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An investigation of inside school factors which may contribute towards the high drop out rate in some of Lesotho secondary school.

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Supervisor: Dr Nazir Carrim

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Abstract:

Statistics both from inside Lesotho and outside Lesotho indicate that there is a high drop-out rate in Lesotho schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2007; Unite Nations Sub-Saharan Regional Report, 2006). This is despite the efforts of the government of Lesotho to try to bring down the rates of drop-out on all levels of schooling. In an effort to try to achieve this, the government in 2002 implemented a long waited programme of free education for all which was in line with the undertaking of many countries who are signatories to the Education for All (EFA) initiative. This was done so that all children can have access to free basic education.

However this initiative along with other reforms and initiatives taken by the government which provide bursaries for poor children (Nyabanyaba, 2008; MOET, 2007) so that learners can go to school, many learners still continue to drop-out of school. It is upon this basis that I decided to investigate whether there are factors inside schools which may be responsible for such a high drop out rate among learners in Lesotho secondary schools. In carrying out this research it was important that I engaged with actors within schools to get an understanding of what it is that may be pushing learners out of school.

The interactionist approach in this regard was very appropriate and helpful as Blumer (1969) and Cohen (1985) point out that through interactionism, one is able to get an understanding as to the processes that shape people's actions, thinking and why they react to circumstances the way they do. And interactionism again offered me an opportunity to understand what 'strategies' they use to 'cope' with the world Woods (1983). From this perspective ways in which actors make choices, improve and counter others' strategies in their 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) come under scrutiny.

My reason for taking this direction was based on my belief that it is not only factors outside school which can contribute to the high drop-out rate, but other

factors from inside school can have the same impact as well. Many young people dropped out of school and may not be in a position to live ‘various lifestyles’ (Sen, 2001). This is because once they drop out of school many of them take low paying jobs which force them to work under poor conditions, risking their lives and making them to live in poverty which counts among many forms of ‘unfreedoms’ (Sen, 2001).

I selected four secondary schools to carry out my research. The participants in each school were ex-learners, one teacher and a principal. Two schools were based in the rural area while the other two schools were based in the urban area. I used Education Management Information System (EMIS) and other school resources to find out where the drop-out rate was the highest. I had originally intended to interview and administer a questionnaire to 40 ex-learners, 10 from each school, but I could only locate 25 learners as some had relocated to other places inside and outside Lesotho. All the interviews I had with teachers and principals, one from each school were tape-recorded. Ex-learners interviews were tape-recorded as well. The tape-recorded interviews were later transcribed.

My findings revealed that there exists an atmosphere of fear among learners particularly when it comes to their teachers. This fear as learners pointed out was caused by ‘bad treatment’ learners get from their teachers. Teachers on the other hand complained that many learners were very disrespectful towards them. As a result the relationship that existed between teachers and learners was very strained as each group harboured some negative feelings towards each other. Other factors that came out included bullying, lack of teaching and learning facilities, effects of going to circumcision ceremonies especially for those schools located in the rural area and hatred of school. All these factors from inside school seem to have played a role in pushing learners out of school.

Declaration:

I declare that this research is my own work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg. It has never been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dedication:

I thank God for giving me strength during difficult times when I felt I could not cope anymore. He gave me strength to stand up again and trudge forward in the hope that I will make it. He nursed my spirit back to vitality when all hope had gone and I felt worthless.

To my family Ntate Mphi, Me Mamphi, Margaret, Leeto, Maria, Tumisang, Thato, Motlatsi, again I say I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the support you gave me during difficult times. You will always remain close to my heart.

Acknowledgements:

I unreservedly say thank you to my supervisor Dr Nazir Carrim who refused to give up on me when I was really struggling with my work. His belief in my potential to become a better person never ceased to amaze me. He encouraged, guided and nurtured me academically and emotionally. I feel I am now a better person because of him. I thank you from the bottom of my heart Dr Nazir Carrim.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction.

Looking at the alarming rate of drop out that occurs in Lesotho schools, particularly at the secondary school levels, one realises that there is a challenge facing the educational system of Lesotho and the learners who drop out of school and usually end up doing manual labour and working under appalling conditions. This is reiterated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2007) as well as Nyabanyaba (2008). The MOET (2007) shows that in a study conducted between 2004 and 2006, in which the aim was to find out how many young people aged between 15 and 19 were working in the factories and their reasons, it was found that there were about 230 000 young people aged between 15 and 19, who were working in the clothing factories in the 10 districts of Lesotho.

A significant proportion of this 230 000 young people, who are working in these factories is constituted by those who have dropped out of school at the secondary level, because of school costs (37%) as well as those who have left school to find employment (27%) so as to take care of their ailing parents because of the AIDS pandemic in Lesotho (MOET, 2007, Nyabanyaba, 2008). The number shown by the MOET (2007) only shows the number of young people between the ages of 15 and 19. This could mean that there may be more than 230 000 young people if the study was to include those of other age groups who may have left school because of various reasons. This trend may indicate that when these people leave or circumstances compel them to drop out of school, since they do not have much of a choice, they just pick the first thing that comes to them. Makara (2007) commented that usually those learners who find themselves having to drop out of school and find work in the factories all over Lesotho, are victims of the AIDS pandemic. He says that these young people usually find themselves having to support their siblings and provide for them in any manner possible.

When learners drop out of school, Makara (2007) indicates that the only available options to them is to find work in the firms of which a large number of them are owned by Chinese or work as a herd boy if one is male or a maid if one is a female. And they usually find themselves working under poor conditions with little prospect of one day improving their living-conditions. On the one hand Nyabanyaba (2008) indicates that even though the government tried to intervene by encouraging school drop outs to enrol for free in the Distance Learning Programmes (DLPs), this was short lived because there was no follow up monitoring to ensure that the targeted groups after enrolling were given the necessary support to sustain this initiative.

Nyabanyaba (2008) argues that if after completing their different assignments offered by the DLP's they were given support to start businesses or even better, to continue at a higher level, this would have made a major impact on their lives and would have probably encouraged more school drop outs to enrol and better their lives. Instead of curbing the drop out and ensuring retention rates, the rates of drop out seem to be steadily going up, especially for those in the secondary and high school. This may raise questions as to the nature and design of these DLPs by the MOET. This is particularly because these programmes seem not to be designed in such a manner that they foster creativity and inquisitive minds. And this in my view may reveal a weakness, that is, these programmes may not be relevant to the demands of national development as they do not cater for the needs of the local Basotho people. This is yet another challenge that faces the government of Lesotho.

Nyabanyaba (2008) expounds on this further by indicating that what is important now for the MOET is to try to take positive steps towards improving the quality of education so that many learners can stay at school. But one question remains, will improving the quality of education stop learners from dropping out of school? And my opinion is, not necessarily so. The root causes for learners to drop out must be found and addressed. This is because to me, what is the crux of the

matter here, is preventative measures that must be taken to curb this widespread rate of drop out especially at the secondary school level. The MOET (2007) among other things discovered that those who dropped out of school did so because of;

- Entrenched cultural practices
- Lack of motivation from parents as well as teachers
- AIDS pandemic effects, and,
- Poverty.

To address the above problems so that learners can participate and complete their respective levels of education, MOET decided to engage in a country-wide awareness campaigns so that all stakeholders can engage in a dialogue to discuss what can be done (MOET, 2008). Even non governmental organisations (NGOs) were invited to be part of this campaign. However as Nyabanyaba (2008) shows, more still needs to be done because instead of the drop out rates going down, they seem to be increasing. One can assume that even though the government is trying to address these issues, an approach in which other equally important areas within schools are examined is necessary and that the problem of drop out should be addressed dealing also with inside school factors that influence them.

It is on this premise and background that this study was undertaken. This study sought to find out what inside school factors could be contributing towards the high drop out rate in some of the Lesotho secondary schools. This was done by particularly looking at and focusing on the relationships that exist between actors within school. These are teachers, principals as well as learners. Again here the assumption is that the relationships that exist between these groups are important and that they could play a significant part in pushing learners out of school. I will now give a brief educational and political history of Lesotho so that light may be shed on some of the trends that may exist in Lesotho educational system.

1.1.2. History and nature of education system in Lesotho

Lesotho is a small country found in sub-Saharan Africa with a total population of about 2,123,180 and a total area of about 30,355 sq km (Lesotho Statistics Bureau, 2003). Lesotho is totally surrounded by the Republic of South Africa and gained independence from Great Britain in 1966 (Murray, 2001). The country is currently ruled by King Letsie the 3rd as a constitutional monarchy after the death of his father Moshoeshoe the 2nd in 1998 (Murray, 2001, Sanders, 2003) while Pakalitha Mosisili is the Prime Minister of the country.

The first democratic elections in Lesotho occurred in 1970 when King Moshoeshoe the 2nd was still in office, and they were won by the Basotho National Party (BNP) and Leabua Jonathan became the Prime Minister of Lesotho (Murray, 2001; Sanders, 2003). In 1975, the general elections were held again and BNP claimed to have won the elections while the two major existing political opposition parties in Lesotho namely; the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) and Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) rejected the outcome of the elections on the basis that they were flawed and due to claims that the BNP cheated (Machobane 2000; Matsela, 1979). In the '1980's' and '1990's' a relative drive towards peace and democracy took place, but civil unrests still erupted, especially during election time.

Such civil unrest happened in 1998 amid allegations of vote rigging by the Lesotho Congress for Democracy Party. The capital town and other nearby smaller towns were looted until intervention was called by the Prime Minister to South African Developing Community (SADEC) to come and quell the situation (Sanders, 2003).

Lesotho is divided into 10 administrative districts of which Maseru is the capital and the administrative headquarter. Because Lesotho is a mountainous country, the population distribution is dense in the lowlands and sparse in the mountains and foothills as the following table reveals.

Districts:	Population Distribution:	Region
Berea	223,659	Foothills
Leribe	321,451	Lowlands
Butha-Buthe	121,341	Mountains
Maseru	389,742	Lowlands
Mafeteng	310,327	Lowlands
Mohales Hoek	297,123	Foothills
Mokhotlong	146,743	Mountains
Qachas Nek	196,874	Mountains
Quthing	120,122	Mountains
Thaba-Tseka	156,981	Mountains

Table 1.1.2A: Population distribution in the 10 Lesotho districts: source: Lesotho Statistics Bureau, 2006.

