

Strategies of Teacher Participation in Decision-making in Schools: A Case Study of Gweru District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT Teacher participation refers to the extent to which subordinates or groups who are affected by decisions are consulted and involved in making of decisions. Participation is not only about taking part in decision-making process but it is also about being valued. Teachers feel rewarded when they are part of the decision-making process. Principals cannot manage schools alone nor take the burden of motivating others to achieve objectives and complete tasks without support from their colleagues, they must actively involve them. This study examined the strategies of teacher participation in decision-making in five schools involving 20 teachers and five heads. Data were collected through interviews, documents and observation of staff meetings. The study established that in most cases, school heads make unilateral decisions and impose them on teachers for implementation. The study recommends teacher empowerment in critical decision-making processes in schools.

INTRODUCTION

The growing interest in decentralisation is attributable not only to the disillusionment with the results of centralisation but also to the realisation that development is a complex and uncertain process that cannot be easily planned and controlled from the centre (Rondinelli and Cheema 1983; Khoza 2003). In its true sense, decentralisation is about the transfer of authority from higher level to lower one to enhance public participation in decision-making (Mokoena 2003). Many different authors use different terms to identify different degrees or forms of decentralisation. They refer to three major forms of decentralisation which are deconcentration, delegation and devolution. According to Rondinelli and Cheema (1983), deconcentration involves the redistribution of administrative responsibilities only within central government. Accordingly what is often called decentralisation in some countries is merely shifting of workload from a central government ministry or agency headquarters to its own field staff located in offices outside of the national capital, without also transferring the authority to make decisions.

Delegation is a form of decentralisation in which decision-making and management authority is delegated to organisations (temporarily) that are not necessarily under the direct control of central state departments. Delegation of functions from the central government to such organisations such as public corporations, re-

gional planning or area development authorities and special project implementation units represent a more extensive form of decentralisation than administrative decentralisation (Kumar and Scuderi 2000). Devolution seeks to create or strengthen independent levels or units of government by which the central government relinquishes certain functions or create new units of government that are outside its direct control (Juru 2002). It is an arrangement in which there are reciprocal mutually-beneficial, coordinated relationships between central and local governments, that is, the local government has the ability to interact reciprocally with other units in the system of government of which it is part of (Wadesango 2010).

The education sector was no exception to the developments that took place in the developing countries towards democracy. Education has been seen as a driving engine in the social and economic development of both developed and developing countries. Therefore, African countries like all other developing ones have placed priority on the enhancement of education by making it a right and ensuring its implementation among others through universal primary education (UNESCO 2001). They have also put emphasis on technical and vocational education to enhance skills development for their citizens. Adult and non-formal education has been introduced to eradicate illiteracy while at the same time enhancing people to engage in income generating activities in order to eradicate poverty. Moreover, there has been a

move to improve the management of education by devolving certain powers to the school level. Noticeable in this trend is a shift from autocratic models of decision-making by few people to collective decision-making and team work (Juru 2002). Different members of school communities became involved in decision-making regarding teaching and learning and other school activities.

In these measures, teachers have been empowered to participate in decisions regarding classroom and school policies, governance and management issues and curriculum development (Matunhu 2002). Teachers are also involved in decision-making at higher levels, that is, in districts and provinces through their professional associations. Examples of decisions on policies and other issues that teachers are involved include classroom discipline policies, selecting learning materials and structuring learning activities, decisions on course offerings, school discipline and promotion policies, how student time is scheduled, class size, selection and recruitment of teachers, teacher redeployment, salary schedules and employment benefits and school finances (Khoza 2003).

Participation of teachers in the above mentioned aspects and policies can expand their authority and influence in the work place, enhance motivation and morale, foster collegial interaction, capitalise on and contribute to teachers' expertise, engender satisfaction, enhance commitment and improve performance (Wadesango 2010). However, it must also be noted that districts, regions and provinces which are at higher levels impose some constraints on the type of decisions that teachers and other members of the school community can make (Wadesango and Shumba 2009).

Participative management is also at the heart of Bush's (2003) collegial model of management. According to Bush (2003), 'Collegial models include all those theories that emphasise that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation'. One of the features of collegial models is that it is strongly normative. The participative management approach supports the idea of school based decision-making. The idea of school based decision is an effort to increase the autonomy of schools.

