were still centrally controlled at the district level and pronounced inefficiencies were encountered throughout the country. Following this malaise, the local government system was re-introduced in Tanzania mainland in 1984 (Kabagire 2006).

1.3.2 The comprehensive Education Sector Reforms

The education sector reforms began in 1995 with the overall objective of introducing education reforms together with other policy initiatives is to ensure growing and equitable access to high quality formal education and adult literacy through facilities expansion, efficiency gains and quality improvement, accompanied with efficient supply and use of resources. In early 1997, the Tanzania Government developed a Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP) to guide development in basic education provision. In response to the local Government reforms agenda, an action plan for transferring responsibility to local school committees (for primary schools) and boards (for secondary education) was prepared pursuant to the Government Reform Policy Paper of 1998.

In 2000, the government of Tanzania undertook an overall Education Sector Review Programme, with the major focus centred on primary education (which was the concern of my study). However, it is not my intention to dwell much on the scope of the study here, as more of this are provided under item 1.7 of this thesis book. The reforms came up with the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) in 2002, aimed at improving education quality, expanding school access, and increasing school completion at the primary level. This

involved measures to increase resource availability and improve resource allocation and utilization; to improve educational inputs; and to strengthen institutional arrangements for effective primary education delivery by particularly empowering the stakeholders at the grassroots (URT 2001). However, while there is high consensus on the fact that citizen empowerment in the management of social services in particular, education has a significant potential for enhancing accountability and local participation in public sector service delivery, it is not quite clear about the degree to which it contributes to the effectiveness of the institutions at the grassroots level (the school committees in this case).

1.3.3 What is the current situation?

Following the recent government reforms, management and co-ordination of the Primary Education Sub-sector in Tanzania has been vested to two ministries, namely the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and the Prime Minister's Office- Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RLG); where the delivery of education is the key responsibility of the local government authorities. Under this framework, six (6) major institutions (stakeholders) at different levels are involved with their roles clearly outlined in the Basic Education Master Plan (URT 2001) as follows:-

a) Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government

Under the Decentralisation by devolution policy, the PMO-RALG becomes in-charge of delivering basic services such as primary education and health care ((URT 1998). Decentralisation by devolution entails transfer of powers, functional responsibilities and resources from the Central Government to Local Government Authorities. With respect to the primary education, box 1 bellow provides a summary of the key roles that fall under the PMO-RALG as provided by the PEDP document (URT 2001).

Box 1: PMO-RALG's key roles

1. To guide and oversee the delivery of primary education by Local Government Authorities (LGAs);
2. To provide strategic leadership and technical support to council education offices;
3. To support and build the capacity of Regional Secretariat (RS) and Local Government Authorities;
4. To ensure that councils prepare consolidated education development plans that conform to government development goals, education policy and assurance standards;
5. To consolidate council plans and budgets into National Plans of action which will provide the basis for the approval and transfer of school development funds;
6. To collaborate with the MoEVT in order to monitor, review and evaluate education development programme outputs and outcomes;
7. To communicate education information to all system levels and interested stakeholders;
8. To produce regular financial and physical report to the Ministry of Finance;
9. To collaborate with other agencies in the education sector in planning and specifying national service delivery standards for primary education; and
10. To technically support Local Government Authorities in planning and implementing primary education programmes in accordance with the national service delivery standards

b) Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT)

MoEVT is the parent ministry for education in Tanzania. Its core responsibilities under the D-by-D system are mainly confined to policy and curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation of education outcomes as summarised under box 2 below.

Box 2: MoEVT's key roles

1. To set sound policies promoting quality education for all;
2. To monitor, review and evaluate progress, outcomes and the impact of the PEDP for quality assurance;
3. To prepare, in a collaborative manner, detailed plans for PEDP implementation;
4. To support and build the technical capacity of Local Government Authority education offices;
5. To carry out school inspection and monitor delivery of services. Promote compliance with curriculum and ensuring that school committees govern and manage schools in a democratic manner; and
6. To evaluate the implementation of the PEDP and provide feedback to LGA, PMO-RLG, development partners, NGOs and community based organizations.

c) Regional Secretariats

The Regional Secretariats (RSs) are advisory bodies under the Regional Commissioners' Offices responsible for providing technical support and advisory services to the District to enable it to implement the development activities of different sectors. The responsibilities of the Regional Education Office in respect of the primary education are summarized in box 3 below.

Box 3: Key responsibilities of the REO in the Regional Secretariat

1. To carry out periodic internal audits in the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and schools to ensure that performance targets are being met;
2. To guide, co-ordinate and monitor the delivery of primary education; and
3. To provide technical support to council education offices.

d) Local Government Authorities (LGAs)

These involve both District (District councils) and Urban (Town, Municipal and City Councils) authorities. The LGAs assume full responsibility for the management and delivery of all primary school services within its boundaries. Council level planning, management and monitoring capacity has been strengthened to enhance autonomy at the local level (URT 2001). The major roles with regard to education are summarised in Box 4 below.

Box 4: Important roles of the LGAs with regard to the Education Sector

1. To prepare in a participatory and inclusive way development plans for primary schools;
2. To promote meaningful participation of communities and other stakeholders in planning and implementation;
3. To account for PEDP funds by the school committees;
4. To produce and submit regular financial reports to the PMO-RLG and MOEVT through the Regional Secretariats;
5. To provide technical support to school and village committees especially in procurement, funds utilisation and reporting; and
6. To regularly monitor, review and evaluate the progress of education development activities at school level.

e) The Ward

Ward is an administrative area for supervising implementation of LGAs' development programmes. It is responsible for coordinating service delivery activities in the Villages and Neighborhoods (Mitaa) in their areas of jurisdiction. The Minister responsible for Local Government has been mandated to subdivide the area of every District, Town, Municipality or City Council into Wards, which are also the electoral areas for the election of Councilors representing the Ward in the LGA Council. There is no elected Council at the Ward level. Instead, each Ward has a Ward Development Committee, which comprises of the Councilor representing the Ward in the District or Urban Council (Chairperson of the WDC); Chairpersons of all villages/neighbourhoods within the ward; women councilors who occupy special seats reserved for women in the relevant District or Urban Authority resident in the Ward; and invited members who must include persons from Non-Government Organizations and other Civic Groups involved in the promotion and development of the Ward (but without

voting rights). The responsibilities of the ward (under the coordination of the WEC) with regard to primary education are summarised in Box 5 below.

Box 5: A summary of the Ward's responsibilities under the coordination of WEC

1. To share information with and facilitate the participation of all parents and the community at large;
2. To help identify priorities for school development plans and to assist in the planning process;
3. To ensure that the implementation of PEDP funded activities is transparent; and
4. To co-ordinate the formulation of Whole School Development Plans.

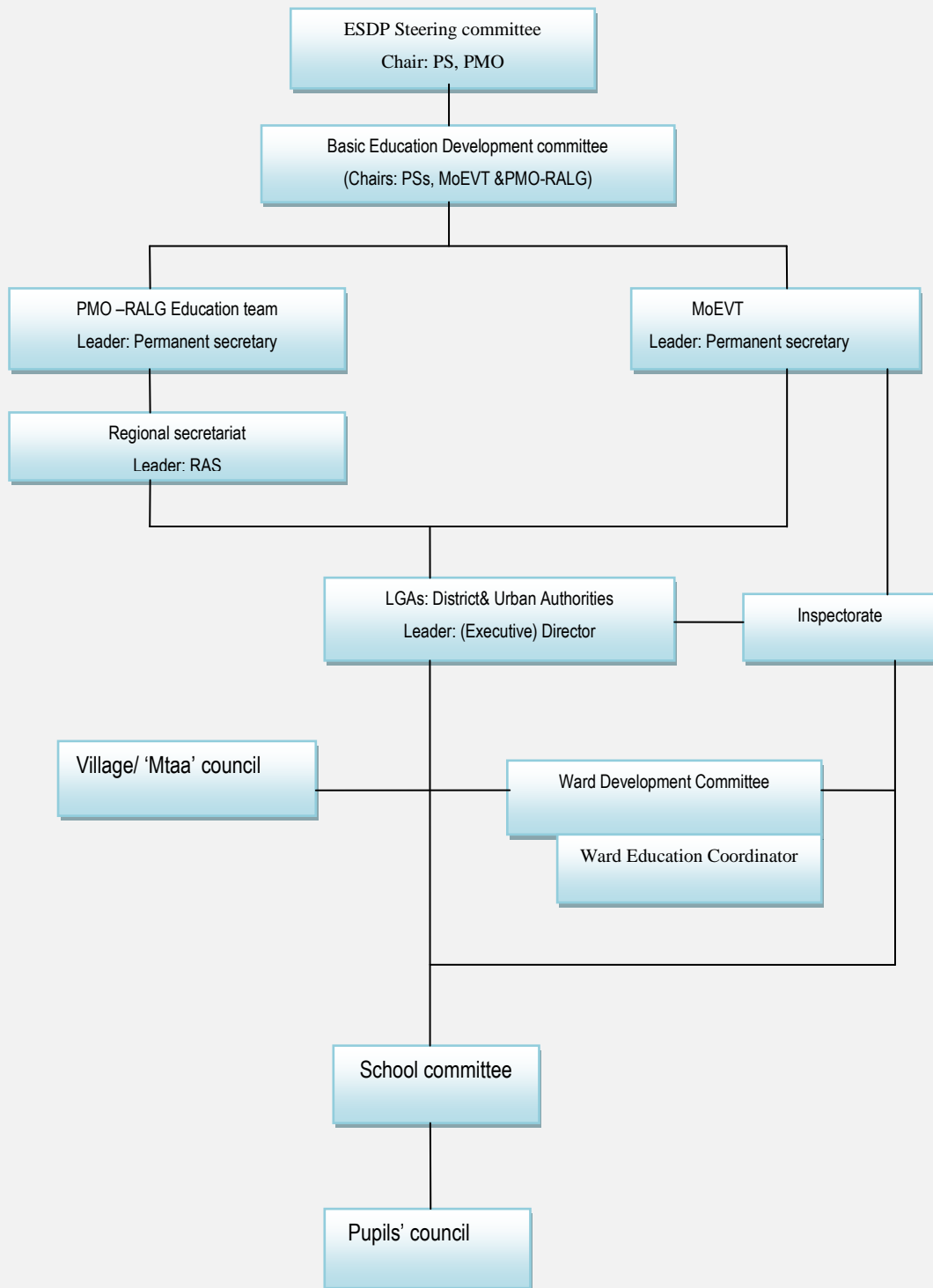
f) The Village/ 'Mtaa'

The Government strives to enhance empowerment by promoting democratic participation and accountability at all levels. This vision demands increased involvement of men, women and children from all communities. Partnerships between teachers, schools and communities have been developed in order to strengthen school management. At the school level, the school committee is accountable to the Village Council in District Authorities and to 'Mtaa' Committee in Urban Authorities. Since the launching of PEDP in 2002, more responsibilities and powers have been conferred the school committees to enable them pursue local level initiatives in the management and development of their respective schools (Box 6 below summarises the school committee's key roles) as stipulated by the Primary Education Development Project (2002- 2006) document (URT 2001).

Box 6: Specific responsibilities of the school committee

1. To mobilize voluntary community contributions to projects, in the form of labour, money or building materials such as timber, sand and others;
2. To facilitate planning, budgeting and implementation at the school level;
3. To provide information to the community on implementation and, indicating progress achieved, problems encountered and funds used;
4. To manage funds received for project implementation while ensuring maximum transparency and accountability.
5. To prepare and submit regular project progress report to the LGAs through Council Education Officers.
6. To prepare and submit accurate and timely progress and financial reports to the village council, 'mtaa' committee and LGA
7. To effectively communicate educational information to all parents, pupils, community stakeholders, to the village, ward/ 'mtaa', &LGA; and
8. General oversight of day-to-day affairs of the school.

Figure 2: The institutional framework for management of primary education in Tanzania³



³ Source: Modified from PEDP document (URT, 2001)

1.4 Statement of the problem

Like many other developing countries Tanzania has recently embarked on major reforms in the education sector to enable local communities play an active role in managing their schools. To achieve this goal, the government came up with the policy of decentralisation by devolution enshrined in the general government decentralization framework called *the Local Government Reform Program (LGRP)*. Under this framework, various service provision responsibilities have been transferred to the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) through the Prime Minister's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG). These reforms envisage mainstreaming local communities into the management of education that had for many years been centralised. Under the decentralisation by devolution policy, school committees have accordingly been empowered to manage the primary schools in their respective local (village& neighbourhood) levels.

The government's efforts to confer educational decision making powers to the local communities through their school committees are meant to enhance local ownership, democracy, inclusiveness, accountability and hence, effectiveness. Effective local level empowerment through decentralisation calls for prior consideration of availability of competent people in terms of capabilities to manage the decentralised functions. The key capabilities that need to be taken into consideration include: relevant skills and knowledge on decision-making, monitoring and evaluation, planning and implementation (Naidoo and Kong 2003). These Management capabilities are vital particularly at the school level where the actors there are responsible for translating decentralisation policies into concrete actions through preparation and implementation of school development plans. These skills are usually not naturally acquired by the local communities without proper strategies to enhance them. Rather, they are acquired and maintained through regular training and practicing. For example, members of the school committees need to be constantly trained to enable them acquire some basic school management skills (Baganda 2008).

However, while there is high consensus on the assumption that conferring decision making powers to the local communities to manage their local schools would empower them and bring about effectiveness as a result of enhanced accountability and local participation, there have been controversial perspectives with regard to the extent to which school committees are effective institutions for taking on the devolved responsibilities and resources. While the

government is in favour of the whole idea of entrusting the management of the schools to the school committees elected by respective local communities, concerns have been raised that not adequate prior preparations were done in terms of awareness creation to the general public, knowledge and skill development to the school committees; and changing the mindsets of the people in the local communities from *passive recipient* to *active participant* orientations. The basis of the concerns is that the school committees are not adequately empowered to render them effective in managing the schools. It was on the basis of these differing arguments I decided to carry out a study to explore on the functioning of these institutions and whether they are empowered and effective.

1.5 Purpose and objectives of the study

The study intended to examine empowerment and effectiveness of school committees in Morogoro Municipality and Mvomero District Council. More specifically, the study aimed at accomplishing the following objectives:-

- a) To examine the extent to which school committees are informed of their roles, and the mechanisms through which information exchange takes place between the school committees and the local communities in urban and rural schools;
- b) To examine the inclusiveness of school committees in terms of various community groups and gender;
- c) To examine the capabilities of the school committees in terms of financial resources, education and skills;
- d) To assess the willingness of individual school committee members to commit their energies and time towards promotion of education at their localities;
- e) To examine the extent to which school committees have autonomy to make and implement decisions at the local level in urban and rural settings; and
- f) To assess the effectiveness of school committees in terms of role accomplishment, capturing the differences (if any) between the urban and rural school committees in that aspect.

1.6 Research questions

The study was meant to answer one major question: “Are the school committees effective and empowered? More precisely, the concern of the study was to answer the following operational research questions:-

- a) How do school committees receive and disseminate information/feedback to the school communities and other stakeholders in the district and urban authorities in Tanzania?

This question was meant to address the first independent variable (Access to information). It explored how school committees share information with other education stakeholders, a crucial tenet for promoting effectiveness in role accomplishment.

Hypothesis The higher the access to information by the school committees the higher is their empowerment and effectiveness”.

- b) To what extent the school committees are inclusive of the various groups in the local communities?

This question was asked in relation to the second independent variable in the analytical framework. The concern was to examine the composition of school committees with attention inclusion of the various categories of people in the respective local communities (parents, pupils, the local elite etc.). The composition of school committees in terms of gender representation (men vs. women) was also the major concern of this research question.

Hypothesis: “A balanced inclusiveness of the various categories of local community members in the school committees promotes their empowerment and effectiveness”.

This hypothesis is based on the fact that committees elected through inclusion of the various segments of the community members in question gets more legitimacy and cooperation from the community as a whole when it comes to planning and implementation of school development programmes. Hence, such committee is likely to be more effective in accomplishing its roles.

- c) What are the capabilities of the school committees in terms of financial resources, knowledge and skills of the individual members? Are there any differences between school committees in the rural and urban committees in terms of capabilities?

This question addresses the third independent variable in the analytical framework (i.e. Resources). The concern is to assess the educational qualifications and skills possessed by the individual school committee members in MVDC and MMC.

Hypothesis: “The higher the capabilities of the school committees in terms of financial resources, skills and knowledge of individual members, the higher the empowerment and effectiveness”.

- d) What is the level of commitment/willingness of individual members of school committees to work as representatives of the school communities in the management of schools at the local levels?

This question was meant for addressing the fourth independent variable (Agency), which was done by assessing the willingness /motivation of the school committees to assume their roles. Individual school committee members were asked to express their levels of enthusiasm to work towards achieving the goals of their school committees.

Hypothesis: ‘High level of agency of individual school committee members, will increase their empowerment and hence effectiveness of the committee’.

- e) To what extent school committees have autonomy when it comes to decision making and implementation at the local level in the rural and urban authorities?

This question is meant for operationalising the fifth independent variable in the analytical framework (Autonomy). This question seeks to find out the extent to which the school committees can autonomously make and implement decisions without external interference. Effectiveness in schools improves with increased autonomy of primary schools where more autonomous schools perform significantly higher than the less autonomous schools(Eskeland 2002).

Hypothesis: ‘The higher the level of autonomy, the higher the empowerment and effectiveness of the school committees’.

- f) To what extent school committees are effective in accomplishing their roles?

This question is meant for addressing the dependent variable (Effectiveness of the school committees) .To answer the question effectively, two more sub-questions are posed, and these are as follows: Are there any differences between rural and urban school committees with regard to effectiveness? What lessons can be learned from the study?

Hypothesis: - The more empowered the school committees are, the more effective they will be.

On the basis of context variation, it was assumed that urban school committees are more empowered and hence, more effective than the rural school committees. Empowerment here entails the extent to which they have access to information, the level of local community members' inclusion, the extent to which there is willingness of the individual school committee members to deliver what they are expected, the level of skills and knowledge possessed by individual members, availability of resources and the level of autonomy of the school committees have a lot to do in determining the effectiveness of the committees.

1.7 Significance/rationale of the study

The fact that the Education sector in Tanzania has undergone fundamental transformations in line with the major administrative, economic and political reforms that took place in the country in the last one and a half decade; and that not sufficient studies have been carried out so far to examine the impact of the reforms at the grassroots level, I was motivated to carry out the study as my contribution towards addressing the gap. Of course, I do appreciate that some of the recent academic studies in Tanzania (Ewald 2002; Fundi 2002; Mrutu 2007; Baganda 2008) have attempted to focus on the impact of the educational reforms at the local levels. However, some of the key evaluation studies (Galabawa 2001; URT 2004; Kabagire 2006; URT 2007) focused on the overall/aggregate impact of the reforms at the macro (national) level, as opposed to the grassroots levels where the impact can be felt more realistically. In the academic sphere, the experiences drawn from my study might contribute to knowledge how local communities in Tanzania manage their schools, the variations between rural and urban school committees in terms of competences, autonomy and access to information and resources. The study can in a way contribute to the existing knowledge about citizen empowerment and educational management; and can stimulate further studies in this area to see whether experiences gained from the two LGAs diverge or converge to the practices in other local authorities in Tanzania and elsewhere.

1.8 Scope of the study

The study focused on the effectiveness of the primary school committees in Tanzania, particularly in Mvomero District Council and Morogoro Municipality. The study was narrowed down to comparing the two school committees in terms of access to information, autonomy, knowledge and skill capability profiles for executing their functions. The boundaries of the study were within the management roles of the school committees. Assessing the effectiveness of school committees based on their capacity to accomplish the

managerial responsibilities assigned to them, e.g. planning, budgeting, pupils' discipline control and day to day oversight of the school functions appeared to be more practical because of their relatively easy measurability as compared to the other variables like those related to curriculum success or failure and pupils' performance. Outcomes such as the overall academic excellence of the schools and performance of individual pupils in the local and national examinations were not the concern of this study on the premise that such outcomes may not easily be assessed as they are influenced by multiple factors and actors besides the school committees. Such factors may include among others, availability and quality of teachers, suitability of the teaching-learning environment and motivation of teachers and pupils. It is therefore on these grounds I decided to stay within those boundaries.

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

This work is organized in six chapters. The first chapter covers the Introduction, which addresses the fundamental aspects of the study (Background and Statement of the problem, Research objectives and Research questions). The chapter also addresses the Significance, Limitations and Scope of the study. The second chapter articulates the theoretical framework by indicating the theory that guided the study, and review of literature on empowerment and participation; providing a link to the research problem. The chapter indicates the relationship between the dependent and independent variables; and how each is measured. The third chapter examines educational decentralisation in Tanzania as an empowering process meant to bring about effectiveness in education service delivery. The fourth chapter is devoted to Research Methodology. Various methodological aspects employed in the study have been highlighted. These include the research approach; selection of the study sample; data collection methods and analysis techniques; and ethical considerations. The fifth chapter presents the study findings with respect the research objectives and questions stated in the first chapter. Discussion of the findings is based mainly on qualitative approach, trying to link the data to theory and empirical evidence from related studies. The sixth chapter gives a recap of the major findings in relation to the research problem. It provides the conclusion and important lessons from the school committees in the two local authorities in Tanzania. The chapter also links the study findings to prior researches and the empowerment theory, and outline some theoretical implications and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

My concern in this chapter is to elucidate what empowerment entails. In the course of doing so, I start by introducing the concept of empowerment- its origin, meaning and scope and then proceed to analysing the empowerment construct in the dimensions of processes and outcomes; the ultimate destination being to establish a theoretical context /frame for the study. The main argument raised in this chapter is that the concept of empowerment builds on the concepts of empowering processes and empowerment outcomes; where the processes are analysed as specific actions, activities and structures (independent variables) that ultimately results in ‘the state of being empowered’ (empowerment) as an outcome (dependent variable) as depicted in figure3. However, my concern in this study is not to dwell much on the relationship between the empowering processes and their outcomes as illustrated in figure 3. Rather, I attempt to go further to linking the manifestations of empowerment (i.e. the outcomes of the empowering processes to effectiveness of the empowered (figure 4). I discuss the concept of decentralisation as an empowering process (entailing actions, activities and structures); and through the Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation (figure 5) and the continuum of decentralisation (table 2), I describe empowerment as an outcome of empowering processes.

2.2 The concept of empowerment

2.2.1 Origin

Is empowerment a new concept? Probably this might be one of the fundamental questions one might ask. However, the question might not have a straight answer. There is a tendency of considering empowerment as a new concept, partly because of the importance currently attached to it on the agenda for development than it was ever before. In addition, the inclination of some scholars with regard to how they write about empowerment makes it appear as a new concept. As Wilkinson puts it, “...many accounts write as if empowerment is entirely a product of the times and do not see it in a historical context” (Wilkinson 1998:44). In spite of the emphasis that is currently accorded to the importance of promoting empowerment in the planning and implementation of development interventions, it should not be regarded as a new concept. It is a concept that has been there for quite many years.

The concept of empowerment became more popular in the 1990s as an attempt to replace the concept of “*participation*”, which gradually lost its popularity since the 1980s due to its lack of authenticity. Unauthentic participation is a situation where people could “*participate*” in a project without having the power to decide on the critical issues related to the project (Gergis 1999 :3). Therefore, Empowerment attempts to foster meaningful or authentic participation, where decisions are made by people who have to bear the consequences of the same (McArdle 1989). The implication here is that “*it is not the achievement of goals, as much as the process of deciding that is important*” (Gergis 1999 :6). This is to say, empowerment goes a step further than participation because former is wider in scope than the latter, encompassing both the weak and strong forms of participation. People can participate in a given process or activity while they do not actually have the power to make critical decisions pertaining to the activity or process they are involved in. Empowerment is concerned with the strong forms of participation, trying to see into it that people are fully involved at every stage of development intervention; namely, identification of need, identification of options/strategies, decision making/choice of action, mobilization of resources and action (Onyx and Benton 1996).

However, empowerment and participation are very much linked. In a sense, the two concepts in development discourse are inseparable. That is, empowering people means promoting opportunities for their participation. On the other hand, for participation to be meaningful, people must be empowered to enable them contribute fully in the development process(Sidorenko 2007). Empowerment and participation of citizens can be exercised in the economic, social, or political spheres; at the individual, family, community, national and global levels. Clearly, people are empowered through participation in decision making.

2.2.2The roots of empowerment

Some scholars argue that empowerment theory is a pedigree of Paulo Freire’s educational theory, but that might not suffice. Freire’s *critical pedagogy theory* (Freire 1970) has been explained as an attempt towards “*empowering the oppressed by entering into the experience of oppression and assisting the oppressed in transforming oppressors through reflection and action.*” (Demmitt and Oldenski 1999:234). The theory contributed to the transformation of the way educators viewed the poor and marginalized. Building on the work of Freire, empowerment can be analyzed in three levels: the personal (Zimmerman 1995), the

community or organizational (Peterson *et.al* 2002), and the socio-political (Moreau 1990). In the perspective of work organizations, the concept of empowerment has also been associated with the popular management movements of the times such as HRM and TQM of the 1980s as an attempt to address the chronic problems of Taylorism and bureaucracy which dominated the workplaces (Wilkinson 1998). Although the scientific management theory by F.W. Taylor⁴ was very successful in terms of increasing productivity, workers' dissatisfaction was immense as reflected in high labour turnover, absenteeism and conflict. It is the work of Elton Mayo⁵ and the Human relations school that started to advocate on involvement of workers in organization decision making for promoting business success and employees' motivation (Rose 1978). From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the concept of empowerment is a result of contributions from various disciplines, making it a multidisciplinary concept that no single discipline can claim to 'own' it.

2.2.3 Meaning of empowerment

Empowerment takes different meanings across different socio- economic, cultural and political contexts, usually translated according to local value and belief systems (Bailey 1992). If we explore all local terms associated with empowerment around the world, we will come up with a number of conceptions of empowerment relating to economic, social, political and cultural interpretations. Despite the diversities in the contextual viewpoints, there are some basic commonalities in the way various scholars understand empowerment.