As the above Table shows districts that are found in the lowlands such as Maseru, Mafeteng, Leribe, Berea and Mohale's Hoek are the most populated. While districts which are located in the mountains and foothills such as Quthing, Qacha's nek, Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe and Thaba-tseka have the least population. This population distribution is similarly prevalent in schools in the lowlands as well as those in the mountains and foothills (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2003), in the sense that schools that are in the lowlands have a large number of learners as opposed to schools located in both the foothills and the mountains. The Table below indicates this.

Districts found in:			Distribution of schools and learners in both primary and secondary			
Lowlands	foothills	mountains	Pri. schools	Sec. schools	Learners in: Primary	Secondary
Maseru			233	43	96,890	15,956
Mafeteng			224	34	76,871	14,432
Leribe			198	37	55,715	13,231
	Berea		167	30	52,189	10,343
	Mohale'shoek		162	29	49,391	9,112
		Quthing	98	19	24,124	8,897
		Qachas nek	97	19	20,382	7,574
		Butha-Buthe	99	17	19,912	7,916
		Thaba Tseka	96	14	17,679	7,189
		Mokhotlong	93	13	16,901	6,569
			Total=1477	Total=256	Total 430000	Total 93000

Table 1.1.2B: Distribution of primary schools, secondary schools and learners in them in the 3 regions in Lesotho. Source: Ministry of education and Training (2006).

One reason suggested for this uneven population distribution both in the regions and schools located in the lowlands and mountains is that people leave the highlands in search of jobs as many firms and factories are located in the districts situated in the lowlands (Matsela, 1979, Ministry of Education and Training, MOET, 2006). When parents relocate to the lowlands in search of jobs in the factories, they usually take their children with them, which may explain why there are more learners in schools located in the lowlands as opposed to those that are located in the mountains or foothills. It will be equally important that I briefly give a historical account of education system in Lesotho prior to 1970's as well as the developments made from then till the present. This is so that we can understand some of the trends that are still persisting even years after Lesotho gained independence from Great Britain in 1966 (MOET, 2006; Sanders, 2003). The formal western education system was first introduced in the 1830's'. This was done by the French missionary society known as the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) (Ministry of Education, 1975).

The main focus of the PEMS was mainly with religious education and economic necessities of the 18th century Basutoland as Lesotho was known then. In other words PEMS mission was to establish Missionaries and preach the gospel in

Lesotho, whether Lesotho was poor and lacked professionals in all fields to make it a better country economically was of less importance (MOE, 1975; Seotsanyana et al, 2002). As this 'Western religion' was a new idea altogether, enrolment was very low since many Basotho were very suspicious of this new religion which advocated that young boys and girls abandon their chores, traditions and some of their cultural practices at home and go to 'school' (MOE, 1975; Matsela, 1979). Only a handful of the Basotho families allowed their sons and daughters to go to schools. This had distinct consequences. For those who allowed their children to go to school, they were treated as outcasts and very often suffered some forms of discrimination. They would be barred from attending communal functions as well as take part in some of the clans' festivities (MOE, 1975; Matsela, 1979; Seotsanyana et al, 2002). For those who persisted with schooling, they were usually taught the basics of reading and writing.

The MOE education policy document (1975) states 'boys were taught simple vocational skills while girls who attended were taught house crafts' (MOE, 1975). As it can be seen, education then, for these few who attended school was based on the basic needs of the people and of the colonisers. This only made those who could go to school to be able to sign their names and engage in other semi skilled labour practices such as weaving and decorating. The Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC) took over from PEMS in 1933 when the white missionaries returned to France. However the ideas and the ways in which things were done still reflected the PEMS legacy and teachings, the only difference being that these missions were now under the direct control of LEC, with no mandate from France. Both LEC and Roman Catholic Church (RC) enrolled a total of 40% of the school going population. Most of those who enrolled were usually aged from15 to 16. Upon finishing the primary school level of education, for those who could stay that long, they were encouraged to go into missionary colleges at which pastoral studies were usually the core subjects. These would be subjects such as religious studies, agriculture and home economics (Matsela, 1979). Those who stayed on and completed these subjects in their final year

which was at the end of 5 years of schooling were trained to be missionaries or alternatively, to teach in these missionary schools and this is how the system was structured:

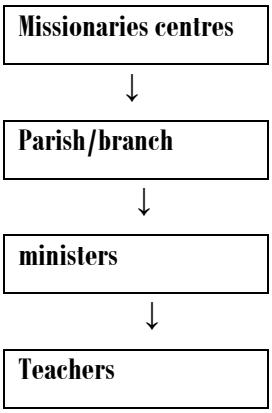


Diagram 1.1.2C: Structure of education system in Lesotho in the 1900s: Source: MOE 1975.

Missionaries' roles were that of control centres where major decisions were made. Everyone was answerable to them. Parishes were branches where schools were established with the help of missionaries. They report to missionary centres. Ministers coordinated activities of the schools as principals; major decisions had to be taken to the parishes or missions. Teachers were at the bottom of the ranking with virtually no say in the running of the schools. As it can be seen from diagram1.1. 2C, administrative issues pertaining to the running of schools were the responsibility of the missionaries. There was no representation of either parents or government. Then the reforms of 1970's by the Lesotho government aimed at re-structuring the whole education system to answer to the needs of a developing nation. The education system in Lesotho today is a joint responsibility of three partners. These are: the government, churches which own 90% of the schools (MOET, 2006) and the community. Community schools are schools that were established by community members and in consultation with the Ministry of Education (MOE). Their purpose is to address the immediate needs of the concerned community such as lack of primary or secondary schools in their area or lack of transportation to schools which are far. The reforms made by the Lesotho government in the 1970's' included the re-structuring of the

education system, teacher training and support. The following diagram shows the education system structure after 1980's':

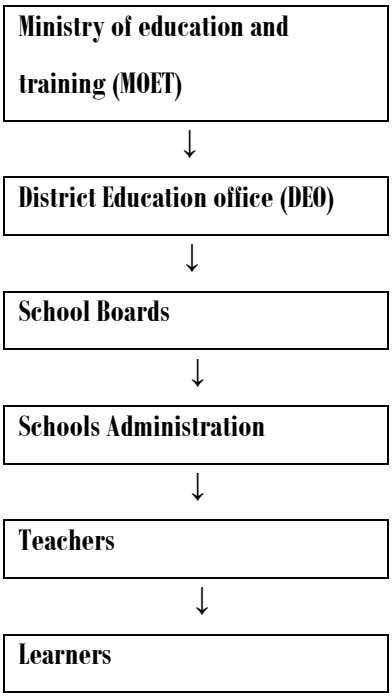


Diagram 1.1.2D: Lesotho education system structure: Source MOET 1998

MOET is the control centre, where major decisions affecting education policy are taken. MOET plans and implements policies after consultation with the minister of education. Decisions are then taken to the DEO where they liaise with school boards to air their views on how best to implement the policies. Parents, teacher's representative, chiefs, non teaching staff and the principal coordinate the aspirations of the DEO to the school and ensure that everyone understands their roles. School administration headed by the principal implements the education policy with the help of teachers. Teachers help to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the implemented policies. They make suggestions to the principal who then takes them to the school boards and from there to the DEO then to the MOET. Learners participate by electing prefects who attend meetings with teachers where issues are discussed and they can then go back to report to their fellow learners. As it can be observed from diagram 1.1.2D, the restructuring of the old education system was done so that education system in

Lesotho can address issues such as what kind of teachers are produced, what kinds of skills they have and how to give them support they need. Effective running of schools and giving communities a sense of responsibility were also addressed. The MOET (2006) therefore decided to focus among others on the following:

1. Organisational structure----- to have structures in schools which help to run schools effectively and democratically. This is evidenced by the composition of school boards in which parents, teachers, principal and students all participate in running the school.
2. Improvement of management-----this means engaging the principal and the administrative staff in workshops so that they know what is expected of them as well practicing good managerial skills
3. Upgrading teaching force----this means re-skilling and training teachers so that they can perform their tasks better.
4. Effective delivery system------ this means planning and effectively implementing those plans so that all within the system can work effectively (MOET, 2006).

The focus was directed at giving local communities a role to play in the development and effective running of schools. In other words the government was saying as Motsabi (2007) indicates, ‘let us share responsibilities and ownership’. It must be noted that earlier on in the early 1930’s; the government involvement in how schools were run was left at the hands of proprietors which were churches. Churches owned almost 79% of all school in Lesotho (Motsabi, 2007). Everyday running of these institutions was solely in their hands and they could do as they please. They were only required to register and abide by the regulations that controlled schools in Lesotho, but they had absolute control on who to enrol, usually based on one’s religious affiliation, as well as who to fire.

When government decided to step in the late 1970’s, it was particularly because of the treatment and some exclusionary practices which some learners suffered.

The government intervened significantly and made amendments to the education policy to the effect that no one should be excluded from schooling because of her/his religious affiliation; principals had to take necessary procedures before expelling learners or teachers; and the composition of school boards needed to include all stakeholders, from parents, teachers, learners and other members of the community. Again teachers and principals were encouraged to attend workshops in which the purpose was to train them and give them necessary skills on how to be good managers of schools as well as encouraging practices of good governance (Motsabi, 2007; Nyabanyaba, 2008).

In the early 1990's, the Lesotho government then decided to address the shortage of qualified teachers in all levels of school. The prevailing situation was that from 1986 to 1996 was that about 41% of teachers in primary schools were not qualified, while in secondary and high school the percentages of unqualified teachers stood at 17% and 13% respectively in 1996/7 (Motsabi, 2007). The government invited those who had been teaching but had no qualifications to skill themselves by providing them with bursaries to enable them to teach on all levels of school. Workshops were conducted for a period of one year that is from March1996 to March 1997in all the 10 districts to encourage participation of such people (Motsabi, 2007). The curriculum was also looked into. This too was important because curriculum as Motsabi (2007) aptly says 'needs to address the needs of the local community and be relevant in their lives as well'. This was with the view that what today's learners needs may be different from what learners in the colonial era needed and it was equally important that the government of Lesotho look at what it is that Lesotho learners need today.

1.1.3. Access rates, retention rates, completion rates and drop out rates in Lesotho primary and secondary schools

The rate at which learners drop out on all school levels, whether in the rural or urban area, is a major concern to the Lesotho government. The Table on the next page illustrates this point.