Juru (2002) regards decision-making as a process of identifying a problem, creating in

systems manner alternatives, testing the alternatives and selecting the best alternative for implementation. This process cannot be done by one person but by all stakeholders who will be affected by the decision that will be taken hence the need for teacher participation (Mokoena 2003). Accordingly then, decision-making involves consideration of relevant facts and consequences against a background of values and value conflicts (Khoza 2003). One starts off with opinions rather than facts. The decisions are then tested against experience. To make a decision requires the consideration of alternatives (Morse et al. 2005). Therefore, an effective head will create and foster differing views through the process of shared decision-making (Matunhu 2002). Wadesango and Shumba (2009) assert that decision-making is a sequential process that ends up in a single decision or series of choices that stimulate moves or actions. There is therefore need for teacher involvement if this is to be successful.

Bakkeness et al. (2005) have observed that decision-making lies close to the naïve center of school administration. It is at the center of the head's job. All other activities are implemented because of the decisions that the head makes. Wadesango and Shumba (2003) share the above view by postulating that decision-making is synonymous with administration. It is, therefore, the administrator's duty to be very clear of this function. It is not only the administrator who should worry about decision-making but as Hoy and Tarter (2003) say in collegial organisations, there is a strong norm that groups have the right to participate in decisions influencing their activities. Hence, the importance of teacher participation should not be underestimated.

Zimbabwe, like other African and developing countries, implemented some of the above changes in education when it gained independence in 1980. In order to redress past imbalances and inequities, the government declared education a basic human right and committed itself to universal and equal educational opportunity for all as proclaimed by UNESCO (2001). It was within this broad framework that the Government, buttressed by the progressive Bill of Rights in the Independence Constitution of Zimbabwe, re-organised, democratised and expanded its education system (UNESCO 2001). There was increase in enrol-

ment and revision of curriculum and teacher development to enhance quality in education. In an attempt to maximise the attainment of the goals that the state had set for itself, certain operational conditions had to be adopted and implemented.

As a result of the decentralisation process, the Ministry of Education has devolved some functions to the regions, districts and schools. These functions include: standards control, staffing, human resource development, supervision, counselling, budgeting, liaison with the internal and external clients of the ministry. In terms of hierarchy, the regional office is the link pin of the head office and the district offices while the district offices link clusters and individual schools with their regional office (Juru 2002). The cluster plays the role of linking individual schools with the district. However, the relationship between schools and the cluster is fluid in that there is a direct link between the district office and individual schools. Schools have also been mandated to establish school development associations (SDA) and school development committees (SDC) so as to assist heads of schools in running the institutes. Therefore, certain functions have been devolved to SDA/SDC's (Matunhu 2002).

Significance of the Study

This study should be of significance to school heads as its results will make them aware of the effect of teacher participation on organisational effectiveness. The findings of the study will also enlighten school heads on the degree of participation desired by teachers in decision-making. This study will provide a picture on what is taking place in schools in terms of participation.

Justification of the Study

There is a lot of debate on the significance of teachers' role in decision-making. It is believed that improved decision-making leads to an engaged organisational climate, thus the working environment in schools is likely to be more favourable socially, urging stakeholders to be more productive (Wadesango 2010). Teachers are the direct custodians of the curriculum implementation process and their marginalisation in decision-making may lead to poor

curriculum implementation and innovation (Wadesango and Shumba 2009). It is, therefore, against this background that interest was developed to investigate the nature of teacher participation and involvement in decision-making in schools.

A great deal of educational research has been done in this area of teacher participation and involvement in decision-making. Still, not all theorists agree. Most of the theories imply a contingent style of management such that some situations call for subordinate participation while others do not. However, these theorists do not identify the specific situations that either call or not call for subordinate participation. It is hoped that this study will come up with knowledge (showing areas, level and nature of teacher participation), that will help heads of schools, district offices and regional offices determine the situations under which teachers should participate in the decision-making process without causing conflicts. It is also hoped that the study will contribute new knowledge on decision-making and participation and also more contribution on decision-making theories and empowerment of ordinary school teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the qualitative methodology. The study concentrated on the qualitative form since this research aimed at elucidating what the participants had to say with regard to decision-making in their natural settings. In this regard, it was imperative that a methodological perspective be adopted to allow the findings to develop: 'from the data itself rather than from preconceived, rigidly structured, and highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed' (Babbie and Mouton 2002). The problem identified in this study demanded that the participants themselves be allowed to freely express their feelings, views and opinions. The study adopted a case study research design. A case study is described as a form of descriptor research that gathers a large amount of information about one or a few participants and thus investigates a few cases in considerable depth (Thomas and Nelson 2001).