Empowerment can be defined as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives (Narayan 2002). This is an institutional approach to empowerment of men and women through removal of formal and informal institutional barriers that prevent them from taking action to improve their wellbeing both individually and collectively. It is a

⁴ F.W. Taylor is respected as 'the father of scientific management'. Under his management system, factories are managed through scientific methods rather than by use of the empirical 'rule of thumb' so widely prevalent in the days of the late nineteenth century when F. W. Taylor devised his system and published 'Scientific Management' in 1911.

⁵ Elton Mayo conducted the popular Hawthorne experiments (1927 -1932) where he found that work satisfaction is enhanced, to a large extent, by the informal social relationships between workers in a group and upon the social relationships between workers and their bosses. The effects of the group should never be underestimated.

transformational process through which individuals and groups are enabled to take greater control of their lives and the environment. Empowerment envisages enabling individuals to pursue their goals successfully through positive integration at the micro (individual) and macro (community) levels. Empowerment is not a one-time event. Rather, it is a continuous process that happens over time. It has also more intrinsic than extrinsic value; though its instrumental values cannot be taken for granted (Rappaport 1981). In other words, one should not wait for others to empower them. Empowerment comes from oneself and others only support the person's empowerment. Rappaport thus views empowerment as a construct that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems, and proactive behaviours to social policy and change.

Empowerment can also be defined as "*the expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was denied to them*" (Kabeer 2001:19). In Kabeer's framework, empowerment is analysed under three major dimensions that define the individual's capacity to exercise strategic life choices namely; access to resources, agency and outcomes.

Empowerment can also be defined as "*the process of transforming existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power*" (Pritchett and Woolcock 2004:12). This definition takes the human development approach, which views empowerment as an attempt to create an environment where people can develop their full potentials, making them creative in improving their lives according to their needs and interests and enabling them to participate actively in the development process.

Other scholars explore empowerment at different levels: personal (psychological), implying a sense of self confidence and capacity; relational, implying ability to negotiate and influence relationship and decisions (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995; Rowlands 1997; Zimmerman and Warschausky 1998), which implies collective action to improve the quality of life in the community and to the connections among community organizations.

2.2.4 Empowerment, power and freedom of choice

Empowerment can be conceptualised from the perspective of ‘power’. Kabeer⁶ argues that one of the approaches through which power can be conceptualized is in terms of “*the ability to make choices*” (Kabeer 2001:18). Analogously, disempowerment can be conceptualized in terms of ‘choice denial’. In this view, denying people the opportunity to make their own choices amounts to disempowerment. Empowerment is thus an attempt to enhance poor people’s freedom of choice and action by removing formal and informal institutional barriers⁷ that inhibit them from taking action towards improving their wellbeing both individually and collectively (Narayan 2002). By carefully examining the logic of Kabeer’s argument, empowerment and disempowerment can be viewed as coexisting constructs. That is, whenever there are empowerment efforts, there must have been a perceived state of disempowerment that necessitates embarking on empowerment interventions.

With regard to enhancing one’s freedom of choice, there must be options. That is, their ability to have chosen otherwise. It is from this fact poverty is often associated with disempowerment because in such a situation, one may have no alternatives for making choice. This is so because in a situation where people have insufficient means to meet their fundamental needs, their ability to exercise meaningful choice is automatically ruled out. It is also important to note that choices are not equally relevant to the definition of power. Some choices are more important than others. These are the ones referred to as “*strategic life choices*”⁸ which help to frame other, “*less consequential choices*”⁹ which may be important for the quality of one’s life but do not constitute its defining parameters (Kabeer 2001:19).

2.3 Empowering processes and outcomes

The empowerment construct is essentially built on empowering processes and empowered outcomes (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995). This implies that some specific actions, activities and structures may serve as empowering mechanisms/processes that lead to the state of being

⁶ Researcher and women empowerment analyst from the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, United Kingdom

⁷ Formal institutions include: state, markets, civil society and international agencies whereas the informal ones include: norms of social exclusion, exploitative relations and corruption.

⁸Strategic choices are critical for the people to live the life they want. They include for example, choice of livelihood, where to live, whether to marry, who to marry, whether to have children, how many children to have, freedom of movement, and choice of friends... They are also referred to as ‘the first order choices.’

⁹ Also called ‘second-order choices’

empowered. The processes (which in a causal relationship constitute the independent variable) and outcomes (the dependent variable), may not be universal in their outward manifestations. Rather, they vary with contexts and/or populations (Rappaport 1984). Nevertheless, It is important to distinguish empowering processes from outcomes in order to establish what empowerment theory actually entails. This can simply be done by outlining some specific elements that best explain each of the two categories of variables.

2.3.1 Empowering processes

At the level of an individual, participation in community organisations and/or groups can be regarded as one of the empowering processes. To put this in the perspective of the study that resulted to this thesis, individual community members' participation in school committees and/or school development activities is an appropriate example of empowering processes. At the organisational level, collective decision making and mutual leadership might be good examples of empowering processes. Again in the perspective of my study, collective decision making and leadership at the local levels by the school committees are examples of empowering processes. At the community level, collective access to government and community resources and services are illustrating examples of empowering processes. In relation to this study, empowering processes can be explained through community's access to education, information and government funding/subsidy to support education development at the local levels.

2.3.2 The outcomes (consequences of empowering processes)

Empowerment outcomes are depictions of the consequences of empowering processes. At the level of an individual, empowerment outcomes or 'empowered outcomes' may include among others; perceived control and resource mobilisation skills. Putting this in the perspective of my study, the outcomes/consequences of empowering processes can be seen through individual community members' feeling of having control and competence over school activities and resources, the feeling of ownership of the school development projects and so on. At the organisational level, development of organisation networks, policy leverage can serve as good examples of empowerment outcomes; while at the community level the outcomes of empowering processes or simply 'empowerment outcomes' include among

others, existence of pluralism/democracy, organisational coalitions and accessible community resources (Zimmerman and Warschausky 1998).

Table 1: Individual, organisational and community empowerment analysis

| Level of analysis | Processes (examples) | Outcomes (examples) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supporting/helping/encouraging others; -Receiving support/help/encouragement from others; -Mutual support/help/encouragement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sense of control/self confidence; -Critical awareness; -Participation. |
| Organisational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Providing opportunities for members to develop and practice skills (i.e. capacity building); -Putting in place participatory decision making structures/ frameworks; -Sharing responsibilities and leadership. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Effectiveness in resource management; -Linkages with other organisations; -Influence of policy making/creation of alternative service. |
| Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Providing for equal access to resources and /or opportunities for development; -Allowing expression of different opinions and /or accepting criticism; -Creation of participatory structures in community institutions (e.g. decentralisation). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organisations working together to control/influence policy decisions; -Collective efforts towards improvement of quality of life; -Residents' participatory/bargaining skills. |

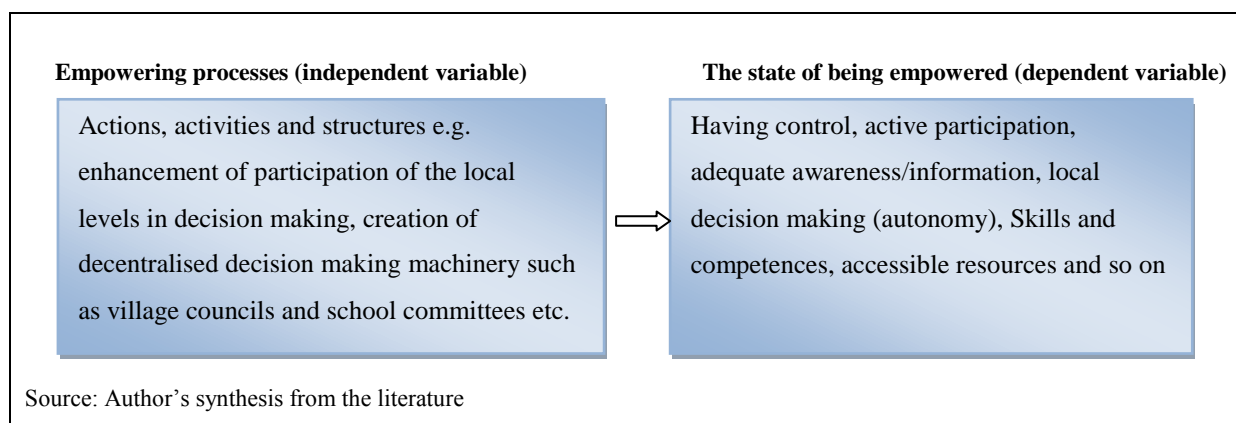
Source: Developed from the reviewed literature (Zimmerman M. and S. Warschausky 1998:7; Perkins, D. and M. Zimmerman 1995; Rappaport, J. 1984).

In the light of what I have discussed in this part of the chapter, the bottom-line is that at the individual level, participation, access to resources and knowledge of socio-political environment are fundamental tenets of empowerment; whereas organisational processes and structures for enhancement of member participation and goal achievement (i.e. effectiveness) are key factors for empowerment at the organisational level. Similar to that, collective action to improve quality of life in a community and to the connections among community organisations are key variables of empowerment at the community level. It should be noted however that organisational and community empowerment do not simply mean a “*collection of empowered individuals*” (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995:571).

2.4 Orientation of the study's analytical framework

Based on the discussion I have made under sub-item 2.5 above, empowerment construct is built on actions, activities and structures that serve as empowering mechanisms that result into the 'state of being empowered.' In that view, 'the state of being empowered' or if you like, 'empowerment' becomes the dependent variable while the processes (actions, activities and creation of structures/ institutional frameworks) serve as independent variables (Figure 3).

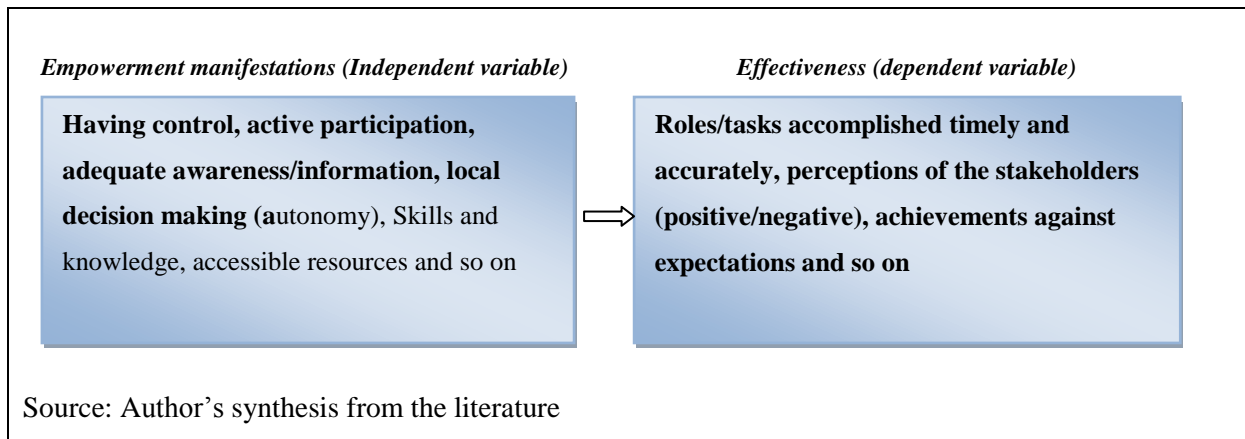
Figure 3: Empowering processes-Outcomes relationship¹⁰



However, my concern in this study is not on the relationship between empowering processes and the outcomes. Rather, I seek to explain how the consequences of empowering processes impact on the effectiveness of the school committees (Figure 4). Taking this as my point of departure, I further build my review of literature on the concepts of decentralisation policy and citizen participation to articulate the concept of the empowerment construct. To accomplish that, I use what I call 'the continuum of decentralisation' I synthesised from decentralisation literature and 'the ladder of citizen participation' by Arnstein (1969) as the key models for concretising empowerment in the day-to-day social, economic and political life; linking it to effectiveness of the local level institutions (e.g. the school committees as is for this case).

¹⁰ This is not what the study sought to examine. However, reviewing on this relationship served to develop more understanding of what empowerment consists in; and establish a point of departure towards linking empowerment to effectiveness.

Figure 4: Empowerment (the state of being empowered)-Effectiveness relationship¹¹



The above (figure 4) illustration depicts what the study sought to examine. However, my concern in this sub-item is not to go into the details of the dependent and independent variables but just to give an outline of the concern of the study. A discussion of the relationship between the dependent and independent variable and how the variables were measured is provided under sub-item 2.11 and figure 6.

2.5 Decentralisation as an empowering process

As I pointed earlier when I was attempting to concretise the concept of empowerment under sub-items 2.4, 2.5, figure 3 and table 1; I identified decentralisation as one of the practical actions that constitute the empowering processes. My concern in this sub-section is to examine decentralisation of the public sector because it has always been the most important pillar in supporting national development, not only in the developing countries but also in the developed ones. Public service provision in most of the countries is at large accomplished by the state. Even where these services are provided by private bodies, non-governmental organisations and/or civil societies, the state remains the principal regulatory body. I am therefore much concerned with analysing decentralisation in the public sector, focusing on the main types, forms and features, linking them to the concept of citizen empowerment at the local levels. It is this link that is important in marking my point of departure in this study and offset the confusion that might arise on the part of reviewer as to whether I am using decentralisation and empowerment as two different theories.

¹¹ This is what the study sought to examine. The analytical framework of the study was based on the relationship between the manifestations of empowerment on one hand, and the effectiveness of school committees on the other hand.

2.5.1 What does the concept of decentralisation entail?

Decentralisation has been viewed differently by various people. While most of the views are unanimous on the idea that decentralisation concerns the ‘shifting of decision making authority and power from a central point (such as the central government) to its local units (local government), there are some differences with regard to the scope and specificity (Dyer and Rose, 2005). For instance, while some definitions focus on the partial transfer of authority and power from the centre to the periphery (deconcentration and delegation), others suggest total shifting of authority and power from the central point to its respective local units (devolution).

Similarly, some definitions of decentralization are specific in terms of the functional areas that are transferred to the local levels whereas others do not. For example, Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) specify in their definition that functions like planning, decision making and administrative authority need to be transferred from the central to local authorities. According to Brinkerhoff and Azfar, “*Decentralization deals with the allocation between center and periphery of power, authority, and responsibility for political, fiscal, and administrative systems*”(Brinkerhoff and Azfar 2006:2). The authors are more specific here with regard to what is decentralized and the scope of functions. In contrast, McGinn and Welsh (1999) consider decentralisation generally as the transfer of authority from central government to provincial, district and school level. In the same way, Geo-Jaja describes the concept of decentralisation as “*a process of re-assigning responsibility and corresponding decision making authority for specific functions from higher to lower levels of government*” (Geo-Jaja 2004:309). From these points of view, it can be said that there are differences in meanings and motives of decentralisation depending on the degree to which power is conferred to the local levels.

To sum up what has been grasped from the various viewpoints and extend a little bit the scope of argument, decentralization can be described as the transfer of decision making authority and responsibility from central to lower levels of government or private institutions. The transfer of authority and responsibility may encompass such aspects as planning, resource distribution, administrative and management tasks (Abu-Duhou 1999; Dyer and Rose 2005). Local authorities may be provinces (for federal states like that of the United States and Nigeria), and Regions (for unitary state like those of most African countries like Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda). Decentralisation also involves transfer of authority and responsibility

from the central government to the local government authorities (LGAs) and institutions (city, municipal, town and district councils, villages and schools) depending on the context of the country in question. Most of the popular definitions of decentralization differentiate alternative levels of decentralisation along a continuum. At one end of, the center maintains powerful control with limited power and discretion at lower levels (de-concentration) to more and more diminishing central control with increasing local discretion at the other (devolution). The devolutionary end of the continuum is associated with more democratic governance, expanded discretionary room to make decisions at the local level and a shift in accountability from upward to downward orientation (Brinkerhoff and Azfar 2006).

2.5.2 Public sector decentralisation

Decentralisation in the public sector can in essence be discussed under three main types, namely; political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation.

Political decentralisation can be explained as the transfer of political power and decision making authority to sub-national levels such as district councils, elected village councils, district councils and state level bodies. Where such transfer is made to a local level of public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the decentralising authority, the process is referred to as devolution. Fiscal decentralisation on the other hand, involves some degree of resource reallocation to local government which would allow it to function properly and fund allocated service delivery responsibility. The arrangements for resource allocation are usually negotiated between local and central governments. Normally, the fiscal decentralisation policy would also address some revenue-related issues such as assignment of local taxes and revenue sharing through local taxation and user fees. Administrative decentralisation encompasses transfer of decision making authority, resources and responsibilities for the delivery of some public services from the central government to the lower levels of government, agencies, and field offices of central government line agencies. Administrative decentralisation may be implemented in three forms of power relations between the centre and the periphery. These are: de-concentration, delegation and devolution depending on the scope of functions that are decentralised and the degree of autonomy allowed at the local levels. This can be explained as a ‘continuum’ of decentralisation (table 2) as discussed under the subsequent sub-heading.

2.5.3 Decentralisation as a 'continuum' of centre-periphery power shift

Being broad, decentralisation may take different forms ranging from those which depict the lowest degrees of power shift from the centre to the periphery, to the ones which depict the highest power-shifts from the same. This forms a 'continuum' of decentralisation along three levels of power (de-concentration, delegation and devolution (Brinkerhoff and Azfar 2006). De-concentration is the transfer of authority and responsibility from one level of the central government to another, with the local unit being accountable to the central government ministry or agency which has been decentralised (Olsen 2007). It is a form of decentralisation which involves transfer of a narrow scope of administrative authority and responsibility to lower levels of the government institutions. This form of decentralisation does not give the periphery (local authorities) ultimate power to make decision (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983 ; Dyer and Rose 2005). Decentralisation by de-concentration is often considered as 'a controlled form of decentralisation' and is used most frequently in unitary states (Olsen 2007); where the concern rests on relocation of decision making authority and financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the central government. The process can take two different ways. The first option is that the central government can just shift responsibilities from its officials in the capital city to those working in the regions, provinces or districts. The second option is that the central government can create a strong field administration or local administrative capacity under the central/ministerial control (Olsen 2007). In Tanzania, the decentralisation policy of 1972 is a real example of decentralisation by de-concentration. With this form of decentralisation, the central authority retained the final decision making responsibility, while the operations were shifted to the local authorities. For instance, decentralisation of education was done by transferring the responsibility of supervision of primary schools to the regions and districts, where the Regional and District Authorities became responsible for the management of schools under the directives from the centre. With this type of decentralisation, the peripheries had low scope of autonomy.

Delegation on the other hand, involves redistribution of authority and responsibility to local units of government or agencies that are not always necessarily branches or local offices of the delegating authority, with most of accountability still vertically directed upwards towards the delegating central unit. It is the transfer managerial responsibility for specific functions to

local units, LGAs or NGOs¹² that may not be under the control of the central government (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983; Bray 1987; Olsen 2007). In this form of decentralisation, the centre remains accountable for the activities that have been delegated to the periphery. Despite the fact that with delegation decision making powers are conferred to the lower units, they may be withdrawn at any time. It is at this point, no much difference is seen between de-concentration and delegation. Although the power conferred to the local units through delegation may imply a higher degree of autonomy as compared to that of de-concentration in as far as decision making is concerned, the power is not ultimate as the power still rests with the central authorities which have chosen to '*lend*' them to the local one (Bray 1987:132). Thus, it can be argued that the two forms of decentralisation (de-concentration and delegation) above present the weak forms of power at the local levels.

Decentralisation by devolution (D-by-D) is the form of decentralisation whereby the states gives full decision making power and management authority to sub-national levels and allows decision making at local levels without asking for higher level's approval. The scope of devolution may cover matters related to financial, staffing and administrative functions, where formal authority is transferred to the respective LGA (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983 ;Dyer and Rose 2005; Bray 1987; Abu-Duhou 1999).With decentralisation by devolution (D-by-D), full autonomy is given to the LGAs, limiting the responsibility of the central government authorities to exercising indirect/supervisory control over them (Abu-Duhou 1999). Under the D-by-D government system, the justification of decentralisation rests on its effectiveness and efficiency in resource utilization as well as responsiveness to local needs (Robinson 2007).

From the discussion of the three major forms of decentralisation above and the illustration in table 2 below, it can be argued in a nutshell that there are different manifestations of decentralisation as an empowering process depending on the degree of decision making power conferred to the local levels (the peripheries) by the centre. It is on this ground that decentralisation (as an empowering process) can be viewed as a 'continuum' of decision making power that is conferred by the central authorities to the authorities at the peripheries. The degree of decision making power conferred depends much on the intentions of the centre. In the same way, manifestation of empowerment at the local levels as a result of decentralisation as an empowering process will depend on not only the extent to which power

¹² Non Governmental Organisations

has been conferred to these destinations, but also the people's agency (i.e. their ability and willingness) in making use of the opportunities that have been made available through decentralisation to take specific initiatives to improve their lives. As the case of school committees in this case, it is not having the committees in place that leads to empowerment of the local levels. Rather, the extent to which people at the community levels are willing to participate fully in and /or with the school committees to develop their schools for better education of their children which is an important strategic means for peoples' empowerment. It is through this way decentralisation can be considered a meaningful strategy for local level empowerment. The role of the concept of agency in empowerment is discussed under sub-item 2.10.7 of this chapter.

Table 2: The continuum of decentralisation

| | Administrative | Financial/fiscal | Political |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| De-concentration L | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Policies implemented by LGAs are imposed by the central govt. -Formation and structure of LGAs is decided by the centre. -LGA Employees are recruited by the central ministries -LGAs are service delivery arms of the central government -LGAs have no discretion in decision making -Upward accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LGAs depend on the centre for funds(sectoral ministries, Ministry of Finance and the Treasury) -No independent sources of revenue to LGAs -LGAs accounts for expenditure to the centre -Expenditure auditing of the LGAs is done by the central government (in Tanzania for example, it is done by the Office of the Controller and Auditor General). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No elected LG, officials appointed by center, & serve central interests. -Civil society & citizens rely on remote & weak links to central government for exercising accountability. -Little political space for local civil society, & central elites control politics. |
| Delegation M | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LGAs follow central policies & norms, has some discretion to tailor to local needs, & to modify form & structure. -LGA staff may be mix of central and LGA employees; LGAs have authority on hiring & placement; center handles promotion & firing. -LGAs provide service menu set by center, some discretion in mix to fit local needs, & in modes of provision. -LGAs provide most information upwards to center & selected information to local officials, Citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Although LGAs are dependent on center for funds; it has some discretion on spending priorities within budget envelope. Block grants & conditional transfers from center offer some autonomy. -LGAs have no independent revenue sources. -LGAs report to center and local officials on expenditure according to the central procedures and norms. -Center and LGA conducts LGA audits. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LGA may be a mix of elected and centrally appointed officials. -Local officials often tied to national party platforms, little discretion. -Some local accountability, but strong central orientation. Some political space for local civil society. |
| Devolution H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LGAs are subject to national norms, but sets local policies & priorities, plans autonomously in response to local preferences & needs. -LGAs determine own form & structure. -LGA staff are employees of the LGA, which sets salaries, numbers, assignments, & handles hiring/firing. -LGAs determine service mix, modes of provision, eligibility, & allocation. -LGAs provide information to local Officials & citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LGAs set spending priorities, plan how to meet service delivery obligations given resource availability. -LGAs have a mix of own-source revenues, revenue-sharing, central transfers. -LGAs may have some authority for debt financing, but is subject to a hard budget constraint. -LGAs report to local officials and citizens on expenditure according to central formulas and norms. -LGAs are responsible for audits, reports results locally and to center. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -LGAs are led by locally elected officials, who may or may not be linked to national parties, platforms respond to constituent demands and needs. -Strong local accountability, LGAs shape budget priorities, investment, service mix to fit local preferences and needs. -Broad political space for local civil society activity. |

Sources: (UNDP 2004; Johnson 1995; Brinkerhoff and Leighton 2002).

KEY: L: Low level of decentralisation; M: Moderate level of decentralisation; H: High level of decentralisation

2.5.4 The utility of the continuum of decentralization model in describing the concept of empowerment and local level effectiveness

Similar to the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, the continuum of decentralisation may serve as an appropriate model to explain the concept of empowerment. As indicated in the preceding discussion, decentralisation (as an empowering process) can take different forms consistent with the level of centre-periphery power shifts as illustrated in figure 2. Conversely, the manifestations of the outcomes of decentralisation (empowerment) vary in the same way as with the processes.

2.6 Decentralisation (as an empowering process) and effectiveness: worldwide experiences

The impact of decentralisation to effectiveness in service delivery is hotly debated, especially between its proponents and opponents. According to Gurgur and Shah (2002), decentralization helps to minimise corruption that tends to crop up with bureaucratic and centralized authority. This is because decentralisation strives to ensure increased access to information, which promotes informed decision making and awareness of the general public about their rights and obligations. With decentralisation therefore, there is potential for increased transparency and accountability at the local levels, a situation that is unfavourable for corruption to build up in the service delivery systems. This can be translated as better/improved service delivery. King and Ozler (1998) in their study on the impact of decentralisation to the learning outcomes in Nicaragua, the scholars observed that decentralized management of schools led to improvement in achievement scores. It is also argued by various scholars that decentralization improves citizen's access to social services and ensures that social services provided to citizens are responsive to the local contexts. For example, Faguet (2004) found that decentralization in Bolivia improved consistency of public services with local preferences; and quality and access of social services was enhanced considerably. According to Dyer and Rose (2005), quality of education can be improved by conferring adequate decision making powers to the points where implementation of educational decisions takes place (i.e. the local levels). In this way, it is possible to suit the local contexts in terms of expertise and experience. However, the amount of power that should be conferred to the local levels to bring about effectiveness in service delivery remains to be the major challenge.

