

**SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES IN FARM SCHOOLS OF THE
CAPRICORN DISTRICT (MOGODUMO AND POLOKWANE
CIRCUITS) IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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DISTRICT (MOGODOMO AND POLOKWANE CIRCUITS) IN LIMPOPO
PROVINCE**

BY

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Declaration

I, Sandra Senthakeng Mojapelo, do hereby declare that this dissertation for my Master's in Education is my original work in design and execution and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; and all the material herein has been duly acknowledged.

S.S. Mojapelo

September 2008.

Signature _____

Mojapelo S.S

Abstract

This dissertation describes the schooling experiences of learners in farm schools in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. The study examines how learners and teachers cope with the daily challenges they face in farm schools. The study followed a qualitative approach, where a case study design was used. Two methods of data collection were used, namely, interviews and observations. The study found that schooling in farm schools was characterized by a lack of basic learning and teaching resources such as classrooms, chalkboards, and basic amenities such as toilets. It was also found that the use of the multi-grade system adversely affected quality schooling.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

The system of farm schools came into being as a result of the Eiselen Commission of 1949-1951 and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 as stated by Hartshorne (1992:137). One of the fundamental purposes of the apartheid ideology was to remove the influence of the missions over education. In particular, those from the English speaking tradition and it was therefore necessary to find a new form of control over the ex-mission schools which had been situated on white farms.

The Eiselen Commission referred the matter to the new Department of Bantu Education, recommending that 'all possible steps be taken to encourage the growth of education facilities for the large Bantu population at present on European farms'. Regulations governing the setting up of farm schools were published in terms of Bantu Education Act [Act No.47 of 1953, 15(1), (m) and (n)] in the years 1954 to 1956. Taking responsibility for such schools out of the hands of the mission churches and placing them directly under the owners of the farms on which the schools were situated.

The farm owner was required to make an application for the registration of the school; to undertake to manage the school or appoint a manager to do so; to declare that he will support the Bantu Education Act and that his management of the school will faithfully observe the Act and the regulations. The following regulations that were established were the following:

- A farm school must be established primarily to provide facilities for the children of bonafide employees on the farm concerned
- If children from the surrounding farms are admitted, it must be with the permission of the owner of the school and also of the owners of the surroundings.

- Under no circumstances may hostels be attached to farm schools.
- No farm school situated on a farm adjoining a community area may admit children from the community without the permission of the secretary. If the community is in the immediate vicinity, Bantu children from farms should attend a community school in that area.

Nasson and Samuel (1990:16) highlighted that in 1954, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd mentioned that the curriculum for the learners in farm schools would include the “basic idea of teaching blacks was to fit them for farm work. It was therefore necessary that the Native Education be controlled in such a way that it should be in accordance with the policy of the state”

Hartshone (1992:138) further indicated that effective education planning was not possible as it rested entirely on the initiative of individual farmers as to whether a school was to be provided or not. This meant that a large number of black children would not have any access to education at all.

Hartshone, further indicates that it was not until the 1980s that serious considerations were given by the state to reform or even improve farm schools, but the concept of farmer ownership of the school was never challenged. Whenever problems cropped up in respect of individual farm schools, education officials took time to solve them because it was an extremely sensitive political issue. Education inspectors were powerless to protect the school or the teachers.

Troup (1976:39) indicated that it was compulsory for learners in farm schools to work on the farm fields during school hours as it was believed that manual labour on the farm by learners under the supervision of teachers was just as good as formative and developmental level as any other subject.

Ramphela and Wilson (1989:146) state that ‘it is probably true to state that the general educational problems are experienced at their worst by farm children and that the chief

difficulty about education on the farms is that the existence of the school is entirely at the discretion of the farmer’.

According to the de Graaf, Unterhalter, Wolpe, and Botha (1986:221-231) farm schools are a reflection and an extension of farm owners control of their workers, including school going children. The learners who have completed their farm primary schooling have little opportunity to compete in the labour market. Therefore, farm schools form part of a system that forces farm school learners to become farm workers.

The educational needs of learners in farm schools have always been neglected. Troup (1976:38) highlighted that, it was a well known fact that farmers, as the managers of the schools, for the most part of the schooling time, objected to the hours of the learners’ labour lost, and fear that with education, their future workers would seek profitable work elsewhere.

I have observed at my school, which is a farm school, that learners walk long distances to and from school and there have been reported cases of girls being raped on the way to or from school. Furthermore, on arrival to school, learners have to fetch water from the neighbourhood, because there is no water at school.

The accumulation of incomplete work of the learners, including the educators, due to the multi-grades class system in farm schools, for example, grade one, two and three (foundation phase) are combined in one classroom, grade four and five (intermediate phase) share a class, and grade six and seven (intermediate and senior phase) also create a learning problem because grade seven is a senior phase.

In this kind of situation, one educator teaches all the learning areas. Learners also find it difficult to concentrate in this type of learning situation because of disturbances by other learners. Nasson (1988:128) stated that most farm schools do not go beyond grade seven and learners who pass grade seven have little opportunity to study further.

In general, learners in farm schools begin school at a much older age. Currently 41% of the learners in grade 1 are in the 8-12 year age group and some of them do not cope at all because of lack of interest in school. Most learners are used to working in the farms fields with their parents who also do not see the importance of education; such learners ultimately often leave schooling earlier than anticipated.

Farm school learners are regarded as the 'orphans of the system' (Reeves, 1994:27) meaning that they are neglected by the Department of Education, while other public schools in townships are receiving adequate educational resources. Reeves further stated that farm owners have the power to decide if and when schools would be built, when it would close and whether children from the neighbouring farms would be allowed to attend or not.

In line with Reeves' findings, it was stated in the SABC news bulletin on the 15 May 2003 that the farm owner prevented learners and teachers from entering a farm school outside of Louis Trichard in the Limpopo Province. The reasons for locking the school gates were that the Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) owed him money. In response to that, the superintendent General of the Limpopo department of Education, Professor Harry Nengwekhulu, stated that the department would apply for a court order to force the farm owner to open the gates for learners and teachers, and to this day it is not known whether the court order was obtained or not.

It would appear that the education of learners in farm schools of the Limpopo Province lies in the hands of the farm owners. As I work at a farm school in the Mogodumo District, the farm owner would come to school at the beginning of the year to ask the principal about the learner enrolment for the year. When asked why the farmer wanted to know about the enrolment of the school, the principals' response was that the farmer wanted to close down the school once the enrolment of the learners is below twenty. In my opinion, farmers thought that too much learning by farm children was a threat to them. They regarded education for farm children with some scorn and scepticism. The general lack of parental support to learners is another factor that migrate against

proper schooling on farms. Parents do not see the importance of education for their children due to the high rate of illiteracy among parents on the farms. Most parents would encourage their children to work on the farms for extra money to help with the household expenses. In addition, the lack of recreational facilities prompts learners to start consuming alcohol at an early age, because they regard that as entertainment.

Farm schools are not getting enough funding from the Limpopo Department of Education. In 2002, farm schools with a total enrolment of plus minus 65 learners, received a minimum funding of not more than R1500.00 per annum (Limpopo Department of Education circular of June 2002). This allocation had to be used for managing the school, purchasing of teaching and learning material and sports equipment.

A Limpopo Department of Education circular dated 9 June (2005) indicated that final allocations for ordinary public schools, including farm schools for the 2005 academic year as per South African schools Act No.84 of 1996 (National Policy on Norms and Standards for school funding) was R5300.00 only. This allocation was for schools with total enrolment of more than 80 learners.

In an article by Callaghan (2000), it is stated that, in his speech at the conference held in Midrand the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, mentioned that “it is evident that education officials often neglect farm schools in their planning and visits to schools”, meaning that the farm schools were often sidelined and seen as not as important as other schools because of their location.

In an effort to find a solution to the problems of learners in farm schools, the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, convened a national conference on farm schools in Midrand on 13 May 2000. At this conference he mentioned that through the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) all farm schools had been proclaimed public schools bringing them within the ambit of financing and governance provisions that apply to public schools and that Members of the Executive Committee (MECs) for education in the province and the farm on which schools are located should agree on the provision to

be given. Although teaching and learning problems of farm schools exist in all the provinces, they seem to be more acute in poor provinces such as Limpopo Province. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out how learners experience schooling in farm schools in the Limpopo Province.

1.2 Research Question

What are the schooling experiences in farm schools of the Capricorn District in the Limpopo Province?

1.2.1 Sub-Questions

- What are the teaching and learning experiences in farm schools of the Capricorn District?
- How do teachers and learners cope without adequate physical resources?
- How do teachers and learners cope without basic amenities in the school?

1.3 Aims of the Study

- The general aim is to explore the schooling experiences in farm schools of the Capricorn District in the Limpopo Province
- To determine how teaching and learning process is affected by lack of educational resources in farm schools
- To establish how teachers and learners cope with limited teaching and learning resources in farm schools
- To determine how teachers and learners cope without basic amenities in the school

1.4 The objectives

- To provide baseline information to the Department of Education about the educational needs in farm schools of the Capricorn District (Mogodumo and Polokwane circuit) in Limpopo Province.

- To contribute towards the improvement of teaching and learning in the farm schools in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province

1.5 Literature Review

According to Mcmillan and Schumacher (2001:108) a review of literature serves certain purposes in a research study. Knowledge from literature is used in stating the significance of the problem, developing the research design, relating the results of the previous knowledge, and suggesting further research. Marshall and Rossman (1999:43) state that literature builds a logical framework for the research and sets it within a tradition of inquiry and context of related studies.

For this study, literature review was conducted to gather information on farm schooling, construct a frame work and to evaluate a conceptual analysis of the issue of farm schooling.

1.6 Research Methodology

Methodology describes the design of the study including the selection and description of the site, the role of the researcher, the time and the length of the study, the number of participants, how they will be selected, data collection, and analysis strategies McMillan and Schumacher (2001:55).

There are two types of methods which can be described as follows:

- The Quantitative method presents a statistical result represented with numbers and is usually based on some “logical positivism” which assumes there are stable, social facts with a single reality separated from the feelings and beliefs of individuals McMillan and Schumacher (2001:15).

- The Qualitative method is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participant's perspective. It helps in building a complex, holistic picture and to get a detailed view of informants in natural setting (Greswell, 1998:14).

In this study qualitative research method was adopted. This method helped me to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the schooling experiences of learners in farm schools. It also involved going out to the setting, gaining access, and gathering materials while being sensitive and flexible throughout the research process. I also interacted with the participants.