Purposive convenience sampling was adopted in the selection of participants for this

study. This type of non-probability sampling method seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth. A sample of 25 secondary school teachers and 5 substantive school heads from 5 secondary schools constituted the study. Since school teachers were scattered all over the district, convenience purposive sampling was employed in order to come up with the actual participants for this study.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Interviews were held with all the 30 respondents/participants at their respective schools. An audio recorder was used to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of data. Documents related to shared decision-making process such as minutes of staff meetings and heads' files were examined. Observations of proceedings of two staff meetings per school were made by sitting in their meetings and recorded on a specially constructed data sheet. This allowed for triangulation of data by providing a variety of perspectives on the issue at hand.

Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was approached by treating each case on its own and then cross case analysis followed. The researcher arranged the question numbers on each research question answered. The raw data from interviews was coded so as to come up with the data sets. Responses were treated according to the research questions they were responding to and, in the process, came up with data sets X and Y. The researcher then came up with inductive themes related to each research question.

RESULTS

Teachers can participate in decision-making either as individuals, in committees or in staff meetings as a group.

Teacher Participation at Committee Level

The study found that teachers do participate in decision-making at committee levels. It was established that all the five schools do have such committees as; the fund raising committee, sports committee, entertainment committee, finance committee and school de-

velopment committee (SDA). Members are voted into some of these committees by their fellow teachers in a meeting that is chaired by the head or deputy head. However, in other committees, the committee members were appointed by the school management team. The researcher had an opportunity of sitting in one staff meeting in which the committees were set. There was high teacher involvement in this process. An inquiry into teacher participation in decision-making at committee level yielded the following response from one of the participants:

I belong to the fund-raising committee. I am happy to be there because we work like a family. Members are freely involved in deciding how to raise funds for the school. However, our terms of reference end with raising funds. We are not fully involved in how the money is committed to use. That is the responsibility of the administration. (Teacher 10).

All school heads under study concurred with the above findings. Take for example, Head 2 had this to say, 'In 'my school teachers participate in decision-making in staff meetings. However, since this is a big school, certain issues are discussed in their various committees and recommendations brought to my office for determination'. The interpretation that one gets is that although teachers may not be involved as a group in staff meetings in certain issues such as school budget and increase of levies, they were, however, involved through various committees as indicated in teacher 10's statement above.

The document analysis of the committee meetings confirmed the opinions raised above by the responding teachers. The language used in these records was indicative of high teacher participation at committee level. In one school, the fundraising committee minute book read: 'The committee discussed and agreed to invite a local musician to stage a show at the school'. In another school the minute book read: 'In a meeting that was held on 3 March 2006, the head of the sports committee thanked the members for their excellent ideas which saw their soccer and netball teams winning at the prestigious Coca Cola tournament'.

The study, however, observed that in four of the five schools under study, there are fewer committees than in one school. Apparently the one school that has more committees is that

school that involves its teachers in strategic decisions such as teaching-load allocation and choice of curriculum. It was also noted that the committees in four schools deal with insignificant issues like selection of prefects and fundraising activities while the one other school has committees that deal with what teachers consider to be critical issues like curriculum issues and the procurement issues.

The main issue here is that although teachers were represented in various committees by their fellow colleagues, the fact remains that some of the committees were not functional at all as they could not make decisions which were binding. It appeared, there was a lot of manipulation and dominance by school heads in these committees.

One-on-one Consultation

The study found out that in one of the schools, school heads besides consulting their management teams went on to involve certain teachers on a one-on-one basis depending on one's expertise and experience as well as the complexity and nature of the issue. However, in the other four schools, heads sought for advice on a one-on-one basis from only their management teams who are the deputy head, senior master and the senior woman. In other words, these heads neglect the experiences, expertise and personal stake of teachers who are not in the management structures. This is confirmed by the following response:

What on earth are you talking about? Do you think the school head believes that ordinary teachers know anything in administration? Put in simple terms, no ordinary teacher is consulted on critical decisions on his/her individual capacity (Teacher 17)

The sentiments above were confirmed by teacher 7's head, who made the following comments:

You talk of teacher involvement on a one-on-one basis. I do not do that. That is suicidal. You only do that if you want to be ill advised. These teachers do not like us. They think that we are very strict for nothing. More so, I can not stoop so low. I would rather seek advice from other school heads or my deputy head on a one-on-one basis. (Head 4).