In the same line of argument with other proposers of decentralisation, Caldwell (1990) cited in Govinda (1997) outlines six important arguments (justifications) for the shift from central to peripheral control of education in the light of experiences drawn from the developed countries as follows:-

First, the perceived complexity of managing the modern education from one central point led to the governments' acceptance of decentralised educational management systems. The essence of that shift lies on efficiency improvement. Second, the concern to ensure that each individual student has access to the particular as opposed to an aggregated mix of resources to cater for the needs and interests of that particular student. Third, some study findings in the developing countries with regard to school effectiveness and improvement have been insisting on decentralisation as a vehicle for success. Fourth, the fact that increased autonomy of the teachers and some bureaucrats at the local level increases ownership and commitment makes decentralisation an ideal strategy for educational management. Fifth, popular demand for more freedom and power of choice in terms of the schools they would prefer according to their perceived qualities by the general public; and sixth, the fact that the education sector should follow the reforms that were instituted in the other similar sectors which were earlier presumed to be solely the concern of the central government. Now with regard to how these are applicable to the developing world, much can be debated especially on the basis of the varying contexts of the developing and the developed countries.

However, various studies have also revealed some negative impacts of decentralization policy. Using data from a cross-sectional study of industrial and developing countries, Estache and Sinha (1995) found that decentralization leads to increased spending on public infrastructure. In another study by Ravallion (1998), it was found that poorer provinces were less successful in favour of their poor areas in Argentina, and decentralization generated substantial inequality in public spending in poor areas of the country. In another study in Uganda, it was found that there was no significant positive impacts of decentralization were observed on efficiency and equity of local public service provision in Uganda (Azfar and Livingstone 2002); whereas in the rural China, decentralization resulted in lower level of public services in poorer regions (West and Wong 1995). The Ugandan and Chinese experiences concur with those of South Africa and Namibia; where experiences from these countries show that decentralisation may lead to increased inequalities or new forms of social exclusion in the settings where inequalities and

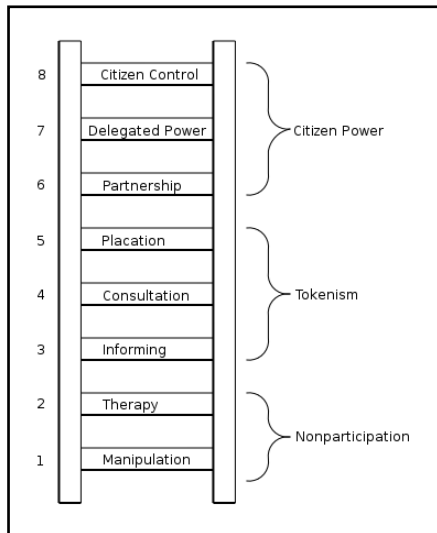
social exclusion had been in existent before(Sayed and Soudien 2005). The review of the impact of Norweigan aid to EFA in the South (Bolivia, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and others) through Sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) also noted some failures in the realisation of the anticipated outcomes of decentralisation (i.e. enhancement of democratic participation and effectiveness in service delivery at the local level) due to inadequate capacity of the local actors to manage the devolved functions and resources from the central authorities (Askvik and Tjomsland 2005:122-123). As a result, local community participation is hindered despite the attempts to put in place good local administrative structures. In such a situation therefore, decentralisation of educational administration would be considered an ineffective approach to improvement of education. It can thus be argued that decentralisation of service delivery would be effective only when local capacity building has adequately been done to prepare the local communities for taking over the responsibilities from the ministerial authorities.

2.7 Key lessons from decentralisation as an empowering process

It s evident from the empirical review that excessively centralised systems foster inefficiency and corruption in not only the education sector but also other service provision sectors in many countries. A shift towards a more decentralized education system has been argued to be an appropriate way of creating an empowering system, where active citizen participation, transparency and accountability are the key pillars. However, educational decentralisation may not be in itself enough to bring about positive outcomes at the grassroots level. In other words, it may not be regarded as an automatic way of enhancing efficiency in the education delivery systems. There are some obvious risks with decentralizing of decision making power from national to local levels. As argued by some scholars like Robinson (2007), decentralisation may result in an unequal education system and marginalisation of disadvantaged groups and or/regions. In that view, a carefully struck balance between centralization and decentralisation is of vital importance. In addition, the governments' consciousness and willingness in the transfer decision making powers and provision of the necessary resources, support and training to the local level are critical determinants of local level empowerment and effectiveness.

2.8 Explaining the outcomes of empowering processes by using the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation¹³

Figure 5: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation



Arnstein (1969) uses a ladder metaphor, popularly known as “the ladder of citizen participation” to explain the concept of participation. The ladder of is divided into eight rungs, that are grouped into three levels namely, *on-participation* (therapy and manipulation), *tokenism* (informing, consultation, and placation) and *citizen power* (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control) as depicted in figure 1.

According to Arnstein’s conception, Participation is not an absolute. Rather, it occurs on a continuum of participation ranging from lesser to greater levels of participation. Conversely, community participation manifests itself in different forms, encompassing both weak and strong structures of citizens’ power to make decisions. As illustrated in the Arnstein’s typology of eight levels condensed into three, each rung in the ladder denotes some degree of citizens’ power in decision making. Through the ladder of citizen participation model, empowerment can be explained as the highest form of citizen participation (rugs 6, 7, and 8). This is achieved when potential beneficiaries can also make key development decisions, participation becomes a self-initiated action and meaningful. This is what Arnstein refers to as “*having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process*” (Arnstein 1969:216).

2.8.1 Description of the model

With the first two rungs which Arnstein calls manipulation and therapy, there is no authentic participation but rather, the power holders use the participation theory to legitimate their domination over the citizens’ power over decision making. This is what Bray terms as “the empty ritual of participation” (Bray 1999 :10). Basically, the two bottom rungs constitute the

¹³ Source: Arnstein, S. (1969). "A ladder of citizen participation." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35(4): 216-224. cited in Bray (1999). *The Private Costs of Public Schooling: parental and community financing of primary education in Cambodia*. UNESCO/IIEP.

weakest form of citizen participation, which in practical terms may be regarded as 'non-participation'. Under the 'illusion' of participation, citizens can be manipulated to form advisory committees or boards to serve their interests, while in practice, they perform 'a mere rubber stamp role' as they cannot influence the decision making process. This form of citizen participation (in my opinion) is symbolic, serving as the tool for power holders' to enhance public relations and impress the international community especially the donors.

Rungs 3, 4 and 5 (Informing, Consultation and Placation respectively) constitute the second level of citizen power which Arnstein calls "tokenism". At this level citizens have the opportunity to hear and to have a voice by being informed and consulted, but they lack the power to assure that their views will be taken seriously by the power holders. With this form of participation, there is no follow-through, no power, and hence no possibility of changing the status quo. Although rung 5 (Placation) is sometimes considered a more genuine approach to participation, citizens are not conferred full power to decide. In this view therefore, it can simply be considered as "*a higher level tokenism*". This form of participation has been seen in the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa, which seem to be there simply as the means to contain parental discontent and mobilize additional resources for running the schools. Parents' participation in particular, depends significantly on what they are "*allowed*" to do by principals (Lewis and Naidoo 2004:106), and it is restricted to 'token involvement' in fund-raising and other support activities.

The three upper rungs of the ladder (rugs 6, 7, 8) are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision making. Citizens can enter into a Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in power sharing with traditional power holders. The two topmost rungs (7 and 8) involve Delegated Power and Citizen Control respectively. At these levels, citizens have strong power to make decisions. Arnstein's ladder analogy was applied and further developed by various authors like Weidemann and Femers (1993) to classify the public rights and analysis of decisions needed for hazardous waste management. Public participation increases with the level of access to the information as well as the rights that citizens have in the decision making process. This is essentially what empowerment consists in. The conception of empowerment encompasses both access to resources and the capacity to participate in decisions that affect the least privileged (Moore 1995).

2.8.2 How can the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation be useful in describing local level effectiveness?

The Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation can serve as a practical model for explaining local level effectiveness. For instance, using the various levels of power gradation depicted in the ladder metaphor as different levels of power that the central government confers to the local levels (e.g. the schools), we can analogously describe various intensities of local level participation relative to the power conferred.

Depending on the prevailing situation, participation may be direct (by individual citizens), representational (through representatives e.g. the school committees in this case). The participation in primary education management can be both direct and representational. Direct participation in educational management involves local community members' participation in building of classrooms, parents' meetings, sending the children to school controlling truancy and many other related activities. Representational participation on the other hand rests with the school committees which represent their fellow members of the community in decision making at the school. This is practiced in situations where some decisions need to be made or certain proposals require deliberations, which in actual fact, the entire community may not participate. Activities like planning, budgeting, financial management and day to day monitoring of the school activities (just to mention a few) are typical roles that school committees accomplish as representatives of the entire school community. In both forms, active participation (which I also refer to as 'meaningful participation) can be enhanced by ensuring adequate power to the local levels and not mere rubberstamp or token power as illustrated in the ladder.

In line with the idea by Weidemann and Femers (1993) that public participation increases when adequate decision making power is conferred to the citizens at the local levels, it follows that people would not participate in activities that they know exactly that their participation is not meaningful (i.e. cannot influence decision making processes, bring in innovations, control outcomes and so on). For instance in an education development project, school communities may become reluctant to contribute resources to support the government efforts leading to ineffectiveness. Therefore in such a situation, high and /or low effectiveness at the local levels can be explained as an outcome of manifestation of high and /or low citizen power at the local levels.

2.8.3 Limitations of the model

Like any other model, the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation has some limitations, and therefore, it can by no means be exempted from scholarly criticisms. Indeed, the eight-rung ladder designed by Arnstein appears to be an over- simplification of social reality. In my view, participation being a social phenomenon cannot just be described as a simple linear process of eight levels of power presented in a ladder metaphor. This is practically unrealistic. Why? -because first, it may not be possible to establish a clear demarcation of where exactly each level begins and end in practice; and second, social phenomena involve people, who are usually complex and unpredictable in their thoughts and behaviour (Taylor 1985). It is on the basis of this complexity and unpredictability which makes social phenomena and processes like participation difficult to describe and measure in direct/concrete terms as is for the natural phenomena and processes.

2.8.4 Relevance of the model and its application to the study

Despite the inherent limitations of the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, it attempts to represent, organise and explain the concept of citizen participation in a simple and understandable way. Using her explanation of the concept of participation through a ladder metaphor, Arnstein has successfully managed to provide the academic world with a quicker view and grasp of the complicated relationships involved in the participation process than it would have been if she had used mere words. The gradations she established in her ladder aid in distinguishing meaningful/genuine citizen participation from non-participation; weak from strong forms of participation; and empowerment from disempowerment in that regard. Specific to my study, the utility of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation rests on linking participation (as an indicator of empowerment) to the effectiveness of school committees (the dependent variable).

2.9 Conclusion

Drawing from the theoretical insights of the two models, it can be established that the empowering processes that are embarked on by the governments have a direct relationship to the outcomes (empowerment) at the local levels. The amount of power allowed at the local levels by the central government determines the level of citizen power at the local levels with regard to decision making and control. As seen from the conceptual recap (table 3) below,

allowing retaining the power at the centre through de-concentration will lead to lack of power at the local levels. Citizens might be seen to be participating in various development activities at their respective local areas while in actual fact, they do not have any say on what should be done when and how. Likewise, allowing for a limited scope of power to the local levels through delegation will in the same way lead to low level of empowerment of the people down there. From the two examples, it follows that where the government allows for adequate decision making power at the local levels through devolution, there is genuine manifestation of citizen power (i.e. real empowerment) to affect the policy processes and outcomes.

Table 3: Recap of the concept of empowerment from the two models

| Empowering processes as illustrated by the continuum of decentralisation, call them “PROCESSES” | Manifestations of power as illustrated by the Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation, call them “OUTCOMES” |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><u>1.De-concentration</u></p> <p>Local levels implementing centrally planned development policies and projects, with total control of the processes and outcomes.</p> | <p><u>1.Non-participation</u></p> <p>Local levels are engaged in an empty ritual of participation (unauthentic participation) in practical terms. Local decision making institutions perform a rubber-stamp role- no power</p> |
| <p><u>2.Delegation</u></p> <p>Local levels implementing centrally decided development policies and projects with limited discretion to modify implementation structures/processes to suit local contexts. However the central government controls the implementation processes, outcomes and may withdraw the powers conferred to the local levels any time it deems necessary.</p> | <p><u>2.Tokenism/Token-participation</u></p> <p>Weak participation is exhibited at the local levels, with inadequate power to follow through & demand accountability or influence change in the status quo.</p> |
| <p><u>3.Devolution</u></p> <p>Local levels are governed by central (national) norms, provisions and/ or structures are in place for them to make autonomous development policies, set local priorities and control the processes</p> | <p><u>3.Citizen power/real empowerment</u></p> <p>Local levels have the real power to affect the outcomes of the processes</p> |

Source: Author’s caption from the two models

2.10 Elements of empowerment: a synthesis from the literature review

Although it is not possible to have a single model for empowerment, experience shows that certain elements are almost always present in successful empowerment efforts regardless to the differences in the contexts of empowerment. In this view; some key elements (like access to information, inclusion/participation, accountability, local organisational capacity, resource

capability, agency and outcomes) are identified as important elements of empowerment (Narayan 2002; Kabeer 2001).

2.10.1 Access to information

Information is power. Well informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunities, access services, exercise their rights, negotiate effectively, and hold state and non-state actors accountable. Releasing information about the performance of institutions, future plans and many other issues of interest enhances transparency in the government, public service, and the private sector. Regulations about rights to information and freedom of the press promote informed citizen action. In this view they should be easily available by every citizen. Unrestricted two-way information flow from government to citizens, and from citizens to government is critical to responsible, responsive and accountable governance. The basic assumption here is that access to information promote stakeholders' knowledge, competences and initiatives; making them more effective in their performance. The more the information they have, the higher is their self-confidence and initiative to make decisions and the higher is their performance. An empowering approach to participation treats people in the local communities as co-producers, with equal authority and control over decisions. In addition, resources are devolved to the lowest level to support planning and implementation of development plans right there.

2.10.2 Inclusion/Participation

Opportunities for all community members to participate in decision-making are critical to ensure that the use of limited public resources builds on local knowledge and priorities and brings about commitment to change. In order to ensure inclusion and informed participation, it is important to ensure that the institutional rules create room for people to debate on various issues, participate in local and national priority-setting and in the delivery of basic services.

Inclusion of all segments of the local communities and representational institutions/bodies of managing education at the local levels such as the school committees in Tanzania (Fundi 2002), the School Governing Boards (SGBs) in South Africa ((Lewis and Naidoo 2004) and the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees in Ghana (Adam 2005) increases legitimacy of these institutions to the local communities, making them

more effective in accomplishing their roles. For example, a legitimate school committee can easily mobilise local communities for classroom construction, fundraising and so on.

2.10.3 Accountability

In an empowering system accountability encompasses the obligations of political authorities, parties and representatives to explain their intentions and conduct to their constituencies and to voters at large and the responsibility of government agencies to fulfil their administrative and social commitments to citizens by presenting transparent periodic reports of their work for public scrutiny and discussion. Citizen action can strengthen political and administrative accountability mechanisms and put up demands for better governance and transparency.

A variety of mechanisms can be used to ensure greater accountability to citizens for public actions and outcomes. Access to information by citizens builds pressure for improved governance and accountability in areas such as setting priorities for national expenditure, enhancing access to quality education, ensuring that roads once financed actually get built, or seeing to it that medicines are actually delivered and available in clinics. Access to laws and impartial justice is also critical to protect the rights of poor people and pro-poor coalitions and to enable them demand accountability, whether from their governments or from private sector institutions. Citizen action can reinforce political and administrative accountability mechanisms and build pressure on improved governance and transparency. In Tanzania, it was found that local participation in school affairs particularly financing and management through the Community Education Fund (CEF) inculcated local accountability of schools to the local communities (URT 2003).

2.10.4 Local organizational capacity

This element of empowerment refers to the ability of people to work together, organize and mobilize resources to solve problems of common interest. Often outside the scope of formal systems, poor people cooperate to solve their everyday problems by organising themselves in informal groups, for instance, a group of women who lend each other money or crop produce. The groups may also be formal, with or without legal registration, as in the case of farmers' groups or home-craft groups. The assumption here is that organised communities are more likely to have their voices heard and their demands met than unorganized communities. It is only when groups connect with each other across communities and form networks or

associations (federations) that they begin to influence government decision-making and gain collective bargaining power.

2.10.5 Resources

In a broad perspective, resources encompass the conventional economic resources such as land, equipment, finance and working capital as well as human/social dimensions that nourish one's ability to exercise choice (Kabeer 2001). 'The human resources' are within the individual, and they include their individual knowledge, skills, creativity, imagination and the like. Human resources do not end up there. They also constitute claims, commitments and expectations inherent in the relationships, networks and contacts that take place in the day to day operations and long term activities in various areas of life. Having the resources is one thing. The questions arise on: 'How the resources are distributed to the people'? What are the ideal institutional arrangements and processes to govern resource distribution? How rules, norms and practices that are embedded in various institutional domains (family norms, employer- employee relationships, patron- client relationships, informal wage agreements and public sector entitlements can promote access to resources? The ways through which people gain access to resources are crucial. Lack of access to resources is equally the same as lack of resources when it comes to analysis of empowerment. Therefore, empowerment in this respect means improvement of access to and acquisition of resources (Kabeer 2001).

2.10.6 Agency/willingness

One of the key explanatory variables of empowerment is agency. Empowerment is not something (like a gift) that can be given to people individually, in groups or communities. Rather, it comes from processes where people empower themselves (Sen 1997). Individuals need to utilise the opportunity structures and enabling environments created by the government to act effectively in transforming their lives (Wallerstein 2006). For example, while the government establishes local level institutional frameworks for people to participate in decision making, it is the responsibility of individual citizens to make use of them and participate. Or, while the NGOs, the Government and other actors advocate on involvement of citizens in planning and implementation of various development actions at the local levels; the individual community members must in the first place have confidence, willingness and enthusiasm to making use of the opportunities to change their lives. Therefore, the main idea here is that no matter how much the Government, NGOs and other change agents may

catalyse actions and create favourable environments for people to build their capacities and in turn attain the highest quality of life; sustainable empowerment cannot be achieved unless people as individuals, groups or communities willingly and enthusiastically take appropriate initiatives to exploit the opportunities in place to develop themselves.

According to Kabeer (2001), agency is concerned with one's ability to define her/his goals and pursue them. It includes observable (activities) and unobservable actions like the meaning, motivation, motives/drives of individuals in their activities (Kabeer 2001). Agency can also be termed as 'power within the individual.' Its measurement can be done through assessing 'individual decision making' potentialities. It also encompasses a wide range of purposive actions such as bargaining, negotiation, deception, manipulation and some more intangible cognitive dimensions such as reflection and analysis. Agency has both positive and negative meanings in relation to power (Sen 1999). In the positive connotation, it takes the form of 'power to'. This is the people's capacity to define their life choices and pursue their own goals even in the presence of external opposition. The negative meaning of power implies 'power over', i.e. the ability of an actor or group of actors to over-ride the agency of others. This can be through hostility, coercion and intimidation. Lukes (1981) also points out some instances where power can operate in the absence explicit agency, where the norms governing social behaviour tend to ensure replication of certain outcomes without any visible use of agency.

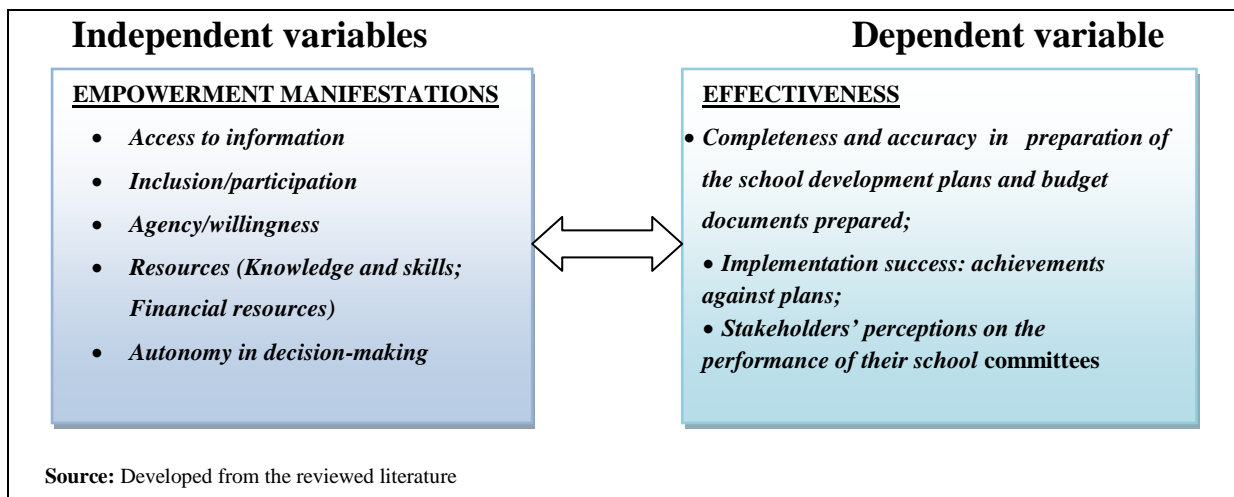
2.10.7 Achievements

The combination of resources and agency results into capabilities, which imply the potential that people have for living the lives they wish, and of achieving valued ways of 'being and doing' which imply achievements realized by different individuals (Sen 1999). Kabeer's third dimension of power is constituted from the 'achievements' or failures as the case may be, though she cautions that there are some cases where failures to achieve valued ways of 'being and doing' can be a result of laziness, incompetence or other individual-specific reasons, so the issue of power becomes not very much relevant. The achievements contribute to empowering the individual or team (e.g. the school committee as for this case) and that is why in the analytical framework (figure 6) the arrow goes in both direction to the empowerment manifestations (independent variable) and effectiveness in role accomplishment (dependent variable).

2.11 Analytical framework of the study: the variables and their operationalisation

In the light of the reviewed literature on empowerment in the perspective of empowering processes and their outcomes, five independent variables were identified as key determinants of *effectiveness* (the dependent variable) at the local levels. These were: - *access to information*, *participation* of local communities, *capabilities/competences*, local level *autonomy* and *willingness* to participate fully in all school development activities. Using the above variables as my point of departure, the framework was based on the assumption is: ‘*Effectiveness of the school committees depends on the extent to which they are empowered*’.

Figure 6: Analytical framework



2.12 Dependent variable

The dependent variable of the study was *Effectiveness* of the school committees, and it was operationalised through the following indicators that have been drawn from the responsibilities of school committees as spelt in the PEDP document under the item “*institutional responsibilities*” in the PEDP document (URT 2001:16). Effectiveness was operationalised by examining the extent to which the school committee members were conversant with the preparation of school development plans and budget documents; the extent to which the committees disseminate educational information to the community members; proper accounting financial reports (timeliness and accuracy); and stakeholders’ perceptions on the performance of their school committees.

2.13 Independent variables

From the assumption that ‘Performance of the school committees depends on the extent to which they are empowered’, the independent variables were the empowerment manifestations namely, access to information, inclusion/participation, capabilities /competences (knowledge/skills, time and resources), Agency (willingness) and autonomy/local level decision making. Each variable was measured as follows:-

2.13.1 Access to information

Access to information was operationalised by examining the extent to which school committee members has adequate information on their roles, the school, rules and regulations and policies and the number of meetings convened by school committees to inform parents and other stakeholders about the schools’ progress. The assumption here is that ‘*the higher the access to information by the school committees, the higher the performance*’ (Behrman 2002).

2.13.2 Inclusion

This has been operationalised by finding out the extent to the school committee members included the various segments of the local communities. The representativeness of the committee in terms of gender balance, high and low classes of the communities were examined. The assumption was that participation makes the community members feel that the committees originate from themselves, enhancing cooperation between the committee and the community. The assumption was that *higher levels of inclusion lead to increased effectiveness of the school committees*’ as a result of increased legitimacy of the committee to the local communities that maximises cooperation between the school committees and the local communities.

2.13.3 Capabilities

This variable has been operationalised in two ways:- First, by assessing the educational qualifications, skills and competences possessed by individual school committee members; number of capacity building programmes organized by the authorities responsible and attended by the school committee members; and future capacity building plans in place. The assumption here was: ‘the higher the level of capabilities the higher the performance’. Where

knowledge and skill capabilities are lacking there cannot be effectiveness in outcome realisation.

Second, the variable was also operationalised by examining the school committees' access to financial resources for funding implementation of school development plans. Financial resources are important for determining the effectiveness of school committees. Although devolution of decision making powers to the local levels make school management more responsive to the community needs, promote cost consciousness, efficiency and effectiveness, inadequacies in resource capabilities at the local level will hinder effectiveness (Behrman 2002).

2.13.4 Agency/willingness

Agency/willingness may be explained as the ability to define own goals as individuals or group and pursue them with high level of enthusiasm (Kabeer 2001). A sense of agency is an internal feeling that can be exercised by individuals as well as groups/teams (like school committees in this case). In the study, agency was operationalised by assessing the willingness /motivation of the school committees to assume their roles. More specifically, individual school committee members were asked to express their levels of enthusiasm to work towards achieving the goals of their school committees. The scale used was qualitative, with Low-Moderate-High levels. The hypothesis here was: 'the higher the agency of individual members the higher the effectiveness of the school committees'.

2.13.5 Autonomy

This was measured in terms of the extent to which the school committees can autonomously make and implement decisions without external interference. The assumption here is: 'the higher the autonomy, the higher the effectiveness of the school committees in accomplishing their responsibilities'. According to Eskeland and Filmer (2002), there is evidence of positive correlation between performance and the autonomy of primary schools; specifically from their study on autonomy, participation and learning in Argentine schools, where more autonomous schools performed significantly higher than the less autonomous schools. This also concurs with the by the hypothesis by Cohen (1988) on the 'Increased school autonomy and responsibilities will lead to increased performance'(Cohen 1988).