		Primary school	Secondary school
Access rates in %	Male	72%	68%
	Female	41%	78%
	Rural	56.4%	65%
	Urban	72.5%	87%
retention rates in %	Male	51.2%	43.9%
	Female	61.6%	59%
	Rural	48%	40%
	Urban	69%	61.1%
drop-out rates in %	Male	42.3%	48%
	Female	39%	47.6%
	Rural	50%	57.1%
	Urban	41%	52%
Completion rates in %	Male	49%	41%
	Female	51.3%	52%
	Rural	43%	39.5%
	Urban	56%	60%

Table 1.1.3C: Completion rates, drop out rates, retention rates and access rates in Lesotho primary and secondary schools (source, UN Regional Education Report, 2006).

As the above Table indicates, one could say that there is an improvement in access rates. In regard to access rate, it can be seen that especially in primary schools, the rate of access is significantly higher than that in the secondary school. This may probably be explained by the fact that among some of its goals, the Lesotho government, in line with the Education for All campaign of the United Nations, decided to embark on an intervention that “gives access to all learners

in Lesotho, in line with the EFA goals of according each learner free primary education" (MOET, 2007).

This is evidenced by the fact that even statistics from Table 2.1B show that learners on primary education level seem to be having higher percentages as far as having access to education is concerned. Having introduced and implemented the free primary education in 2000 (UN, 2006), the Lesotho government first targeted learners who were eligible for enrolment in the primary school level, and as it appears, the above statistics bear testimony to that. However what is happening is that retention rates and completion rates still seem to be very low. These rates as Nyabanyaba (2008) indicated seem to be reversing and undoing all that the introduction of free primary education seems to want to achieve.

1.2. Focus

The focus of this study was to investigate possible factors which may be responsible for the high drop out rate in some of Lesotho's' secondary schools. What was at the core of my study here was to see what kinds of relationships exist among actors within schools. I utilised the interactionist perspective in this study. This is because as Denzin (1978) says, "interactionism offers an insight into the relationships between individuals pertaining to why and how they act, react and do things the way they do". My focus in this study was to find out how teachers relate with learners, how learners relate with teachers, how learners relate with other learners. I wanted to find out how do they feel about each other, their interpretations of each others' meanings, and how these lead to dropping out of school, if at all.

It was very important that I therefore get an understanding of what kinds of relationships exist between these groups as Cohen (1985) points out that "reality grows out of social processes". Interactionism therefore offered me a great opportunity to get to understand how these realities are produced in the schooling setting. Other inside school factors that I investigated included the

availability of resources within schools. Availability or unavailability of resources can also have an impact on whether learners come to school or not.

1.3. Rationale

Emerging literature on the importance of education and the role that schooling plays in the lives of individuals and countries indicate that education plays a major role towards development and an improved economy (Brown, 1985; Levin, 1987; Psacharopoulus, 1987). The point that is being made is that investing in schooling on all levels can have a positive impact on the economy of a country as well as on individuals. Therefore education which people obtain from school should help such individuals to release and realize their potentials and capabilities so that they are able to live better lives and hopefully, be free from such social ills such as poverty, crime, inequality and poor health. These "unfreedoms", to use Sen (2001:15), are impediments which if not eradicated via vigorous measures, which involve education, can have terrible repercussions on people's lives. Many of these unfreedoms still continue to make the lives of many people in Lesotho miserable.

Furthermore we live in a post-modern global economy, where technological advances have been made. In today's world, people need education so that they can compete for jobs in a global market as new demands are put on workers (Brown, 1995). In the Lesotho context, the question is how would learners compete for jobs in the global markets if they do not even complete elementary education which in itself is not enough? People's "capabilities" (Sen, 2001) therefore need to be released so that they can utilize their potentials and have a positive impact on the nation's economy as well as their own well being (MOET, 2007, Sen, 2001:33).

What stands out here as the argument is that elementary or primary education is just not enough especially in the developing countries like Lesotho where there are shortages of resources, skills and lately the labour force because of the AIDS pandemic. Great levels of drop out both in primary and secondary schools will

lead to an adult population which is illiterate and as such, as Sen (2001:72) illustrates these people are likely to lead unfulfilled lives because of the very same impediments which will make it difficult for them to live free lives as human beings. This is because these capabilities are needed to ensure their survival and so that they are in a position to make informed decisions concerning their lives.

Thus if learners complete their schooling and go further with their education, they stand a better chance of realizing and releasing their potentials as well as being productive members of their society. I therefore think it will not bode well for Lesotho to just focus on primary education and not on post primary education as well. There must be measures in place to address the question of high drop out rates in post primary education, which I think is very crucial in a developing country. It has been revealed (MOET, 2007; UN, 2006) that large numbers of learners drop out in Lesotho, even before completing primary education which has a negative impact on the post primary enrolments. Statistics both within and outside Lesotho indicate that indeed the drop out is still very high in Lesotho schools (Nyabanyaba, 2008; UN, 2006).

1.4. Aim

Looking at the large numbers of drop-outs in primary and secondary schools in Lesotho, and the impact this has on individuals who drop out, I think it is important that one looks at the factors which may have contributed to this large number of drop-outs. I think understanding the underlying factors may be crucial in trying to come up with a solution to this phenomenon. These factors may come from within schools or from outside schools as we know that schools are located within communities and societies. These factors both from inside schools and from the society, may exclude learners from participating fully and meaningfully in their education and the repercussions may be bad in the sense that once they drop out they may be forced to engage in low paying jobs or even commit crime. And this does not in any way help them gain their freedom economically and live

better lives. Again their potential to become better people who can impact positively on the lives of others is stifled. They end up not living their lives to their full potential. More specifically, I tried to find out the following:

1. What are the inside school factors that push learners out of school?
2. How do these factors push learners out of school?
3. What causes such factors to exist and how are they constructed?

The worrying factor to me is the drop-out rate in some of Lesotho secondary schools. As statistics from MOET (2007) and UN Regional Report of (2006) indicate, many young people in Lesotho drop out of school even before completing their secondary schooling level. This trend in my opinion has a potential of producing an adult labour force lacking in meeting the global markets' demands as well as adults who will be hampered from living fulfilling and healthy lives as they will have very limited choice. This is created by the fact that such people with such a limited education, may find it difficult to compete in the markets and as such remain targets of exploitation by their employers. A point noted by Nyabanyaba (2008), who argues that many learners with limited level of education cannot exercise many alternatives and often find themselves victims of unscrupulous business people in Lesotho.

In my view, it is therefore very important that preventative measures are put into place, but first, it is imperative that causes of this high rate of drop-out in some of Lesotho secondary schools are investigated. My priority is investigating causes that come from inside school as I believe that it is equally important that learners should want to go to school. This is particularly important as Cohen (1985) aptly says that how people react to circumstances grows out of social practices. So by looking at the practices that happen at schools between learners, teachers and principals, one can get an understanding of why things happen the way they do. By finding out what kinds of relationships exist between learners, teachers and principals, I will be in a better position to say whether relationships between these actors inside school contribute towards the high rate of drop-out or not.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1. Interventions by the Lesotho government to address the MDGs and EFA goals

There were some strategic interventions by the government of Lesotho to try to alleviate some of the problems associated with access, retention and completion rates. First of all the government embarked on identifying those learners that have lost their parents to the AIDS pandemic to try to give them support in terms of providing them with scholarships (MOET, 2006; Nyabanyaba, 2008). Furthermore, the government of Lesotho has enlisted the help of foreign donors to help them build schools in the foothills and mountainous areas so that all learners can have access to education (EFA, 2000; MOET, 2005). The government has also held many “Pitso” or “gatherings” in terms of workshops with parents to try and show them the importance of allowing their children, boys or girls, to go to school and complete their schooling (MOET, 2006; Seotsanyana et al, 2002).

In building schools where there were few and holding workshops to educate parents about the importance of letting their children get education is a strategy to address inequalities and to try to include everyone in education. In this manner, the Lesotho education policy is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2005, which among others is to try to provide “education for all” and that all must have access to primary education by 2015. In terms of education reform and transformation in relation to the MDGs, the Lesotho education policy seeks to:

1. Decrease drop-out rates of primary school.
2. Increase the net enrolment of primary school from 85% to 90%
3. Increase the through-put rates from 60% to 80% for primary school by 2015.
4. Provide additional bursaries for orphans and vulnerable children. (MOET, 2005).

The above points seem to address some aspects of inclusive education in which all people can participate meaningfully in their education without being marginalised or excluded. The need to provide poor learners and other vulnerable children is a drive towards including all learners in schools, and as such a very commendable effort by the MOET. This is because research undertaken to find out everyday learners' experiences in Lesotho schools indicate that, those children who are from deprived families are usually denied access to education simply because they usually cannot afford school fees, uniforms or stationery (MOET, 2006; Seotsanyana et al, 2002). So as a result of lack of funds, they find themselves being marginalised.

The fact is that those learners from poor families may not experience schooling like learners from rich families whose parents can afford to pay school fees, provide money for food and transport. And in contrast, many learners from poor families may not afford these and as a result, their kids' experiences may be different from those of their affluent counterparts. This may put them at a disadvantage. Sayed et al (2007) demonstrates the importance of making children experience education holistically and meaningfully by saying that "access should be enhanced in such a manner that all students eligible for education, especially those from deprived backgrounds, are meaningfully included in education programmes" (Sayed et al, 2007). Providing scholarships for the poor and orphans as well as reducing educational costs are important factors. Matsela (1979) said many Basotho parents are poor and often cannot afford to pay large amounts of money for school fees as well as meeting other school costs. This may then compels some learners to drop out of school and further compounds the problem as well as perpetuating practices of exclusions and inclusions in schools.

A vivid example is offered by Sayed et al (2007) of schools in both South Africa and India where it was found that there were schools which were 'strongly inclusive', 'moderately inclusive' and 'weakly inclusive' in terms of enrolling

learners, language use and fees. For those schools which were strongly inclusive it was found that learners have easy access in terms of fees, that is, learners would not be expelled because they owe fees (Sayed et al, 2007), which is the opposite of what happens in some of Lesotho schools where a learner is expelled if he/she cannot pay her fees. In terms of language for strongly inclusive schools, learners would not be denied admission because of language as it was the case with schools that were weakly inclusive in terms of language. For example those that could not speak Afrikaans were denied admissions in such schools.