1.6.1 Research Design

Blalock and Blalock (1990) point out different types of designs, for example, a case study design, experimental design and quasi-experimental design. The experimental design is used to determine whether one or more variables affect another variable, while the quasi-experimental design exists for situations in which complete control is difficult or impossible for the researcher to identify.

A case study as defined by Stake (1994:11) is a study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. To approach this research problem, a case study design was adopted because I needed to understand a particular problem from the perspective of the participants themselves.

1.6.2 Sampling or Selection of Cases

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:100-102) point out that there are four different types of sampling, for example, convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, network sampling, and simple random sampling.

Convenience sampling involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained. The network

or snowball sampling is a strategy in which each successive participant or group is named by a preceding group or individual. It is frequently used for in-depth interview studies, while simple random sampling involves selecting at random the required number of subjects for the sample to form a list of a population and this can be done by drawing out names randomly until the required number is reached. The purposeful sampling allows the researcher to hand-pick the cases to be included in the study.

Purposeful sampling was adopted due to the fact that the participants were knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena that I was investigating. Three farm schools, (two from Polokwane circuit and one from Mogodumo circuit) were selected as sites of the study because of the vicinity. Nine respondents were selected to participate namely, one learner, one educator and a principal from each school.

1.6.3 Data Collection

According to Merriam (1998:136), data collection in a case study research is a recursive, interactive process in which engaging in one strategy incorporated or lead to a subsequent source data. Furthermore, it is stated that collecting data in a case study involves conducting interviews, observations, document analysis, and analyzing data. Therefore, in keeping with the nature of the proposed study and design, it was most appropriate to make use of interviews and observation as data collection techniques because each had significance for the study.

Interviews

There are different types of interviews, namely, closed interviews, which require a “yes” or “no” answer and open ended interviews. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:444) it is the exact wording and sequence of questions which are pre-determined. Questions are completely open-ended and informal conversation takes place where questions emerge form the immediate context.

In this regard, open-ended interviews were used because the participants were able to give their own views and opinions spontaneously. I was thus able to obtain data from the participants' meanings, for instance, how they conceived of their world and how they made sense of the important events in their lives, while at the same time guiding them on issues or problems to be focused on. The interviews were person-to-person. There were no time limits for the respondents during the interviews.

Observations

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:43) observations are for ensuring validity and it is an active process which is writing extensive field notes to describe what happened and the observer has to document his/her role in the situation and what effect that may have on the findings.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 346-348) indicate that there are different types of observations and they are as follows:

a) Participant Observation

The observer engages in the activities set out to observe. Participation is necessary to obtain acceptance of the researcher's presence.

b) Non-participant observation

The observer stands aloof from the group activities and notes the verbal exchanges between the teacher and the learners.

c) Corroborating field observation

Field observation is a technique of directly observing and recording without interaction.

The observer actively seeks different participants for accuracy and for confirmation.

Due to the nature of the study, participant observation was used so as to interact with the participants to gain their trust and acceptance and to encourage them to be free so that the researcher could get a clear understanding of the experiences.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process integrated into all phases of qualitative research. Qualitative analysis is a process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing, and interpreting to provide an explanation of the single phenomenon of interest (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:462).

I analysed the data in accordance with the model provided by Terreblache and Durrheim (1999:140-143):

- I familiarized myself with the preliminary meaning of data developing from the experiences and ideas gathered through interviews and observations during data collection
- Identified themes from the language of interviewees, their thinking in terms of processes, tensions and contradictions, and finding levels of the complexity of themes from the interview schedules and notes.
- Selected, categorized and compared themes from interviews and observation notes.
- Synthesised (integrated) compared and contrasted themes derived from the interviews with those from the observation notes in order to ensure validity.
- Lastly, I interpreted the data to provide explanations, findings, summaries, and conclusions.

1.7 Definition of terms

It is important that the terms used are defined in the study. This is to ensure that I do not talk at cross-purposes, and that the reader should be able to interpret some of the concepts that are used in this research, (Papo, 1994:6).

Learning Resources

Popenoe, Cunningham and Boulton (1998:299) indicate that learning resources are structured objects used for educational purposes to make teaching simpler for the learners and teachers. Gultig (2001:21) refers to learning resources as support materials which learners can use to deepen their understanding and to make their learning more exciting and easy.

Therefore, for this study, learning resources refer to learning support materials which help learners in their learning process. These include objects such as maps, textbooks, educational charts, designed worksheets, task cards, chalkboards and computers.

Multi-grade Classes

Jansen (2002:18) refers to multi-grade classes as the integration of different grades in one classroom taught by a single educator. In a published article by Chala (2002:1) multi-grade classes are described as the integration of different classes or grades in a single teacher teaching all subjects.

Therefore, for this study multi-grade classes refer to one teacher teaching all the learning areas to two or three different grades in one classroom irrespective of his/her ability or knowledge of the subjects.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The research was conducted in the Capricorn District (Mogodumo and Polokwane Circuits), in Limpopo Province. I made this choice for proximity and economic reasons, that is, the area is within my working environment and am very familiar with the districts and has access to the farm schools.

1.9 Summary

This chapter laid out the background to the problem and indicated how the problem would be investigated. The following chapter locates the theoretical framework within which the problem was explored.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the background to the problem, the aim, the scope, and the purpose of the study. To achieve this purpose, a review of literature was undertaken first by looking at the concept “farm school”, ‘theoretical framework’ for farm schooling and lastly an international perspective on farm schooling.

2.2 The Concept “Farm School”

A farm school is an educational institution built on a farm and as a result the farmer becomes part of the management since the school is built on his/her land (private land). De Graaf, Louw and Van der Merwe (1990:226) stated that the farmer owns both the school buildings and the land on which the school is built. The farmer has the power to decide when the school will be built or closed and whether learners from neighbouring farms may attend or not.

The apartheid regime or separate development in South Africa brought farm schools into existence. Hartshorne (1992:121) states that the problems, dilemmas and complexities of education in South Africa have been compounded by state policies of apartheid and white economic and political domination.

The farm owner was required to make an application for the registration of the school, and had to undertake to manage the school or appoint a manager to do so. Furthermore, the farmer had to declare that he would support the Bantu Education Act in his management of the school and would faithfully observe the Act and regulations.

Nasson (1998) refers to farm schools as 'hungry' schools because of their poor conditions of teaching and learning environment and that the future of farm schools is in the hands of the farm owners, while Christie and Gaganakis (1989:88) see farm schools as a reflection and an extension of farm owners' control over the school and the community.

Hartshone (1992:136-137) point out that under pre-Bantu education arrangements there was no legal definition of a farm school. They were called mission schools like any other, either supported entirely by the particular mission church or subsidized by the provincial education department concerned on the same basis as any other state subsidized school.

Furthermore, farm owners were responsible for the appointment of teachers, and subject to proper notice being given, could also terminate their services. Teachers were in the hands of the farm owners, and as such it was difficult for them to resist demands from the owner to use the pupils during harvest time.

Farm school learners' futures are generally and already determined when they walk through the classroom door, (de Graaf, 1986:221). Furthermore, Jansen (2002:18) states that learners in farm schools are at a disadvantage. The multi-grade class system contributes to the teaching and learning problems of learners in farm schools. The workload and educational administrative work take a toll on educators and learners as well.

Kruger (1992:85) indicates that conditions under which teaching and learning take place at farm schools generally leave much to be desired. These are poor school facilities, textbooks, chalkboards, learner support material, primitive teaching methods, lack of suitably qualified teaching staff and the fact that learners have to work on the farm after school which denies them time to do their homework or school projects.

Chala and Moalusi (2003:2) in 'The Teacher' stated that teaching and learning in farm schools is often disrupted when learners are expected to be available for additional labour on the farm and after school they become farm labourers. Frequent absenteeism by

learners due to walking long distances to school, farm evictions put impact on the teaching and learning process of learners and in the end learners drop out of school.

According to Christie (1991:127) overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of teaching staff impact on the teaching and learning process in farm schools. Christie also states that libraries and laboratories are not available at all for teachers and learners. The low level of education that learners receive in farm schools is due to the lack of well-trained teachers, suitable books, educational resources, language difficulties, multi grade classes, illiterate parents, and poverty at home.

Furthermore, the district officials and circuit managers often neglect farm schools in their planning and visit to schools. There is no supervision of work and learner support material is usually delivered late in the year due to negligence, which causes a delay in teaching.

In his study on farm schooling, Nasson (1988:6-8) speaks of the dreadful reality of farm school dependence and of the almost absolute power of the farmer, resulting in a situation of ruling class paternalism and working class difference. White farmers did not see schooling as having any direct relevance to children staying on the farm; but thought that too much education for farm children would empower them and take away their future labourers.

Educational problems in farm schools such as the provision of equal access to schools, equal educational opportunities, irrelevant curricula, inadequate finance, inadequate facilities, shortages of educational materials, large enrolment of learners, and under qualified teachers all contributed to the need for educational change in south Africa.

The reason for educational change was to provide equity in terms of educational provision and to promote a balanced view by developing learners' critical thinking powers and their problem solving abilities. Another reason for educational change was that a large number of learners did not receive educational and training opportunities

during the apartheid era. But it would appear educational change was not the case for farm schools.

2.3. Theoretical framework for farm schooling

2.3.1 Schooling and effective learning

In order to gain a proper perspective of the problem, I decided to look into the concept of schooling and effective learning. The school is regarded as the formal institution that directs learning experiences within a particular society. McKay and Allais (1995:157) state that for effective teaching and learning to take place, a new culture of learning has to take root. Teaching and learning in farm schools are not in line with the philosophy of curriculum 2005 (C2005), which is an Outcomes-based Education (OBE) approach to teaching and learning.

In the Curriculum 2005 manual (2001), OBE is described as an approach which requires teachers and learners to focus their attention on the end results of each learning process which are called the outcomes of learning, and learners need to demonstrate that they have attained them. The characteristics of OBE are that:

- Learners should understand what they learn, thus to be able to develop skills, attitudes and values during the learning process.
- Learners should become active participants in the learning process and have to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Learners are given the opportunity to work at their own pace and in different ways according to their individual abilities and level of development.
- Each learner's needs are catered for by means of a variety of instructional strategies and assessment tools.
- The learner is facilitated towards the achievement of outcomes.
- It is learner centered.

However, to gain a proper understanding of schooling on farms, theories in sociology of education need to be consulted. The most relevant theories are to be the functionalist and the Marxists theories because they both have different ideas with regard to education. The functionalists believe that education operates to socialize individuals and groups into the requirements and demands of the society and a school a child attends very often sets the tone the future. (Popenoe, Cunningham, and Boulton, 1998:299).