CHAPTER 3:

TANZANIA'S MOVE TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL DEVOLUTION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some strategies that Tanzania has embarked on as means to empower citizens in service delivery at the local levels, paying more attention to the primary education sub-sector. The concern of the chapter is to examine the steps that Tanzania has embarked on since independence to ensure that the responsibility of managing education is devolved to the local levels and in turn, elucidate the extent to which these steps have contributed to empowerment and effectiveness of the local levels in of education development. The chapter culminates by highlighting the government's achievements in connection with the attempts to devolve the educational management function to the local levels.

3.2 Decentralisation policy in Tanzania: a historical perspective

Like many countries of the world, Tanzania has embarked on decentralisation programmes in order to establish local governments which can deliver quality services to the people in a participative, effective and transparent way. The country takes decentralization as an appropriate approach to promote local initiatives in socio-economic development processes at the local levels, as it gives citizens more power to influence decisions of their concern. Through involvement of the people at the local level in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, a partnership is established between the government and the local communities and hence, making citizens feel as being important stakeholders in the process. Since her independence, the government has adopted several decentralization measures geared towards promoting rural and urban development (Kabagire 2006) as summarised in Box 8 below:

Box 8: Decentralisation measures in Tanzania from 1967 to 1975

1. Launching of the Regional Development Fund (RDF) in 1967 which aimed at promoting self initiative in the development process.
2. Restructuring of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development Planning in 1968/1969 whereby Regional Economic Secretaries were posted, to selected regions to coordinate the planning process.
3. Ministerial reform in 1969 which came up with changes in the cooperatives and the creation of the Ministry of Regional Administration and Rural Development.
4. Decentralization of government administration in July 1972 to give power to the people with regard to decision making concerning their development. A decentralized structure with clearly defined development responsibilities, coordination, and direction of the rural development work of all Ministries and Regions was established. A direct link between local organizations and the centre was established through the Regional Development Directors (RDDs). The decentralized structure consisted of the Regional Development Committees, the District Development Councils and Ward Development Committees.
5. Enactment of the Villages and *Ujamaa* Villages, Act of 1975 which further strengthened decentralization by establishing village councils that were charged with participatory development by the people at the local level, which was meant to realize the following four key objectives: First, to ensure that local development is effectively managed by organs that are closer to the people; second, to ensure full involvement of the people in the development process; third, to ensure that development is effectively planned and controlled; and fourth, to ensure that rural and urban development are centrally coordinated for efficiency and effectiveness.

3.3 The outcomes of the decentralisation measures at the local level

What can be said generally is that the decentralisation efforts resulted in skewed outcomes between the centre and the peripheries. While central government administrative structures improved significantly through the decentralization initiatives, active participation by the rural and urban populace in the development process (citizen power) was not achieved. The reason for these asymmetrical outcomes was on the fact that this type of decentralisation was more of de-concentration than devolution of power through local level democratic organs, where limited scope of power was conferred to the local authorities. Owing to this limitation, the government of Tanzania embarked on the policy of decentralization by devolution (D-by-D) in the 1990s. During this period, the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) was launched, consisting of six components, including a Local Government Reform component. The reform of Local Government was aimed at decentralising government functions, responsibilities and resources to Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and strengthening the capacity of local authorities. Reform of the

local government system was initiated in 1996 through a National Conference seeking to move “towards a shared vision for Local Government in Tanzania.” (Mmari 2005:6). This vision was subsequently summarized in the Local Government Reform Agenda, and, in October 1998, was endorsed by the Government in its Policy Paper on Local Government Reform (URT 1998).

3.4 Educational decentralization in Tanzania: a review of policy context

Educational decentralization in Tanzania aims to promote community participation in decision-making and cost sharing to ensure sustained effective provision of education and proper use and maintenance of school resources, and to reinforce planning and management capabilities at all levels of the school system. Educational decentralization in Tanzania is embedded in the general government decentralization framework (URT 2007), called the Local Government Reform Program (LGRP). Various service provision responsibilities have been transferred to districts and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) through the Prime Minister’s Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG).

Primary education is the most important responsibility of local governments in Tanzania. Half of all their funds is spent on this activity (although most funds are provided by the central government), and two-thirds of all local government employees are teachers. Local government decision-making is vested in the district council. A majority of its members are directly elected at the ward level. At the lower level, the village council has much the same functions as the district council. At the school level the school committee (in which parents are represented) has the overall responsibility of overseeing the running of the school. Education decentralisation in Tanzania is implemented under a framework of various interlinked policies; the key ones being the following:-

3.4.1 Tanzania Development Vision 2025

Tanzania Development Vision 2025 was formulated in 1995, aiming at realising total elimination of poverty in the country by the year 2025. Tanzania’s Vision 2025 recognises education as a strategic agent for transformation of the citizens’ mindsets, and for the creation of a well educated nation adequately equipped with the knowledge needed to solve the development challenges which face the local communities and the nation as a whole. In this view, Vision 2025 stresses on restructuring and transforming education qualitatively, with a focus on promoting creativity and problem solving. Along the same line, Tanzania

Development Vision 2025 devolves a greater role to the local actors to own and drive the process of their own development. The document puts it clear that the local people know their problems than anybody from outside. In that view therefore, they can decide what they need to prioritise, what is possible to achieve and how it can effectively be achieved under the prevailing local conditions.

3.4.2 Education and Training Policy (URT, 1995b)

The Education and Training Policy (ETP) was formulated in 1995 as a product of the liberalisation policy which started in Tanzania in 1986. The liberalisation policy came to effect in the country after the signing of an agreement with both International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Mrutu 2007). As such, the thrust of the policy initiatives is privatisation, and changing of the role of state into facilitation as opposed to state ownership in the provision of services. The major aims of the Education and Training Policy include achieving increased enrolments, equitable access, quality improvements, expansion and optimum utilisation of facilities as well as operational efficiency of the entire system. It also aims at enhancing partnership in the delivery of education, the broadening of the financial base, the cost effectiveness of the education, and reformation education management structures through the devolution of authority to schools, local communities and Local Government Authorities (Mrutu 2007).

3.4.3 Education Sector Development Programme (1996)

The Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) was developed in 1996. This followed the development of the Education and Training Policy that was formulated in 1995. ESDP is a sector wide approach that was initiated to facilitate achievement of the government's long term human development and poverty eradication targets and to redress the problem of fragmented interventions under the project modality of development assistance. The essence of the sector wide approach is collaboration by the key stakeholders, using pooled human, financial and material resources for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation. This approach established new relations which promote partnership, co-ordination, and ownership amongst all groups of people with a vested interest in education (URT 2001). It should be noted that the ESDP derives its objectives from the Education and Training Policy of 1995, as well as from the broader national development strategy of

MKUKUTA¹⁴ and the long-term development plan of the country's Vision 2025. The main education-related objectives include: comprehensive efforts to improve the quality of the education process, increase and improve access and equity for all children, the decentralisation of the management structures, the devolution of authority to local levels and broadening the financial base which supports the education system.

3.4.4 The Local Government Reform Programme (1998)

Reform of the local government system was initiated in 1996 seeking to move towards a Vision for Local Government in Tanzania. This vision was subsequently summarised in the Local Government Reform Agenda, and, in October 1998, was endorsed by the Government in its Policy Paper on Local Government Reform. The programme implementation of the LGRP began on 1st January, 2000. The LGRP is a primary mechanism for the decentralisation and devolution of power to local levels, a main feature in the delivery of education at the primary level. The Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) is a vehicle through which the government promotes and derives the decentralisation processes (Mmari 2005). As such, LGRP is said to be an integral part of the wide public sector reforms. The Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) for example, was set within this decentralised framework and included components that help to develop the capacity of personnel and structures at the local level, to enable the local communities participate in planning and delivery of primary education services.

3.5 Trends and issues in Development of primary education in Tanzania

The primary education sub-sector sector in Tanzania has undergone significant developments from 1961 when the then Tanganyika got her independence, all geared towards giving the citizens an opportunity to participate in education delivery. The trends can be traced along three major socio-economic development periods which the country has gone through namely, the period before Arusha Declaration(1961-1967); the Arusha Declaration era (1967-1986) and the period after Arusha Declaration /liberalization era (from 1986 to date).

14 MKUKUTA is a Kiswahili acronym for the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty. Its long form in Kiswahili is: "Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini Tanzania". This strategy is the development framework for the current five year phase (2005-2010). It forms part of Tanzania's efforts to deliver on its national Vision 2025. The focus is outcome orientated and organized around three clusters:

3.5.1 The period before Arusha Declaration (1961-1967)

Right after independence in 1961, the main concern of Tanzania mainland (the then Tanganyika) was to create an environment for socio-economic development. During the first Development Plan, the government identified ignorance as one of the major three hindrances of social and economic development in the country– others included disease and poverty (Nyerere 1967). The then new government was determined to eradicate ignorance through investment in human capital, which with time would produce a healthy and well-educated population that is crucially needed for social and economic development. Towards this endeavour, Tanzania has undertaken a number of policy and development initiatives in the education sector with a focus to improve quality and access to school education. Investing on human capital was considered the main tenet towards creating a healthy and well educated population for social and economic development (Kamuzora and Anna 2002). The new government enacted the Education Act of 1962 that repealed the colonial legislation (the Education Ordinance) that was in force since 1927 (Mamdani 1996). As a means towards enhanced sense of ownership by the local communities, the new legislation intended to make Local Authorities and communities responsible for the construction of primary schools; provision of primary education; streamlined the curriculum; examination and financing of education (URT 1995a.).

3.5.2 The Arusha Declaration era (1967-1986)

It was during this period various attempts to reform education received a special impetus. Following the Arusha Declaration on 5th February 1967, the then President Nyerere launched the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) policy to guide the planning and practice of education as a step towards putting the Arusha Declaration into effect, as the ESR policy was a programmatic follow-up of the objectives spelt in that Declaration.

ESR policy envisaged embarking on curriculum reform so as to integrate the acquisition of practical life skills. This came up with the philosophy of linking classroom teaching with physical economic activities (self reliance activities) particularly agriculture. It also urged the linkage of education plans and practices with national socio-economic development and the world of work. The principles of Arusha Declaration emphasized on equal access to the scarce economic resources and social services such as primary education. In order to ensure

adherence to these principles ,the government regulated and controlled all the production means such as land and other resources as well as social services such as education so that all Tanzanians regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnic origins, religious beliefs or gender (Galabawa 2001). As a back-up to the Arusha declaration and the ESR policy aspirations, the Government of took several steps which involved among others, the enactment of the Education Act of 1969 which was later repealed by the 1978's Act number 25; launching of the decentralization programme of 1972 which in essence led to the abolition of the Local Government in the same year; and the start of Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme contained in the Musoma Resolution of 1974.

The Musoma resolution emanated from the meeting by the National Executive Committee of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party in Musoma in the northern part of Tanzania; meant to review the country's progress in its policies of Socialism and Self-reliance. Some profound deficiencies were marked in the Implementation of the policy of Education for Self-reliance, especially at post secondary level (Biswalo 1985). Given that the resolution was adopted along the Julius Nyerere's "*we-must-run*" development strategy context, the date for starting implementation of Universal Primary Education was brought forward from 1989 to 1977 (Hydén 2006:122-123). It was also resolved during that time that from then on, formal education would basically end at the secondary school level. Secondary school graduates would serve one year in the National Service and thereafter, they would work for several years before they would be admitted to any post secondary institution. Post secondary institutions were, therefore, declared open for adult workers and peasants who satisfied the minimum entry qualifications for admission into higher education. This had implication to the primary education. Owing to the fact that only few candidates were selected to join the secondary school education, and because the secondary school level was meant to prepare the few selected graduates for work, the primary education (which was for all) was designed to prepare citizens for work both in the formal and informal sectors.

There is strong evidence that the steps taken in line with the Arusha Declaration accrued considerable success. The primary school enrolment rates rose to over 90 percent, with corresponding Net Enrolment Rates between 65 and 70 percent in the early 1980s (Davidson 2004). However, this 'success story' was frustrated by the economic recession of the late 1970s as well as early 1980s, when Tanzania's economy suffered seriously (Mmari 2005).

Much has been discussed about the causes of Tanzania's and other third world countries' problems during this period. Some scholars argue that the key causes of the problems were external factors such as the oil price-shocks as well as deteriorating terms of trade while others totally disagree with this line of argument (Galabawa 2001). To them, the cause of this malaise is internal factors, especially weak and inappropriate policies and poor governance (Davidson 2004). As a result of the crises, the 1980s witnessed increasing pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and donors in the development aid business, being put on Tanzania to accept the IMF Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) to address the crises.

In the mid 1980s, Tanzania started to implement the structural adjustment Programmes (SAPs) under the guidance and support of IMF and the World Bank (Msambichaka 1995). SAPs were intended to restore balance in the functioning of the economy as well as rationalizing resource utilization through domestic activities. It is widely believed that implementation of the SAPs has negatively affected social services provision in many of the developing countries. For example, a substantial reduction of public educational service in Africa occurred as a result of the SAPs because under these structural reforms, public expenditure on social services has been curtailed (Kiwara 1994). The introduction of the cost sharing policy in the service provision sectors was embarked on to cut public spending on these services. The primary education fee was re-introduced in 1984, which excluded large segments of the population (the poor in particular) from gaining access to education (Ewald 2002). This resulted in a considerable decline in the enrolment rate in the primary schools throughout the country.

3.5.3 The liberalization era (1986-to date)

The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s had adverse outcomes to the primary education in Tanzania. It was observed that in 1999, out of every 100 children of primary school age, 56 were enrolled in schools; of 56 enrolled in schools, only 38 completed primary school (Lema 2004). Of the 38 who completed primary school, only 6 proceeded to secondary schools. Moreover, there were significant differences in school enrolment according to location reflecting regional, district, ethnic and urban-rural differences (Mukandala 2004). In addition, data show that by 1993, gross enrolment in primary education had declined from 98 percent of the early 1980s to 71 percent in 1988, and only

gradually rose to 78 percent in 1997 (Lema 2004). In addition, the state of physical infrastructure continuously deteriorated and schools faced serious shortage of major supplies such as text books, chalk and exercise books. Many pupils learned in overcrowded and poorly furnished classrooms.

Recent evaluation indicates considerable improvement in the status of primary education in Tanzania since 2001 following the educational reforms that devolved most of the educational management responsibilities to the local levels. The areas in which significant progress include the following:-

First, quantitative developments; where for example, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) improved from 84% and 65.5% in 2001 to 112.7% and 96.1% in 2006 respectively. With regard to the number of primary schools, there was an increase from 11,873 in 2001 to 14700 schools in 2006 while the rate of transition of pupils from primary school to secondary school increased from 22.4% in 2001 to 49.3% in 2005(URT 2008). Although these improvements could be partly be attributed to the government’s decision to abolish the school fees, parents’ cash and labour contributions in classroom construction, and their active participation in enrolling their children can by no means be ignored.

Table 4: Some key achievements of PEDP between 2000/01 and 2006/07

| Year | GER (%) | NER (%) | Actual enrolment(millions) | No. of schools | Transition rate (%) |
|------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 2000/01 | 78 | 59 | 4.4 | 11873 | 22.4 |
| 2006/07 | 112.7 | 96.1 | 6.6 | 14700 | 49.3 |
| % increase | 44.5 | 63 | 50 | 24 | 120 |

Source: URT (2008); Lema (2004)

Second, there have been increased collaborations between the government administration and NGOs, CBOs and the private sector in education development. The Government has attempted to create an enabling environment for NGOs and CBOs to operate, by putting in place various legal provisions to support their operations. During the education reform process, NGOs/CSOs played an important role in the process leading to the elimination of user fees in

Tanzania. They played this role through carrying out research on the impact of user fees and releasing the results to the government, donors and the general public and through lobbying, they influenced some changes that led to abolition of the fee (Terme 2002).

Third, equitable distribution of resources; where through the government's school support mechanism called 'Direct Support to Schools' (DSS), each primary school receives recurrent and development fund. The recurrent fund also called 'capitation fund', is disbursed based on the actual number of pupils enrolled and actively attending school in a particular year. This fund is usually around 10 USD per pupil, and is meant for procuring teaching aids, sport facilities and other similar facilities. With regard to the development fund, the schools are funded based on the actual needs indicated in the budget proposals as approved by the respective local authorities. However, funding of primary education has for a long time been donor-dependent, and hence, posing substantial threats to sustainability and empowerment of the local communities. According to Mushi (2006), more than 80 percent of the primary education budget in Tanzania is dependent upon donors. The primary education under the PEDP was funded through basket funding with the World Bank (28.8%); the Netherlands (9.6% co-financing with World Bank); Canada (9.5%); Sweden (14.2%); Ireland (2.5%); EC (15%); Norway (6.9%); France (0.9%) and Belgium (1.8%) (ibid). Despite this shortcoming of donor dependency syndrome, Tanzania has shown remarkable achievements with regard to ensuring equitable distribution of resources (although the major source is from donors) to the local authorities for supporting primary education development. The financial control mechanisms put in place are working fairly well; for instance, every school has a bank account where all school grants are deposited directly. Accordingly, the school committees have been adequately effective in accounting for the capitation and development grants in the primary schools (Einar 2008).

Fourth, local level decision making (autonomy); where Tanzania has achieved promising results in as far as enhancement of decision making autonomy at the grassroots level is concerned. Through their respective school committees, local communities plan and implement their own school development initiatives consistent with their local needs (Mushi 2006). The role of school committees has remarkably changed from that of 'bridging relations' between communities, parents and the school; to playing an active role in school development. As of now, the committees are responsible for preparing school development plans and budgets and implement them accordingly; announce local tenders for school

supplies and mobilise and use resources locally with respect to their local needs. However, there have not been adequate awareness creation and capacities building at the local level to enable them handle effectively the devolved roles.

3.6 Conclusion

To conclude the chapter, it is evident that Tanzania has recorded remarkable achievements towards achieving a devolved educational management. Promising outcomes have been achieved in the aspects of creating appropriate institutional frameworks to support the whole process of transferring decision making powers to the local levels. In addition, Tanzania has since independence been embarking on supportive policies to further the process of empowering the local levels. However, not much has been achieved in building the local level capabilities in terms of knowledge, skills and financial resources. Successful devolution of educational management to the local levels calls for continuous awareness creation and capacity building to the stakeholders down there. Awareness creation entails sensitizing the local communities on the importance of them participating and taking full ownership of the educational development processes, whereas capacity building entails transferring enough resources and/ or powers to mobilize resources at the local levels and training of education management stakeholders at the district, ward and community levels to equip them with the necessary capabilities for handling the devolved responsibilities.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Having highlighted my research problem and questions in the first chapter and discuss various theoretical perspectives, review various related literature and establish the study framework under the second chapter, I now proceed with the methodological chapter. This chapter is an important facet of the study because it explains how the findings were grasped. In the chapter, I specify the study approaches used, sources of data, instruments used and the analysis and presentation methods. I also highlight some ethical issues that I took into consideration both before and in the course of soliciting data from the informants.

4.2 Area of the study

The study was carried out in Mvomero District Council (MVDC) and Morogoro Municipal Council (MMC) both located in Morogoro region in the Eastern zone of Tanzania mainland. The two LGAs are among the 114 that implemented the Education Sector Development (ESDP) in the country. The two LGAs were selected on convenience grounds. As the study was for academic purpose, and owing to the fact that the time and financial resources for the study were limited, I had to ensure that I accomplish the study within the time and financial resource constraints. I evaluated various options that could minimise fieldwork costs and at the same time ensure high quality, and at last I decided to select Morogoro Municipality (where I live) and Mvomero District Council, a rural district which neighbours Morogoro Municipality. But again the two LGAs seemed to be too big for me to manage with the resource and time constraints. So I selected one school from each LGA for detailed analysis and comparison.

4.3 Research approach

Research approach is a general orientation to the conduct of social research. It can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed. Quantitative research approach is meant for theory testing. This is achieved through deduction; that is, by specifying narrow hypotheses from a particular theory and collecting data to support or refute the hypotheses. This is what Creswell refers to as the “*post positivist worldview*” (Creswell 2009:16). Usually, surveys and experimental designs take the quantitative approach and are characterised by many study variables and large samples. In contrast, qualitative research approach seeks to establish meaning of a

phenomenon from the view of participants/subjects. Collection and analysis of data takes the form of inductive approach, where data is used to develop theory. Qualitative approach is concerned with sufficiency in the depth and insight for theoretical explanation of a phenomenon rather than statistical explanation. In that view, small variables and few variables are included to allow for in-depth study, as for case studies. The mixed approach is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Basically, the mixed methods approach attempts to minimise the disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods and tries to apply the advantages of each. For example, while the use of qualitative methods helps in understanding phenomena from the respondent's perspective, quantitative methods increase analytical rigor by statistical generalisations and conclusions.

In this study, I used qualitative approach in order to get an in-depth insight of how the devolved education management system in Tanzania works by capturing the subjects' feelings and perspectives in that regard (Taylor 1985). The study was exploratory and inductive in nature, focusing on recent primary educational management reforms in Tanzania. It sought to carry out an in depth study of the school committees, focusing on the extent to which they are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills and how they interact with the other actors involved in the school management processes I attempted to map out the school management processes and depict the patterns of communication and resource mobilization for the purpose of ascertaining the extent to which the entire framework makes the school committees effective institutions for managing the primary education at the grassroots level.

The main advantages accrued from the use of qualitative approach in this study were first; it enabled me to study the school management machinery (the school committees at large) deeply. For example, it was possible to explore specific issues in detail. Just to mention one, I was able to understand the key actors in school management at the local level, their key roles and relationships. Second, the approach permitted data collection from a variety of stakeholders and sources (triangulation of methods and sources) hence, making the data more reliable. Third, the informants involved in the study got unlimited opportunity to tell their story through harmonious discussions in focus groups and face to face interviews. The interviews provided me with a room to probe relations between actors (school committee, parents, LGA officials and so on) and capture individual feelings of the school committee members on their competences, problems and preferences. Through probing, I followed the

clues until I was convinced that all possible questions concerning emerging issues were answered. The study was rather flexible than rigid. New insights emerged and some questions changed as the investigation progressed.

4.4 Research design

Research design entails a research strategy/practical guide followed in executing a research project. The design for this study was a case study design (Yin 2003), involving comparison of two primary schools selected from two local authorities, one in urban and another in rural (district) were involved. By comparing cases, it becomes possible to make statements about empirical regularities and evaluate/interpret cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria (King et. al 1994; Ragin 1994). In this study, the cases compared were generally, the two local authorities (Urban vs. Rural), a comparison that narrowed down to two schools; one from each LGA. The two schools are government (public) primary schools, which are in principle community-based schools under the decentralisation-by-devolution policy. They are located in the same regional authority (Morogoro), with similar structures set under central guidance of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and the Prime Minister's Office- Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG). The decision to carry out a comparative study of the two schools was based on the need to uncover the levels of participation of the local communities in the urban and rural contexts. The study was also meant to come up with an explanation as whether the differences in community contexts (urban and rural) have anything to do with the competences and effectiveness of their respective school committees.

4.5 Target population, selection of participants and the sample size

4.5.1 Target population

The participants of the study were selected from the pupils, parents, teachers, school committees, and village /'mtaa' council leaders and officials the Municipal and District Education Officers. The aim was to ensure that data collected at least provide view points from the main stakeholders. However, the target population for the study was not considered in strict terms as it is usually done in quantitative research, where a sampling frame has to be specified. This was not the case because qualitative studies do not seek to ensure representativeness for statistical generalization but rather, analytical generalization.

4.5.2 Selection of participants

I usually prefer using the term ‘selection’ to ‘sampling’ when dealing with sampling in qualitative studies. The reason behind my inclination is to differentiate qualitative from quantitative studies. However, I do agree with those scholars who are of the view that both qualitative and quantitative studies require sampling, only the approaches to obtaining the sample differ. People, events, activities, times, and documents may be sampled when dealing with qualitative research, but the sampling should be purposeful rather than random as is for quantitative research (Marshall and Rossman 1999). To me, purposeful sampling is nothing but selection of elements to be included in the study based on certain criteria. Using the term ‘selection’ in my opinion, helps to clarify what ‘sampling’ in qualitative research entails and avoids confusion with that used in quantitative research.

With regard to the study therefore, I used purposeful selection of participants (Patton 1990). All the participants and areas of the study were selected purposefully. The two selected local government authorities I have pointed out earlier were selected from Morogoro region in eastern part of Tanzania. I chose the two local authorities for my convenience because first of all, I live in Morogoro Municipality and second, the headquarters of the two LGAs are close to one another (the headquarters of the two LGAs are 60 kilometres apart). Owing to the fact that I was constrained both in terms of time and money, it was rational to make that decision because it would be easy to wake up in the morning for data collection and return back home in the evening. In addition to obtaining data from each of the two LGA’s education offices, I chose one school from each LGA for the purpose of committee members, parents, pupils, Ward Education Coordinators, Village/ ‘Mtaa’ leaders and the Municipal and District Education Officers were included in the study. The reason behind was that these persons appeared to have the relevant information for answering the research questions.

4.5.3 Sample size

Owing to the exploratory nature of qualitative research, I did not specify the study sample in strict terms, as it could lead to an important person, variable, or unit of analysis being overlooked. Sampling in this case, aimed at obtaining adequate data (from appropriate sources) to address the research question. However, an initial sample size was considered based on the selection criteria (getting appropriate persons for the required data), but was

modified as the study unfolded (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The total number of participants included in the study was thirty two (32); involving sixteen (16) from either case as categorized in table 3 below. The respondents included one (1) Education officer from each of the two LGAs, two (2) Ward Education Coordinators (one from each of the wards in which the two schools were chosen), eighteen (18) school committee members (9 from each of the 2schools involved), two (2) parents from each of the two school communities, two (2) pupils from each school, one (1) Village Executive Officer from Mvomero District and one (1) ‘Mtaa’ Executive Officer for Luhungo. The reason for including the six categories of sample elements was that I considered them to be the most appropriate sources of data that the study sought to explore.