Furthermore, schools that were weakly inclusive both in India and South Africa, made it difficult for learners to get admission as there were too many requirements imposed on both learners and parents failing which it was impossible for learners to get admission (Sayed et al 2007). In the case of moderately inclusive schools in both countries, access was relatively easy as compared to weakly inclusive schools. The difference being that in the moderately inclusive schools, even though there were requirements for admission, it was not as stringent as those in the weakly inclusive schools. What comes out consistently from all these schools and which is very similar to the situation and experiences of learners in some of Lesotho schools is that, the experiences of learners seem to be totally different in that there are those that are excluded because they cannot afford things and there are those that are included even though education policy covers all. And this can be attributed to the socially constructed practices as Bourdieu (1989) shows that there are those who the ‘education system’ will reject because they do not have the inherited “cultural capital”.

For example in some of Lesotho schools as Matsela (1979) pointed out those that come from the mountain region are treated with scorn even by teachers and the reason offered is that they are ‘backward’. This may then translate into such learners being forced to take ‘admission tests’ for admission in some of Lesotho

secondary schools, while those from ‘towns’ do not undergo the same test (Motsabi, 2007). So practices of inclusion and exclusion still persist even though there are direct policies in place to deal with all these problems and meanwhile, learners in some Lesotho secondary schools find themselves having to drop out of school.

A major concern among other things is that children still find themselves having to leave school to go into ‘piece jobs’ either as herd boys or domestic workers because of poverty and HIV and AIDS which affects 23% of the total population and the third highest in the world (MOH, 2002; Murray, 2001). These practices give one the impression that maybe not much is done to enforce the policy aspirations and really direct the funds where they are needed (MOH, 2002; MOET, 2006). Sayed et al (2007) illustrate the above point thus; “inclusion education policy needs to take account of the often contradictory nature of exclusion and the various ways in which exclusion is manifested at all levels of society” (Sayed et al, 2007). In other words such a policy should address the context in which children find themselves and deal head on with such peculiarities which may be unique to the settings in which they find themselves.

2.2. Education v/s schooling

“Education” and not “schooling” is what is at the core of my argument in the context of Lesotho. Education can be used as a tool towards development of human beings. It is through education that human capabilities and potentials can be released so that individuals can live better lives and benefit themselves and humanity at large. Carrim (2006) captures the very essence of what education is in this manner, “education which does not indoctrinate and which is liberatory is one that is valuable in itself. It serves the essential aim of improving the quality of human life, the development of human potential and the pursuit of truth” (Carrim, 2006).

If education is to liberate, improve human life as well as develop human potential then poverty can act as an impediment for human beings towards using their capabilities to liberate themselves from hardships and develop as human beings. Developing human potential and the pursuit of truth speak of not just gaining monetary rewards for oneself, but being the very best that one can be, expanding one's horizons, capabilities and being a tool for the advancement of the human race . In my view this is what is meaningful and worth investing in.

Education which can help individuals' live better lives and be in a position to contribute positively in the development of others is valuable in itself. What such individuals may be able to do in their communities may go a long way towards making a visible impact on the lives of those who may be living under difficult conditions. On the other hand, "schooling" may perpetuate imbalances even further. This is because as Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) say "schools functions are the reproduction of the dominant ideology, its forms of knowledge and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of labour" (Aronowitz and Giroux,1985). In other words, schooling helps to make worse the already worse situation. Schooling does not change the status quo to allow all people to enjoy their "freedoms" (Sen, 2001). Their "capabilities" are curtailed, because by society's design, they belong to a certain station in life and may not proceed further.

Carrim (2006) illustrates the adverse role that schooling can have on individuals' lives by saying that, "Schooling is in fact anti-educational because it is based on and promotes traditional pedagogies which reproduce social inequalities, schooling is linked to instrumentalist purposes in these views. It trains people with the skills and know-how needed for insertion into the socio-economic and political orders of societies. It socialises people into the dominant norms, values, attitudes and behaviours required by societies" (Carrim, 2006: 24). In other words, there are imbalances and inequalities in the societies which schooling does not seek to eradicate but to promote. Promotion of inequalities in this

manner will not develop humanity, rather there will always be those who are destined to live in misery and poverty because that is how society wants things to be and it vigorously promotes the status quo.

People's capabilities will therefore be forever shackled as Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) point out that "schools will remain as factories or prisons, teachers and students alike act merely as pawns and role bearers constrained by the logic and social practices of the capitalist system" (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985). Schools are therefore only fulfilling an instrumentalist purpose in which as Carrim (2006) writes gives people experiences of indoctrination and not education.

These inequalities are played out in all the important areas of the society and schools so that, in my view, those who are poor are likely to stay poor and those that are rich are likely to stay rich. These important areas are captured by Giroux and Aronowtitz (1985) in the form of three reproductive models which are "economic reproductive model", "cultural reproductive model" and "hegemonic state reproductive model". Under economic reproductive model, "schools provide different classes and social groups with the knowledge and skills they need to occupy their respective places in a labour force stratified by class, race and gender" (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985). This means that every class has its defined and pre-determined jobs. Training that each class gets is totally different depending on whether one is destined to be a street sweeper or a doctor, which to me speaks of gross inequalities.

Under the "cultural reproductive model", "schools part is to legitimise and distribute forms of knowledge, values, language and modes of style that constitutes the dominant culture and interest" (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985). This means that instead of trying to correct the inequalities as practiced in the society, schools are used as platforms on which to promote the dominant values and consequently demote other interests. In the sense that those that dominate get to

be ‘heard’ while those that are not are ignored. It then follows that those who can have their interests catered for are those from the dominant groups.

Under the “hegemonic state reproductive model” “schools’ role is that of an apparatus of the state that produces and legitimates the economic and ideological imperatives that underlie the state political power” (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985). This means that schools as I said earlier are only seen as instruments to use to achieve a certain goal, however destructive to human development that goal is, I might add. If most of what schools do is to further widen the gap between the rich and the poor, perpetuate practices of social inequalities in a case of a developing country like Lesotho, I think what should be at the centre is education which as Carrim (2006) says should be aimed at developing people to the best of their abilities, encourage their growth and promote independent critical thinking in them.

Schooling however is different today from what it was in the 18th century. Countries are affected by global markets which place particular demands on workers. Schools are located in societies and need to answer to the needs of its society. As Carrim (2006) writes, “schools may provide useful sites to develop education as processes of education and training complement each other and are thus not necessarily incompatible” (Carrim, 2006). In other words, education is important but it cannot happen in isolation, the main aim is to bridge the gap of inequalities that prevail in society and improve the lives of all through education.

I think it is very important that education should look at or address the needs of its people from as early as primary school level, and most importantly for me, even afterwards. This it can do if all forms of social exclusion are closely scrutinised for the purpose of including everyone in education, on all levels. Sen (2001) quoted in Sayed et al. (2007) defines social exclusion as “a holistic concept which includes depravation in the economic, social and political sphere” (Sayed et al. 2007). The above quotation implies that some people find

themselves not participating fully in the sense that they may be barred or because they lack expertise to participate in their social and economic spheres of life in the society. But if a large number of learners drop out before even completing elementary education at primary level as is the case in Lesotho, then there is a problem as such people will live with impediments in their lives and not be in a position to free themselves.

At this rate, the country will end up with illiterate adults who cannot contribute meaningfully to their lives. As I have said it is very disheartening to observe that even though the rates of enrolment are higher, the rates of completion, retention as well as drop out still remain a problem. Education seems to provide a better chance of escaping hardships and gaining some security in terms of securing jobs and even creating some, and people need to be encouraged to learn. Education itself is a treasure to be valued as Camus (1999) in Hoffe (2003) says that “elementary education offered children not only an escape from poor meagre family lives…it nourished a hunger in them, the hunger for discovery…” (Hoffe, 2003).

In this manner children engage meaningfully in their education, they do not see school as just a place to go to when they do not have anything better to do, but as a place where they can discover new things and escape from daily hardships which as we have seen can be socially constructed via schooling. Ultimately they will be able to explore ways for defeating hardships such as poverty by engaging in criminal activities. Feinberg (1980) reiterates the importance of education by indicating that “the state should not be concerned with the maintenance of educational system as an end in itself; but it should rather attempt to nurture and develop the human potential of its children” (Feinberg, 1980).

Education must have the capacity to prepare the learner so that such a learner can see value in education. I think that if learners think of education as adding value in their lives, then that, in itself, would be motivation for them to do well and

complete their education. Lockheed (1991) concurs with Sen when demonstrating the importance of education. He says “education is a cornerstone of economic and social development, and primary education is its foundation” (Lockheed, 1991). Primary education is a cornerstone because that is the starting point and if learners are to appreciate education then thorough preparations must start at primary school level.

Education can help to reduce poverty in the sense that as Lockheed (1991) and Sen (2001) say, it alleviates hardships/poverty by skilling people and making them efficient to participate in all decisions regarding their lives. If education helps to skill people, then it means such people can get better paying jobs which may mean improvement in the productive capacity of the population as many people will be educated. Schooling, especially post-primary schooling, should be, as Lockheed (1991) says, a base on which human capital development is built. This means that schooling should focus on producing literate population which can effectively and efficiently deal with challenges especially in a developing country like Lesotho and to serve as a foundation on which further education can be built. If education helps to ‘alleviate and advance economic and social development’ as Lockheed (1991) says, then my belief is that in the context of Lesotho, education should take a central role.

Lauder et al (1997) goes further to say that “education seems to be in the forefront of many societies as it is seen as a key investment in the promotion of economic growth as well as a means of promoting social justice” (1997). This is because barriers such as ignorance and illiteracy which may hamper people from participating fully in their economies are minimised. But as Lockheed (1991) says it is very worrying because in many developing countries, of which Lesotho is part, “too small a proportion of the adult labour force has completed primary education and even those who have finished often lack skills to meet the demands of the rapid economic development” (Lockheed, 1991). If learners drop out in such large numbers in Lesotho, then the entire output of such a system will

be poorly prepared for senior secondary and tertiary education. They will be illiterate parents, workers and managers who cannot contribute effectively to their development in this era where technological advances and education matter most.