In line with what the functionalists, it is evident that learners in farm schools are at a disadvantage of getting a better education and future due to their schooling conditions at present. This theory explains why children from farm schools are destined to have a low socio-economic status like their parents.

On the other hand, Marxists agree with the functionalists that education operated to socialize individuals and groups into requirements and demands of the society. However, Marxists are opposed to the ways in which young school children are schooled into conforming to the requirements of a capitalistic society.

Thompson and Priestley (1996:126) indicate that the functionalists believe:

- Education selects people according to their abilities and qualifies them accordingly.
- There is a rough correspondence between intelligence and achievement.
- Education is the device which ensures that the most able people get the most responsible work.

The Marxists, in turn, believe that:

- Education contributes to the continuation of the class system and class inequality.
- Education reproduces a labour force which is socialized to accept its lot in life.
- A small minority of the working class is allowed to make it in order to reinforce the impression that the system is fair.

However, at some point, Marxists and the functionalists agree that schooling or education operates to socialize individuals and group them into the requirements and demands of the society. Giddens (1993:437) argues that education should provide for everyone who wants to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives. These theories give an explanation of why farm schools should be unequally treated compared to those in urban areas.

The teachers are the ones who should provide a proper learning environment, which will enable the learners to proceed at their own pace, but, with the present lack of resources in farm schools, it is quite difficult for teachers to create the required learning environment.

Kruger (1992:85) states that the conditions under which teaching and learning take place in farm schools generally leaves much to be desired. These conditions include poor teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, charts, overhead projectors, classrooms and desks.

2.3.2 Inequality and poverty

Bowles and Gintis (1975) stated that it is a failure to confront the structural dimensions of poverty and inequality which have resulted in a preoccupation with tepid policies and programmes that attempt to alleviate the educational disadvantages of pupils from impoverished environments such as farm schools. Haralambos and Holborn (2000:291) agree with Bowles and Gintis that poverty and inequality play a major role in the schooling process of learners in farm schools.

They furthermore state that inadequate educational facilities and unpleasant learning conditions are regarded as aspects of poverty. Farming communities are generally poor and poverty stricken. My experience is that due to poverty, most school going learners work after school during weekends to help their parents get some extra income. Poverty affects learning because a hungry learner cannot concentrate in class. According to Feignburg and Soltis (1992:35) farm schools have to make do with old buildings, poor facilities and a shortage of well trained teachers. Poverty stricken children do not receive effective education and are often vulnerable and, therefore, become incapable meeting scholastic demands satisfactorily.

Basson (1992:17) points out the following expectations of learners in farm schools:

- Physical, psychological and spiritual security is needed by learners.
- Establishing sound interpersonal relationships with fellow scholars and teachers, and of being accepted by them.
- Being acknowledged as human beings who are unique in their own right and whose achievements are in accordance with their personal abilities, on the strength of which they can expect to command whatever respect due to them; and
- A curriculum with contents that are relevant to the future needs and that offers opportunities for self-actualisation.

Therefore, poverty- stricken learners in farm schools are treated unjustly because of their situation and circumstances. Their expectations are also related to their experiences in their own school situation.

Mckay and Allais (1995:187) revealed that a farm school is built by the owner and is partly financed by the government while farm communities have to carry a significant part of the cost of school buildings. I view that as a burden because farm communities are generally poor and that means learners in farm schools are being sidelined by the government.

Poor funding for farm schools contributes negatively the smooth running of the schools, for example, purchasing teaching and learning materials as well as sports equipment such as soccer, cricket and netball kits. In 2002, farm schools with a total enrolment of learners of 65, received a minimum funding of not more than R1 500.00 per annum per school. (Limpopo Department of Education, Circular June 2002).

The allocation was supposed to manage the school, including the purchasing of teaching and learning materials and office stationery. Recently, financial allocations for 2005 academic year as according to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, (SASA) for ordinary public schools, including farm schools, was R5 332.00 only, (Limpopo Provincial Circular 9 June 2005).

Hartshone (1992:138) indicates that as early as 1986, farm schools were allocated a maximum amount of R600 per school, for the building of toilets and a supply of drinking water. Factors such as poor financial management and lack of resources make what farm schools are and because of this, more money should be spent on infrastructure, transport for learners and other related matters such as educational materials and sport equipment.

2.3.3 Power and control

Nelson, Carlson and Linton (1972:21) state that those who have power typically dislike giving it up, and those who have no power, experience difficulty getting access to it. Though it is not compulsory for the farmer to build a school, he can choose to build a school so that children staying in the farm with their parents can go to school in the farm. In this instance the farmer has the power to decide if and when a school would be built and when it would close down. Callaghan (2000:9) revealed that because of power and control of the farmer owner, teaching and learning in farm schools is often disrupted when learners are expected to be available for additional labour on the farm.

Nkuzi Development Association (2001) shares the same sentiments. They reported that power based on prejudice orders the society in a particular way and institutions

reinforcing the imbalances of power were set up by the powerful and the manner in which they operate benefited only the powerful while discriminating against those without power. This is in line with Reeves (1994) when it was highlighted that the farmer has the power to decide if and when a school would be built, when it would close down and whether children from the neighbouring farms would be allowed to attend in that school.

The major findings associated with this study by Nkuzi Development Association (2001) were that the following impedes access to basic education in farming communities due to social control and power:

- Farm evictions which disturb teaching and learning
- Closing down of schools by farm owners.

This framework can be viewed as unifying various overlapping theoretical arguments about education inequalities and poverty and, power and control. The framework helped me to understand the problem under investigation and it was also necessary to review some experiences in different countries with regard to schooling experience in farm schools.

2.4. International perspectives on farm schooling

Literature indicates that farm schools do exist in other countries as well. For the purpose of this study it was not possible to discuss all the countries and how they cope with schooling in farm schools.

Therefore, some countries were selected from five continents only, based on their experiences and how they manage to improve the schooling conditions in farm schools. The continents selected are Africa, Asia, North America, South America, and Europe.

One or two countries were selected from each continent.

- Africa: South Africa and Zimbabwe
- Asia: China and Thailand,
- South America: Brazil,
- North America: United States of America
- Europe: Belgium.

Literature shows that some countries selected were making efforts to improve schooling conditions in farm schools, while other countries were making very little effort to improve the condition in farm schools.

2.4.1 Africa: South Africa

According to the report by the Human Rights Watch Division, thousand of South African farm children have prevented from receiving an adequate education. A researcher from Human Rights Watch's Division was quoted as stating,

“The neglect of farm schools officially known as ‘public schools on private property’ - results in children attending dilapidated schools, often without running water and electricity. Delivery of these services is determined contracted between the state and the farm owner” (2004:18)

According to the report, the South African government is failing to protect the right to a private education for children living on commercial farm by neither ensuring their access to farm schools nor maintaining the adequacy of learning conditions at these schools. Farm schools are now referred to as public schools according to the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996.

The report has also revealed that farm schools in South Africa are among the poorest in financial resources. Farm school learners attend schools without electricity, water, sanitation, suitable buildings or learning materials and they also face harassment from some farm owners.

According to IRINnews.Org in South Africa (2004) the lack of transport from home to school further hinders access to education in farm schools. Further, it is stated that two thirds of the children, some as young as eight years old, who attend schools in Limpopo Province, travel to school on foot up to 10 kilometers each morning.

Such exhausting conditions adversely affect the ability of these children to adequately participate in activities in the classroom. This results in poor performance, non-attendance or regular absences. In particular, girls face the risk of sexual assault when walking for several hours to and from school each day.

There is little difference between South Africa and other countries in terms of farm schooling because experiences are the same and nothing much has been done to address the problems experienced by learners in farm schools. In South Africa there are no programmes which monitor the running and progress of farm schools

2.4.2 Africa: Zimbabwe

An article by Mukaro of Zimbabwe Independent (2002) titled “10 000 children denied an education”, reveals that farm invasions have displaced farm workers and their children leaving more than half of farm schools without adequate numbers of children to go to school.

In the event of a farm closing down, a school was forced to close because the invaders displaced the parents, who worked on the farm. It is stated that farm schools could not be re-open because teachers did not want to risk their lives in a politically volatile area.

Other factors such as infrastructure and shelter, which were being provided by the farmers, can also drive away teachers once the farming activities come to a standstill and the farmer deserts the farm. According to Mukaro (2002) a Zimbabwean journalist, commercial farms had more than 200 schools with an average enrollment of around 300 pupils each which translated to about 60 000 pupils in farm schools.

Furthermore, according to the report in IRIN news.org dated 13 February 2004, written in Mashonaland Central Province, in Northern Zimbabwe, lessons are often held in a badly ventilated barn which is so dark the learners' have to strain to see what is written on the blackboard.

The report further states that there is a lack of learning and proper facilities, education standards are far from ideal, and marked by high levels of absenteeism. When it emerged that the children's educational development was under threat, the Minister of Education established satellite schools on some commercial farms to try and alleviate the challenges facing children. In South Africa nothing much has been attempted to try to alleviate the challenges facing the farm school learners and their teachers.

2.4.3 Asia: China

Schooling in China is characterized by a two-track system which fulfils two tasks, namely, raising the quality of education and training talented learners for institutes of higher learning, (Lo, 1984: 52). On the other hand, the standard of education and the facilities offered in the farm or rural schools in china vary considerably.

In a study conducted by Hawkins (1983) the classroom facilities in many farm schools of China are of a poor quality, the lighting is dim and in certain regions, classes even learn in caves due to shortage of classrooms. Further on, due to the shortage of classrooms it often happens that two groups of learners use the same classroom in shifts on a daily basis.

Henze (1992: 117) states that although politics still determine the aims and objectives of the curricula in schools, there have been positive changes in textbooks, while the curricula in tend to be highly subject specialized and the emphasis is on content rather than process skills.

In addition the curriculum design is based on two main important points, namely,

- The known abilities of learners
- The appraisal of the best practice.

Lewin and Lin (1993:10) highlight that, though there have been changes in the curriculum, learning opportunities for learners in the farm schools of China are limited and they frequently end up dropping out of school to work in the farm fields. Although in South Africa, the curriculum design is learner centered and focuses on the learning outcomes, efficient learning opportunities for learners in farm schools are very limited and they lose interest in school and decide to drop out and work in the farm fields.