The above statement contradicts that which emerged from one of the four schools where

teachers' expertise and experiences were considered in certain issues such as the choice of curriculum. Below is a confirmation by one of the teachers:

Oh! Yes. My head is a good administrator. Teachers are consulted on a one-on-one basis. Teachers are involved in certain issues like choice of curriculum based on their levels of expertise, experience and personal stake in the issue at hand. (Teacher 11)

Consultation at Group Level

The study found that there are differences in approach to consultation at group level. While all the five school heads involve their teachers in decision-making, it was established that there is variance on the issues to which teachers are involved in decision-making as a group. It also emerged that in certain strategic issues such as the formulation of a school budget and increase of levies, teachers in certain schools were not involved as a group but participated through their representatives. However, in issues of lesser importance such as the selection of prefects, streaming of students and selection of various school committees, it was found that this consultation is done formally through staff meetings. One of the responding teachers made the following comments: *'My school head uses staff meetings as consultative forums where all teachers participate in decision-making in certain issues' (Teacher 13).* Most of the responding teachers noted that teachers were fully involved in decisions in insignificant issues at group level.

The views expressed above agreed with the views of one of the heads who made the following comments:

Who am I in this school if not a mere facilitator? Mine is to superintend the decision making process. My teachers are my colleagues. (Head 5).

However, some of the school heads' responses indicated that some decisions were not reached by consensus in staff meetings. It appears that although they play a facilitative role, the verdict in critical issues is determined by them (heads). Seemingly teachers are of the opinion that staff meetings should be a place where issues would be discussed and a decision reached by consensus in strategic issues as mentioned above. However, school heads feel

otherwise as portrayed by the following responses which are presented verbatim:

If there is an issue, I take it to the staff meetings, we discuss it, the pros and cons and teachers here are very vocal, and they all come in with ideas. But the final decision is not always by majority rule. I normally make the final word with the help from my deputy, senior master and senior woman. (Head 3).

How? By inviting them to take part in a discussion and by presenting to them or giving them the information that this is what we have so far, what are your suggestions even if I really know what I want. They discuss, they debate, I listen and I give the final word depending on the issue at hand. (Head 4).

The study was also quick to note that in one of the meetings, the head dominated by way of reminding teachers about certain rules and regulations that govern their operations. Although teachers were participating in the staff meetings, their participation was limited to insignificant issues. The minutes of staff meetings of one of the five schools under study reflected that the nature of teacher involvement in decision-making was that of getting more involved in issues which were considered not critical by teachers, such as streaming of pupils to low involvement in critical decision-making areas.

School Management Teams

It emerged in this study that some of the participating school heads tend to engage their deputies and senior women/masters more often when dealing with certain crucial and complex decisions. Most of the participating teachers reiterated that school heads discussed certain issues first with their management teams and make a decision before meeting the whole staff. Teacher 6 made the following comments respectively to that effect:

It depends on the subject in question. In certain areas such as choice of curriculum and teaching load allocation, there are times when we are just told what to do. At times the administration asks for our views which are either adopted or not at all in staff meetings. In certain cases Heads of Departments (HODs) meet with departmental members and submit our views to the school management team for consideration. Our proposals may be considered or not.

In collaboration, Head 2 made the following comments:

If we are in a staff meeting and there is something to be discussed, everybody contributes. But then if there is a decision to be taken by only those in offices of responsibility, then they also have their own decisions. So in certain cases we sit down, discuss and agree as management and then the issue is taken to teachers for deliberations or implementation depending on the nature of the issue.

It was also established in the staff meetings that members of the management teams were always supporting the school heads' decisions in certain issues such as school discipline policies and choice of curriculum. It emerged in this study that senior management meet, discuss certain issues first and then present the issue for discussion in staff meetings where decisions will be reached by consensus in certain areas. Senior management and HODs meet first and discuss certain issues such as choice of curriculum. The issue is then taken to a staff meeting where it will be discussed but the management team does not take what staff members say.

DISCUSSION

It was established in this study that the five participating school heads use three strategies of participation in involving teachers in decision-making namely, participation at committee level, participation at group level and participation on one-on-one level. The study established that there is a disparity in the level of teacher participation in decision-making. It was observed that participating teachers are involved mostly in periphery issues. The findings tend to concur with the works of Hoy and Miskel (2005) who advocate that teachers must be involved in areas where they command higher expertise. However, school heads may not view their teachers' expertise as adequate enough for them to be involved in some decisions. Perhaps this is why the study found out that school heads do not consider expertise in deciding who to involve in what decisions. Thus there is a discrepancy in the definition of expertise among heads and teachers.