Table 5: Sample size

| S/N | Morogoro Municipal Council | | Mvomero District Council | | Total |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Category | Participants | Category | Participants | |
| 1. | Municipal Education Officer | 1 | District Education Officer | 1 | 2 |
| 2. | Ward Education Coordinator | 1 | Ward Education Coordinator | 1 | 2 |
| 3. | 1 school committee | 9 | 1 school committee | 9 | 18 |
| 4. | Parents | 2 | Parents | 2 | 4 |
| 5. | Pupils | 2 | Pupils | 2 | 4 |
| 6. | ‘Mtaa’ Executive Officer | 1 | Village Executive Officer | 1 | 2 |
| | Total | 16 | Total | 16 | 32 |

Source: Research proposal, May 2009.

4.6 Data collection methods

4.6.1 Direct observation

This was done in line with the other methods of primary data collection (i.e. Interview, focus group discussion and documentary analysis). According to Yin, observation helps to reveal some relevant behaviours and conditions (Yin 2003). Observation was done to see how local communities participate in school development activities, meetings and other interactions. During FGDs and interviews I observed the way people were free in making their arguments both in and outside the groups. This enabled me to explain how different categories of

community members were represented the school committees and how they actually participated.

4.6.2 Interview

An interview is a method of collecting qualitative data, where researcher attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to grasp the meaning of people's experiences so as to uncover their lived world before providing scientific explanations (Kvale 1996). Interviews attempt to capture things we that we cannot capture through observation. In the study, interviews were conducted to the individual school committee members, parents, pupils and the education officials. An in-depth interview was conducted to the District Education Officer, Ward Education Coordinators, teachers, parents and pupils. The interview was semi-structured to permit probing for comprehensive answers (Kvale 1996). The questions were open-ended to enable interviewees give their opinions/suggestions freely. This was useful in capturing broad information as well as feelings.

4.6.3 Focus group discussion (FGD)

Along with the other methods of data collection, the study obtained data through discussion with the school committee members using "*focus group discussions*" (Creswell 2009:179);(Kvale 1996). According to Bryman (2004), a focus group is a small and homogenous group of six (6) to ten (10) or twelve (12) people meant for gathering data for a particular research topic through discussion. However, there have been varying recommendations as to the optimum group size for effective focus group discussion. For instance, while Bloor *et.al* (2001:26) recommends a group of 6 to 8 participants, group sizes ranging from 3 to 14 participants have also been reported to have successfully been used (Bloor *et. al* 2001). Therefore this is to say that there is no an exactly agreed group size. However, decisions with regard to the number of people to be included in any focus group discussion will at large be determined by the prevailing situations and should strive to recruit an optimum number of participants for effective focus group discussion. In the study, FGD was used for collecting data from the School Committees. Each school committee had less than ten (10) participants and therefore, easy to manage. Through FGDs, data including feelings, perceptions and general comments were captured. In addition, the data were analyzed as the discussions continued; as focus group discussion permits some degree of analysis of data by the group members themselves (Kvale

1996) and provide some checks and balances that are crucial in ensuring that false or extreme views are weeded out (Patton 1990). In the study, FGDs offered an excellent way to get people talk, and allowed for cross-checking (this constitutes part of analysis). Group members (school committee members) were able to correct if somebody did not remember or else did not provide arguments or answers in a way that did not satisfy the group. However, in either school committee, women were few, and could not express their views as openly as men. In both FGDs, I tried to ‘encourage’ every member to express their concerns without doubting whether they were contrary to the contents of the ‘discourse on table’ or conventional ‘community transcription’ acceptable by to others in the group. This made the FGDs good means for obtaining data. In addition, I decided to use individual interviews after the FGDs to give more room for individuals who might have been unable to talk freely in the group; and also to capture skipped information.

4.6.4 Documentary review

This was the major method for gathering the secondary data. Secondary data for the study were collected from the various reports from the two schools, Village Council Offices and the District and Municipal education offices. Data were obtained also obtained from pieces of legislation such as the Education Act, 1978 and its 1995 amendment. Other documents reviewed included policies and guidelines; for example the Education and Training policy, the Procurement manual for the primary schools (URT 2002a) and the ESDP/PEDP document (URT 2001). Documentary review was geared towards obtaining data related to statutory and policy issues, such as the establishment, composition and roles of school committees, procurement of school materials, financial control and so on. Documentary analysis provided adequate data to complement the primary data collected during field work.

4.7 Data analysis and presentation

Data analysis in this study basically started in the field particularly during interviews and the focus group discussions as it can be seen in appendices I (a) and (b). This was based on the fact that data analysis in qualitative inquiry starts right from the beginning of the study until it is completed (Cobb and Forbes 2002). Qualitative methods were used to further analyze the data after the elementary analysis in the field. Content analysis was used to analyze verbal and written information (such as reports) to get an interpretation of their meaning. This was aimed to be used to analyze the data collected through focus group discussions, individual interviews

and documents. Presentation of data was done through narration and tables. However, tabulation was just for a matter of organisation and enhancement of clarity, and was by no means intended to change the study to quantitative.

4.8 Addressing the issues of validity and reliability

While validity refers to the quality that an instrument used in research is: accurate, correct, true, meaningful and right (Guba and Lincoln 1998); reliability refers to the degree of consistence within which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer but in different occasions (Hammersley 1990). Silverman argues that one must show his/her audience that the procedures used in a particular study were both reliable and valid before thinking about concluding his/her research dissertation (Silverman 2000).

To enhance validity, I decided to embark on a number of strategies. First, I employed multiple sources of data (triangulation of methods and persons). In triangulation of methods, more than one method of data collection was used. This strategy did not only increase the depth of exploring, but also it enhanced accuracy. For example, in exploring the issue of access to information by the school committees and community members, I interviewed the participants and also review documents available such as reports, policies, and circulars. This justified the answers obtained from the interviews. I also used observation to test and fill out accounts given in interviews. Triangulation of persons on the other hand, was an important strategy I used to ensure that data on a particular issue were obtained from different people such as school committee members, parents, pupils and education officers. The ultimate goal here was to minimise biasness. Second, I ensured that all the instruments prepared were checked by both my research supervisor and my fellow master's students. Indeed, their comments (during the Research Field seminars) were useful and made me refine my instruments by adding, removing or maintaining some items.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Much as the Social Science Research involves collecting data from and about people, it has to adhere to ethical and professional codes of conduct to safeguard the rights of the participants and enhance trustworthiness of the findings. Ethical issues may arise in the process of soliciting, recording and using data from respondents. These include: obtaining permission to access the organization that one intends to research, ensuring voluntary participation,

informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Silverman 2000).

With regard to obtaining permission to access the areas of study, I sought introduction letters from the University of Bergen and Mzumbe University in Tanzania, which were very much helpful in speeding up the release of permission letters from the authorities. During field work, I asked the people to participate in the study voluntarily, and gave them a clear explanation of why I was carrying out the study. This was important in establishing confidence to the respondents on how the information they provided would be used. The study also involved some voice-recordings during the interviews. All voice-recordings were done after obtaining consent of the participants, and guaranteeing them they would be handled with maximum confidentiality. In addition privacy and anonymity of individual respondents was highly taken care of to ensure that they were free to give their opinions and feelings.

4.10 Concluding remarks for the chapter

The chapter elaborated the methodological aspects of the study, i.e. the methods and instruments used in data collection and the way analysis and interpretation of the data were done. As I pointed out earlier in the chapter, this study was mainly qualitative and for that matter, the methodology as a rule involved the use of various methods in collecting data as discussed in the “methods” part of the chapter.

During the study, I learnt three important methodological lessons. The first one was that qualitative research requires a flexible methodology. It often involves going back and forth during the inquiry process. I remember there were some instances where I had to go back to the field to gather data for some emerging issues. This experience provides a crucial lesson that planning a study (i.e. methodological plan) at the proposal stage is comparatively an easier task than putting it into action during field work. The second lesson was about the importance of adopting multiple data collection methods. In this study I used in-depth interviews and Focus group discussions as the main methods for collecting the primary data. The two were supported by observation and document review. The advantages I accrued from this triangulation of methods were actually many. However, the most important one was the easiness of checking for consistency of the data and hence making them more reliable. The third lesson was that in qualitative research methodology, the researcher and the respondents are in constant interaction in a less relationship. This creates a friendly environment for the respondents to answer researcher’s questions more freely.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study; which have been generated through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, observation and documentary review. The findings of the study are presented along with the attempt to answer the main research question of the study: “Are the school committees empowered and effective? More precisely, the findings chapter seeks to answer the following operational research questions:-

- a) How do school committees receive and disseminate information/feedback to the school communities and other stakeholders in the district and urban authorities in Tanzania?
- b) To what extent the school committees are inclusive of the various groups in the local communities?
- c) What are the capabilities of the school committees in terms of financial resources, knowledge and skills of the individual members? Are there any differences between school committees in the rural and urban committees in terms of capabilities?
- d) What is the level of commitment/willingness of individual members of school committees to work as representatives of the school communities in the management of schools at the local levels?
- e) To what extent school committees have autonomy when it comes to decision making and implementation at the local level in the rural and urban authorities?
- f) To what extent school committees are effective institutions for managing primary education at the local levels?

5.2 Establishment, Composition and leadership of school committees

School committees are established under section 39 of the Education Act, 1978 as amended in 1995. The Act clearly stipulates that: “*There shall be established a school committee for every pre -primary and primary school responsible for the management and maintenance of the school*” (URT 1995b.S.39:1). The regulations stipulate that a school committee should have 9 to 11 members, of which 7 are elected members (5 from parents and 2 from teaching staff). The remaining 2 to 4 are ex- officio or co-opted members. There is no requirement that authorities should formally approve the members. As per the establishing regulations, the

school committee is led by a chairperson who is elected from among the members of the committee elected by the parents while the secretary of the school committee is the school head teacher. The current requirements insist that the school committee chairpersons should have a minimum of ordinary level secondary school education. However, in practice, only few committees have so far managed to get people with such qualifications. In the two school committees involved in this study, the chairpersons had primary education qualifications.

5.3 Election and office tenure of school of the school committees

The study examined the procedures followed in forming school committees in Morogoro Municipality and Mvomero District Council in general and specifically compared the actual practice of the two chosen primary schools from the two local authorities. The intention was to examine the extent to which election of school committees adhered to the established requirements; and the extent to which the committees originate from the people themselves.

In both Morogoro municipality and Mvomero District Council, the education officials pointed out during interviews that the election process for school committees is left to the schools and the village government; as the DEO for Mvomero District explained:-

We are operating in the era of decentralisation by-devolution, and therefore the whole process of electing school committees is vested to the respective school communities in collaboration with the village governments. My office through the Ward Education Coordinators in each Ward has the responsibility of ensuring that the process is properly and timely done in accordance with the established rules and procedures.

The operating framework of the school committees that is in place is a pedigree of the PEDP policy that was instituted in 2002 which broadened the tasks of school committees, giving them more autonomy and enhancing their accountability to the local communities. An Education official from Morogoro Municipality had this to say:

Following the launching of the Primary Education Development Plan in 2002, school committees have been strengthened and assigned a wider scope of responsibilities/roles than ever in their history of existence. While in the past they were there to serve a symbolic role of bridging relationships between the schools and their respective local communities, this time they more responsibilities and powers have been conferred the school committees to enable them plan and implement local level initiatives in the management and development of their respective schools.

The findings from the two school committees confirmed that District and/or Municipal Education Officers did not influence the election process of committee members. In addition, the Ward (sub-district) Education Coordinators were not key facilitators of the election process. As it was noted from the focus group discussions, the election of school committees was organized in a variety of ways. There was a clear cut role of village/ 'mtaa' governments

in organizing the committee members' elections. The two committees attributed a leading role to the village/ 'mtaa' government in organising the election of school committees; or even preparing a list of candidates from which parents could elect. This was contrary to the procedural requirement which stipulates that the election of school committee members should be in the hands of general parents' meetings, and the village/ 'mtaa' governments are only overseers of the process. The findings also revealed that local actors and factors primarily determined the nomination and election processes. That is, candidates could be pre-selected by the village government, register individually, or proposed in the election meeting by the members of the community. It was also noted that there was a lot of flexibility in the election methods. For instance; members' election could be by hand-raising or by secret ballot depending on the agreement by the community members during the Election Day.

With regard to the office tenure, elected school committee serves for a period of three (3) calendar years. This was pointed out by both the Morogoro Municipal Education officer and the DEO for Mvomero District Council, and confirmed by the members of the two school committees.

5.4 Committees' access to Information

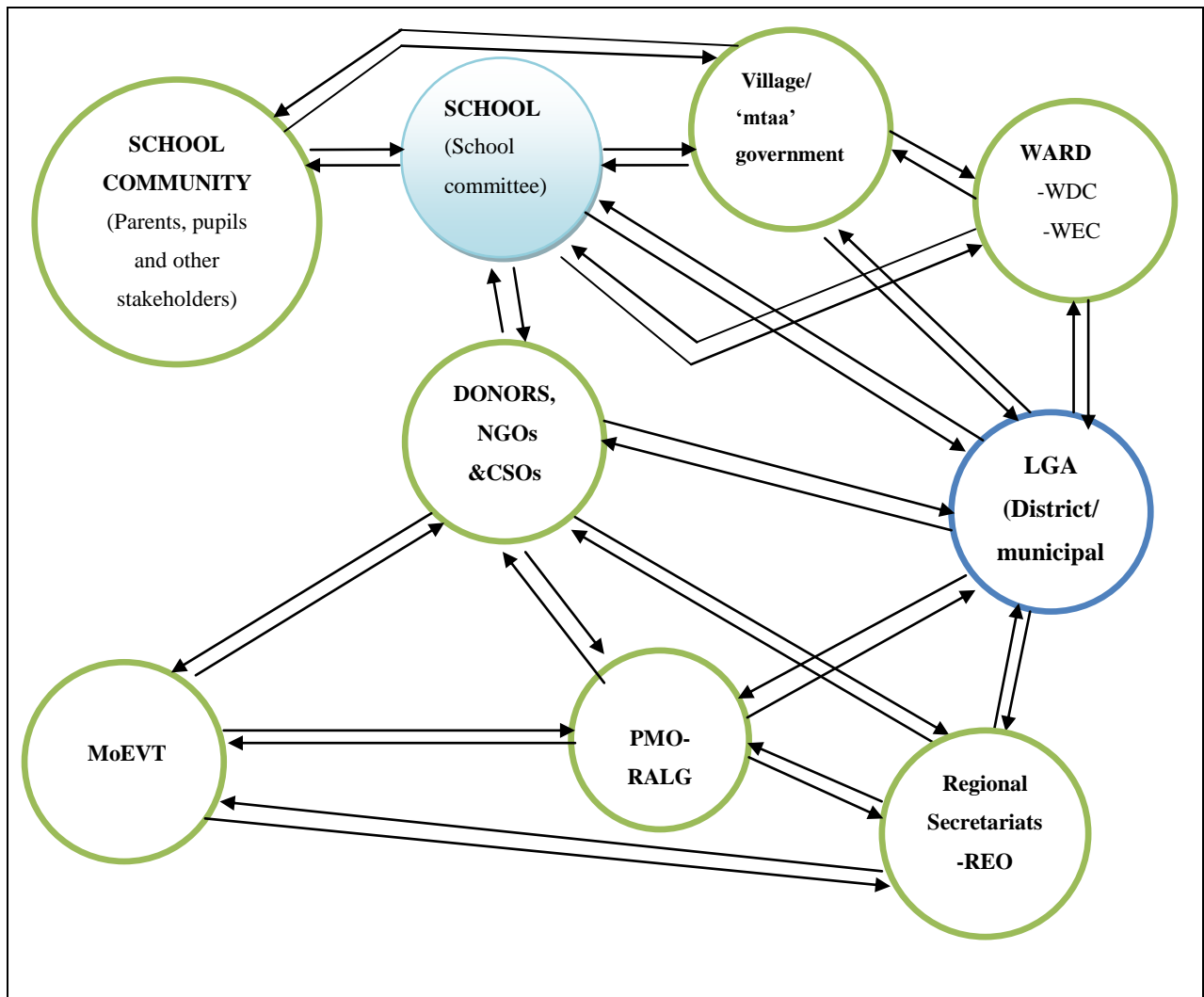
Empowerment and effectiveness of the school committees in managing education involves multi-lateral communications and two-way power relations among the stakeholders. One of the independent variables that I indicated in my analytical framework as key for empowerment of local communities was access to information (figure 4). Information is an important input in making decisions. It helps in determining various possible options/alternatives by analysing the feasibility of each alternative in terms of cost, time, and compatibility with socio-economic and cultural contexts and so on. Information in this context, may include experience, skill, knowledge, implicit (tacit) knowledge, and information about what is going on in the community projects; for instance in a community school. Information sharing was one of the main concerns of this study due to the fact that well-informed stakeholders can make good (well informed) decisions and participate effectively in implementing educational policies and school development plans (URT 2001).

Under the decentralised educational management system in Tanzania, school committee is a vital institution that links the local community to the other education stakeholders. It is basically an important vehicle for planning, management and monitoring of school

development activities at the local level. In order to accomplish these roles effectively, the committee needs adequate information from various stakeholders as an important input for making informed decisions and /or choices. On the other hand, information flow (i.e. feedback) from the school committees particularly to the school communities and other stakeholders in the education sector with regard to implementation of school development activities, resources used, challenges and future plans is essential for enhancing democratic participation, accountability and local ownership. Information in the conceptual framework is an independent (determinant) variable for effectiveness of the school committees.

During the fieldwork, I examined how information sharing took place among the various stakeholders of education, my ultimate concern being to examine the adequacy of information sharing between the school committees and the other stakeholders and its implication to the effectiveness of the committees in executing their functions. Documentary review and individual interviews to school committee members, village/ 'mtaa' executive secretaries, pupils and parents in the two schools were used to examine how information sharing took place between the school committees and other education stakeholders. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the interactions among the important educational stakeholders (the school committees, local communities, village/ 'mtaa' government, the ward, the LGA and non-governmental organizations / CSOs); that was constructed in the light of institutional framework for management of the primary education in Tanzania and the insights drawn from the interviews.

Figure 7: Interactions between the school committees and other stakeholders



Source: Constructed from the field data (June & July, 2009)

5.4.1 School committee and the local community

School committees represent their respective local communities in decision making processes at the local level. In each local community, the school committee is responsible for planning and pursuing local level educational development initiatives, performing general oversight roles and integrating the community to the school and the educational management system at large. During field work in Mvomero District and Morogoro Municipality, I noted that there was a well designed institutional framework for management of the primary education from the national (ministerial) to the grassroots (village/ 'mtaa') levels where the schools are (see figure 2). Although the institutional framework seemed to be potential for enhancing access to information through the continual interactions among the stakeholders, I noted some inadequacies in communication between the local communities and school communities from

the responses of various interviewees. Here is one parent's response with regard to how the local school community in Mvomero district interacted with the school committee:

Our school committee does not give us regular information about what is going on in the school. They normally report to the village, ward and district leaders in most cases but not directly to us. When there is a village assembly meeting it is usually the right time for us to be informed about the school progress ...I think the school committees need to have their own ways of communicating to us; which are more frequent of course.

Another local community member from the urban school had a different opinion with regard to information sharing between the school committee and the local community. To her, the inadequacy in access to information by the local community members was a result of their reluctance to attend meetings in the school claiming to have too many pre-occupations. Here is her remark:

Mr. Researcher, I feel guilty to accuse the school committee for not informing us about various developments in our school. I know very little about that ...I do not remember any single day I have managed to attend a meeting at the school although they are often announced. During those meetings I am usually busy with my small business at the municipal market; or even when I am not very much occupied with that, I feel no importance of attending... This is likely the same to others. "We don't have time" is always our excuse. That is why I say this is our own fault for not attending the meetings in the school!

From the rural school community, one parent commented that the school committee represented the local community as a whole in the school decision making processes; hence it was the committee which was supposed to be well informed about the policy and day-to-day issues at the school on behalf of the community as a whole. The following is a caption of what he thought should be the main concern:

I hope you know the essence of having the school committees in place is that local communities need to be fully represented in the school decision making processes, as the whole community cannot do that. Given that the school committee has been elected from among us, I don't see why I should bother much about being informed about what is going on in the school. They will inform us! And whatever they come up with as a decision is legitimate and trustworthy under representative democracy.

From the three quotes above, there is evidence of inadequacy in information flow between the local communities and school committees attributed to lack of interest on the part of local communities to seek information; and also inadequate mechanisms for information flow from the school to the local communities. From the responses during interviews and focus group discussions, the two school committees appeared to be more accountable to the local and district authorities than to the local communities which are central to all development processes.

5.4.2 School committee and the village/ 'mtaa' government

The study findings show that school committees interact directly with the village/ 'mtaa' government (leadership) in planning and implementing various school development activities, daily oversight of the school activities and mobilisation of local communities for participation in school development activities. Information- sharing between the school committee and village/ 'mtaa' government takes place through meetings, reports and deliberate contacts as shown in table 7. When asked to explain how the village government shared information with the school committee, the village chairperson from Mvomero District (rural) responded that:

During the school committee's meetings, the village chairperson and/or VEO always sit in the committee as invitees. In this way, the village government becomes informed of what happens in the school; ... the activities and future plans of the school committees. So I can tell you that the village government and the school committee work closely together and therefore information sharing between them is part and parcel of their work.

The head teacher for the urban school (in Morogoro Municipality) had a similar remark that information sharing between the school committee and the village/ 'mtaa' leadership, and the following was his comment:

The school committee is always accountable to the 'mtaa' government with regard to management of development activities in the school. They are supposed to prepare and submit on regular basis, progress reports of various school development projects to the village / 'mtaa' government. They are also supposed to report to the village / 'mtaa' government any important procedural decisions reached by the school committee especially with regard to pupils' discipline.

From the rural school (in Mvomero District), the head teacher of the selected school remarked as follows:

In line with my administrative role as the head of school and accounting officer for the school funds, I am also the secretary of the school committee. The school committee chairperson and I are normally invited to all village government meetings, where we give reports on the progress of various activities in the school. In the same way, we also get information from the village government about their plans and also some education information from the ward and district authorities. This is how we depend on each other for information.

From the above quotes, it implies that the provisions for interactions between school committees and the village/mtaa leadership (meetings, reports etc) serve as the potential for constant information sharing between the school committees and the local level leadership.

5.4.3 The school committee and the Ward Administration

The Ward is an administrative unit of the Local Government System comprising of a number of villages or neighbourhoods ('mtaa'). These administrative units are meant for coordination of

LGAs' development activities. With regard to the education sector the ward administration under the coordination of the Ward Education Coordinator (WEC) work closely with the village/ 'mtaa' leaders and school committees to promote educational development in their areas of jurisdiction. During data collection for this thesis, I examined how the two school committees share information with the Ward administration. The main observation was that the WECs were important coordinating agents for educational development activities at the local levels. I interviewed one school committee member from each of the two schools and the two WECs from the Wards where the two schools were selected for the purpose of examining the means and adequacy of information flow between the school committees and the Ward administration. Here are two interesting quotes I captured, the first being that from the urban school committee member who informed that:

The Ward Education Coordinator is an important link between the school and the Municipal Authorities. For example, when there is any new communication from the Municipal Education Office, the WEC circulates it. Where clarifications are needed, he helps in doing that. He also coordinates planning, budgeting and reporting by compiling and submitting them to the Municipal Education Office, hence, facilitating two-way information flow between the Municipal Education Office and the schools.

From the Ward Education Coordinator for Mzingo Ward in Morogoro Municipality, the following is what I captured:

The Ward administration is meant to bring the Municipal administrative authority close to the people at the local levels, and coordinate all development activities in their areas of jurisdiction. As the coordinator for education matters in the Ward, I usually receive policy and directive information from the Municipal Office, translate, disseminate and coordinate its implementation consistently to all schools in my Ward. Remember also that we have the WDC which is composed of both elected and appointed councilors and other members who set development targets and priorities consistent with those of Municipality. My concern is to coordinate implementation of education-related targets and priorities in my Ward.

From the two quotes above it is evident that the School committee enjoy an environment of enhanced access to information that has been created by the Ward administration as an intermediate institutional framework that bridges the administrative gap between the LGAs and the schools. The quotes show that there are adequate provisions for information access in the institutional framework.

5.4.4 The school committees and the LGAs

LGAs being the principal actors in educational delivery function under the devolved system in Tanzania are charged with the responsibility of linking (under the coordination of the RS) the local communities to the ministries responsible for educational policy decisions (the MoEVT

and PMO-RALG). To accomplish this role successfully, provisions for both direct and indirect information flow mechanisms have been put in place. With regard to direct communication, the schools receive and send information directly to the LGA (City, Municipal, Town or District Council as the case may be) through their respective school committees. Such kind of information flow involves among others, sending school development budget proposals to the LGAs for approval and funding; where on approval, the funds are directly deposited to the school account. In the same way, accounts for the spent funds are reported directly to the LGA. There are also some ministerial guidelines and policy information that flow directly to the school from the LGAs for ensuring uniformity of practices and effectiveness at the local levels. The head teacher for the rural school in Mvomero District who is also the secretary for the school committee confirmed this to me (emphasizing on how educational information was more accessible at the school level than it used to be before. The following is a quote from his words:

The devolution of authority and school management responsibilities to the school level under the supervision of the school committee, there have been direct linkages between the District Education Office and the school with regard to information flow, funding and reporting. School funds are directly deposited to the school account, so we receive various ministerial guidelines from the District Education Office, for example this document here (he showed me a Procurement manual that was translated in Swahili language) which we use as our guide in procuring school materials, construction tendering accounting and so on. Therefore, I can say that school committees are adequately informed of what they are supposed to do and the way things should be done.

From the quote above, it is evident that school committees were properly linked to their respective LGAs that serve to translate the ministerial policies and plans for the primary education development into specific local level plans that individual schools use for developing their own plans.