2.4.4 Asia: Thailand

In Thailand, studies conducted on farm schooling by Bartlett and Jatiket (2003:6-7) of Rural Ecology Livelihoods (REAL) describe how learning activities based on the 'Farmer Field School' approach are transforming environmental education for children attending farm schools in parts of Asia. Learners and teachers, for instance, get out of their classrooms into the rice and vegetable fields to study ecology, while in South African farm schools, learners work in the farm fields to get paid and not for educational purposes.

To improve farm schooling conditions in Thailand, education was established. REAL education is an integrated learning process in which farm school children explore what is happening in farms. Learners gain an understanding and develop critical thinking skills with respect to environmental, health and social problems.

For learners in Thailand farm schools, education involves weekly sessions in the field and classroom. In the field, learners are taught how to grow their own crops, conduct simple experiments and make detailed observations of the agro-ecosystem. In the classroom, the fieldwork is documented, analysed and discussed.

This learning approach is better compared to learning approaches in farm schools of South Africa because in Thailand learners do both theory and practice or experiment outside the classroom to gain an increased understanding. To maintain good quality education in Thai farm schools, National and Provincial budgets of the Ministry of Education in Thailand supplied funds for the development and implementation of the REAL programme in farm schools.

2.4.5 Europe: Belgium

In an article by Van de Sompel (1999:3) it is stated that farm schooling in Belgium was originally affected by poverty, and the Catholic Party favored the idea that primary education should continue to be controlled by the church. It is further stated that in Belgium consisted merely of recitation and explanation of the catechism and poor children who were provided of regular schooling could at least write their names. The high illiteracy level in Belgium has been blamed on inadequate preparation of teachers, namely, of the teaching clergy as well as temporary teachers. The aggravating factors were interruption of schooling because children were expected to help with work on the farm, especially during harvest time, and with cottage industries to mitigate the frequent family poverty.

The educational changes that have taken place after the control by the church were abolished. Education was improved by requiring better training, improved instruction methods and better school buildings. Although the teachers were poorly paid, teaching and learning progressed because of the availability of textbooks. Learners were transported by free busses to school and parents had a choice of choosing schools for their children.

2.4.6 North America: United States of America

According to a study of inequalities in education in the USA by Coleman (1966) it was established that the majority of black learners in rural schools had no facilities with large classes in dilapidated buildings and poor support from the Department of Education.

There was a poor interaction between teachers and pupils, the teaching and learning environment was not conducive to learning, as well as poor organized course preparation while the schools were not always well equipped in terms of educational resources. As a result of these factors, Alternative or Farm schools were established in the 1970s Button and Provenzo (1989: 303).

The aims of establishing such schools were to:

- Offer learners more learning opportunities.
- Focus on the personal problems of the learners.
- Create a more flexible learning environment within which provision is made for a wider range of educational needs and styles.
- Emphasize the individuality needs styles.

It was stated that on AERO (Alternative Education Resource Organisation) that in other parts of the United States of America, for example in western Massachusetts, a farm is regarded as a non-profit educational programmes in farming and engaging them in a yearlong practical training programme

2.4.7 South America: Brazil

In a study conducted by Gallant (2002) it was stated that education in the farm schools of Brazil was worse. The lack of funds, unprepared teachers and in some instances, to mention a few, teachers had to use old history textbooks, which did not even mention the main figures of the country's past.

Further on, textbooks used in farm schools of Brazil were inadequate in quantity and quality. In a study that was commissioned by the Education Ministry of Brazil, many of the textbooks that the ministry itself distributed were composed of lines and lines of senseless information.

It was further stated that many learners could not keep up with the conquest in science and technology, because many textbooks had not been updated for at least ten years. The lack of informative textbooks frustrate learners, some teachers decided to resort to newspapers, comics and cook book recipes in order to make learning more relevant to heir learners.

In addition, approximately five million children between the ages of 7 and 17 had no access to classrooms. The findings by Gallant are fairly similar and relevant to South Africa where a large number of learners in farm communities do not attend school due to long distances or lack of schools nearby.

In conclusion, from Thailand farm schooling experiences, we can learn that programmes like REAL are there to monitor the running and the process of learning in the farm schools. Teaching and learning is more practical. Teachers and learners get support from both Thai Education Foundation and REAL which is funded by the ministry or education. This is not happening in South Africa where the study was conducted.

For example, teachers do not receive adequate support and training from the Department of Education in terms of teaching multi-grade classes and assistance in implementing new teaching methods such as co-operative learning. To add on, most farm schools are seldom visited by education authorities or monitored to give support as expected.

In Belgium there is a higher rate of illiteracy among children and parents which has been blamed on inadequate preparation of the teaching clergy and lay teachers and lack of support.

The high rate of illiteracy in farming communities of Belgium is the same as in South Africa and Zimbabwe where most parents did not have the opportunity to go to school and their children drop out of school due to inadequate support from their parents and due to the reasons already highlighted like farm invasions in Zimbabwe and farm evictions in South Africa. The children rather work on the farm fields with their parents than go to school.

Brazil and the United States of America are also not making enough effort to improve farm schools in terms of provision of buildings, textbooks and lack of support from education authorities. Even though there are poor learning facilities in China, what can be learnt from China is that an effort has been made to raise quality of education and training of talented learners that are identified in different schools and there have been changes in the curriculum.

In this study, Thailand is the only country which developed a plan or a strategy called REAL (Rural Ecology and Agricultural Livelihoods) to improve farm schooling as compared to other countries which have not developed any programmes to improve teaching and learning in farm schools.

2.6 Summary

In summary, this chapter reviewed literature that is related to the problem under investigation. The strategies used in different countries to address the schooling experiences of learners in farm schools were presented. Research methodology used for this study and, method of data collection, will be outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two, literature was reviewed to find out what other authors say about farm schooling, theoretical framework for farm schooling and lastly international perspective on farm schooling. This chapter deals with methods used to carry out the research. It presents the design and the methodology used during the research. Different approaches to research are briefly discussed, such as qualitative and quantitative approaches and reasons why the qualitative approaches and case study design were chosen. Different types of sampling are described and the reasons for choosing purposeful sampling.

3.2 Research Methodology

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:55) methodology describes the design of the study including the selection and description of the site, the time and length of the study, the number of participants, how they will be selected, data collection, and data analysis strategies.

Neuman (1997:30) points out that every researcher collects data using one or more techniques. The techniques may be grouped in two categories: the quantitative, (collecting data in the form of numbers), and the qualitative, (collecting in the form of words or pictures). In this study, qualitative research approach was used to reflect on the schooling experiences in farm schools.

According to De Vos et al (1998:243) quantitative research is a deductive form of reasoning since it collects data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses and theories. It

uses an ethic perspective, in that the researcher determines the meaning of a certain phenomenon.

Neuman (2000:16) mentions that qualitative research approach enables the researcher to:

- Directly observe and participate in the social setting at that time.
- Involve a few cases or participants in the study, and lastly.
- Inductively develop themes out of field observations.

Due to the nature of the study, qualitative research approach was adopted because it was relevant and appropriate. Therefore, full participation of the respondents was required to understand their feelings and interpretation. In other words, I wanted to derive meaning from the participants namely, from principals, educators and learners about their experiences in farm schools. Furthermore the qualitative approach enabled me to analyze data by extracting themes such as multi-grades, teaching and learning.

3.3 Research Design

Blalock and Blalock (1990) points out there are different types of research designs, for example, a case study design, experimental design and quasi-experimental design. An experimental design is used to determine whether one or more variables affect another, while a quasi-experience design exists for situations in which complete control is difficult or impossible for the researcher to identify, while a case study design as defined by Stake (1994:11) is a study of particularity and complexity of a single case coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.

According to Yin (1994:13) a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon and context that are not clearly evident. It is an approach in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity, and collects detailed information by using a variety of data procedures during a sustained period of time.

The case study design was adopted because through this design, I was able to select and thoroughly investigate three schools and nine respondents, understand and describe in detail the challenges that are experienced by both the teachers and learners in farm schools. It was; therefore, appropriate to understand the phenomenon or the problem in detail.

3.3.1 Sampling

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002: 100-102) point out that there are different types of sampling, for example, convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, network or snowball sampling, and simple random sampling. Convenience sampling involves choosing the nearest individual to serve as a respondent and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained; the network or snowball sampling is a strategy in which each successive participant or group is named by a preceding group or individual and it is frequently used for in-depth interview studies, while simple random sampling involves selecting at random from a list of the population the required number of subjects for the sample.

Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to hand pick the cases to be included in the study. Purposeful sampling is further elaborated by Babbie and Mouton (2001:288) when they state that “in fact, samplings in studies where qualitative methods are used are always by means of purposeful sampling”.

Therefore, purposeful sampling method was adopted because the participants were knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon I was investigating and wanted to identify and select farm schools in the Capricorn District (Polokwane and Mogodumo areas) for in-depth study of schooling experiences learners in farm schools.

I chose farm school in the Mogodumo circuit because it is my work place and am familiar with the surroundings, learners and the educators. The other two farm schools from

Polokwane circuit were chosen because they were the nearest farm schools that I could manage to visit with regard to distance, and to find out about their schooling experiences whether there are any similarities or differences with the farm school in the Mogodumo circuit.

Three farm schools were thus selected, one from Mogodumo and two from Polokwane area. The principals of the three farm schools were first consulted for permission to interview the learners and the educators. So all in all, nine respondents namely a learner, an educator and, a principal from each school were selected. The respondents were chosen because they were familiar with their schooling experiences in farm schools and were knowledgeable about the phenomena.

3.3.2 Data Collection

The goal of data collection was to produce a formal document of the process followed to engage all the stake holders, the actual research and the results of the research conducted from the three farm schools. Therefore, in keeping with the nature of the proposed study and design, it was appropriate to make use of interviews and observation data collection techniques because each had significance for the study.

3.3.2.1 Interviews

As it was highlighted in chapter one that there are different types of interviews such as closed interviews and open ended interviews, for this study open ended interviews were used because the participants were able to give their own views and opinions spontaneously and without time limits. I was able to obtain the exact meaning of the participants' meanings, in other words, how they conceive their world and how they make sense of their experiences of schooling, while at the same time guiding them on issues or problems to be focused on.

The interviews were face to face and there were no time limits for the respondents during the interviews. I spent twenty to thirty minutes interviewing the educators and the principals, and fifteen to twenty minutes with the learners because some of them were very reserved and shy to talk to me. I had to ask for assistance from the educators as some of the learners interviewed in the three schools were not Sotho speaking.

3.3.2.2 Observations

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:346-348) indicated that there are different types of observations such as participant, non-participant and corroborating and observation.