Despite the difference in the manner in which school heads define expertise, it still

remains critical that school heads involve their teachers in decision-making. Their involvement should be based on the wealth of expertise that an individual teacher commands. A teacher who is a national soccer coach may need to be fully involved when dealing with decisions on planning a coaching clinic. Similarly, a teacher who holds a qualification in accountancy needs to be involved in financial issues of the school. Perhaps, school heads fail to harness this expertise because they fear exposing their ignorance in areas in which they are expected to reveal high expertise themselves. This is improper because decisions should be made in the interest of the target group.

School heads are not superhuman beings and it would be naïve on the part of their accuser to believe that they know all concerning their schools. This opinion is about encouraging school heads to apply themselves fully into issues of considering a whole range of expertise their teachers have when making decisions. It emerged in this study that major decisions are taken only through the principal's permission. This trend is similar to what was observed by Mokoena (2003) in his study in Thulamahashe schools that teachers are left out when it comes to making important decisions and that they are allowed to make minor decisions, like selection of prefects or on sporting activities, but major decisions like finances of the school are mainly the principal's and his or her group's territory.

The findings of this study contradict with Bush (2003)'s theory of collegiality. According to Bush (2003), decision-making should be shared among all members of the organisation. Decisions should be reached by consensus rather than division or conflict. Organisations should determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus (Bush 2003). Research carried out by Juru (2002) indicated that imposed decisions are not fully implemented by teachers due to a number of factors, which include misinterpretation of the requirements. Wadesango (2010) observed that teachers enjoy some autonomy but experience little self-regulation over many facets of their role activities. The most effective leaders rely increasingly on participatory decision-making from subordinates (Khoza 2003). Thus, the prime advantage of involving teachers in critical decisions is that they are able to respond

to the idiosyncratic needs of pupils, and the community to which centralised personnel can never address themselves (Mokoena 2003). Teacher participation calls for teachers to assume leadership roles in schools. Principals cannot manage schools alone. Teacher participation is linked to decision-making in that it leads to teacher-empowerment which is the transfer of decision-making authority of key issues to people who in the past had looked to an authority to make decisions (Khoza 2003). People should have the freedom to participate fully in democratic process (Wadesango and Shumba 2009).

The study suggests that imposed decisions face various problems during implementation. Teachers may reject the ideas for the simple reason that they were never part of its development. Some ideas are not implemented because teachers do not know the objectives let alone the benefits that will accrue from them.

Teacher Participation at Committee Level

The study found out that in all the five schools there are committees and that these committees are constituted in areas such as entertainment, sports organisation, fund-raising activities, school finances and disciplinary committees. Some of the teachers are generally not satisfied with this level of involvement. They asserted that decisions arrived at by committees at times are not adopted by their school heads. It is the study's opinion that committees are a way to formally draw together people of relevant expertise from the whole staff, who otherwise would not have a good way to share information and coordinate actions. Thus, committees may have the advantage of widening view points and sharing out responsibilities. Normally committees are used when not every one can get together to make a decision and when only a few members have relevant expertise or knowledge. However, it has emerged in this study that some of these committees are not effective at all in some of the participating schools. Some of the heads were found to be dominating in some of these committees.

Van Rensburg (2001) also supports the idea of establishing committees in schools. Van Rensburg (2001) further refers to committees as quality circles. Accordingly, these are groups of teachers who have been divided into small

groups which discuss problems on behalf of the rest of the staff and cascade possible solutions and recommendations to the management of the school. Quality concepts operate from the principle that committees are more efficient in problem identification and problem-solving.

Some schools in Britain, however, have established certain structures such as advisory councils and curriculum committees to work with the principal in making school-wide decisions (Lipham 1997). Generally, these structures have resulted not only in higher levels of staff involvement in decision-making, but also in greater staff satisfaction, motivation adaptiveness and instructional effectiveness (Matunhu 2002). Still, simply establishing a structure does not make it effective, especially if the principal continues in making decisions unilaterally as what was indicated in one school that the school management in many instances did not consider proposals from committees. Instead, a basic commitment of the principal and other stakeholders to a philosophy of shared decision-making is essential.