5.4.5 School committees and NGOs/CSOs

NGOs /CSOs are among the broad range of actors that play a key role in the governance of the primary education. The recent education reforms have increased space/opportunity for NGO engagement in education development at various levels. This has enabled NGOs/CSOs to exchange information with local communities especially through the school committees. They also play an important role in informing the general public about various educational issues at the local levels, and also the importance of participating in local level educational development activities (Makongo 2003).

During the study, it was noted that NGOs/CSOs played an important role in educational development through resource mobilization, organizational and institutional capacity building especially with the school committees and school heads; teachers' development, advocacy and many more. Some examples of the NGOs that have recorded important contribution to the enhancement of primary education in Tanzania include the World Vision, Oxfam, *HakiElimu* (Swahili name meaning 'Education Right'), *Pamoja* (Swahili name meaning 'Together') and *Maarifa ni Ufunguo* (Swahili name meaning 'Knowledge is the key') just to mention a few. The head teacher for the urban school (in Morogoro Municipality) recognized the role of NGOs /CSOs in informing the school committee and the community at large on their roles and responsibilities in the whole process of enhancing educational development in their respective areas; and below is a caption of his remark:

From the Government's primary education institutional framework, one can learn that the role of NGOs and CSOs has been well articulated. In the course of implementing the education reforms, increased space and opportunity for NGO engagement in education development at various levels has been witnessed. Civil Societies, NGOs, CSOs and other actors play an important role in informing the public about the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) and the importance of participation of the general public in education development. For example, HakiElimu is doing a remarkable job in promoting access to information to the school committees and local communities through translation of policy documents into simple brochures that can be easily understood and also through the media; the NGO sensitizes citizens about various issues of educational governance

From the quote above, it is apparent that the role of NGOs/CSOs in educational governance is paramount. This is an indication that the government is no longer dominating but rather, employing an empowering approach in the process of planning and implementing educational development projects in the country by actively involving multiple stakeholders both inside and outside the government operating systems.

Table 6: Information sharing (school committees and other stakeholders at the LGA level)

| Relationship | Means of information sharing |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School committee & Local communities | -Formal: Public meetings with community members and written communications to individual parents informing them about various decisions made or planned school development activity like classroom construction and so on. -Informal: Local community members' informal contacts with the school committee leaders & the school |
| School committee & village/ 'mtaa' government | -Formal: Routine and ad hoc meetings, school development and financial reports & School committee meeting minutes -Informal : Deliberate contacts between the village/ 'mtaa' leaders and the school committee leaders |
| School committee & the Ward (WDC and the Ward Administration) | -Formal: Meetings & briefings between the Ward Education Coordinator and the school committees, reports from the school committees, written communication/directives from the Ward Executive Officer, Meetings with respective councilors -Informal: WEOs, Councilors & WEOs visiting the schools in their respective wards informally |
| School committee & the Local Government Authorities | -Formal: Written communications (Guidelines developed from translation of educational policies and directives, performance feedback, allocation of funds to the schools, etc.); Reports and plans from the school committees are sent to the LGA's Education department -Informal: Through informal contacts with the councilors in the respective wards |
| Intra-School committee interactions | -Formal:- Regular and ad-hoc meetings -Informal: Interactions between school committee members and their leaders and teachers ; and among the school committee members themselves |

Source: Document reviews (URT, 2001) and field data from MVDC and MMC Education Offices and the 2 school committees (June/July, 2009)

Information includes both knowledge about the policies and plans; as well as requisite skills to accomplish assigned roles. As seen from table 6 above, school committees share information with other stakeholders through formal and informal communication mechanisms. The key formal methods through which information sharing takes place between the school committees and other stakeholders include meetings, reports, briefings, directives and organised training/workshops; whereas informal means of information sharing include spontaneous interactions. This is an indication that there are well established institutional frameworks for enhancing access to information which is an important element for enhancing local level decision making power.

5.5 Information sharing between LGAs, Regional and Ministerial authorities

LGAs are the focal points for coordinating development activities and service delivery under the devolved system in Tanzania. With regard to the Primary Education; the LGAs (District, Town, Municipal and City Councils) are charged with the responsibility of supervising the education delivery and infrastructure development within their areas of jurisdiction. LGAs therefore provide linkage between the local communities and the Central Government. My concern during the study was to examine how the LGAs share information with the Regional Secretariats, the two ministries responsible for managing primary education and the NGOs/CSOs; for the purpose of examining the adequacy of information sharing between these key actors. Table 7 below summarizes the ways through which information sharing takes place between the LGAs and other stakeholders.

Table 7: Information sharing (LGAs and the R S, PMO-RALG, MoEVT & the NGOs/CSOs)

| Relationship | Means of information sharing |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LGAs & the MoEVT | Communications to and from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) are formally done through policy documents, directives/guidelines and circulars. On the other hand, communications from the LGAs to the MoEVT is done through reports, minutes and official correspondence (letters, fax and internet). Workshops/seminars are also key methods through which MoEVT disseminate information to the LGAs. For issues requiring immediate action or clarification from the ministry level, telephone communication is used. |
| LGAs & the PMO-RALG | Communications between the PMO-RALG and LGAs take place through directives/guidelines, circulars, reports, minutes, workshops/seminars, official correspondence, and telephone for issues requiring immediate action. |
| LGAs & the Regional Secretariat | The regional education office communicates education information to all lower levels and also feedback /concerns from the LGAs and communities to the national levels. Regional Secretariats and Local Government Authorities share information through formal and informal means (official correspondence, minutes, reports, seminars/workshops). Meetings between the LGA staff and Regional Secretariat serve as an important means of information sharing between the LGAs and the RS. |
| LGAs and NGOs/CSOs | Communications between NGOs /CSOs and the LGAs takes place outside the government hierarchy. It takes place through official correspondence, meetings, reports, seminars/workshops and deliberate contacts/visits. |

Source: Document reviews (URT, 2001) and field data from MVDC and MMC Education Offices (June/July, 2009)

5.6 The inclusiveness of the school committees

In addition to interviewing the District and Municipal Education officials on the establishment procedures, composition and roles of school committees in two local authorities (Mvomero District Council and Morogoro Municipality); I visited two school committees (one in each local authority) for the purpose of exploring the actual practice. The methodological approach to both school committees was mainly Focus group discussion, complemented by individual interviews to individual committee members. The main idea was to ascertain the extent to which establishment, composition and representation of various groups conformed to the rules and regulations, i.e. the Education Act, 1978 as amended in 1995 and the guidelines (URT 1995b.). The focus group discussions and individual interviews were administered to the two school committees at different times. The concern was to get insights from the committee members themselves with regard to how in practice the committees are formed, their composition/representativeness, responsibilities and office tenure. It was found that the two school committees conformed to the procedural requirements. In both cases, the representation of parents, teachers, and other members of the community was taken into consideration.

Table 8: Characteristics of the two school committees (composition)

| School committee's context | Sample size | Categories of members | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|---|--------|---|------------------|---|
| | | Parents : n= 5 | | Teachers: n= 2 | | Pupils | | Ex- officio: n=2 | |
| | | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Urban | 9 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | - | - | 2 | - |
| Rural | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - |
| Total | 18 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 4 | - |

Source: Field work June/July, 2009 'n'= number of respondents; M=males; F=females

As indicated in table 8, the local communities constituted the majority in each of the two school committees. Parents in both committees constituted 5 members out of 9 which is equal to 56%. This is in concurrence with the Education Act, 1978's stipulation (as amended in 1995) under S.39(2)(c) which insists that the members of the School Committee representing the community served by that school shall be in the majority (URT 1995b.).

It was noted however that women representation was lower than that of men in both cases. In the rural primary school for instance, out of the 5 parents only 1 was a woman, and none of the two school committees had a female representative teacher. This was so because the

female teachers did not show up. With regard to pupils' representation, the situation was the same in both schools. None of the committees had a pupil representative though members from both committees insisted that pupils were adequately involved in the key decisions embarked on by the school committee.

In the light of the above findings, arguments can be raised that although some significant changes have so far been accrued with regard to the attempts towards empowerment of the local communities in the management of education, there have not been a great deal of radical changes from the traditional educational management approaches. For instance, there has not been adequate willingness of the fairly educated people to contest for membership in the school committees, and that is probably why 78% of the two school committees involved in this study had basic education qualifications or less; there is still considerable dominance of men over women in the committees both in their percentage representation and influence over the decision making process; pupils are still being regarded as recipients of instructions regarding management decisions and not as important stakeholders in generating decisions, and that's likely why in the two school committees none of the members was a representative from the pupils' organisation; and the head teachers continuing to be key persons responsible for accomplishing most of the school committees responsibilities on behalf of the rest of the members (though this seems to be mutually accepted by the two parties) indicate that there is a discrepancy between empowerment theory and practice.

5.6.1 Parents' perceptions and dispositions

Parents are key stakeholders in the primary educational management at the grassroots levels. Much as they are the leaders of the families from which school children originate; they are the key agents for their upbringing and socialization, though of course, socialization and upbringing of children also takes place outside the family (i.e. in the community). In an empowering approach to educational management, parents are among the other important stakeholders at the local levels for promoting effectiveness in the education delivery system. My concern during the study was to examine the roles that parents accomplish at the school community level, their disposition about empowerment and effectiveness of school committees.

"We play a big role in furthering development of our school. For example, we contribute some money to finance infrastructure development; we contribute labour force to support construction of classrooms, teachers' houses, toilets and the like." (Parent's response from the rural school community).

Another parent in the urban school community commented as follows:

What I see from the current system is that the most of the responsibilities of managing the schools have been in the hands of the school communities under the school committees and local leaders. The government is left with the key roles of employing teachers planning school curricula; allocating education development and capitation fund.

On the aspects of education delivery and learning process, the parents pointed out that they influence the process indirectly. The following quote was captured from the response from one parent from the rural school community:

In the recent years, the importance of education has been recognized by many parents. This is because of not only the fact that the government has put more emphasis on that to ensure that parents send their children to school and ensure that they complete, but also access to secondary education has increased. Nowadays, each Ward has at least one secondary school built by the local people for children to go after completion of the primary education. This has motivated us to follow up the education of our school.

With regard to the trust that parents have to the school committees and teachers, the parents pointed out that the trust on the school committees and teachers has increased with the involvement of the local committees in school governance; as one of the parents from the rural school community pointed out:

“I have more trust nowadays than before on the school committee and the teachers because I am involved in electing the school committee. This was not possible before the PEDP. One could not understand what is going on in the school because the schools were somewhere very far from the local community”

The parents also pointed out that ever since they have been involved in the educational management at the local levels through the reforms of the late 1990s and early 2000s, they have considerably transformed their mindsets in as far as ownership and control are concerned.

We have now taken ownership of the school, though not by a hundred percent. Because we built the classrooms ourselves and put in the desks, we feel that it is our school and therefore we have the responsibility of taking care of it. This was not so in the past! The school used to be sabotaged by unfaithful people who stole some of the school properties. One may not wonder that the people who did all these things came from our school community, and some of them having their children studying in the school! Now we have said NO to this sabotage and it is working very well (Parent, rural school).

Another parent from the urban school had this to say:

From the time when involvement of the people in financing and management of schools started, the cases of misuse of school funds and stealing of school property have been reduced. Although I may not be able to give you any statistical evidence on this, there is no doubt that this is what most of us feel. Now, we know that if some properties in the school are destroyed or stolen, we are the ones who will be responsible for replenishing them. That’s, why we are ready to react on any sabotage or destruction that happens in our school.

With regard to effectiveness, parents from both school communities appreciated that local level effectiveness has improved, especially with regard to infrastructure development, enrolment, completion and financial management. However, all the parents from the two communities (rural and urban) who were interviewed pointed out financial resource as one of

the major challenges to effectiveness at the local levels and that most of them were not able to contribute because of poverty.

5.6.2 Pupils' perceptions and dispositions

Four (4) pupils were interviewed (2 from each of the two schools) to examine their participation in the school committees. Consistent with what have been noted from the FGDs with school committees, the interviews to pupils revealed that they were not directly involved in school committee meetings in the two schools. Rather, they contribute ideas or raise their concerns through their Pupils 'council regarding various issues discussed in the school committees. However, this may not be regarded as a violation of the Law as the Education Act does not provide for the involvement of pupils in school committees. However, with the education reforms and specifically PEDP guidelines require pupils to participate in the school committees. With regard to their perceptions, it was noted during the interviews that pupils perceived the school committees as mainly concerned with classroom and other school infrastructure development; as one pupil from the urban school pointed out:

“Yes! I understand that we have a school committee in our school which has been doing a very good job in classroom, teachers' houses and toilet construction in our school. It does not have a lot to do with pupils' academics”.

When asked to give her feelings on the importance of pupils being informed about what is happening in their school committees, she was straight forward that it was really not necessary for them but for the teachers and parents.

I don't see any importance of me as a pupil knowing the details of what is happening in the school committee, the leadership election and so on...these might probably be of importance to our parents and teachers and not very important to us!.

In line with the above orientation, pupils from both schools informed that their school committees did not meet with them directly to explain to them various decisions taken or plans intended to be implemented. Rather, the pupils' councils received communication from the school committees through their head teachers with regard to important issues discussed in the committees, which in a way touch their interests, as one of the interviewed pupil in the rural school informed:

We don't meet with the school committees directly. When there is any decision or issue that touches our interests then the teachers tell us about this either directly or indirectly through our leaders. Our main arena for discussing our concerns that we feel should be considered by the school management is the pupils' council. I don't think that there is any need for me sitting in the school committee meetings while my parents and teachers are there! After all, I cannot challenge them in any case because of our culture.

From the above quotes, it can be seen that pupils were in most cases just informed and not practically involved in the school decision making processes. In the light of the pupils' interview responses, there is an indication that no radical changes have been made so far with regard to empowering pupils in the two schools. In addition pupils perceived themselves as obliged to be obedient to their elders (teachers and parents), and that sitting in the school committees and raising their concern implies disobedience, which is culturally a serious taboo. From this observation, it is clear that much still remains unresolved especially addressing the cultural barriers in the local communities to attain full empowerment of the local levels particularly through adequate awareness creation and advocacy.

5.6.3 Teachers' roles and dispositions

During the study, it was found that teachers work together with the school committees in ensuring that the schools achieve their academic and administrative goals. In the academic area, the teachers interviewed confirmed that their responsibility was mainly imparting knowledge and skills to the pupils and making sure that their schools achieve high rates of pupils' transition to secondary school. In the administrative role, they pointed out that they were responsible for enforcing school rules and regulations and ensuring that they were followed accordingly by all pupils. A teacher from the rural school had this to say during an interview:

During the school terms, teachers stay with the pupils for longer period than their parents. In average, teachers spend an average of eight hours a day with pupils which I think plays a big role in shaping their behavior and promoting discipline of individual pupils and the school as a whole.

Another teacher from the rural school did was of the opinion that teachers are mainly responsible for teaching. The teacher also remarked that she felt a lot of relief from non-teaching activities because the school committees performed them.

I would rather say that my responsibility as a teacher is to teach the pupils. The school committees are meant to perform management roles and we teachers carry out the teaching. If our pupils do not pass for secondary education we are the ones to be answerable. However my feeling is that we have got a lot of relief as a result of the strengthened school committees. We used to spend a lot of time in out of class activities which are now supervised by the school committee at large.

With regard to the teachers feelings about the functioning of school committees, the teachers had a feeling that the school committees have now become comparatively more powerful than before the educational reforms. However, the teachers who were interviewed insisted that most the school committees lack adequate skills, knowledge and experience on how to

manage the schools. They recommended that continuous capacity building to the school committees should be done on a continuous basis to enable the committees develop their skills and experiences for effective management of the schools.

5.7 Responsibilities and autonomy of the school committees

During the interviews, the education officials admitted that since their establishment in the late 1960s, school committees have undergone remarkable changes in as far as decision making power is concerned. For example, the Mvomero District Education Officer pointed out in an interview that:

In the early times of their establishment, school committees have been responsible for bridging the relations between communities, parents, and the schools. The circular that was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1968 confined the school committees' roles to advisory, and could by no means influence academic matters.

From the quote above, it can be seen that school committees had a relatively narrow scope of functions during the late 1960s as compared to the 2000s period. Working as sub-committees of the village governments, school committees were meant for promoting integration of the schools into the life of the community and co-operating with teachers in solving educational problems at the local levels, such as truancy of pupils. The reforms which were embarked on in the late 1990s and early 2000s increased the autonomy of school committees detaching them from the village government and widening the scope of their functions. An Education Official from Morogoro municipality remarked as follows:

In the 1970s, school committees appeared to be sub-committees of the village government, with limited role of parents. ...Nowadays, things have changed a lot. The position of parents in the committees is prominent, and they have more powers than ever over schools affairs. Today, school committees can decide on repairing of school buildings and also building new ones. They can mobilise and utilise resources from the community in collaboration with the village/ 'mtaa' government for development.

From the quote, it is evident that currently, school committees have been more community-centred than ever in the history of educational management in Tanzania. Their responsibilities have also been increased in line with decision making powers. Through the school committees, local communities play an important role in decision making over various issues pertaining to development and day to day oversight of the schools. For instance, the two school committees played an active role in community mobilisation for school infrastructure development (classrooms, teacher's houses, toilets and so on) and pupils' enrolment during the implementation of PEDP between 2002 and 2006.

5.8 School committee members' understanding of their roles

Knowledge of the roles one is supposed to accomplish and how to accomplish them are important determinants of effectiveness in role accomplishment. Individual interviews were administered to the 18 members of school committees at different times to assess the extent to which each member perceived himself/herself with regard to the extent to which they understood their roles; and how much they were capable of implementing them. The committee members were asked to assess themselves based on Low-Moderate-High scale. An interviewee was required to assess himself/herself as having a 'Low' understanding if s/he felt that her/his understanding was below 50% of the key roles. Similarly, for an interviewee who felt that his/her understanding was 50% and above but less than 70% of the key roles was asked to assess herself/himself as having 'Moderate' understanding while for those who felt that they understood 70% or more of the key roles of the school committee were asked to assess themselves as having 'High' understanding. The same procedure for assessment was done to assess the committee members' capabilities with respect to execution of the roles. Individual members of school committees were asked to assess their capabilities as 'Low' if s/he felt that s/he was able to execute less than 50% of the key functions, 'Moderate' if s/he has enough knowledge and skills to execute above 50% but less than 70% of the same; and 'High' if s/he felt that s/he is conversant with 70% or more of the roles. However I was sceptical about bias that could result from members' self- assessment. As a safeguard, I had another question at a later stage [Question 8 Appendix II(c): 'Can you mention specific roles of the school committee which you are conversant with? Can you explain a little bit what part do you play in those roles?']; to cross-check if the members really understood their roles.

Table 9: Role understanding and execution capabilities

| School context | Level of understanding | | | | Competences | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH | TOTAL | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH | TOTAL |
| Urban | - | 7 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Rural | - | 6 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| Total | - | 13 | 5 | 18 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 18 |
| Percentage | - | 72 | 28 | 100 | 61 | 17 | 18 | 100 |

Source: Individual interviews, July 2009 **Key:** 'n'= number of responses

The study found no significant differences between the two school committees with regard to their understanding on what they were expected to accomplish. It was also noted that despite low educational qualifications most of the school committee members showed a moderate

understanding of their responsibilities as it can be seen on table 9. None of the school committee members indicated a low understanding of their responsibilities. In both schools, it was found that the percentage of school committee members who moderately understood their roles was 72%. This implies that being rural or urban may not be much considered as an important criterion for the committee member's understanding of their roles. In addition, the school committee members' understanding of their roles was not affected by education levels.

However, it was observed that the implementation capabilities of the members of the two school committees were considerably low (in average 61% of the members in the two school committees admitted that they had low capabilities for accomplishing their roles). In that view, local level effectiveness in role accomplishment depends on knowledge and skills possessed by the individuals responsible for accomplishing the assigned roles. In Bangladesh for instance, poor output performance effectiveness at the local authorities was attributed to (along with some institutional factors such as weak accountability mechanisms) the Local Authorities' staff lacking the requisite qualifications in terms of skills and experience to take over the new responsibilities (Crook and Manor 1998). This implies promoting effectiveness of local level institutions (such as the school committees as for this case) in terms of role accomplishment requires adequate capacity building in terms of skills and knowledge capabilities along with other measures such as ensuring adequate resources and accountability mechanisms.

5.9 Profiles of the committees

5.9.1 Educational qualifications

During the study, the profiles of primary school committees from Morogoro municipality and Mvomero District Council were assessed in terms of educational qualifications and skills. The intention was to try to match the committees' capabilities to the roles assigned to them; and also to ascertain if there exists a significant difference between the urban and rural committees with regard to the members' profiles.

Table 10: Educational qualifications of the committee members

| School context | Level of education | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Functional literacy | Uncompleted primary | Completed primary | Secondary education | College education | |
| Urban (MMC) | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 2 | 9 |
| Rural (MVDC) | 3 | 1 | 3 | - | 2 | 9 |
| Total | 5 | 2 | 7 | - | 4 | 18 |
| Percentage (%) | 78 | | | - | 22 | 100 |

Source: School Committees' records (July, 2009)

As indicated in table 10, the levels of education of the members of the two schools committees exhibited a similar trend. In both cases, the dominant level of education was standard seven (primary education) or less. Out of all the 18 members in the two school committees, 14 (78%) had a primary education qualification or less. In all the two committees, only 4 (22%) had college education qualifications. This was so because the head teacher of each school is a member and also the secretary of the respective school committee. Each committee also had one representative teacher and one ex-officio member. The representative teacher for the rural primary school had a Grade A-Teacher Certificate, whereas the ex-officio member for the urban school had a Certificate in Agriculture and Livestock Production, making the total number of members with college education in the two committees 4 out of 18. In actual fact, there was no significant difference between urban and rural school committees with regard to members' educational profiles.

Although it is stipulated in the guidelines for the election of primary school committees that the committees' chairperson should have a minimum of ordinary level secondary education, most of the schools are practically unable get such a person, and in most cases, the composition of the rest of the members fails to include fairly well trained people. As it has been observed in this study, 78% of the two school committees had basic education qualification and /or less; leaving a substantial vacuum in effective planning, management and monitoring at the grassroots level. Evidence from the study shows that in both committees, the head teachers and other teachers had a dominant role over the rest of the committee members with regard to planning, budgeting, monitoring and overall management of skill demanding activities. This supports the argument that inadequacy in skill capabilities limits effectiveness in role accomplishment and ability to demand for accountability.

5.9.2 Skills/competences

The study assessed skill capabilities of the two school committees to find out the extent to which the committees had adequate skill base for accomplishing their roles. It was found that the two school committees faced the challenge of skill inadequacy. It was found during the study that most of the committee members were not conversant with the methods of financial accounts and hence they found it difficult to understand the financial records prepared by schools. As a result, effective assessment of financial expenditure was difficult to carry out at the village level. This shortcoming was confirmed by the chairperson for the urban school who pointed out that:

We ourselves have no idea about accounting and book-keeping. Yet, we do not have trained accountants or bookkeeping officers here at the school. We depend on the school head teacher to prepare and keep financial accounts for the school on our behalf. In addition, the village government members are not conversant with the methods of financial accounts and hence they find it difficult to understand the financial records prepared by schools. Consequently, effective assessment of financial expenditure is difficult to carry out at the village level. Instead, we rely on auditors from the municipal headquarters to carry out the assessment.

The above quote is confirmed by another quote from the focus group discussion with the rural school committee. Similar to the urban school committee, the school committee members said that they did not have relevant knowledge and skills/experience on how to handle some school activities such as planning and budgeting. As a result of this discrepancy, they confirmed to have left their responsibilities to head teacher. The situation was similar for the two school committees with regard to the way shouldered their tasks. During the focus group discussion, one of the members of the rural primary school committee in Mvomero district commented as follows:

I agree that the school committee has been given more powers...Yes, but we have inadequate knowledge and skills compared to our counterparts- the teachers, who have more understanding about schools and how to manage them. The laws and bylaws that govern the schools are at their finger tips...and everything about the children and the school. So, we as members of the school committee trust them to execute the technical responsibilities on our behalf; and we give them the support needed for making our school progress smoothly.

From the above findings, it is indicative that the Members of the School Committees in primary schools lack adequate knowledge, skills and experience to efficiently manage the primary schools. The inadequacy of knowledge, management skills and experience has led the members of the school committees to unofficially surrender their decision-making powers to the Head Teachers as it has been observed from the two school committees.

The parents' representatives from the two School committees admitted that although the school committees had powers to make decisions at the school level; their education backgrounds, skills and experience were comparatively low to fully exercise the powers. From the study findings, it was explicit that the school committee members who had a fairly higher level of education were confident and could efficiently utilise their decision-making powers better than those members of the school committee who lacked the required competences. It was unfortunate however that the school committee members who had better education were not from the ordinary community members (i.e. parents with or without children in the respective school). This observation shows that empowerment of the local levels in as far as the management of schools is concerned has not been 'meaningful'. Why? Because the power asymmetry noted in the school committees as a result of knowledge, skill and experience gaps between the teachers and the community members indicate (and this has been proved during the focus group discussions and interviews) that the teachers played a dominant role in accomplishing some of the important tasks of the school committees. Good examples of the tasks which the head teachers (who are also secretaries to the school committees) accomplished on behalf the school committees in both cases were the preparation of financial accounts, book keeping, planning and budgeting.

It was observed during the study that although the committee members sat to approve what had been prepared by the head teachers, it appeared that the rest of the members played a passive role of rubberstamping the head teachers' decision templates. That kind of participation in my opinion; did not go any far beyond token participation as illustrated in the Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (figure 5) where the citizens have 'inadequate power to follow through'. From the experiences drawn from the two school committees and community members involved in this study, it is apparent that the local community representatives lacked adequate power to follow through various decisions in their respective schools due to the knowledge, skill and experience deficiencies.