Due to the nature of the study, I followed the participant observation because I was able to fully participate in the activities and data was gathered easily. According to De Vos et al (1998) participant observation is regarded as a research method that is typical of the qualitative paradigm, meaning that it aims at the in-depth investigation of a problem and can be utilized if the researcher has a good chance of gaining access to the field of research.

3.3.2.3 Entering the field

It was very important to gain permission to enter the field of research. Firstly, permission was granted at the beginning of the project by the Department of Education (Provincial Head Office), and school principals. I telephonically communicated with the first school principal to ask for permission and informed him of the purpose for the visit to the school and permission was telephonically granted.

For the second school, I personally visited the principal at her home in Seshego Township where she lives. I explained my purpose for the visit to the school and both agreed on the date and permission was verbally granted.

At my work place, I asked for permission from the school principal and explained the purpose of the research and permission was verbally granted. After collecting data, I thanked the principals, teachers and the learners at all the three schools for having given me the opportunity to interview them and observe.

3.3.2.4 Ethical considerations

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 420) points out that a qualitative researcher needs to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic, face to face interactive data collection and reciprocity with participants. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:100) state that throughout the process of data of data collection, the problem of persuading participants to co-operate is ever present, lack of co-operation leases to non-response, to incompletely filled out questions and to unreliable results.

To gain the confidence of the participants, they were assured that the data collected would be treated with great confidentiality and anonymity and that they were used for research purposes only and no other person would have access to them.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

As already highlighted in chapter one, data was analyzed in accordance with the a model provided by Terreblanche and Durrheim (1999:143):

- I firstly familiarized myself with the preliminary meaning of data developing from the experiences and ideas gathered through interviews and observations during data collection.
- I identified themes from the language of the interviewees, their thinking in terms of processes, tensions and contradictions and finding levels of complexity of themes from the interview schedules and notes.
- I selected, categorized and compared themes from interviews and observation notes.

- I synthesized (integrated), compared and contrasted themes derived from interviews with those from observations notes to ensure validity.
- Lastly, I interpreted the data to provide explanations, findings, summaries, and conclusions.

3.4 Methodological considerations

3.4.1 Validity and reliability

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) refer to validity of data as the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world, while Babbie (1998:136) states that reliability refers to the likelihood that a given measurement procedure will yield the same description of a given phenomenon if that measurement is repeated.. Validity is measured in terms of two separate but related dimensions: internal and external validity.

3.4.2 Internal validity

Internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can be sustained by the data Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:107). To ensure internal validity of data collected, I evaluated the data collected by checking the consistency and relationship of responses from the different participants. I took the responses back to the respondents to verify if the transcripts accurately represented their views.

De Vos et al (1998:351) propose the four following strategies to ensure trustworthiness in internal validity:

- Credibility
- Transferability
- Dependability, and
- Confirmability

The goal in applying the strategy of credibility is to demonstrate that the research was conducted in proper manner to ensure that the phenomena were accurately identified and described. Transferability rests more with the researcher who would make that transfer than with the original investigator.

The third strategy is dependability where the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions to the phenomenon chosen for research as well as changes in the design created by a refined understanding of the setting, while the final strategy of confirmability is focused on whether the results of the research could be confirmed by other researchers.

3.4.3 External validity

External validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalized to the wider population, cases or situation, (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002:109). To ensure external validity of data, I ensured that the study was relating to other people or world. The conditions and situations were seen as normal, depicting the usual reality of the participants and that means the tasks that were required of the participants were planned to minimize the whole range of the outcomes.

3.5 Profiles of the schools

School A

The school is about 30km south of the Polokwane city. It is situated on a farm along the Zebediela road and falls under the Polokwane circuit in the Capricon District. The school was established in 1974. There is no supply of water, no electricity, one toilet which is used by learners and teachers and no soccer or netball grounds. The school has 25 learners with one teacher and a principal. It consists of grades 1 to 5. The school is classified under quintile one category by the department of education, meaning that it is a no fee school.

Olipphant L (2008: 10), a City Press reporter, explains that a 'no fee' school is where parents pay no school fees and the government pays for every child who goes to that school. Further more, not every school is a 'no fee' school if it meets the government's poverty assessment criteria. The Department of Education relies on statistics provided by the Statistics South Africa to identify 'no fee' schools.

There is only one classroom for teaching and learning with broken desks, windows, cupboards old small cracked chalkboards, and torn textbooks. According to the teacher at this school, learners travel long distances to school daily, some learners walk approximately ten to fifteen kilometers on foot.

Most parents did not go to school at all, and some of them attended school up to grades four or six. During weekends learners join their parents in the farm fields to earn extra money. Parents earn between R400.00 to R700.00 per month and their children are paid R10 to R15 per day. The farmer does not assist the school with anything like cutting long grasses around the school and provide basic amenities such as water. The only relationship that exists between the farmer and the school is that the school is built on his land.

School B

According to the principal, the school was established in 1970. The school is about 25km west of the Polokwane city and situated on a farm far, away from the tarred road to Louis Trichardt. It falls under the Polokwane circuit in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. The school has only two classrooms with 25 learners and 3 teachers including the principal. The school is graded as a primary school and classified under quintile 1 category by the department of education, which means, learners do not pay school fees at all.

There is no electricity, source of water and sports grounds. Learners travel five to eight kilometers on daily basis and are always late for school. There are broken desks and windows. The learners do not have uniforms as their parents cannot afford to buy them because they are poor. Most of their parents had dropped out of school in grades 2 or 4 while some did not go to school at all.

The average income for the parents on a monthly basis is between R500.00 and R700.00. According to the principal, the farmer supplies the school with fresh vegetables occasionally, when available. The only relationship between the school and the farmer is that the school is built on his farm and the learners' parents' work for him.

School C

The school was established in 1968. It is approximately 25km south of the Polokwane city and situated on farm along the Lebowakgomo road. The school falls under the Mogodumo circuit in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. Although the school is situated on a farm, it is regarded as a public school. It is a primary school with grades 1-7 and the total enrolment of learners is 75. It has recently been classified under quintile 1 and that means learners do not pay school fees any more.

The school has only 3 teachers including the principal. There are only four classrooms of which three are used for teaching and learning while the other class is used as a store room for objects such as broken desks, cupboards, and pots. The school has no electricity and the toilets are built with used corrugated iron.

There is a water tap in the school yard but in most instances it runs dry and learners are supposed to fetch water from the neighbourhood or from a nearby dirty cement dam where cows and donkeys drink and teachers have to wait for them to come back. In some instances, the school principal sends two learners to the farmer to request water.

Most adults in the area are very poor, unemployed and illiterate. Most parents did not go to school at all, and those who attended school, mostly dropped out in grade three or five. The average monthly income for parents working on the farm is less than R800.00 per month. The farmer, would at times cut the long grasses in the schoolyard, repair damaged doors, burglarproofs and windowpanes when requested to do so by the principal. The farmer inherited the farm from his father ten years ago and still lives with his family on the farm.

3.6 Summary

This chapter gave information on the strategy which was used to conduct the study. This includes the design, methods of data collection, data analysis, methodological considerations and the three school profiles.

The next chapter presents the results of the data collected during field work. Themes were identified, selected, categorized and compared from interviews and observation notes. Lastly, data was interpreted to provide findings, summaries and conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of data collected during the field work. It includes data from interviews with learners', teachers' and principals' opinions and experiences with regard to schooling in farm schools. It also includes the analyzed results from the observations.

4.2 Results from interviews

Table 1 below presents the results of the study from the interviews. The responses are from learners, teachers and principals from each of the schools. The results are categorized and presented according to the following themes:¹

Themes	Respondents	School A	School B	School C
1. Physical resources	Principal	There is one classroom, no office, library or laboratory	Two classrooms and a small office attached to the classrooms. No other buildings exist as you can see.	Four classrooms only and a small office which I do not get a chance to sit and work. No library or laboratory.

¹ See the interview (appendix A)

	Teacher	One class room which accommodates learners in grade 1 -5	Two classrooms and an office	Four classroom and an office only
	Learner	Our school has one classroom.	Two classrooms and an office	Four classrooms and one office only
2. Teaching and learning materials	Principal	Not available at all. Only old torn books are available to use.	Very few, learners have to share textbooks.	Available but not enough for all the learners in other classes like grade 5 and 6.
	Teacher	Not available. I struggle a lot. LSM is delivered late in the first quarter.	Not enough for all the learners. For example, the grade 7s use a grade 6 natural science textbook.	Grades 4 and 5s do not have enough textbooks. They share books and some of them are not in good condition
	Leaner	We do not have books and we use old ones.	There are few books for all of us.	We share textbooks because there are only few of them.

3. Multi-grades	Principal	Grades 1-5 are all in one classroom and it is difficult to teach and do administration work.	We try to teach but it is very difficult and not manageable.	It is a challenge for all of us, I am not coping well and I have to teach.
	Teacher	Very difficult, It is stressful to teach multi-grade classes.	It is difficult but I try to teach anyway.	My problem is that, I cannot even follow the time table as required. It is very challenging for me.
	Learner	I cannot cope and do not like mixing with other grades.	I do not like to share a class.	Learners in the other grade disturb us and we fight.
4. Basic amenities e.g. electricity, water and toilets	Principal	No electricity, water and there is one toilet for all of us in the school.	We have no water and electricity. Boys and girls use a broken down toilet.	Our solar plates for electricity were stolen, the tap sometimes runs dry and the toilets pose health risk to all of us.

	Teacher	No electricity and water. We share one toilet with all the learners in the school.	No electricity and learners fetch water at the nearby houses. Toilets are dilapidated	No electricity, the tap runs dry most of the time and learners have to fetch water from a dirty cement dam. and the toilets are bad
	Learner	We fetch water from nearby borehole before school begins every day	No electricity and no source of water in the school	There is no electricity and we share toilets with our teachers. We fetch water from the cement dam or houses nearby the school.
5. Teaching staff	Principal	Principal and one teacher.	Principal and one teacher only. We were three and the department of education redeployed one teacher.	It is me and two teachers only.