One-on-one Level of Consultation

The study established that teachers are involved in making decisions on a one-on-one basis in one school while the same did not happen in the other four schools. In the school in which the one-on-one decision-making existed, teachers felt satisfied in that each teacher's expertise in a particular area was recognised positively by school heads. According to the researcher's opinion, such a situation is capable of encouraging teachers to put much of their effort on making decisions that improve the instructional performance of the school. Therefore, teachers are likely to associate themselves with the school and work towards maximising output. Greater involvement of teachers in decisions on a one-on-one level encourages teachers to feel respected as individuals. It boosts the individual teacher's self esteem and confidence. These are the fundamental building blocks of high teacher retention and high student performance. Such a teacher is likely to start working towards Maslow's self actualisation level of motivation.

Consultation at one-on-one allows the school head to understand teachers as individuals and not as a group. Their involvement should

be based on the wealth of expertise that an individual teacher commands. A teacher who is a national soccer coach may need to be fully involved when dealing with decisions on planning a coaching clinic. Similarly, a teacher who holds a qualification in accountancy needs to be involved in financial issues of the school. Perhaps, school heads fail to harvest such expertise because they fear exposing their ignorance in areas in which they are expected to reveal high expertise themselves.

In four of the schools under study, teachers were not involved at a one-on-one level. The problem with this arrangement is that experience, expertise and wisdom is not put to use. The end result could be a working environment that is fraught with friction and disengagement and the potential of becoming dysfunctional. According to Wadesango and Shumba (2009), consultation on a one-on-one basis is useful when the expertise of one person is superior to all other team members so that little is gained by discussion. However, consultation on one-on-one basis should be used when the need for membership action is slight. This implies that if all staff members possess the required expertise, there is no need to consult one person. This should only be done in situations where all other members lack the expertise and there is only one person who can assist. Matunhu (2002) also supports the strategy of teacher participation at individual level in that the head of school takes advantage of the individual teacher's expertise when solving particular critical issues.

Participation at Group Level

The study found out that in all the five participating schools, all teachers were involved in decision-making. Literature says that failure to involve teachers in decision-making is a plan to fail (Carnoy 2002). The researcher believes that staff meetings are generally considered as the medium for involving the entire staff in decision-making. However, the study found that while school teachers considered this arrangement as the ideal, in certain cases school teachers considered these meetings as smoke screens where, in the name of participation, senior management meet and make decisions which are passed to staff for implementation.

It is the researcher's view that group deci-

sion-making ideally takes advantage of the diverse strengths and expertise of its members. According to Khoza (2003), by tapping the unique qualities of group members, it is possible that the group can generate a greater number of alternatives that are of a higher quality than the individual. If a greater number of higher quality alternatives are generated, then it is likely that the group will eventually reach a superior problem solution than the individual. This probably explains why one school, where teachers are involved in decision-making in many strategic areas, has reported a significant rise in ordinary level ('O') level results for the past five years, although this could be one possibility among many others. Group decision-making may also lead to a greater collective understanding of the eventual course of action chosen, since it is possible that many affected by the decision implementation actually had input into the decision (Wadesango and Shumba 2009). This may promote a sense of ownership of the decision, which is likely to contribute to a greater acceptance of the course of action selected and a greater commitment on the part of the affected individuals to make the course of action successful.

One person cannot be a good resource for every decision. Advantages of team interaction are lost and zero team commitment is developed for implementation of the decision. Resentment and disagreement may result in sabotage, deterioration of team effectiveness and resources of other team members not being tapped.

CONCLUSION

The study found that teachers participate in decision-making at various levels. There are times when teachers are consulted as individuals on one-on-one basis. In this case the head considers one's experience and expertise. It was indicated that there are times when the head is faced with a complex and sensitive issue and the head sources for ideas from the experienced individual. There are times when the same head consults individuals at a committee level and there are times when the whole staff is consulted. The bottom line is that the heads decide who to consult and it is the situation and the sensitivity of the subject that determines those that must take part in the

decision. The study established that there are times when school heads make unilateral decisions and impose them on teachers for implementation. School committees were also found not to be effective in certain areas as school management teams retained all power. Teachers are currently disgruntled and would like a more democratic way of making decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Heads should give their teachers room to come up with ideas and look at all contributions objectively.
- Heads should hold frequent staff meetings in order to provide a forum for shared decision-making.
- Heads should create conducive school climate for participative decision-making.

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