These findings concur with those by McGinn and Welsh (1999) on decentralisation, where they argue that decentralisation is sensible only if those who have been empowered to make decisions at the lower levels have relevant knowledge to enable them carry out the best practices. In other words, there is no value for transferring the decision making processes to the local levels if local capacity for management is not adequately assured. This is also supported by the philosophy of decentralisation through the principle of subsidiarity which insists that decentralisation is "not just for moving decisions to the site of action, but also making local decision makers competent" (McGinn and Welsh 1999:66). The findings of another study done in Tanzania by Bishop (2008) focusing on the policy and practice education service to pastoral communities indicate

that empowerment of pastoral communities through decentralisation by devolution in the management of education has made considerable progress that distinguishes the current (decentralised management) and previous (centralised management) approaches. Some of the key findings she came up with include among others, the increased awareness among the school committee members about their responsibilities. However, the major challenge she observed was inadequacy of educational qualifications of the school committee members, which in practice hindered their effectiveness as she pointed out: “...*the school committees which are supposed to take on many new responsibilities for the running of the school are ill-equipped to do so*” ((Bishop 2008:10). As a result, most of the responsibilities that require fairly higher level of knowledge and skills like planning, budgeting and accounting continued to be in the hands of the head teacher (secretary), while the other members actually play ‘a rubber stamp role’ over those functions.

A similar observation was also made by De Grauwe *et.al* (2005) in their study on the impact of decentralisation on school management in Mali; where limited literacy of parents in the Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) led to their exclusion from the critical decisions affecting their schools. In South Africa, a similar situation was observed, where the parents with limited literacy especially in the disadvantaged areas were not able to participate fully in the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) by taking on their respective tasks (Askvik 2003). In such situations, the question of power asymmetry is evident, whereby owing to inadequacies in skills and knowledge on the part of School committee /SGB members the principals/ head teachers remain the major decision makers in the committees(De Grauwe *et. al* 2005). These observations reinforce the emphasis that empowerment of the grassroots requires adequate capacity building in terms of skill and knowledge capabilities of the key community representatives.

The lower levels of education possessed by majority of the school committee members had some implications to their effectiveness. For instance, it was noted during the individual interviews and focus group discussions with the members of the two school committees that members who had low education were not conversant with some of the roles of school committees such as planning and budgeting. This discrepancy practically seemed to exclude these school committee members from effective participation in these roles. As a result, the head teachers remained to be the key players while the school committee members were there just to ‘deliberate’ what has been prepared by the head teachers. Although no complaint was

noted from the two school committees regarding this power asymmetry, it was evident though, that much remains unachieved with regard to enhancement of knowledge and skill capabilities of individual school committee members.

5.9.3 Capacity building

The Education Officers for Morogoro Municipality and Mvomero District Council confirmed that tailor- made modules were provided to all head teachers on elementary book- keeping to enable them account for the financial transactions done at the school. They also informed that all school committees received training for building their capacities with regard to management of funds and day to day running of the school.

Strengthening the institutional capacity and competences of stakeholders at all levels in the primary education management system is an important strategy for enhancing effectiveness in the primary education sub-sector. Management training was provided to head teachers, school committees, ward education coordinators, inspectors, and to LGAs, regional and national staff between 2002 and 2004 as an important component of the five-year primary education development plan which ended in 2006. The emphasis was on the acquisition of knowledge and skills for educational management at all levels (Municipal Education Officer)

...and the DEO for Mvomero district had the following remarks:

All training programmes were funded by the PEDP fund set aside for training country wide. The PEDP funds were mainly from the World Bank and other donors. Capacity building achievements were really high from the ministerial, LGA to school levels. At the grassroots level all the 12,689 school committees in Tanzania mainland by 2004 /05 received the training on basic school management skills. Since then, there has not been any other capacity building programme especially for the school committees. This is an indication that our educational system suffers a donor-dependency syndrome.

The two quotes above indicate that knowledge and skill updating was recognized by the government as an important pillar for enhancing effectiveness of the educational management institutions from the national to the grassroots levels. However, it was noted that capacity building at the local levels particularly to the school committees had not been adequately done. It was revealed during the study that no any single training was done to the school committees after the phasing out of PEDP in 2006, though the government continues funding the primary education. The major reason given by the education officials as to why capacity building had deteriorated was shortage of funds. The DEO for MVDC pointed out that capacity building strategies were very much impressive in the beginning of PEDP because of donor back-up and drastically deteriorated as the donors started to pull out. In addition, the two committees visited confirmed that they had not received any training except for few of them who happened to be members in the previous school committees. This situation is a set-back to the

development of primary education in various local authorities in Tanzania. Taking into account that devolution of responsibilities and authority for managing education at the grassroots level is a contemporary approach that was embarked on about a decade ago (leave alone the de-concentrated management system that had been there for nearly two decades), lack of adequate skills and experience at the grassroots levels for shouldering the new responsibilities is inevitable. In that view, embarking on steady capacity building programmes for enhancing effectiveness down there is very important.

Table 11: Achievements in committees' capacity building between 2002 and 2006

| Levels of achievement | Number of schools(n) | Freq. of Training | Length of training | Schools covered(n') |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| MMC's achievement | 60 | Once | 5days | 60 |
| MVDC's achievement | 135 | Once | 5days | 135 |
| National(Tanzania mainland) | 12,289 | Once | 5days | 12,289 |

Source: MMC &MVDC Education Offices July, 2009

As shown in table 11 above, capacity building to the school committees was done only once for five (5) days. The five-day training was as a matter of fact, inadequate for ensuring effectiveness of the committees in accomplishing their roles. As the empowerment literature suggests, empowerment is not a start-stop event. Rather, it is a continuous process that enables people to recognize, upgrade and use their capacity to better control and gain power over their own lives. In the same way, increasing effectiveness school committees requires continuous capacity building initiatives (empowering actions) through knowledge, awareness and skill updating to enable them better understand the decision-making processes; communicate more effectively at different levels; and develop a sense of confidence in managing their schools. The question of capacity building to the school committees requires genuine commitment by the government. It is all about the importance it attaches to the whole idea of enabling the local levels participate actively in managing their development. If the government attaches great importance to this, it will cut all unnecessary spending on things that may have no significant benefit to the general public and allocate more funds to capacity building at the local levels to make them effectiveness in managing their development.

5. 10 Actual roles of the school committees

My concern during the study was to explore the actual roles of the two school committees. This was done through focus group discussions using pair-wise rank matrix strategy as shown in appendices I (a) and (b). The ultimate goal was to establish the core functions of the school committees accomplish in practice; and whether there were any deviations from what was actually stipulated. The tool also helped to crosscheck the awareness of the committee members with regard to their roles/responsibilities. In addition, the results of the focus group discussions provided an insight of the functional areas which the school committees have the mandate to make autonomous decisions at the local level.

In each of the focused discussions, each of the school committees was regarded as ‘a focus group’. The attendance was 8(89%) and 7(78%) for the urban and rural school respectively. During the focus group discussions, the members were facilitated through probing questions to mention at least ten (10) different functions related to management of primary education regardless of who was responsible to accomplish them. Each function mentioned was written on a pair-wise rank matrix drawn on a flip chart, on both the horizontal and vertical axes to allow for pair-wise ranking as shown in appendices I(a) and (b). After listing all the functions on the matrix, the next step was comparison of each of the functions on the horizontal axis with their corresponding functions on the vertical axis. For each pair of functions compared, the members were required to agree/ rank on which is a more important function of the school committee than the other, and its abbreviation is written on the corresponding box. Comparison was done only once for each pair of functions/roles. For each pair of functions which group members agreed that it did not appear to be part of their roles, or where a function was compared to itself on the opposite axis, their corresponding boxes was left black. Finally, each function was counted in terms of how many times it featured in the matrix and the total was inserted on the appropriate column on the right and ranked. Ranking of each variable was done on the basis of the total number of counts. The findings from the two focus group discussions were interesting in the sense that there was high consistency (uniformity) in the functions identified by the two school committees as being core. In addition, there was close relationship between the functions identified in practice and those established under the PEDP guideline. In general, eight functions were identified by the two school committee members as their core responsibilities, five (5) being mentioned by both committees and three (3) by one in exclusive of the other committee as indicated in table 6. From this experience, it

was learned that the ministerial guidelines which are in place to guide the school committees throughout the country have contributed at large to the consistency in procedures and practices. Some examples of guideline documents used by the two school committees included the Procurement manual (URT 2002b) and the PEDP document (URT 2001) and others. This observation implies that empowering the local levels is not an overnight activity; rather, it is a gradual/stepwise process involving some degree of central oversight/control over the policies and practices at the local levels before they can take full autonomy over the new responsibilities.

Table 12: Practical roles of the two school committees

| Functional areas (roles) | The urban school (MMC) | The rural school(MVDC) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Planning and budgeting at the school level | X | X |
| 2 Resource mobilization at the local level (Labour, material and financial) | X | X |
| 3 Discipline of pupils | X | X |
| 4 Procurement of text books & school materials | X | X |
| 5 Admission of pupils | X | X |
| 6 Tendering for procurement of school facilities and building contractors | | X |
| 7 Informing the local community about the school plans, budget etc | | X |
| 8 Construction/infrastructure(classrooms, toilets, teachers' houses) | X | |

Source: Focus group discussions June/July, 2009

As seen on table 12, five (5) out of the eight (8) functions were mentioned by both school committees while two of the last three functions were identified by the rural school committee (tendering for supply of school materials and local contractors and informing local communities about what is going on in the school) whereas the last function (construction of school infrastructure) was mentioned by the urban school committee alone. However, this does not mean that the two school committees differed practically in their roles. The listing of roles was based on how each committee viewed the roles. For instance, while one committee viewed some of the roles as embedded, the other viewed them as separate. The urban school

committee viewed tendering as part and parcel of procurement of school materials and recruitment of building contractors for school infrastructure construction; while their fellows in Mvomero (rural) separated the two functions. This is to say therefore that all the eight functions identified were part and parcel of the responsibilities of both committees, and the differences seen are only based on the way each committee combines or separates them. These findings have an implication that at most, the two school committees had adequate awareness of what they were supposed to accomplish.

5.10.1 Planning and budgeting

Based on the findings in table 12, preparation of school development plans and budgets are among the key responsibilities of the school committees. My concern was to find out how planning and budgeting were actually carried out by the school committees. To accomplish this, I interviewed two head teachers (who are also secretaries to the school committees) on how each activity is carried out. Here is an explanation captured from the rural school's school (in Mvomero District):

The preparation of school budgets involves all teachers on the basis of responsibilities assigned to them by the school management team. Each of the teachers in the school prepares a schedule of activities her/his department or class plans to carry out during the period under consideration. The individual schedules of activities (work plans) and costs are then presented in teachers' meeting that consolidates them into teachers' budget proposals to be presented to the school committee as inputs for the preparation of the school budget.

From the urban school (Morogoro Municipality), the head teacher the following is a caption of his response with regard to the process involved in the process of preparing school development plan and budget:

Planning and budgeting are among the core activities of the school committee. However, the process of preparing a school development plan and budget involves other actors... for example; the 'mtaa' chair and executive secretary are invited to the school committee during budget approval. After endorsement by the school committee, school budget is forwarded to the District/Municipal Council for review and approval; usually by District/Municipal Education Officer.

Concerning how the funds are received and allocated the head teacher continued to explain the whole process, and here is a quote from his explication:

As I told you in the beginning, this is neither a one person's responsibility nor a one stage activity. Rather, it involves various actors and stages. As soon as funds are received in the school account, I notify the chairperson of the school committee and my fellow teachers. Because the funds are usually allocated based on item of expenditure, each of the beneficiary department/section at the school level prepares expenditure plan that is presented to teachers' meeting for approval before review and final approval by the school committee. You can see how the process is long, but then the good thing is that it is transparent and conscious to accountability.

This quote is similar to another one from the head teacher for the school in Mvomero District (rural context) with regard to the whole process of receiving and allocating funds to various departmental/sectional activities in the school:

After approval of sectional/departmental budgets by the school committee, bank cheques are prepared by the head teacher (committee secretary) and then signed by the chairperson and one authorized member. In addition to these two signatories, we have two others for ensuring that things do not strand when both or either of the two signatories are not available.

With regard to autonomy in spending the money, it was noted that ministerial guidelines determine at large what priorities should be set and implemented at the local levels, as the head teacher for the urban school informed (and here is a caption of his words):

My feeling is that school committees do not have much freedom to spend the money outside the planed schedules or the national priorities that are usually provided earlier before the budgeting process begins. The priorities act as the planning guidelines to all schools. In other words, priority setting at the school level is centrally governed by the national education priorities.

From the five quotes above, it can be noted that the principles of transparency and accountability are given adequate attention in the whole process of preparation and execution of school development plans and budgets. However, the question of autonomy at the school level is still bounded by the ministerial authority control, especially on the issue of what should be taken as an issue of priority at the local levels.

5.10.2 Procurement of school equipment, materials and technical services

The responsibility of procuring school materials is vested to the school committees, and guided by the procedures stipulated in the PEDP procurement manual (URT 2003b). The two head teachers from Morogoro Municipality and Mvomero District Council pointed out during the interview that the procurement of school materials is guided by the directives that have been prepared and issued by the Basic Education Development Committee to each school

through competitive bidding. This quote was captured from the head teacher for the urban school:

Procurement of construction works and items and /or materials worth Tanzanian Shillings 500,000/= (500 USD) and above requires local tendering and notification of the same to the LGA Director. A tender evaluation committee set up by the Primary School Committee carries out the analysis of the tender applications based on the set evaluation criteria.

Considering the ways through which the advertisements are designed ensure that all the community gets the information timely and accurately, this is what the head teacher for the rural school (in Mvomero District) said:

Information flow at the local level regarding tenders is given due attention. Tendering is done by placing specific notices at the local media for disseminating official announcements. Suggested media include Primary School notice boards or places where people meet for social gatherings like churches, mosques, and markets. The notice is usually placed in at least 5 such places, as well as at the council and ward offices and the school itself.

With regard to the process, he continued to clarify that:

At least 15 days are allowed for preparation and submission of tenders. Date, time and place for the public tender opening coinciding with that for the deadline for tender submission are indicated. Here, the tenders are opened at the announced time, place and date in the presence of tenderers who happen to attend. Names of the bidders and prices are read out aloud at the tender opening ceremony.

However, it was revealed during the study that procurement of services such as construction faced the challenge of meeting the quality standards due to lack of providers of such services at the local levels. This weakened competition and choice of the right supplier; as the WEC for the rural school pointed out:

The procurement process at village level is poor and uncompetitive because most services are not available at village, ward, and sometimes at the district level. This constrains fair competition and compliance to quality standards that might reduce costs of procurement of school supplies. For example, building of classrooms requires competent engineers that are for sure not available here at the village level. This has sometimes led to sub-standard buildings leading to some of them being demolished and reconstructed.

The quote above indicates that the local levels suffer from the challenge of implementation capabilities (e.g. in terms of expertise) despite the efforts embarked on by the government to empower them.

5.10.3 Resource mobilization

During the study I explored the ways through which school committees mobilised resources for supporting school development activities. The key source information was the education officials from the two LGAs and the school committees through interviews.

The education officers for both MVDC and MMC informed that school committees have the responsibility of mobilising resources at the local level to contribute to support the government's efforts towards improved education delivery.

The essence of the government's efforts to devolve educational management responsibilities to the local communities at large is to promote partnership between local communities and the government in resource mobilisation for school development activities; and more importantly, to inculcate a sense of 'ownership' among the members of school communities. The arrangements for resource mobilization from the local communities are made by the village governments in collaboration with the school committees (DEO, MVDC).

The MMC's Education officer had the following remark with regard to resource mobilisation at the local levels for primary education development:

Following the recent educational reforms, especially those which came under the PEDP in 2002, the concept of partnership between the government and local communities has really taken shape. For example, while the local communities contribute some locally available resources in form of cash, labour, and material like stones, sand and timber for repair and/or construction of classrooms, teachers' houses and toilets, the government allocates capitation and development funds and also manning the schools with qualified teachers. School committees are therefore central in mobilising resources from the local communities.

Table 13: Capitation grant allocation to the primary schools in Tanzania

| Capitation Grants Cost | USD (\$) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Facility repairs | 2 |
| 2 Text books, teaching guidelines, Supplementary reading materials | 4 |
| 3 Chalk, exercise books, pens and pencils | 2 |
| 4 Administration materials | 1 |
| 5 Examination paper purchase and printing | 1 |
| Total Capitation Grants | 10 |

Source: URT, 2001:30

5.11 Willingness of the school committee members and local communities

Willingness of the local authorities is absolutely important for enhancing effectiveness at the local levels. It was revealed during the focus group discussions and interviews to individual school committee members that school committee members were willing to participate in the school committees. From both schools, the committee members informed that they were not forced to join the school committees. However, the members pointed out that working as a school committee member involves a lot of time. As a result, it is a usual thing for members to miss meetings especially during the peak of agricultural activities in the rural school committees.

For the local communities, the study found signs of willingness to participate in school development activities especially when they contributed labour force and some locally available materials for supporting classroom and teacher's houses construction. However, this enthusiasm seemed to be weakened by the local communities' extreme poverty. Although they were willing to contribute to their schools, they were unable to do so because they could not afford. In addition peoples' willingness to participate in the real decision making processes seemed to be low. In either school community, attendance to school development meetings convened by the school committees was significantly poor.

5.12 Effectiveness in role accomplishment

During the study, I observed that preparation of plans, budgets and the quality of record keeping was fairly good in both schools. It was noted that the schools kept good records on expenditures and the minutes of the school committee and those of teachers' meetings were in general well kept and showed clearly how allocated funds were to be used. In addition, schools maintained files of important supporting documents such as invoices, receipts and bank statements. The key documents indicating the roles accomplished for the year 2008/2009 were in place as shown in table 14 below.

Table 14: Role accomplishment

| School | A checklist of some key documents for accomplishments of roles for the year 2008/2009 | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | School development plan | School budget | Minutes (meetings) | Quarterly reports | Financial records | Procurement records |
| Rural (MVDC) | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Urban (MMC) | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Source: Field Data June/July 2009

Key: X means “available”

As it can be seen from table 14, each of the two school committees had the school development plan budgets for the year 2008/08, a file for keeping minutes of the school committee meetings, quarterly reports, financial and procurement records. The observation above shows that at least things are working, though at large with the help of the head teachers who seemed to be shouldering the skill- demanding roles on ‘behalf of the committees’.

There were yet other two important secrets behind the uniformity that was found in the practices, record keeping and preparation of school plans and budgets. First, ministerial guidelines were in place in every school as working guidelines. It was noted for example, the procurement of school materials, equipment and services were governed by the Procurement Manual (URT 2003). Similarly, guidelines were in place to guide the preparation of school plans and budget and so on. Second, despite being recognised as being among the key roles of the school committees; preparation of school plans, budgets, various reports and overall functioning of the schools were integrated into the job description and accountability frameworks of the head teachers. In that regard every head teacher made sure that the responsibilities were accomplished. For instance, if a school failed to prepare a plan, budget or a financial report, it was the head teacher who was to be answerable to the authorities in the first place. This could most likely be among the reasons that contributed to the uniformity in role accomplishment and the overall school management practices.

5.13 Challenges to the school committees

During the study I noted three major challenges which affected the empowerment and effectiveness of two school committees. These were namely, low capabilities, extreme poverty and poor attendance to meetings.

5.13.1 Low capabilities

This study found that despite the achievement that Tanzania has at present managed to ensure that school committees are in place and are taking over the devolved roles, a number of challenges have been noted. A large proportion of the members of the school committees in the primary schools lacked the necessary skills for accomplishing their roles successfully. For example, it was observed that 78% of the two committees involved in the study had primary and /or lower education qualifications. In addition, 61% of the 18 members of school committees interviewed declared that they were not competent enough to accomplish some of their roles such as planning and budgeting.

With regard to resource mobilization capabilities, it was found that some of the components in the school development plans could not be implemented simply because the donors had not provided funds to the Central Government or the funds from the Central Government were not timely disbursed to the schools. It was also noted that there were some cases where the actual funds allocated did not match with the actual local level needs.

Both committees pointed out that there were delays in allocation of both the capitation and development funds to individual schools. As a result, implementation of the school plans was also delayed.

In most cases, there are delays in receiving funds. We fail to meet our targets because we do not have money to finance their implementation. We have annual strategic plans, monthly plans and even weekly plans. But, where is the logic of planning when you are not sure of the resources? It's really a big challenge for the school committee. For instance, these two unroofed buildings are meant for teachers' accommodation, but up to now, it is six months since we completed completion of the walls but up to now we have not received money for roofing (the Chairperson for the urban school committee).

The quotation above is similar to that from the rural school committee's secretary who said that:

We do not receive funds timely as we used to do so during the launching of PEDP in 2002. Although we are supposed to receive funding quarterly, it happens that a month or more passes after commencement of a quota without funds. This has implications to implementation of the school plans. Timing of implementation becomes difficult and meeting targets sometimes becomes a challenge as a result of inflation.

The two quotes above indicate that the problem of delays disbursement of funds from the government contributes to constraints in financial resources during implementation of the school development plans. This in turn, impedes effectiveness of the school committees in accomplishing their roles. This Observation is in line with that of Crook and Manor (1998)

who found that resource constraint in the communes was among the factors that contributed to poor performance on the output effectiveness in Ghana's decentralised public administration.

5.13.2 Extreme poverty in the local communities

Although it is stipulated in the Education and Training Policy (URT 1995:116) that financing of education and training shall be shared between the government, communities, parents and end-users, the study revealed that community financing of primary education was the major challenge due to extremely low levels of income among the local community members. The majority of the local communities in the rural areas were unable to contribute to school development activities except in the situations where their labour could be useful. The following is a response from one parent from the rural school community (Mvomero)

Some people are saying that the government has abolished the school fees so we are now able to send our children to school because the burden has been offset. This is actually an illusion. I am telling you that this time we are paying more than what we used to pay before the abolition of the school fees. We are paying for desks, rehabilitation, watchman and lunch for our children. I am not complaining that this is not our responsibility. I am complaining because I cannot afford because I am poor. The prices of our crops have been poor and poor, now where else can we earn income? That is why most of the days our children stay without lunch at school because most of the parents fail to contribute.

From the urban school community, the situation was not very much different from their fellows in the rural community. Most of the parents who had no formal employment (who are usually the majority) lamented that their incomes were poor so they were unable to pay for the school contributions.

My husband and I are not formally employed. We have six children, four in primary schools and two in secondary schools. I have a small business at the municipal market and my husband has a small office for radio repair. We use the small income we get to feed our family, pay house rent and other bills and also for the school contributions. This is more than what we earn. We are willing to contribute for better education of our children, yes, but the government needs to create an enabling environment for us to afford that. For example, if the government can create easily accessible credit facilities for us who are not employed in the formal sector, we will be able to secure capital and increase our earnings.

From the two quotes above, it is evident that poverty among the urban and rural school communities in Tanzania is a limiting factor to the empowerment and effectiveness of the school committees in accomplishing their roles. In a situation where majority of the local community members are extremely poor, it is practically impossible to mobilise adequate

financial resources through contributions from the local community members. As it was observed during the study from the two primary schools, financing of the primary schools in Tanzania is through the government in terms of capitation and development grants. This is a clear indication that local communities are not so far capable of running the schools on their own without support from the government. However, the milestones that have been recorded during implementation in contributing to school development activities give an impression that local ownership of the primary school is possible if adequate steps will be taken to enable the local communities to strengthen their financial resource capabilities. But as of now, it is too early for the idea of letting the communities run their schools to work feasibly.

5.13.3 Poor attendance to meetings

Meetings were identified during the study as among the key methods of information exchange within the school committees and between the committees and other stakeholders in the primary education sub-sector.

Regarding the types of meetings, two categories were identified namely, regular and ad-hoc meetings. While it was found that the school committees were supposed to meet thrice in a year for the regular meetings, ad-hoc meetings could be convened any time in emergencies. During the study, it was noted that attendance to meetings by both the school committee members and local community members was poor. As it can be seen from table 15, only one (1) regular meeting was convened by the rural school committee during the year 2008/2009 while for the urban school two regular (2) meetings were convened out of the three (3) that are required per year. On the other hand, both committees met with the community members once in that year, and that was during the election of the committees. The main reason that was given for poor attendance to meetings was time. In the rural school where most of the school committee and local community members are peasants, getting people to attend meetings was usually a problem during peak times for agricultural activities such as during sowing, weeding and harvesting. For the urban school community in Morogoro Municipality, poor attendance to meetings was associated with the nature of urban life which is hectic, people claimed to be busy with their small businesses and office work. However despite all these reasons it was revealed that people had no culture of attending meetings as it was noted from some of the interviewees' responses. Other community members testified that they did not see the importance of attending meetings in the school even when they were not very

much occupied; some of them claiming that the school committees represent them so they did not see the point why they should not trust what they decided. This experience is similar to another by Adam (2005) in his study on the role of community participation in education development in Ghana; where he found that peasants could not attend meetings due to collision of the meetings with farm work and market days. His respondents complained that they had no enough time to attend their farms and the meetings.

The two experiences are indications of improper timing of the meetings and also lack of awareness on the part of local community members on the importance of participating in the decision making processes; and thus calls for proper timing of the meeting times and dates so that they do not collide with the community members' work plans. On the other hand, the Government, NGOs and other change agents to converge their efforts in sensitising the general public at the local levels on the role of local communities in educational development.

Table 15: Meetings convened

| <i>School</i> | <i>School committee meetings for 2008/2009</i> | | <i>Meetings with parents (2008/2009)</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| | No. of meetings planned | No. of meetings convened | |
| Rural (MVDC) | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Urban (MMC) | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Source: Field data June/July 2009

CHAPTER 6:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The chapter summarises the entire study about the empowerment and effectiveness of school committees in Tanzania. It highlights briefly the study problem and methods employed, proceeds to providing a recap of the major findings and linking them to the research questions. The chapter highlights the theoretical implications of the study in relation to the existing theories; and its contribution to the empowerment literature. Finally, it outlines the study limitations and in the light of these, it suggests potential areas for further research.