	Teacher	It is only me and the principal.	Two, principal and Myself	We are three in our school
	Learner	Two, principal and one teacher.	Principal and a teacher.	Principal and two teachers.
6. Extra-mural activities	Principal	No extra mural activities, there are no sports field	Due to lack of funds and space, we are unable to purchase sports equipments.	Soccer balls and netballs are available but the sports field is not in good condition.
	Teacher	None, not even a tennis ball is available in this school	There is no sports equipment in our school.	Learners play on their own in front of the class rooms during breaks.
	Learner	We do not have soccer balls to play with	No, we do not play or take part in any sporting event in our school.	We play in front of the classrooms because the sports field has long grass and we are afraid of snakes

7.Educational excursions	Principal	No, lack of funds and parents cannot afford to pay	No, the school has no enough funds	Yes, we do go on excursions but once a year. The parents begin paying at the beginning of the year.
	Teacher	We would love to, but parents do not afford	No, I think lack of funds is the reason for not going on excursions.	We do undertake educational trips once a year and it is good for the learners.
	Learner	No, we do not go on excursions because the principal says the school has no money.	We do not go on excursions because our parents cannot afford to pay.	Yes, we go on school trips once a year.

8. Educational workshops	Principal	Yes, we do get circulars to attend workshops, but our school budget is tight. But once or twice the teacher manages to attend.	Sometimes the teacher attends, but it all depends on the location where the work shop will be conducted	We do sometimes if the work shop is conducted around Mogodumo or Polokwane
	Teacher	I do, not always, maybe twice or so because of lack of funds sometimes.	Yes, I do attend workshops, but not all of them because of the distance or lack of funds.	Yes, I do at times attend educational workshops, although I still find it difficult to implement some new teaching strategies in multi-grade classes
	Learner	I do not know	Yes, sometimes he tells us before he leaves.	Yes, in Lebowakgomo or Ga-Maja. They tell us when they leave.

9. Time-table	Principal	No, its not easy to follow the time table because of the multi-grades and many subjects that we teach	No, it is very difficult to follow the time table because I have to do office work.	No, it is not possible to follow the time-table in multi-grades classes
	Teacher	I can't follow it. Its quite difficult	I do not even think of it, because I know it is not possible to follow it.	I wish I could. In multi-grade classes, it is not that simple
	Learner	There is no time-table, I have never noticed it.	The time table is there, but is not followed.	No, our teacher teaches all the subjects without even looking at the time table. It is pasted on the wall.

10. Funding from the Department of Education	Principal	Our learners are few, so our school receives much less	Yes, but we get little funds because of the low enrolment of learners	Yes we do receive funding, but it is not enough to manage the school.
	Teacher	I think so, but it is not enough.	Yes, the school does receive funding, but too little.	Yes, but small amount because of our poor enrolment of learners.

From the results on the table, one notices that in so far as physical resources are concerned, all the participants indicated a dire shortage. This pattern is also observed for the themes on teaching and learning materials, teaching staff, educational workshops, adequate funding and basic amenities. Multi grade classes appear to be a great obstacle to teaching and learning. Only one school manages to go on education excursion once per year and the other two do not afford to do so because of lack of funds.

4.3 Results from observations

4.3.1 School buildings

School A

The building at school A (figure 2) is a one classroom building and not conducive for teaching and learning. First of all, the classroom has a few broken desks and windows and some are tied with pieces of wire so that they could close tightly. The roof could fall

at any time because it was shaking during strong winds and leaking on rainy days. The classroom is also used as an office, storeroom and kitchen. There is no library or laboratory.

School B

School B (Figure 1) had two classrooms and a small office which is used by the principal of the school as a bedroom at night because her home is far from her workplace.

Classroom doors do not close properly or lock and that led to the school being robbed during school holidays.

School C

School C has four classrooms and an office (figure 3). The office is locked most of the time because the principal has got no time to do administration work and she does it in her classroom. Three of the classrooms are used for teaching and learning and the fourth classroom is used as the storeroom for broken desks, fire wood and cooking utensils.

There are no extra buildings such as library and laboratory for other learning activities

4.3.2 School furniture

School A

There is a lack of furniture for teachers and learners at school A. The learners are congested in their small desks which they shared. There is only one table which is used by both the principal and the teacher. The teacher at School A (figure 6) mentioned that smaller learners in the foundation phase do not have desks of their own size and had to share big desks with the grade four and five learners because of the lack of furniture at their school. The two cupboards were damaged and could not lock properly, (figure 5)

School B

There was a table for each teacher, although the learners had to share a few damaged desks. The two cupboards (figure 13) were not in a bad condition as the ones in school A. In one of the two classrooms, there were a few unused chairs on top of the small tables packed in a corner and some of the chairs were slightly broken.

School C

The furniture at this school was not looking bad. Each teacher had her own table and learners had desks to sit on but the cupboard (figure 4) was in a bad condition with one door only. The furniture in the office was in good condition because the office is locked at all times.

4.3.3 Basic amenities

School A

School A had only one toilet which was shared by the two teachers and the learners. I also discovered that, due to the unhealthy conditions of the toilet, teachers had to leave learners during school hours in order to relieve themselves at a nearby secondary school. The learners relieve themselves in the bushes. There is no electricity and no source of water.

School B

In school B there were dilapidated toilets and posed health hazards to both teachers and learners (figure 8). My observations were that the school has two newly built toilets used by the staff only and the learners had to continue using the unhealthy toilets and this discovery was confirmed by a fifteen year old learner when asked where they relieve themselves. In his own words he said:

“We are not allowed to use the new toilets, we use the old toilets and they smell bad. The new toilets are used by the principal and teacher only, and they are always locked”.

The school has no electricity and there is no source of water .There was an empty water tank with a tap connected below (figure 9). Learners fetch water from the nearby neighbourhood in the farm every morning before the lessons resume.

School C

At school C the four toilets are built with corrugated iron (figure 7) and used by learners, teachers and any person from the neighbouring community who need to respond to a call of nature. The toilets are not locked most of the time and that strangers get access to use them. Though the toilets in school C are not in good condition, teachers and learners use them anyway, despite their unhealthy conditions. The school once had eight solar panels and they were stolen in the year 2003 due to lack of security.

There is a tap in the school yard but runs dry too often and the principal has to write a letter to the farmer to request water for the school. In her words, this is what the principal said:

“The farmer would at his own time pump water to the school and at his own time it would take him (the farmer) a week or two before he provides the school with water. The learners had to fetch water every morning from the nearby houses and in some cases had to draw unhealthy water for cooking and drinking from a nearby cement dam used by cows and donkeys. At times, it is a struggle to get water in this far”.

4.3.4 Teaching and learning materials

School A

The teaching and learning materials such as chalkboards at school A (Figure 10 & 11) are very small and placed on top of the learner’s tables for support and shared by grade 1-5 learners. The learning resources at the school are very limited that during teaching, the teacher had to skip a few pages in subjects such as natural sciences and technology because they had to do practical work or experiments. Learners share textbooks.

School B

The school has a huge shortage of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and stationery. The grade seven learners share natural science text books with the grade six

learners. The foundation phase learners were using old books because the learner support material was not delivered on time. When asked about his feelings towards shortage and sharing textbooks with other grades, a grade seven learner expressed his feelings in these words:

“I struggle to finish my school tasks in time because we share our natural science textbook with the grade six learners because they do not have textbooks of their own. I occasionally fight with other learners to use a textbook first so that I can finish and submit my task on time. It is a grade seven textbook anyway!”

School C

The late delivery of learner support material by the Department of Education is another setback and brings frustration to the teaching and learning process at school C. According to the principals and the teachers, the learner support material (LSM) was supposed to be delivered at the beginning of the year, but they frequently had to wait until the middle or the end of February for delivery.

At this school too, the learners share textbooks and use left over stationery from the previous year. The principal expressed her frustrations in these words:

“It really makes me feel incompetent in terms of administration work, even though I made submissions of the requisitions for learner support material to the district office before the due date, the supplier delivered the incomplete learners’ learning material in the middle of February. The teachers had to use the material that was not used the previous year”.

There general feeling of the teachers and principals at the three schools during the observations was that the shortage of teaching and learning materials at their schools had brought frustrations to their teaching and learning process because they got stuck and in the end they are forced to abandon parts of the syllabus. They felt bad because the learners are the ones who are denied an opportunity to learn.

4.3.5 Teaching

Teaching in the three schools was poor and was difficult for teachers to follow the class time table. Learners were not paying attention and were playful in class. Others would

sleep while others listened attentively. Disturbances were caused by learners who came late to school. Poor class management was evident as learners were paging through old magazines and drawing on their desks.

Other subjects were compromised and learners' work was not effectively checked by the teachers because of time constraints and work overload. One teacher in school C teaches all the ten learning areas in grades four to seven such as Natural Science, English, Afrikaans, and Social Science.

Furthermore, the lack of teaching staff was a common problem in all these schools and the principals had also requested the Department of Education for provision of extra teachers for their schools. The response they received from the Department was that they could not be provided with extra educators due to the low enrolment of the learners which affected their staff establishment.

Table 2 illustrates the total enrolment of learners at each school, combination of grades, and number of teachers.

	School A	School B	School C
Learner enrolment	19	21	75
Number of teachers including principals	2	2	3
Multi-grade classes	1-5	1-7	1-7

Table 2 only represents an overview of the condition and the inability by the Department of Education to provide more teaching staff as it is supposed to do. It further illustrates that farm schools are really neglected by the Department of Education and learners are at a disadvantage and the ones who suffer most.

During the observations, after a lesson presentation a teacher at school C expressed her teaching problems in these words:

“Firstly, I was not trained in a multi-grade situation. It is difficult to manage and teach two one three grades in one classroom. The work load takes its toll on me and the learners and I have to skip parts of the syllabus due to the work load. Their books would often be lying unmarked for a long period of time and that is not beneficial to them”

A teacher in school B said in her own words:

“ I attended educational workshops in National Curriculum Statement(NCS) for different learning areas, but found it difficult to implement what I had learnt at the workshop because of the multi-grade classes and my inability to implement new methods and strategies force me to go back to the traditional outdated methods of teaching”

Due to lack of sports activities, the teachers and learners knocked off early to give the learners enough time to walk the long distances of more than five kilometers back to their homes.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the study and has provided a clear picture for one to understand the schooling experiences in farm schools in the Capricorn District. The next chapter presents the discussions, conclusions and recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The general purpose of this chapter is to give a discussion on the schooling experiences of learners and teachers in three farm schools. The main findings of the study are described and discussed in the light of the current knowledge in the field of education. Finally, some implications of the findings are discussed and suggestions for further research are proposed.