2.3. Inclusion and Exclusion in education

Lesotho as a member of the wider international community is engaged in the Education for All (EFA) campaign in which the aim is to give access to basic primary education to all (UN, 2007). This is a laudable effort from the government of Lesotho to be part of such an initiative especially because Lesotho is a developing country and it needs a skilled labour force. But is access to primary education enough? Can elementary education take anyone anywhere in this technologically advanced world where one has to work with electronics, electronic media and computers? I do not think so because advanced certificates are what matter most in order to be competitive in the world markets.

In this post-modern world of technological advances, highly skilled workers who can master technology and be at par with their counterparts from other countries are needed. This gives workers who are highly skilled an edge and a better chance in terms of "employability and prepares them to adapt better in the world markets" as Zuboff (1989) says. Levin (1994) captures Zuboff's points thus "the importance of education is in meeting the demands for technical, personal and transferable skills…" (Levin, 1994). This is why I think that EFA should go beyond primary school levels and address challenges of work, skilled labour and poverty reduction. This can only be achieved if individuals are skilled beyond primary school level. If a country prospers, it is able to cater to a large extent, to the needs of its citizens such as health, poverty and education. In turn healthy and educated citizens are able to provide labour and in this way contribute in the development of their country.

As I said, education seems to be one way which individuals can use to attain prosperity as well as to be productive members of their societies. Woodall (1981) quoted in Psacharopoulus (1987) highlights the importance of individuals engaging in further education as follows, “individuals who take part in education or vocational training benefit by increasing their chances of employment and by increasing lifetime earnings” (Psacharopoulus, 1987). This is because through education they are able to make themselves employable and can then earn better salaries as skilled workers than those who have no education.

So individuals, who continue with their schooling well after their primary level education, end up with more job opportunities and better salaries than their counterparts who did not continue (Lockheed, 1991). This point is picked up by Levin (1987) thus, “persons with less education are more likely to be unemployed, employed at low wages, and in poverty” (Levin, 1987). Looking at this quotation, I question the philosophy behind EFA since it would seem like it is only aiming at making children to be able to read and write, which I find very odd in the Lesotho context, where there are high levels of poverty which breeds crime, ill health and inequality.

The sad part when one looks at Lesotho’s situation is that there seems to be a lack of or a deprivation of the very basic capabilities which ultimately seem to lead to high drop out rates and serious child labour practices both in the rural and in the urban areas. The following table is an illustration.

Rates in %	Secondary schools in 2007.			
	Male	**female**	**urban**	**rural**
1. repetition rate	13.4%	10.9%	8.67%	12.4%
2. drop out rate	47.6%	33.56%	47.78%	50.4&
3. enrolment rate	41%	53%	32%	45%
4. completion rate	51%	73%	50.3%	30.2%
5. child labour practice	27%	13%	18%	27%

Table 2.3A. Rates of repetition drop out, enrolment, completion and child labour practices in Lesotho. (Source: UNESCO, 2006 world education report)

The above Table (2.3A) shows that even if the government is trying by all means to achieve the targets of the EFA so that all individuals can achieve better lives, but because of some problems caused by lack of resources and poverty, Lesotho will continue to experience some difficulties in as far as achieving the EFA goals are concerned. This point is reiterated by Nyabanyaba (2008) thus:

> Despite the high priority towards education by the Lesotho government challenges brought by HIV and AIDS pandemic as well as some internal inefficiencies within the education system leads to high drop out rates, high repetition rates and low completion rates (Nyabanyaba, 2008).

As it can be seen from Table 2.3A above, the percentages show that those who suffer most are from the rural areas. All the percentages of repetition, drop out, completion and child labour practices, indicate that in the rural areas, the situation is worse than in the urban area. Nyabanyaba (2008) again comments that the probable cause of this may be that many people in the rural area still give their children to ‘rich people’ to herd animals or do other manual labour. This clearly means that as Sen (2001) pointed out, it would be quite difficult for people in Lesotho to achieve development since they lack in some of the basic capabilities essential for their freedom and a way out of such lamentable situations. Again those that live in the rural areas are exposed to these

deprivations because of poverty due to death of senior members who die of the AIDS pandemic hence leaving their young children very vulnerable to situations which can expose them to serious child labour practices.

It is important therefore that necessary measures are taken by the government of Lesotho so that its people have these basic capabilities. In support of my point above Sen (2001) offers this example of India and China to show that it is important that necessary arrangements are made so that people can be in a better position to deal with challenges. He asks; “how does one explain the recent gulf in economic progress between authoritarian yet fast growing China and democratic, economically laggard India?” And for Sen the answer is clear as he says:

> India with its massive neglect of public education, basic health care and literacy was poorly prepared for a widely shared economic expansion, China on the other hand having made substantial advances in those areas was able to capitalise on its market reforms (Sen, 2001).

And I am inclined to agree with Sen here, and add that in the case of Lesotho, it is of great importance that the focus should therefore be on preparing the ground in terms of building infrastructure to support education, health and other basic needs of the people. This is so that it will be easy to tackle the many forms of ‘unfreedoms’ so that the lives of all learners, be it from the rural area or urban area, are not hindered in any way. This is because one can see that the situation in Lesotho is a serious one particularly when one looks at the plight of learners after dropping out of school. This is serious for both boys and girls and both in the rural and urban areas as those who drop out usually end up getting employment in the low-paying places inside and outside Lesotho.

From my point of view, it becomes evident that education has a lot to offer in relation to reversing some of the challenges that affect many people in Lesotho. It is equally important that the disparities between genders are looked into with

the view of eradicating them. This is crucial as well because women suffer the most in Lesotho's context, where as Nyabanyaba (2008) says "women usually find themselves on the receiving end because of old notions of men's superiority over women which usually lead to cases of abuses even in schools". As a result of these deprivations of women basic capabilities, it becomes difficult for girls to attend school regularly because of treatment they receive from home and at schools. The following table demonstrates this.

	Net attendance rate by %	
	Males	**Females**
1. urban	40%	52%
2. rural	21%	19%
3. from rich families	38%	53%
4. from poor families	4.1%	2.4%

Table 2.3B: Net attendance rate from rural and urban areas as well from rich and poor families. (Source: Lesotho Bureau of statistics, 2007)).

Table 2.3B shows that there is a problem especially when one looks at the rate of attendance for those learners who are from poor families and from the rural areas. The picture presented by the above table shows that those of the female gender in particular, from the rural areas are still lagging behind their counterparts from the urban area in terms of attendance. This may mean that those from the rural areas are still largely discriminated against when it comes to their basic capabilities. This in turn renders them inefficient and unable to develop their capacities.

This seems to be defeating the purpose of the Ministry of Education and Training's vision in terms of its policy framework. Spelled out in the policy framework among other goals is to:

- Reform the school system to encourage participation by all learners

- Have an education system that answers the needs of all learners and that of a country.
- Have a system that addresses and invites a broader participation of all people in the society/community
  (MOET, 2007).

And if one looks at Table 2.3B above, it becomes evident that there are those that still continue to suffer even though some provisions have been made for them to encourage participation and invite them in the system. Perhaps this is very good and commendable but the picture painted by Table 2.3B tells a different story. One could ask: has Lesotho made necessary preparations to take into account the experiences of different individuals? The answer would be yes in paper but the experiences of different people tell something totally different. As Nyabanyaba (2008) goes on to say that "many young people still miss classes because they need to care for their sick siblings or parents as well as teachers missing classes because of AIDS pandemic taking its toll on the teaching force".

But all is not doom and gloom because the government of Lesotho still tries to eradicate some of the impediments towards a freer society so that people can lead improved lives although this needs more attention and closer monitoring to ensure that indeed the lives of people are improved as their basic capabilities are met. This sentiment is echoed by the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MFP) (2002) thus;

> By 2020, Lesotho shall be a stable democracy, united, prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbours. It shall have a healthy and well developed human resource base. Its economy will be strong, its environment well managed and its technology well established (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2002).

This clearly indicates that democracy has an immense role to play in development and giving people their respective capabilities particularly as Sen (2001) adds that “democracy as well as being an end in itself plays an instrumental role in giving people a voice and a constructive role in shaping values and norms”. It is therefore very important that Lesotho does not only write these policies but that it enforces them so that the lives of individuals are positively affected. In other words and to reiterate Sen’s point, open dialogue, civil freedom and other political liberties are prerequisites for sustainable development, which is again in my view, is where the focus should be on.

So making necessary preparations to include all learners in education should also count among the priorities in Lesotho. This should encompass such things as proper maintenance of schools, creating friendly environments within schools so that at least, many learners will want to go to school. Also of great concern would be to look at those learners that come from poor backgrounds and provide them with necessary help so that they stay at school. Identifying those who are vulnerable, be it because of the AIDS pandemic or poverty also will be useful as only then will the necessary steps be taken to keep such learners at school.

2.4. Education and human development.

Education is a human right and it aims at giving people an opportunity to develop themselves as well as to participate fully in their development and most importantly to me, so that they can be able to take charge of their situations. Article 26 (1) and (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNUDHR) reads thus;

> “Everyone has a right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit” (UNUDHR, Article 26, (1), 1948).

And Article (2) reads thus;

> "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (UNUDHR, Article 26, (2),1948).

The two sub-sections (1) and (2) indicates that education is seen as playing a very crucial role in freeing people and in their development. Furthermore, what is important is that education is said to be a right not a privilege and that all people, all human beings have a right to this fundamental necessity. Sub-section (2) further makes it clear that once people have this right; it enables them to be able to respect other people and to strengthen other basic freedoms. This is a point well explored and expounded on by Sen (2001).

Sen says that to survive and live as human beings, it is important that people have their basic capabilities realised. These basic capabilities are within us as human beings, they reside in us. These capabilities are important in themselves and for other things as well. And Sen (2001) offers this definition to express what he means by capabilities:

> A persons capabilities refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are all feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom; the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles) (Sen, 2001).

In other words, it would mean that there are different 'lifestyles' that different people can live. Some people can lead unhealthy lives while others can lead healthy lives. Some people can have access to education and health facilities so that such people have a kind of freedom to achieve various lifestyles. But for those who do not have one or both of these capabilities, it becomes difficult to

enjoy these combinations of functionings. This in my view depends on what kinds of arrangements are in place for people to live better lives as well as what is within their reach. These capabilities are within the grasp of every individual, what remains a question though is, are these individuals in a position to activate these capabilities and live improved lives? And if not, what is obstructing them from achieving these functionings?