6.2 An overview of the study problem

Tanzania's long term centralisation of education promoted exclusion of citizens from educational governance. The government was the sole agent responsible for planning and implementing various educational development policies and programmes in the country. The centralised system resulted into lack of ownership and commitment among the citizens at the local levels because they felt that the educational development plans were imposed to them. As a result, the government beard excessive workload and financial burden which led to deterioration of education quality in the country. Tanzania's decision to embark on comprehensive education sector reforms in 1995 was meant to devolve the responsibilities of managing education to the local levels. The Government developed a Basic Education Master Plan (BEMP) to guide the process. Educational devolution was done in response to the Local Government Reforms Agenda, geared towards transferring of management responsibility to the local primary school committees pursuant to the Government Reform Act of 1998 and section 39 of the Education Act 1978 as amended in 1995. However, whilst there is high consensus on the fact that citizen empowerment in the management of social services has significant potentials for enhancing effectiveness, there have been differing perspectives with regard to the relationship between empowerment and effectiveness. There are also felt concerns in Tanzania with regard to the adequacy of preparations prior to the devolution process. Arguments are that the process of empowering local communities in educational management (through the school committees) was done in rush without adequate preparation

of the local actors in terms of capacity building and awareness creation; which are important tenets for changing the citizen's mindsets from 'recipient' to 'participant' orientations. It is on the basis of the differing arguments I was interested to design a study to explore on empowerment and effectiveness of school committees as institutions for managing the primary education at the grassroots level to examine what actually is the situation; guided by the question: *'Are the school committees empowered and effective?'*

6.3 Study context and methodology

The study was focused in two LGAs, one being urban (Morogoro Municipality) and the other rural (Mvomero District Council). The two LGAs were approached holistically to examine the general functioning of the school committees. From that point, the study proceeded to studying two schools (one from each LGA) to examine how school committees worked and the modalities of local community participation in school development activities. The essence was to make a comparison between rural and urban school committees in terms of role accomplishment capabilities and effectiveness. The study employed a qualitative approach, using in-depth interview, focus group discussion, observation and document review as the main data soliciting instruments. Study participants were purposefully selected to permit collection of relevant data from the appropriate sources. The key informants of the study were School Committee members from the two schools, parents from the two school communities, pupils, and Village /'Mtaa' Executive Officers, Ward Education Coordinators from the two school communities and the Education Officers from the two LGAs; constituting a sample of 32 informants.

6.4 Summary of the key findings

6.4.1 Access to Information

The study found that the school committees operated in an environment of well set institutional frameworks that permitted two-way information flow between the school committees and the other stakeholders. Although the two school committees seemed to be properly linked to their respective LGAs which served as the 'translator' the ministerial policies and priorities for the primary education development into specific LGA plans and priorities which individual schools used for developing their own school level plans; evidence from the study indicates that there was inadequacy in information flow between the local communities and school committees that was attributed to both lack of interest on the part of

local communities to seek information and also inadequate mechanisms for information flow from the school to the local communities and vice versa. For example, while public meetings were the main means through which local communities got information from the school committees on how the school was progressing. It was found that most of the meetings that were convened by the school committee leaders suffered seriously from poor attendance of the local community members than those which were convened by the village/ 'mtaa' government. As a result, the school committees tended to send their reports to the village / 'mtaa' leaders who would inform the community members during the normal meetings. As a result, 'accountability to the local community members' seemed not to have a direct manifestation. The school committees appeared to be more accountable to the local (Village/ 'mtaa') and District/Municipal Authorities than to the local communities which are in actual fact central to all educational development processes in their respective local levels.

6.4.2 Inclusion

It was found during the study that all the school in MMC and MVDC had established school committees pursuant to the requirement of S.39 (1) of the Education Act, 1978 as amended in 1995. Despite that however, it was note that women representation was lower relative to that of men in both school committees; and none of the two committees had a pupil representative though members from both committees insisted that pupils were adequately involved in the key decisions made by the school committees through the pupils' councils. Participation of pupils in the school committees was not taken care of. The arguments for this denial were that the pupils had their own council where the proposals of decisions were sent for them to contain their ideas. From this remark, it can be argued that although there have been significant changes with regard to empowering local communities in managing education at their local levels, there have not been much radical changes in the previous traditions of viewing the pupils as recipients of the decisions.

6.4.3 Knowledge, skills and experience of the school committees

Out of all the 18 members of the two school committees 14 (78%) had primary education qualifications or lower, and all of them were the local community representatives (parents). In addition, there was no marked difference between the two school committees (i.e. the urban and the rural) in terms of members' educational profiles. Generally, the findings show that there is a gap between the policy and practice of local level empowerment. Although it is

stipulated in the guidelines for the election of primary school committees that the committees' chairperson should have a minimum of ordinary level secondary education, many schools are unable get such a person. In addition, most of the school committees fail to get fairly well trained people. As it has been observed in this study, 78% of the two school committees had basic education qualification and /or less; which leaves a substantial vacuum in effective planning, management and monitoring at the grassroots level. Evidence from the study shows that in both committees, the head teachers and other teachers have a dominant role over the rest of the committee members with regard to accomplishment of planning, budgeting, monitoring and overall management activities. The implication here is that despite the government's efforts to put in place institutional frameworks to enhance empowerment the local levels, much has not been done to build the capacity of the people there in terms of knowledge and skills/competences. The inadequacies in skill capabilities entail some impediments in effectiveness of the school committees especially in demanding accountability from the head teachers who are also the secretaries to the school committees. For instance, it was noted during the study that individual school committee members' knowledge and skills had a noticeable effect on their role accomplishment capabilities. The fact that individual committee members who had inadequate educational qualifications were less conversant with the roles that demanded high levels of knowledge and skills for example planning, budgeting and accounting; the importance of knowledge and skill capability in role accomplishment can by no means be taken for granted. For the school committees to be effective, their members need to have adequate knowledge and skills, continuously updated and maintained through capacity building through training and experience-sharing. The observation concurs with that made by another study on community participation in primary school development activities in Ghana (Anokye 2004), where level of education was found to have effects on the capabilities and level of participation of the community members. It was noted in the study that community members who had low levels of education also exhibited low implementation capabilities and eventually inadequate participation in decision making and school development activities.

6.4.4 Role understanding

There were no significant differences between the two school committees in terms of their understanding on what they were expected to accomplish. It was also noted despite low educational qualifications that most of the school committee members showed adequate

understanding of their responsibilities; and committee members' understanding of their roles was not affected by education levels. This implies that being rural or urban may not be much considered as an important criterion for the committee member's understanding of their roles. In addition, the school However, it was observed that the implementation capabilities of the members of the two school committees were considerably low (in average 61% of the members in the two school committees admitted that they had low capabilities for accomplishing their roles). In that view, their empowerment and effectiveness in role accomplishment depends on knowledge and skills possessed by the individuals responsible for accomplishing the assigned roles.

6.4.5 Autonomy of the committees

The study findings from the two school committees and experiences drawn from the implementation of PEDP (2002-2006) show that the school committees that are in place now have more responsibilities and autonomy compared to the school committees that were in place before the PEDP era. Whereas the pre-PEDP school committees had a relatively narrow scope of functions and operated as sub-committees of the village governments to promote integration of the schools into the life of the communities and co-operating with teachers in solving educational problems at the local levels; the new school committees under the educational reforms have more responsibilities and autonomy; and are fairly independent from village/ 'mtaa' governments. The study witnessed manifestation of school committees' autonomy in various aspects; such as day to day running of the schools, community mobilisation for school infrastructure development (classrooms, teacher's houses, toilets and so on) as per the local priorities, procurement of school materials and control of pupils' discipline.

Autonomy of the school committees is an important tenet for promoting their effectiveness. The experiences drawn from Tanzania with regard to primary education management trends show that school committees have been more empowered effective in the recent days than in the period before the reforms. This improvement is associated with the increased autonomy at the local levels (through the D-by-D policy). For example, with regard to mobilisation of local communities to contribute resources for school development, during PEDP implementation between 2003 and 2006, local communities achieved remarkable successes in classroom, teachers' houses and toilet construction; where the poor communities contributed

labour and the government bought materials such as cement and roofing materials. In addition, school committees were able to manage the development and capitation funds in a transparent way as a result of increased autonomy of school committees and village/ 'mtaa' governments. This observation differs from that by Fundi (2002) in her study on community participation in primary education development activities in Morogoro rural district, where she noted that school committees were not strong enough to make important decisions without consulting the education authorities. She specifically pointed out the problem of bureaucratic decision making in that caused undue delays. Fundi's observation provides evidence that the autonomy that was allowed to the local communities through their school committees has increased the effectiveness at the local levels. The time she was doing her research (2001) was the critical period of transition from the centralised system of educational management system in the country and therefore, the manifestation of school committee autonomy and minimisation of bureaucratic procedures could have not featured that early.

6.5 Theoretical relevance of the study

Now back to my main research question "Are the school committees empowered and effective"? ; I conclude my thesis by first re-visiting my theoretical framework for recap of the 'criteria' for an empowered and effective body (school committee in this case); and then match what I have in the findings chapter with the theoretical 'criteria' to establish whether the school committees are empowered and effective in accomplishing their roles.

Drawing from the theoretical perspectives of the study, empowerment of the school committees (which in the study was the independent variable) can be seen through the five indicators/criteria outlined on the analytical framework. The first criterion is Access to information (i.e. the extent to which the school committee is informed about the policies plans, activities and also its roles as a school management body). The assumption here is that a well informed school committee is more empowered effective in accomplishing its roles than a poorly informed/ignorant committee. The second criterion for empowerment of school committees as established in the theoretical chapter is inclusion, which entails the extent to which the committees are representative of the various segments of the community population in terms of gender, levels of income and education just to mention a few. A balanced inclusion will render the committee more legitimate and confident hence, making it feel empowered. These in turn, increase the effectiveness of the committee in question. The third

criterion for committee's empowerment is Capabilities. These include the level of skills, knowledge and experience possessed by the individual members and also financial resource capabilities of the committee to fund implementation of the school development plans. The assumption under this indicator is that higher levels of capabilities will imply high empowerment and in turn, effectiveness of the committee. Agency/willingness of the committee members to perform and bring about effectiveness is the fourth empowerment criterion/indicator established in the theoretical chapter of the study. It includes the individual committee members' drive and self confidence/ enthusiasm in committing their efforts and time to work in the committees. The key assumption here is that higher level of agency implies an empowered and hence effective school committee. The fifth criterion of an empowered committee as per the analytical framework of the study is Autonomy. This is the ability of the committee to plan, make decisions, allocate resources and implement plans at the school level without being interfered. Regarding the dependent variable (effectiveness), the major criteria to effective school committees include the ability to accomplish the assigned roles (planning, budgeting, informing the community, preparation of reports and general oversight) and also from what the local communities say about the effectiveness of their committees.

From the study findings, manifestation of empowerment (i.e. the state of being empowered) based on the above criteria was evident in both school committees, though in some aspects they were not much explicit. For instance, while in the aspect of 'access to information' there was well set institutional framework that was potential for informing the school committees, large proportions of members of the two school committees were not well informed of some of their key roles (such as planning, budgeting and book keeping) due to limited skills and knowledge. It was also found that no adequate capacity building programmes were in place to address these inadequacies. As a result the head teachers continued to play a dominant role in accomplishing the tasks which other members were not conversant with. Based on the theoretical view that 'knowledge is power', the implication is that there were asymmetrical power relations between the teachers and the other school committee members. If we consider the fact that it was the head teacher who accomplished the most technical roles, it follows that they practically had more powers than the rest of the members; and obviously, it was not possible for them to hold him accountable for the things they were not adequately competent in. This is therefore an indication that in this respective area, the committee members lacked

power and the ability to accomplish their roles (effectiveness). With regard to financial resource capabilities, the findings show that the two school committees had weak local financial resource bases for funding implementation of school development activities. It was learned that due to extreme poverty levels of the school communities, not much in terms of financial contributions could be raised locally. Never the less, labour and locally available material contributions marked significant achievements in school infrastructure development in either case. It was only these forms of contributions which appeared to be successful and reliable. The schools depended at large on government grants to finance their recurrent and development expenditures. Owing to some delays and inadequacy of the disbursed funds, the school committees were not able to accomplish some of their planned activities. In the cases where they got enough funds, they were effective in accomplishing the roles for which the funds were meant. This implies that adequate financial resource capabilities render the school committees effective in role accomplishment. Regarding agency, the members of the two school committees responded during the interviews that they were willing and enthusiastic to work as members of school committees. However from the practical point of view, inadequate agency was witnessed especially where the school committee members failed to attend meetings giving some reasons which showed that they lacked real commitment to their roles. Failure to attend meetings denied them the opportunity to exercise their decision making power and access to information which automatically lowers their empowerment. On the aspect of autonomy, it was found during the study that the current school committees are much more autonomous than those which were in place before the reforms. It was found that the current committees have a wider scope of responsibilities and can make local level decisions regarding mobilization and utilization of resources according to their local level priorities.

6.6 Unexpected findings/emerging issues

The assumption behind the selection of one school from the rural and another from the urban context was that the school committee from the urban context (Morogoro Municipality) would perhaps display some attributes of being more empowered and effective than the school committee from the rural context (Mvomero District Council). The assumption was on the basis that the urban school committees are in an environment where they can access information more easily and adequately than the rural school committees, they have more capability in terms of skills and competences than the rural school committees. The other key

attribute I used to make this assumption was the levels of poverty, where statistics showed that rural poverty incidence was 34.5% in 2004/2005 and that of urban was 17.1% in the same year (URT 2005:7). However as pointed out in the findings, there were no significant differences that were observed between the two school committees regarding their empowerment and effectiveness. The two committees displayed similar trends in the levels of knowledge and skills and role accomplishment and consistency/ uniformity of practices. Although this indifference might be attributable to the narrowness of the study in terms of the number of cases (units of analysis) and the regulatory effect of the central government (i.e. equitable distribution of the recurrent and development grants and provision of standard operating procedures/guidelines) to the local levels; I see this as an important emerging issue which I think might be useful for further exploration.

6.7 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The study employed a qualitative research approach, whereby a small sample of informants was involved. For that matter, the generalisation possibility is low and may not reflect the characteristics of the entire two LGAs and Tanzania as a whole. Owing to the small sample and the narrow geographical scope of the study, it may not be highly plausible to rule out that there are no significant achievements in empowerment and effectiveness of the school committees. However, despite the limitations, the study has attempted to provide at some depth, an understanding on the functioning of school committees as basic institutions for managing primary education in Tanzania. Building on the findings of this study, other empirical studies may be carried out to explore the reasons for school committees being dominated by people with limited literacy in the school communities in Tanzania. For instance, based on sub-item 6.7 above, this study has not managed to show explicitly whether there are variations in empowerment and effectiveness between the rural and urban school committees. Further research can be carried out employing a survey design for analysis of a wider scope of variables and sample. This will perhaps expose the variations (if any), and provide for a wider scope of generalisation.

6.8 Contribution of this study

This work makes important contributions to the existing literature by integrating the concepts of participation and decentralisation in to the empowerment theory to provide for a deeper analysis and understanding of empowerment and effectiveness in education management. Unlike many other previous studies which have focused at large on the impact of community

participation and/or decentralisation in education (for example Govinda 1997; Fundi 2002; Anokye 2004; Bjork 2004; Geo-Jaja 2004; Adam 2005; Baganda 2008; Bishop 2008), I used empowerment perspectives (access to information, inclusion, agency, autonomy and resources) to examine decentralisation and local level participation in education. In that view, this study on empowerment and effectiveness of school committees in Tanzania establishes that the policies of community participation and decentralisation will only bring about meaningful impact to educational development if ‘real powers’ are allowed at the local levels.

6.9 Conclusion

Empirical evidence from studies and evaluation reports on the educational reforms in Tanzania (URT 2003; URT 2004; Kabagire 2006; Mushi 2006; URT 2008) show that LGAs have currently become the key coordinating agents of educational delivery in their areas of jurisdiction, and school committees have been strengthened and vested with the overall responsibility of managing the primary schools in their respective local levels. Despite these insights, the study findings show clearly that the criteria for judging that the committees are fully empowered have not been sufficiently fulfilled. In the two school communities; local financial resource bases were trivial, knowledge, skills and experience of the individual school committee members were inadequate; information (awareness) to the general public regarding participation in education was insufficient; and the two school committees did not adequately demonstrate equitable inclusion of women and pupils relative to men. On these grounds, therefore, my conclusion is that not outstanding but impressive achievements have so far been accrued regarding the empowerment and effectiveness of the school committees. However, attainment of the real school committee empowerment and effectiveness calls for enduring and comprehensive capacity building efforts by multiple agents (the Government, NGOs, CSOs, Media, CBOs etc.) to develop knowledge, skills and financial resource bases at the local levels; and also create awareness to the people on the importance of their participation in decision making in their respective local schools.

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Appendix 1: Focus group discussion data

a) A pair-wise rank matrix of the school committee roles for the urban school (MMC)

| FUNCTIONAL AREAS | PB | RM | REM | DT | HTF | CON | PT | PR | CAL | INF | Total | Rank |
|-----------------------------------------|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|
| School plans& budget(PB) | | PB | PB | PB | PB | PB | PB | PB | PB | INF | 8 | 1 |
| Resource mobilisation(RM) | | | RM | RM | RM | CON | RM | RM | RM | INF | 6 | 4 |
| Remuneration of teachers (REM) | | | | | | CON | | | | INF | 0 | - |
| Discipline of teachers (DT) | | | | | | CON | | | | INF | 0 | - |
| Hiring,Transfer& firing (HTF) | | | | | | CON | | | | INF | 0 | - |
| Construction of school buildings (CON) | | | | | | | CON | CON | CON | INF | 7 | 3 |
| Promotion of teachers (PT) | | | | | | | | PR | | INF | 0 | - |
| Procurement of text books (PR) | | | | | | | | | PR | PR | 3 | 5 |
| Setting of academic year calendar (CAL) | | | | | | | | | | INF | 0 | - |
| Informing the community (INF) | | | | | | | | | | | 8 | 1 |

Source: Focus Group Discussion, June, 2009

Key: MMC: Morogoro Municipal Council

b) A pair-wise rank matrix of the school committee roles(Kipera P/S in Mvomero District)

| FUNCTIONAL AREAS | AP | DP | HT | DT | RM | PB | PT | PR | CAL | TEN | Total | Rank |
|------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-------|------|
| Admission of pupils (AP) | | AP | AP | AP | AP | PB | AP | AP | AP | AP | 8 | 2 |
| Discipline of pupils (DP) | | | DP | DP | RM | PB | DP | DP | DP | TEN | 5 | 5 |
| Hiring of teachers (HT) | | | | | RM | PB | | PR | | TEN | 0 | - |
| Discipline of teachers (DT) | | | | | RM | PB | | | | TEN | 0 | - |
| Resource mobilisation (RM) | | | | | | PB | RM | RM | RM | TEN | 6 | 4 |
| Planning and Budgeting (PB) | | | | | | | PB | PB | PB | PB | 9 | 1 |
| Promotion of teachers (PT) | | | | | | | | PR | | TEN | 0 | - |
| Procurement of books (PR) | | | | | | | | | PR | PR | 4 | 6 |
| Setting of academic calendar (CAL) | | | | | | | | | | TEN | 0 | - |
| Tendering (TEN) | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 3 |

Source: FGD, July 2009

Appendix 2: Interview questions

a) District & Municipal Education Officers

1. For how long have you been working at the capacity of District/ Municipal Education Officer?
2. For how long have you worked in this District/Municipal Council?
3. Under the recent education reforms, management of primary schools has been decentralized to local communities through school committees. In your view, what is the difference between the school committees we have these days and the ones we had before the reforms?
4. What Act establishes school committees in Tanzania?
5. What procedures should be followed when forming school committees?
6. Who are the statutory members of the committees?
7. Is there an established period of time that a committee should serve before electing another one? How long is that?
8. How does your office interact with the school committees and other stakeholders?
9. In your opinion, do the school committees in your Municipality/District council signify any significant paradigm shift with regard to citizen empowerment in management of education at the local level? Why?
10. From your experience, do all school committees in your area face common problems in the course of accomplishing their roles? What are the major problems faced?
11. How do you build the capacity of school committee members in the Municipality/District Council?

b) Village & 'Mtaa' Executive officers, parents and pupils)

i. Village/ 'Mtaa' Executive Officers

1. For how long have you served in this ward/village/'mtaa'?
2. What is your role in the school committee?
3. What are the roles of school committees in general?
4. How do you interact with the school committee?

5. What challenges do you face when working with school committees?

ii. *Parents*

1. For how long have you lived in this village/mtaa?
2. What is your level of education?
3. Have you ever been elected a member of the school committee in your life history?
4. Do you participate in election of school committee members in your local area? How many times?
5. Do you know your school committee leaders and members?
6. Do you know the head teacher of the school in your area? How about the other teachers?
7. How does the school get income? Are there projects for income generation?
8. What is your contribution to development of the school?
9. Do you trust the school committee? Please explain a little bit your answer.

iii. *Pupils*

1. In which class are you?
2. Do you have any idea about school committee?
3. How many pupils are members of the school committee and how were they obtained?
4. Do you know all the members of your school committee?
5. Do you meet with the committee? If yes, how often and what do you discuss? If no, how do you communicate with the school committee?
6. Do you think school committees are helpful to pupils? Why?

c) **Questions for individual members of school committees**

1. How long have you been a member of this committee?
2. What is your occupation?
3. Are you also a member of another committee(s) or board(s) in other organization(s)?
4. How did you to become a member of the school committee?

5. As a member of the school committee, can you tell how often you managed to attend committee meetings this year?
6. What is your level of understanding of the roles/responsibilities of the school committee?

(LOW=below 50%; MODERATE=50% and above but less than 70%; and HIGH=70%+)
7. How much are you motivated to continue working as a school committee member?
8. Can you mention specific roles of the school committee which you are conversant with? Can you explain a little bit what part do you play in those roles?
9. How does the school committee share information with the parents, pupils and the education authorities?
10. To what extent the committee is free to make decisions and use resources?
11. What are the main problems you face as school committee members?

Appendix 3: Location of the United Republic of Tanzania



Source: <http://www.clgf.org.uk/userfiles/clgf/file/countries/Tanzania.pdf> (May 2010)

Appendix 4: Clearance letters

4 (a)

MOROGORO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Tel/Fax No. 023 - 2614727
Telegram "Township"
E - Mail: morogoroMc@yahoo.com.



Municipal Director Office,
Department of Administration,
P.O. Box 166,
Morogoro - Tanzania

Ref. No. **E.10/MMC-56/Vol.III/132**

Date: **29th June, 2009**


Vice Chancellor,
Mzumbe University,
P.O. Box 84,
Mzumbe

Re: INTRODUCTION OF MR. OREST SEBASTIAN MASUE

Your letter with reference No: MU/DRP/19/Vol.III/210 dated 08th June, 2009 regarding the above subject has been considered.

Be informed that, the above student has been granted a permission to conduct a research regarding "*Citizen Empowerment in the Management of Education at the Grassroot level in Tanzania: Exploring the factors affecting performance of school committees in Morogoro Municipality.*"

He is welcome.


P.S. Kobero,
For: MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
MOROGORO

MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY
29.06.09

4 (b)

**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MVOMERO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

TEL. No. 023 - 261 3223
Fax No. 023 - 261 3007



DISTRICT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MVOMERO DISTRICT COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 663,
MOROGORO

Ref. No. MVDC/E.40/6/168

19/6/2009

VICE CHANCELLOR
P.O. BOX 82
MZUMBE

RE: OREST SEBASTIAN MASUE

Refer to your letter with reference No. MU/DRP/19/VOL. III/209 dated on 8th June 2009.

For this letter I inform you that permission have been granted to the named above who is going to conduct research titled "Citizen Empowerment in the management of education Affecting Performance of School committees in Mvomero District Council and Morogoro Municipality.

Wishing you the best.

Nice Ngasala
**FOR DISTRICT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MVOMERO DISTRICT COUNCIL
MOROGORO**

FOR DISTRICT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MVOMERO DISTRICT COUNCIL

4 (c)



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Department of Administration and Organization Theory

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

To Whom It May Concern

This is to introduce Mr. Orest Sebastian Masue who is a student of mine. He is pursuing an MPhil degree in Public Administration at the Department of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen, Norway.

Mr. Orest Sebastian Masue has completed one year of course work and is now doing research for his thesis on the topic:

“CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION AT THE GRASSROOTSLEVEL IN TANZANIA: EXPLORING THE FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES IN MVOMERO DISTRICT COUNCIL AND MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY”.

He is conducting the research on this topic in his home country Tanzania. As an important part of this exercise he has to interview various persons and collect relevant documents. I hope you may assist him in the research. The information provided to him is for academic purposes only. Any assistance given to him is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

For Steinar Askvik
Supervisor

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4 (d)



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Ref: MU/DRP/19/VOL.III/209

8th June, 2009


The Director,
Mvomero District Council,
MOROGORO.

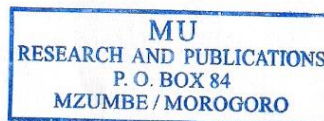
RE: INTRODUCTION OF MR. OREST SEBASTIAN MASUE

The aforementioned is an academic staff member of Mzumbe university, currently pursuing an MPhil Degree in Public Administration at the Department of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen, Norway. As part of the requirements for completion of his studies, he is conducting a research on a topic titled: **“Citizen Empowerment in the Management of Education at the Grassroot Level in Tanzania: Exploring the Factors Affecting Performance of School Committees in Mvomero District Council and Morogoro Municipality”**.

Mvomero District Council and Morogoro Municipality are included in this study for they are likely to offer interesting perspectives on the problem under investigation. We can assure you that this activity is entirely for academic purposes. We trust that you will accord him with necessary assistance.

Sincerely yours,


Moses J. Ndunguru
For: **VICE CHANCELLOR**



Appendix 5: The study programme

| Activity | 2009 | | | | | | | | 2010 | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
| Submission of research proposal | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data collection in Tanzania | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data analysis & attend dissertation seminars | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | |
| Thesis writing, meetings with the supervisor | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Submission of the thesis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |

Source: Study plan, May 2009