5.2 Summary

The present study examined the teaching and learning experiences of teachers and learners in three farm schools of the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. Their experiences were measured through in-depth interviews with nine respondents (3 principals, 3 teachers and 3 learners) from the three schools. I also collected data through observations. The main findings of the study revealed that teaching and learning conditions in these schools were not conducive and needed urgent attention. The main findings can be summarized as follows:

5.3 Main findings

5.3.1 Teaching and learning materials

The study found that at the three schools teachers and learners did not have adequate teaching and learning materials. In some instances learners relied on old textbooks and which are not in line with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), and this made it very difficult for teaching and learning to be effective. Shortage of learner support material such as exercise books, mathematical instruments, pens and pencils, etc.

These findings speak to the research on effective teaching and learning. In particular, some studies by Kruger (1992) and Nkuzi Development Association (2001) and Callaghan (2002) have found that conditions under which teaching and learning are taking place in farm schools generally leaves much to be desired. Conditions such as lack text books, atlases, insufficient supply of learner support material and primitive teaching methods by under qualified teachers. These conditions were affecting teaching and learning adversely.

A study by Mckay and Allais (1995: 157) indicated that adequate teaching and learning materials are fundamental to a faster and effective culture of teaching and learning in schools, and access to learning materials should be enjoyed equally by all the learners in public schools. Therefore, for effective teaching and learning to take place, there should be adequate supply of teaching and learning materials to enable the teachers to provide good quality education.

5.3.2 Main finding 2: Physical resources

In general, there is a great lack of buildings in the three schools and the existing buildings are well maintained. School A's one-classroom building was dilapidated with broken windows, a leaking roof, a damaged door, and a single toilet used by the learners and the two teachers. School B had only two classrooms with two broken windows in each class, an office used by the principal as a bedroom and unhealthy toilets used by the learners.

According to (IRINnews.org, 2005) the South African government is failing to protect the right to a primary education for children living on farms by neither ensuring them access to adequate physical resources such as classrooms, libraries and facilities for extra mural activities such as sports grounds for netball courts or soccer fields. This is similar to the findings by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies/ Education Policy (2005), when it was stated that farm schools are compounded by the lack of educational facilities, characterised by broken desks, shocking toilet conditions, laboratories, libraries, and the other various teaching and learning aids such as overhead projectors.

Extra mural activities such as debates, arts and cultural activities, different sporting activities, for instance soccer, and cricket give learners the opportunity to showcase their talents and abilities. The lack of adequate sport facilities such as soccer fields and netball courts where learners can refresh their minds and showcase their talents and abilities, also has a negative impact on their learning process because some learners who have learning difficulties, can benefit from the opportunity to shine in the different sporting activities.

In school A the teachers had to share one classroom and two small chalkboards among grades 1-5, and in school B the teachers were sharing the two classrooms and the chalkboards also had to be shared among the learners from grades 1-7. In school C the same conditions applied although the school had four classrooms, where each class was shared by two or three grades and had to share whatever was available such as classroom.

The furniture in the three farm schools generally looked old and not fit to be used by learners because most of the desks were broken and continuously making an irritating, squeaky noise which caused disturbances during the teaching and learning process. Although there was old furniture in the three farm schools, there was also a big shortage of desks, chairs and tables as learners had to sit in threes or fours in a desk. The cupboards for keeping books and other teaching and learning aids were broken and looked too old to be used in a school. However, tables and chairs for the teachers were in a good condition although they had ink marks on them.

All the schools had no electricity and this prevented the schools from receiving computers or overhead projectors from private companies. Schools A and B had no reliable source of water, while school C had a tap which runs dry and the farm owner has to rescue the situation. In schools A and B the learners had to fetch water distance away from their schools and this exercise caused delays and disturbances in the teaching and learning process.

My findings relate to the studies by Ramphele and Wilson (1989), Reeves (1994) and Mbele (2004) when they found that some of the physical resources such as toilets in farm schools pose a threat to learners' health and wellbeing because of their unhealthy conditions. In another study by Nkuzi Development Association (2001) and Callaghan (2000) it was stated that most farm schools lack even the most basic facilities like toilets, water and electricity.

The findings above do not contribute positively towards the quality education that learners in farm schools are supposed to receive when compared to urban schools that have much better physical resources at their exposure.

5.4 Limitations and Implications of the study

While the findings from this study are limited by sampling issues (that is, small sample size and locality) they, nonetheless, hold important implications for future research on teaching and learning in farm schools.

5.4.1 Implications of the study

For effective delivery of quality education in schools there should be adequate learning facilities such as buildings, school furniture, learner support material (LSM), textbooks, basic amenities, and extra curricular activities. Furthermore, a good school management and effective communication between all the stakeholders in the education of the learners. The stakeholders are the teachers, parents, learners, and the Department of Education.

The Conditions in farm schools really leave much to be desired and they need urgent attention from all involved. For a better understanding of the implications of the findings, it was important to identify the implications as follows:

5.4.2 The location of the school

From the findings it is evident that part of the problems experienced by farm schools is the distance that learners and teachers travel to and from school. Also, teaching and learning is interrupted during farm evictions when the farmer wants to close down the school because these schools are built by farm owners on private land. What that implies is that farm schools should be built in a property purchased by the state if they are to enjoy any autonomy.

According to South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA), farm schools are proclaimed public schools on private property. Section 14(1) of the Act, stated that a public school may be provided on private property only in terms of an agreement between the member of the executive council (MEC) and the owner of the private property. The agreements between the MEC and the farm owner must provide for the following:

- The provision of education and the performance of the normal functions of the school;
- Governance of the school, including the relationship between the governing body of the school and the owner;
- Access by all interested parties to the school;
- Maintenance and improvement of the school buildings and the property on which the school stands and the supply of necessary services; and
- Protection of the owner's rights in respect of the property occupied, affected or used by the school.

In addition to the above agreements, the farm owner can give the right to the use of the land to the school either for free or for rent. On closure of the school, all improvements to the school buildings will either become the property of the farm owner free of charge or in exchange for agreed payment by the farm owner and the provincial department of education.

Some of the provisions that were contained in the agreement were the following:

- Water and toilets must be provided and secured,
- Electricity should be provided and should be in compliance with national safety standards,
- Access to the school must not be limited to learners, teachers, parents, workers at the school and members of the public who have a reasonable interest in the activities of the school; and
- The schools must be adequately fenced.

At present, the conditions at the three farm schools I visited are an opposite of the above agreements by the MEC and the farm owner in terms of maintenance and improvement of the school buildings, fence around the school and the supply of services such as water, electricity and toilets

Further on, SASA states that “the state has an obligation to facilitate security of tenure for learners and educators at schools on private land”. The Act replaced the apartheid Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953, which had put farmers in control of farm schools, entitling them to “draw learners from school to work on farms” thus denying them access to education.

However, they are now regarded as public schools; their locations make them inferior to other public urban schools because of their poor conditions. In my opinion, as long as the schools are located on private land and some of the agreements between the state and the farmers are not yet implemented, the farm owners will always do as they please, by interfering in the smooth running of the schools.

It was evident that the three schools do not have a sense of belonging because of their location. There was no mission and vision of the school in all the three schools. The mission and vision of the school should collaborate with values because values help the school to develop learning cultures that focus on innovative learning and teaching activities.

The mission and vision statements of the school are very important because they provide schools with a sense of being and of having an enduring purpose. Bush and Coleman (2002: 12) state that the mission and vision of the school have to:

- i) Characterize the school to its community.
- ii) Provide a sense of direction and purpose.
- iii) Serve as a criterion for policy making.
- iv) Set the school culture.
- v) Identify the clients, and
- vi) Serve to motivate and challenge.

Moloi (2005: 58) concurs with Bush and Coleman (2002) when she mentions that the vision and mission of the school embody long-term, common development work carried out in an atmosphere of openness and transparency that allows educators to be connected to a common undertaking. It is also stated that a shared vision can help the teachers to be able to do the following:

- i) Keep the school on course.
- ii) Measure whether actions are still moving in the desired direction.
- iii) Create a context for dialogue and discussion, and
- iv) Feel less pressured.

The location of the school also affects the daily attendance of school by the learners. Late coming and frequent absenteeism of the learners in these schools were a major reason for a high learner drop out. A study by Chala (2002: 5) revealed that learners walk long distances to and from school on a daily basis and are exhausted on arrival to school, and are expected to take part in learning activities. Perhaps, transport should also be arranged for learners to and from schools, and this may require additional funding for farm schools. Funding of farm schools is greatly influenced by the size of the school and has implications too.

5.4.3 The size of the school

Because of the small number of enrolment of learners in farm schools, it may be expedient to combine or cluster a number of schools so that they can share the limited resources. For example, if one or two schools are clustered they may share teachers or teaching and learning resources such as books or stationery. It was mentioned in the SABC news bulletin in September 2007 that such models exist in places like, Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and Zeerust in the North West Province.

The three farm schools I visited do not go beyond grade seven because of their size and total enrolment of learners. Learners who manage to pass grade seven either work in the farm with their parents or go to a secondary school in another village. This is line with Christie and Gaganakis (1989: 88) that, most farm schools do not go beyond grade seven. The learners who have passed grade seven had little opportunity to study further and have little opportunity to compete in the urban labour market.

De Graaf, Unterhalter, Wolpe, and Botha (1986: 221-231) concurs with Christie and Gaganakis (1989) when they indicated that learners in farm schools, who pass grade seven, have little opportunity to compete in the labour market. Therefore, farm schools, are a reflection and an extension of the farm owners' control over learners who attend schools built on their land.

The size of the schools also affects the staff establishment and allocation of teaching staff in such schools. The findings of this study is that, although some of the teachers in these schools are qualified and have experience, they are unable to implement new policies in education such as Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Teachers teach more than four learning areas in an overcrowded multi-grade class. The multi-grade system affects the relationship between the teacher and the learners who have learning problems and do not receive special attention from their teacher. This has a negative impact on learners.

Lemmer and Pretorius (1998: 39) revealed that teacher-learner relationship influences the academic achievement and behaviour of the learners in a positive way and the relationship needs to be nurtured at all times for academic success and this was not the case in these schools. It is imperative to consider that overcrowded classes are difficult for teachers to manage. In most urban schools, teacher learner ratios are 1:35 or 1:40. I am convinced that teachers are able to establish a strong teacher-learner relationship in a well manageable class with 30 or 35 learners

It is highlighted in the Curriculum 2005 Nutshell Manual (2001:22) that for teaching and learning to be effective in a learning environment, different teaching and learning strategies such as co-operative learning, group-work, and dramatization have to be employed by teachers for the benefit of the learners. Learners are more capable of learning, if given different tasks and projects to complete individually or in small groups.