It would seem that there are individuals who can achieve different combinations of capabilities hence live better lives, and that there are those that cannot achieve these combinations of capabilities hence live miserable lives because they have no alternatives. Sen (2001) goes further to mention some of what he calls “basic capabilities” which include being able to move around, meet nutritional requirements, be sheltered, clothed or educated.

One thing stands out here, that human beings need these capabilities to survive in the world particularly because these capabilities seem to ensure live. Life is ensured only if individuals have health, security, food and education. A clear example is that if one cannot eat properly, either because there is famine or he/she cannot afford to buy food, then the life of such a person is greatly affected as he/she cannot satisfy his/her hunger and will as a result live an unfulfilled life. This is why Sen (2001) refers to poverty as “capability deprivation” and that “poverty needs to be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities; rather than merely as a consequence of low income”. This is clearly because if one has no means of buying what he/she wants, eating what he/she wants, either because such a person is unemployed or that his/her remuneration is wanting, he/she is in a position where he/she cannot exercise his/her “freedom to achieve various lifestyles” (Sen, 2001).

From Sen’s point of view and what I believe to be very important if learners in Lesotho secondary schools are to develop their potentials and live better lives is the definition that he seems to offer for what deprivation and poverty may stand

for. In my view Sen (2001) seems to suggest that deprivation and poverty should be seen and understood as the lack of opportunities to develop oneself into what one wants to be, lacking freedom to shape one's destiny as well as to realise one's dream. All these speak of a range of many things that together contribute towards enhancing people's lives. If learners do not have basic things such as proper facilities for effective teaching and adequately trained teachers, I think their chances of getting opportunities to learn and go further in their education are greatly diminished.

And if learners chances of getting opportunities to live better lives are not improved, then they can not be in a position to develop into what it is that they want to be. For example if a learner who wants to be a lawyer drops out of school before completing all the requirements for one to qualify as a lawyer, how can she/he be a lawyer? It means that an opportunity for her/him to be a lawyer is greatly reduced so that such a person may end up doing something else which may not necessarily be what he/she wants to be. In Sen's (2001) words this is much broader and entails more than just unemployment and lack of income. In other words combating such scourge as poverty will mean more than obtaining money, it means getting opportunities, means and resources which will in turn give such a person an opportunity to reach the desired quality of live. The quality of live again is what is very crucial especially when one looks at the kind of lives learners live after dropping out of school in the case of Lesotho secondary schools.

The means to achieve this kind of a 'lifestyle' as Sen (2001) indicates will include such things as economic opportunities such as work, trade and social facilities like education and health care. These Sen (2001) refers to as 'instrumental freedoms'. These are instrumental freedoms because they stand to be used to achieve something and in this particular case, a better life. All these are very crucial if one is to achieve a certain lifestyle and more importantly reach a desired quality of live. For example if a person is living under situations where

he/she is not properly sheltered, in terms of a proper house, without basic amenities such as electricity, water, sewage disposal system, then such a person is exposed to such hazards as death and various kinds of diseases.

Furthermore, if one is not educated, in my view, to the point where he/she can use her/his education to better his/her life, then such a person's life is adversely affected. This is because he/she cannot exercise any alternatives which education can help him/her to exercise. Under such circumstances, his/her life is greatly affected as he/she cannot avoid being employed and working under difficult and unhealthy situations which may, at times lead to early death. This point is captured aptly by Sen who says:

> Depravation of elementary capabilities can be reflected in premature mortality, significant undernourishment (especially of children) persistent morbidity, widespread illiteracy and other failures" (Sen, 2001).

So it is equally important that adequate and proper means are put in place so that people can then utilize all these and be in a better position to take an active part in shaping their destiny. This is because as Sen (2001) indicates it becomes quite difficult to realise one's dream and lead a life that one may desire if social arrangements in any society are in such a way that they cannot benefit individuals. A case in point would be that of learners who will find themselves having to learn under difficult conditions where there are no basic facilities to help them in their learning as it is often the case in the context of some of Lesotho secondary schools. This state of affairs may mean that some learners may often find themselves in a situation where they feel they are not getting anything out of school and such learners may subsequently want to drop out. In any case, dropping out will not help them in any way, rather it may adversely impact on their future.

I would again suggest that what Sen (2001) captures seem to go hand in hand with the declaration made by the United Nations in Jomtien in 1990 and the expanded vision of the Jomtien declaration reads thus:

> Every person----child, youth, adult----shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time (WCEFA, Jomtien, 1990).

In my view, being able to survive does not only end there, in surviving, but extends to what kind of existence one experiences. Is it a fulfilling or miserable existence? And Sen (2001) aptly addresses these issues by showing that for persons to be able to survive and live better lives, their basic capabilities need not be curtailed so that they have choices to exercise and achieve things in their lives.

In developing people's capacities, Sen (2001) again illustrates that it is only when different individuals have gained means as well as resources and that these can then be used in their favour to open up opportunities. 'Means' as I have indicated include and cover many aspects of human life such as health care facilities, education, work and political freedom. It suggests that for individuals to fully participate and enhance their chance of living the kind of lifestyle they wish, they must have access to these means. For example, I believe that people or learners in the case of some of Lesotho secondary school learners, will want to work, live and learn under conditions that are acceptable, friendly and they feel that their

dignity as human beings is respected. But if they do not have means of achieving or realising this dream, they stand little chance or no chance at all of improving their lives to the point where one cannot say that they are truly happy and content. As Sen (2001) suggests, it is not only about making money or becoming rich that is important, but that people must have dignity and that they reach the desired quality of life.

This is where one realises the role that instrumental freedom (Sen, 2001) like political freedom plays in the role of improving people's lives. This is particularly important as Sen (2001) suggest that political freedom is equally important because it may provide a platform for people to express their views and in this manner shape their environment and increase their resources. In other words, this opens a way for various people to actively participate in their lives so that the mentality that others can solve their problems can be up-rooted. This is particularly important as it makes people or learners who can think for themselves and be in a position to do things for themselves. And in my view, these people would then be in a position to reason for themselves, make informed decisions regarding their choices, work towards improving their lives as well as of those around them.

However as Sen (2001) indicates, these, they can only do if both "internal and external impediments" are exposed and dealt with. The removal of one type of impediment can still present serious lack of capability utilization. "External impediments" are usually socially constructed and as such imposed on people. This may come in the form of poverty, political instability and starvation. All these socially constructed impediments are barriers to developing capabilities for the instrumental purpose so that individuals can achieve their various lifestyles (Sen, 2001).

The "internal impediments" on the other hand refer to conditions that may impede one biologically, psychologically or because of adverse attitudes. Such things as

blindness, being born with some disabilities can act as serious barrier towards releasing people's potentials and developing their capabilities.

2.5. Symbolic interactionism

In order to investigate the inside school factors that contribute towards learners dropping out of schools, there are few ways in which this can be done and measured. First, inside school factors are made up of the level of resources (human and material) and facilities that are available in the school. Second, inside school factors are also about the kind of interactions that exist among actors within the school. This is very important because as Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) say it is only through looking at the relationships that hold between different individuals that one is able to get "an insight into how teachers, students and other human agents come together within specific historical and social contexts in order to both make and produce the conditions of their existence" (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985).

Resistance theory offers an immense opportunity to get into close contact with people inside school settings in order to understand why things happen the way they do and what helps to promote them. People inside schools are teachers, learners, principals and non-teaching staff. If one looks at the way in which resistance theory operates, one can see that priority to understand human conditions and what causes such conditions to persist, is placed on the interaction between human agents in a setting. The above point is made even clearer by Woods (1983) by pointing out that symbolic interactionism is important as it concentrates on the small scale details of interpersonal relations. In other words it offers me an opportunity in this study to have an understanding of what people do, how they react to each other and an understanding of patterns of their behaviour (Woods, 1983).

What Woods means is that, for example learners and teachers have and hold different opinions about each other. This defines their existence and by looking at

and understanding some of the behaviours that each group hold, an insight is obtained regarding why and how things in contexts happen the way they do. Within school settings, people inside schools are always engaged in making sense of what is transmitted to them, how these interpretations change and influence them, as well as how these interpretations will impact on the manner in which they relate with each other.

What becomes important here is that all these groups have what Woods (1983) refers to as “strategies”. These strategies can be used by either teachers or learners to ‘cope’ with each other. He quotes “learners avoidance technique” as one of the example of such strategies. Teacher’s strategy on the other hand involves “teacher’s talk”. This looks at the manner in which teachers talk to learners to impose conditions on what will be counted as intelligent and ultimately, so it appears, to persuade learners to adapt to their teachers’ perspective (Woods, 1983).

On the one hand, learners’ perspective takes into account such things as whether the teacher is ‘human’, whether they can teach and whether they can keep control. Interactionism is in this case very helpful to me in carrying out my investigation of inside school factors responsible for learners dropping out. I am able to understand why each group reacts the way it does towards other groups or even amongst individuals. The kind of reaction or action that they take is a result of interaction amongst each other as well as how they interpret messages from and about each other, so one can then see that this is a process in which one listens, interprets, and acts.

This is a process of social interaction which as it can be seen, may compel individuals to have certain perceptions about each other. In this sense it would therefore seem that to understand the experiences of learners inside schools, it is important to understand these processes that may have led to such experiences and realities. The above point is reiterated by Cohen (1985) when

he says that “social reality grows out of social processes”. These social processes as Glassner (1980) say are “symbolic” in nature because interaction between members of the society “involves the manipulation of symbols, words, meanings and language”. A point further reiterated by Haralambos (1985) who stresses Mead’s point of view that for human beings to relate to each other, they need symbols and these symbols are mostly found in language. So my understanding is that it may be difficult to relate to each other if humans did not have language which contains symbols.

My view is that these symbols are usually shared by members of the society and that it is these shared meanings that produces some behaviours which compels others to act in a certain manner towards one another. One can again see that interaction between individuals is in such a manner that when they engage in any kind of interaction, they are interpreting the other person, defining what the other person means, and consequently acting according to how they perceive the other person. This interaction ultimately serves as a basis on which reality or experiences of individuals can be understood.