Different teaching and learning strategies ensure the following outcomes:

- Active participation in learning.
- Learner-centred environment.
- Recognition of prior knowledge.
- Reflection of self-evaluation, and
- Opportunities for application of learning.

New teaching and learning strategies in collaboration with different assessment methods enable teachers to use any planned learning experience to assess learner achievements and progress in schools. In these three schools teachers were using old traditional methods of teaching and learning and there was no active participation of the learners and this was established during the observations at the three schools.

The non-participation of learners during teaching and learning also affects the relationship between the learners and the teacher. It is imperative to consider this aspect as overcrowded classes are difficult for teachers to manage. In most urban schools

teacher learner ratios are 1:35 or 1:40 learners per teacher. I am convinced that teachers are able to establish a strong teacher-learner relationship in a well manageable class with 30 or 35 learners. Lemmer and Pretorius (1998: 39) mention that teacher-learner relationship influences the academic achievement and behaviour of the learners in a positive way and the relationship needs to be nurtured at all times for academic success and this was not the case in these schools.

It was a common problem for the principals of the three schools who had to manage the school, teach, do office work, attend district or circuit meetings, write reports and make submissions to the district or regional offices. This work overload affected their management abilities and displayed poor leadership skills.

According to Moloji (2005: 78) effective leadership determines the future of a school and effective leaders must possess skills such as strategic thinking, innovative thinking and rational decision-making. It is also important for a good leader to motivate and encourage the staff members to think of better ways of doing things, to produce quality work and be more productive in the teaching and learning process which rarely happens in farm schools.

The teachers in these schools lack support and motivation or appraisal from senior education officials. An ongoing teacher support and motivation is one of the factors that contribute towards effective teaching and learning in schools which seldom happens to teachers in farm schools.

Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002: 277) define teacher appraisal as a continuous and systematic process to help individual teachers with their professional development and career planning and to help ensure that the in-service training and deployment of teachers matches the complementary needs of individual teachers and schools.

Further on, Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) highlighted that teachers need ongoing support in order to gain the maximum benefit from the process.

They highlighted the benefits of teacher appraisal as follows:

- Recognition for effective work.
- Greater clarity in role division.
- Improved feedback on performance.
- An opportunity to influence the development of the school.
- Better understanding of the requirements of the job.
- Support in work related issues.

Farm school teachers are not even recognized for the work they are doing in the multi-grade classes because of their inability to implement different teaching and learning strategies due to the lack of adequate resources.

The size of the schools also affects funding of the three schools from the Department of Education. It is stated in the Government Gazette of 1996, Vol 377, and No: 17579, that it is the responsibility of the state to fund public schools from the public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of the past inequalities in education provision.

One of the findings in terms of funding for farm schools was that between the years 2004 to 2005, farm schools with a total enrolment of 70-75 learners were allocated an amount of between R5 300 -R5 800 per annum, Limpopo Department of Education circulars (2004) and (2005). In case of a much lower enrolment an allocation would be in the region of R2 000 and R3 000 respectively.

At present, a farm school with an enrolment of about 80 learners is allocated an amount of R5 861.80 Provincial Circular, (2004). This amount is for running the school educational needs for the current year. This amount is deposited towards the end of the year, which further makes more things difficult for the smooth running of teaching and learning in farm schools. From 2005 to 2007 farm schools have been declared quintile 1 schools (no fee schools) and the funds allocation to farm schools have been increased.

The Limpopo Department of Education Circular (2007) states that farm schools are automatic section 21 without prior application and that serves as an interim relief which is only applicable for 2007/2008 financial year. Therefore, farm schools will receive direct monetary transfers of their total allocations deposited into their schools accounts. The money will have to be used for the recurrent cost allocations such as:

- broken windows, doors, payments of services such as electricity, telephone and water
- purchases of non-scholastic stationery and educational media, for example overhead projector, chalk, white board and photocopies
- purchasing of learner support materials, that is, textbooks, prescribed books and scholastic stationery

Although farm schools are funded by the Department of Education, they are the poorest schools of all as mentioned by Callaghan (2000). According to the National Policy on Norms and Standards for School Funding, farm schools are still running poor due to the conditions of the funds allocations which are based on the size of the school and learner enrolment.

In his speech on 17 June 2005, the MEC for Education, Dr. Motswaledi, mentioned that teaching and learning problems experienced by farm schools would soon be over. He further mentioned that by the year 2007, all farm schools in the Province will be consolidated to form one institution which will accommodate learners from different farm schools and that the Department of Transport will assist in transporting learners to schools. In my opinion, the MEC's speech was a verbal step taken by the Department of Education in an attempt to address the schooling experiences in farm schools because up to this day in 2008, no farm school has been merged in the Capricorn and Polokwane circuits.

This research has indicated that, nothing much has been done so far to improve schooling conditions in farm schools. The Limpopo Department of Education is failing to improve the educational interests of learners who attend farm schools.

5.5 Recommendations

Though educational changes are busy taking place, farm schools have been proclaimed public schools on private land back in 2000 by the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal and, have recently been categorised under quintile 1 schools (no fee school). Despite that, farm schools are overlooked and side-lined by the Department of Education in terms of funding and educational resources.

I suggest that further research should be conducted in farm schools in order to find ways to overcome the schooling experiences of learners in farm schools and the following would serve as the recommendations to improve the situation,

- Amend the Schools Act to address the legal status of farm schools
- Prioritise policies to ensure access to education for children living on farms through adequate financing and planning
- Establishment of a unit at the national department of education to focus on the management of farm schools and facilitate a forum for provincial departments of education to exchange best methods to apply on the governance and management of farm schools and
- database on farm schools should be maintained by national and provincial departments of education
- Provision of educational facilities such as buildings and furniture.
- Provision of teaching and support staff.
- More effective training of educators (workshops).
- Extra-mural activities for learners in farm school
- Provision of free transport for learners who walk long distances to school.
- Provision of basic amenities such as electricity, water and toilets,

- Regular visitation by department officials to guide and give support to principals, teachers, learners and, school governing bodies.
- Farm school managers should be made aware of the importance of the mission and vision of the school they give the school a sense of belonging.
- Farm owners to fulfill obligations under the contractual agreements with provincial government, in particular provision of essential services such as water, toilets and maintenance of buildings.

5.6 Conclusion

The provision of education in farm schools has been a great challenge for the Department of Education and, children living on farms become negatively affected by these challenges. Children living on farms also have rights to quality education and, presently their right to quality education is been denied. Their parents working on the farm where the school is located or on neighbouring farm are often evicted and the children in turn are the ones who suffer because they have to drop out of school to relocate to rural areas far away from the school.

The aims of South African Schools Act of 1996, Act No. 84 clearly state that all learners should be provided with high quality education, uniform standard for education should be set, establish one national education system which will redress past injustices and, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and teachers. It is therefore the responsibility of the state to protect the educational rights of learners in farm schools.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PROJECT: SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES IN FARM SCHOOLS OF THE
CAPRICORN DISTRICT (MOGODUMO AND POLOKWANE CIRCUITS) IN
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PLACE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

INTERVIEWEE: _____

POSITION OF INTERVIEWEE: _____

QUALIFICATIONS OF INTERVIEWEE: _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The study is part of the academic work (a dissertation) towards a Masters degree in Curriculum and Professional Studies with the University of Limpopo.

The researcher wants to establish and understand the schooling experiences of learners in farm schools. The findings of the study are expected to be helpful to policy makers, researchers, and district, circuit and school managers of farm schools.

You are, therefore, requested to share your experiences as a principal, a teacher or a learner with regard to schooling in farm schools. Any information that you will provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and the informants will be kept anonymous.

APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule

Interview questions for farm school principals

1. Do you have enough physical resources such as classroom, library in this school?
2. How many classrooms do you have?
3. Does the school have enough teaching and learning materials such as text books, atlases and exercise books?
4. Are there multi-grade classes in your school?
5. How are they combined in the classrooms e.g. gr. 3s combined with gr. 4s or any other way?
6. How do you cope teaching learners in multi-grade classes and doing office work at the same time?
7. How many teaching staff members do you have?
8. Are all the teachers in this school qualified or under qualified?
9. Do they (teachers) attend educational workshops on regular basis?
10. When you teach in multi-grade classes, are you able to follow the class time table period by period?
11. On basic necessities, does your school have adequate source of water and electricity, including toilets?
12. Do you have any extra mural activities that learners take part in?
13. Does the school ever go on educational excursions?
14. Does the school receive funds from the department of education?
15. What do you think can be done to remedy the problems that you are experiencing at present?

Interview Questions for school teachers

1. What are the teaching and learning experience or problems have you come across as a farm school teacher?
2. How many teaching staff members are there in this school?
3. I understand there are multi-grade classes in this school, how do you cope teaching different grades in one classroom?
4. Are you able to follow the class time table during teaching?
5. Are there adequate teaching and leaning material such as exercise book and text books?
6. Do you attend educational workshop on regular basis?
7. How many learners do you have in class and which grades do you teach?
8. Does the school have any library for learners to lend books or laboratory for doing practical work such as science experiment?
9. Do you have any reliable source of water and electricity?
10. Do learners at this school take part in extra mural activities such as soccer, drama etc?
11. Does the school ever go on educational excursions for learners to gain deeper understanding of what they learn in class?
12. Does the school receive funds from the department of education?
13. What do you think can be done to make teaching and learning in your school to be conducive and enjoyable?

Interview questions for farm school learners

1. What is your name and how old are you?
2. In which grade are you?
3. How many classrooms are there in your school?
4. How many are you in your classroom?
5. Do you share a classroom with other grade? If yes what are they?
6. Does your teacher able to follow the class time table?
7. Do you like sharing a class with other grades?
8. How many teachers are there in your school?
9. Do you have enough text books for different subjects like social science and natural science?
10. Do you have toilets water and electricity in your school?
11. Do you go on educational trips?
12. Does your school ever take part in soccer and netball competitions?
13. Are you happy to school in a farm? If no explain why?

APPENDIX B: Observation schedule

Observation Schedule

I observed the following:

- Where are the teachers and learners located during teaching and learning.
- The school buildings, toilets, source of water and electricity.
- Teaching and learning process and the behaviour of the learners in a multi-grade class situation and why they behave that way.
- How do teachers and learners cope in such a situation.
- Are the teachers able to manage learners in a multi-grade class.
- Is the class time-table followed or not.
- How long does one period of teaching and learning last.
- Work control of the learners.
- Late coming and fetching of water by the learners from the neighbourhood, how does that affect teaching and learning.
- What do they do for extra-mural activities and where do they go for such activities.