This is because it is through this on-going interaction that one acts the way he/she does, the way people live and do things may therefore, may be a consequence of these interactions, as people do not act or do things in isolation. This point is reiterated by Denzin (1978) when he says that “human beings learn their basic symbols, the conceptions of self, and the definitions they attach to social objects through interaction with others” (Denzin, 1978). In other words when people interact with one another, they are making meanings regarding who they are, how others see them and how they see others.

Perhaps “cultural prestige” as Bourdieu (1977) indicates may be seen to be operating here. Cultural prestige operates in such a manner that those who ‘have’ will continue to define settings and realities that others find themselves in. This again is because within schools, there are practices of inequalities that are

further entrenched by “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1977) which favours the ‘elites’ or the ‘middle class’. Bourdieu’s notions of ‘habitat’ and ‘habitus’ goes further to shed light on understanding the impact of cultural capital and how production and reproduction of human culture happens.

‘Habitat’ as Bourdieu (1977) says refers to what he terms ‘objectified history’, that is history which has been accumulated over a passage of time in such things as laws, books and customs. While on the one hand, ‘habitus’ as Giroux and Aronowitz (1993) say refers to ‘embodied history which points to a set of internalised competencies and structured needs, an internalized style of knowing and relating to the world that is grounded in the body itself”. Bourdieu (1999) again offers an interesting definition of what habitus is by saying that “habitus is not only a structuring structure which organises practices but also structured structure”. In other words it is structured because it is shaped by one’s past and present circumstances. This will include such things as family upbringing as well as educational experiences. This in my view explains and sheds light as to why some practices continue to happen as it is the case in some of Lesotho secondary schools.

Habitus is again ‘structuring’ in the sense that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices and a ‘structure’ in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. Bourdieu (1999) goes further to show that habitus does not operate alone; rather practices are results of what he calls ‘an obscure and double relation’ or an ‘unconscious relationship’ between a habitus and a field. This is the equation Bourdieu (1999) formally uses to illustrate that habitus does not act alone:

[(Habitus) (capital)]+ Field=Practice

What the equation means is that practice result from relations between one’s dispositions (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field). From the above equation one is able to see that and understand that practices are thus not simply the result of one’s

habitus but rather of the relations between one's habitus and one's current circumstances. So it would then mean that physical and social spaces we occupy are structured and it is the relation between these structures that will ultimately give rise to practices. So from this perspective it again becomes clear to answer questions of why and how certain practices re-occur over and over again. To answer this question as Bourdieu (1999) seem to suggests, ones has to look at the actors within a context, understand where they are coming from and to understand why they continue to do things the way they do.

A good example here would be to look at children from 'privileged backgrounds' or 'middle class children' and children from 'unprivileged backgrounds' or those children from 'working class families'. Children from the privileged background will acquire certain attitudes such as ways of speaking, eating and even walking while those from the working class families will adopt different styles altogether from their counterparts. This is not by default, it happens unconsciously and consciously and the way these two 'classes' of people will act towards each other will legitimate the other behaviour and attitudes as being 'correct' while the other will be 'incorrect'. I say this happens unconsciously because some social rules are 'unwritten' and 'unspoken' like a child from a working class family who may be expected to speak in a certain way, eat in a certain way and walk in a certain way considered 'appropriate' by the school's authority. On the one hand it may be conscious because there may be rules set by those in power to legitimate ways of doing things.

Bourdieu (1999) reiterates the above point by showing how children from the middle class and those from the working class acquire and 'make history' which ultimately legitimizes some practices in the context of schooling by saying that non-academic things such as 'gait', 'dress', and 'accent' may determine the success or failure of some children. This is because 'privileged' children have learned this behaviour as have their teachers. While on the one hand learners from 'unprivileged' families have not. So children from the privileged families will

therefore ‘fit the pattern’ of their teachers; expectations and that of the society and will definitely ‘pass’. Those children from unprivileged families will not ‘fit in’ and will ultimately be found to be ‘difficult’ by their teachers and present ‘challenges’. This clearly shows the totally different realities of people who may be exposed to same setting achieving totally different goals.

So habitus, in my opinion focuses on people’s way of acting, feeling, thinking as well as being. It captures how people carry within themselves their history as well as how this history is brought into their present circumstances and how they then make choices to act in certain ways and not others. As I pointed out earlier this is an ever evolving process as actors are continuously engaging each other and devising strategies to respond to everyday’s tasks, in other words, this is an ongoing and active process. What becomes critical again from this perspective is that it would seem that learners engage in a continuous process of making history but that this may not be under conditions entirely of their own making. This means that wherever we find ourselves at any particular moment, is not by accident but is a result of numerous events in the past that have shaped our path.

As Bourdieu (1999) points out, we are faced with the same countless possibilities and we have to make choices and take actions as it would be the case with learners in a school setting. Whether the choices learners make will impact negatively or positively in their lives and how this will shape their history rests on their dispositions as they engage in strategies to understand and make meaning of their world as Woods (1983) illustrates. Woods (1983) concurs that actors within schools are constantly engaged in making choices by improving, improvising and countering the strategies of others. The constant shifting of expectations and actions involve all actors within the school. Some actors react in manners that further entrench acts of subjugation. An example is that of a learner from poor family, having no cultural capital. The existing ethos of the school will compel him or her to be either assimilated or eliminated from the

school. She or he will constantly have to strategize so that she/he will meet the expectations and requirements in such an institution.

The way individuals react in a context, will either entrench or dispel the existing notions about them as Blumer (1969) says that “symbolic interaction involves interpretations or ascertaining the meaning of the actions or remarks of the other person as to how he is to act” (Blumer, 1969). It is upon engaging in interpreting the meaning of the other person that one acts the way he/she does. Action can be seen when upon interpreting the message; one does something or says something. In other words through what one says or does upon interpreting the other person, forms of meanings exist. Blumer (1969) captures this point thus:

> In making the process of interpretation and definition of one another’s acts central in human interaction, symbolic interaction is able to cover the full range of the generic forms of human association. It embraces equally well such relationships as cooperation, conflict, domination, exploitation, consensus, disagreement, closely knit identification and indifferent concern for one another (Blumer, 1969:67).

To understand all the above range of the broad forms of human association as well as why they happen, to me indicates that it is only when one studies through questionnaires and interviews, among other methods, people who engage in interactions on a daily basis that perhaps a light can be shed on why and how certain practices occur. Again it can be seen whether individuals through their actions are helping to reinforce some of these practices or not. Symbolic interactionism in my investigation of inside school factors that contribute towards the high drop out in Lesotho secondary schools seem therefore to be very valuable. From this perspective I am able to access teachers and learners interactions, that is how they relate to each other, how they see each other and their perceptions of each other. It is from this perspective that I was able to find out if the interactions inside school between learners and teachers are helping to push learners out of school.

2.6. Inside school factors in Lesotho

Inside school factors are wide in scope, ranging from structures such as school committees that exist inside schools to help in the everyday administration of school such as the School Governing Bodies (SGBs), facilities in the forms of classrooms, laboratories, computer rooms, photocopy machines and staffrooms finally there are people inside school like learners, teachers, non-teaching staff, secretaries and the principal.

The internal factors within schools also comprise of infrastructure and resources. A point of concern raised by MOET (2006) and scholars like Sanders (2003) and Seotsanyana et al (2002) is that first of all, there is an alarming lack of facilities in Lesotho schools. Especially when one looks at the plight of schools in the rural or mountainous areas where it is common to find that there are no adequate classrooms to accommodate all learners, a point reiterated by Sanders (2003) who says that it is not surprising to find both teachers and learners clustered under a tree which has been converted into a ‘classroom’. Such circumstances may force learners to abandon going to school altogether.

This may be compounded by the fact that at times learners may be stopped from going to school especially during rainy seasons. In other cases lack of proper infrastructure like science laboratories, staff-rooms and sporting facilities may hamper efforts of learners and teachers to carry out their duties well. For example when there are experiments to be carried out but with no facilities, this may make everyone involved feel less enthusiastic and discouraged.

Again some schools especially in the mountainous areas employ teachers who are not qualified (MOET, 2006) because those teachers who are qualified do not want to work there. This may make matters even worse because being taught by someone who is not qualified to teach may have detrimental results on the part of a learner in the long run, because their foundation would have been flawed. To measure the availability of infrastructures and facilities, I used questionnaires to

ask learners and teachers as well as the principal what they think about the level of resources and facilities in their school. In addition, principals in the selected schools in which this research was done were also asked to fill in ‘check lists’ of the availability and quality of resources available in their school (see Appendix F) This was done in order to see whether lack of some of these material resources and facilities may be the cause of learners dropping out of school.

The interactions between teachers and learners and learners and learners were also explored to ascertain whether these interactions are pushing learners out of school. I measured this via questions that were asked of teachers, learners and principals of schools using interviews, as well as questionnaires. From this angle and perspective, I focused directly on how do teachers and learners interact with each other as well as how learners interact with each other. This provided me with an opportunity to see whether the interactions between them are pushing learners out of school and how this happens. This is crucial particularly when one looks at the practices that occur inside Lesotho schools.

Corporal punishment is still carried out with zeal in Lesotho schools as pointed out in Ministry of Education and Training Education Policy (2006). This practice may result in forcing some learners to drop out of school as well. And in some cases as Machobane (2000) points out this practice may even force other students to adopt aggressive behaviours as a means of coping with corporal punishment. The practice itself strains the relationship between learners and teachers since learners see teachers as their oppressors and a rift between teachers and learners may get even bigger.

Machobane (2000) also says that some learners, for fear of corporal punishment may dodge classes and engage in substance abuse. And the implication is that once learners engage in substance abuse, they may end up committing petty crimes as a way of escaping the realities which they face. Teachers may again use abusive language when addressing learners and this may be interpreted to

mean that learners are of less importance. Once learners get this notion that they are insignificant, their behaviour will reflect people who do not care since they know that their teachers do not respect them. So if learners are abused be it verbally or physically they may end up opting to drop out of school.

Abusive language can come from other learners as well not only from teachers. Some learners may use abusive language when they talk to their fellow students and this may drive them away from school. They may see school as a place of pain where teachers and even fellow learners are abusive of them. Furthermore incidences of gender harassment may occur inside school were learners feel they are not safe at all, and this may again drive them, particularly girl learners, out of school. All these incidences are a result of interaction between them. So in finding out how learners and teachers interact I will be able to see what forces are at work between these groups which may result in certain behaviours and actions.

One of the most dominant exclusionary factor in Lesotho schools seems to be based on ‘class’ as Machobane says (2000). In other words in Lesotho schools there are those schools that cater for the rich and those that cater for the poor. Some incidences where exclusionary practices happen can be seen especially when learners get transferred to schools in the lowlands from the highlands. Usually such learners would be made to feel less human and would be subjected to incessant ridicule from both the teachers and the learners. This happens particularly because as Matsela (1979) captures it “people from the mountain areas are usually seen as poor, lacking in town manners and generally backward”.

As a result of this perception of people from the highlands, some learners find themselves subjects of daily harassment by learners and teachers. Teachers may usually complain that those learners from the mountain areas will lower their school ratings in terms of pass-rates rankings, which may be untrue. Learners on

the one hand have attitudes of superiority towards those learners who find themselves having to relocate to schools in the lowlands, their reason being that those learners from the mountains are “backward” (Matsela, 1979). This marginalization from teachers and learners alike may result in such learners hating school in general hence feeling excluded and being forced to drop out of schools.

Another factor pointed out in Sayed et al (2007) is the fact that in some of South African schools where their research was carried out, in terms of school fees and school costs there were those schools in which learners could be denied access because they cannot afford to pay their fees. Whereas not all schools in South Africa emphasises the need for learners to pay their fees and learners could still continue with their studies, in Lesotho secondary schools it is compulsory that learners pay their fees in order not to be denied access. This is particularly because even though the government provides bursaries for those who cannot pay school fees, it does not pay for all. The criteria they use is that, for example they may say we will give 20 learners who have lost both parents in all secondary or primary schools. And if there are those with single parents who cannot pay school fees or those from poor families, they are left out (Nyabanyaba, 2008). This point is reiterated by Machobane (2000) when he says that in Lesotho schools it is very common to find a student spending days and even weeks out of school because s/he cannot pay his/her fees.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research sites and Selection

This study was conducted in four secondary schools in Lesotho. Two schools are located in the urban area and the other two are located in the rural area. I looked at four secondary schools in the Maseru district. I looked at these four schools because they were accessible to me and I could reach them as I did not have enough time to reach more. I conducted this research in two schools from the rural area and two schools from the urban area. I used school data sets and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to help me first identify where drop-out rates are the highest and secondly to inform my selection of these schools.

This gave me a clear picture as to where the rate of drop out is the highest and I was able to make comparisons as to whether the experiences of the children are the same in both the rural and urban areas. Since the experiences of those in the rural and urban may not be the same, it was important to see whether social exclusion factors are the same in these two areas.

The two schools in the urban area, which I will refer to as school C and D are located in the middle of the capital town and were very accessible to me. School C caters for mainly children with social problems, like those who have committed petty crimes and have been sent there for rehabilitation purposes. This is a very good school in terms of resources available as it is a government school. It has two large computer rooms, playing fields for various sporting codes.

The principal of this school C was very uncooperative and made it clear that she did not want to grant me an interview even though I had asked for permission from the Ministry of Education and Training. She directed me to carry out my interview with her deputy who was equally uncooperative even though she agreed to help me out. Many learners from school C were from poor families as one teacher there said while few were from rich families. Many came from

outside Maseru where the school is located this is a mixed school catering for both males and female students.

School D is about half a kilometre away from school C and is also a mixed school. The reception I got here was quite different from the reception I got from the first school. This is also a good school in terms of resources available as it has large blocks of classes and some sports fields. The principal here in school C was more helpful even though it was time for exams. She agreed to make time for me after school so that I can interview her.

Two other schools, which I will call school A and B, are located in the rural area and these are approximately between 25 and 35 kilometres away from Maseru. Like those other schools in the urban area, these two are also mixed schools, that is, they cater for both females and males. School A is not very large compared to schools C and D in the urban area. It has four modest blocks of classes, one block which serves as staffroom and the principal's office. There are no grounds for sports; the netball ground that is nearby is in a very bad condition. The principal was very happy to be part of this research and expressed his enthusiasm to fully participate. He even introduced me to the members of the staff who seemed equally pleased.

The last school which is school B is also lacking in terms of resources available. There are five blocks of classes. The school has the principal's office and one small room for staff members. The principal here was also very happy to participate in the research in terms of agreeing to find appropriate time to accommodate me.

I selected these four schools because, first I checked the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to find out in which schools were the drop-out rate the highest. School C and D in Maseru came up with significantly high drop-out rates. Schools A and B from Berea district were also selected on the same basis,

again all these schools were not far away and as such accessible to me. Also the schools annual report to the Teaching Department services (TSD) revealed that these schools are among the schools with the highest drop-out rates. It was important that I selected these schools since indications were that they rank among those with the highest drop out. Again this was important to me because the question of 'high drop-out rate' was at the core of my study. It was therefore important to go to these schools as they offered me that chance to carry out my research.

3.2. Research participants

The participants in this study are ex-learners, teachers and principals from four schools, two in the rural area and two in the urban area. The ex-learners are those students who have dropped out of school in 2008. These ex-learners have dropped out of school while in form A which is equivalent to grade 8 in the South African education system. The ex-learners age ranged from 14 to 16. And since they are considered minors legally, necessary measures were made to get permission from their guardians or parents after I explained the purpose of the research study to both the parents and ex-learners as well as guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality.

Three principals and one deputy principal also participated and all participants here were aged over 40 years of age. I had intended to interview four principals from each school, but one principal from one school in the urban area refused and directed her deputy to act on her behalf. Four teachers also participated in the study and the age range here was between 26 and 35. Their confidentiality and anonymity were also guaranteed when they were informed about the research and consented to participate in it.

The research was mainly a qualitative research since I interacted with my selected sample and tried to understand their situation and context. This is vital as Graham (1990) points out that the "qualitative researcher studies people in the

context of their past and the situation they find themselves" (Graham, 1990). This therefore gave me a detailed understanding of what is it that they are going through and experiencing. Green (2006) captures this point thus "the qualitative researcher seeks not truth or morality but rather a thorough understanding of other people's perspectives", and it is a thorough understanding of their perspectives and experiences that I sought to understand.

Furthermore, I wanted to understand their experiences which I do not want to reduce to statistical equations which as Michael (1993) say make "people to lose sight of the human side of social life" which I wanted to study. I wanted to understand why they act the way they do, so as to understand how and why they may see things the way they do. Again Burgess (1985) puts the above point aptly for me when she says that "the qualitative researcher gets to experience what people experience in their daily struggles in society we learn about the concepts of pain, beauty, suffering and frustration whose essence is usually lost through other research approaches" (Burgess, 1985). However I must not be misinterpreted to mean that other research approaches are of no value.

Again through qualitative research I was able to talk as well as listen to what people say about what is in their minds and as such obtain a closer understanding of their social life and as Green (2006) says this "information is unfiltered through concepts, operational definitions and rating scales". I administered questionnaires as well as conducted interviews. I gave questionnaires to 25 students who dropped out from all the four schools because these were the only learners I could successfully locate even though I had intended to find 40 learners. My selection of this sample was informed by the fact that all these people are ex-learners and have been learners at the selected schools from the academic year beginning February 2008 to September 2008.

These ex-learners should have been at their Form A which is the equivalent of grade 8 in South African education system. I found 25 ex-learners whom I gave

questionnaires to fill in and conducted seven group interviews with them in total. Dividing learners into groups of boys and girls was done for the purposes of gender sensitivity. Since some learners could have experienced some emotional and psychological problems especially bearing in mind that I asked them to talk about things which may be painful to recount. I arranged with the schools counsellors' so that if there are such cases, I can refer learners who were adversely affected by the interviews with them.

I then interviewed 4 teachers, one from each research site or school. I also interviewed 3 principals from 3 schools and one deputy-principal from one school. Again I gave 3 principals and 1 deputy-principal a checklist of resources in which they indicated which resources they have and which they do not have and whether what they have is adequate or not. My selection of the 4 teachers was informed by the fact that such teachers are teaching at the junior secondary schools and have taught those ex-learners who have dropped out. In addition, they had been teaching at those schools for at least a minimum period of two years. This is because they by this time had familiarised themselves with the school's ethos. I focused on interviewing 4 teachers because I did not have enough time to reach a larger number of teachers.

I think by using both questionnaires and interviews offered me an opportunity to be able to validate my findings. Through schools' data sets and registers I was able to trace those who have dropped out and locate them, and carry out my research.

3.3. Methods of collecting data

In carrying out this research I must make it clear that my basic source of data were learners, teachers and principals of the selected schools where this research was conducted. So I collected my data from three different sources. This I did for the reasons of validity and reliability and again from an interactionist view so that I can understand the relationship between these groups. Getting my

data from these three different sources is important because when I make claims or conclusions, it should be on the basis of more than just one person's perspective. In other words I utilised triangulation.

First, I administered questionnaires to the learners who dropped out of school and then I conducted group interviews with these ex-learners after getting necessary permission from their parents/guardians. Some of the questions from the questionnaires in general read as follows:

1. Why did you drop out of school?
2. What was your relationship like with your teachers?
3. Have you ever experienced any acts of bullying at your school?

(Refer to Appendix E)

Secondly, I interviewed four teachers who had taught the ex-learners, one teacher from each of the selected schools. The questions they were asked also reflected on the type of interactions between them and their ex-learners. For example:

1. How do you relate with your learners?
2. Do you practice corporal punishment?

(Refer to Appendix C)

Thirdly I interviewed the principals. Questions such as what do you think are the reasons for learners dropping out of your school were asked (Refer to Appendix B) All interviews were tape recorded.

3.4. Research processes

I first got permission from the Ministry of Education and Training after explaining the purpose of my research in these four secondary schools.

Upon arriving at the research site to collect data, I first handed to the principal my letter of introduction and briefly explained the purpose of my study. When the principal had given me a go ahead to allow me to carry out the research in

his/her school, I then began to arrange with him/her the appropriate time in which the interviews could be carried out. This was usually done after school to avoid noise and other disruptions during classes. I then, after getting permission, went through registers and other necessary school data sets so that I could look at who dropped out, where such people live and how to contact them.

Teachers who took part in the study also helped me a lot in terms of volunteering to contact some ex-learners for me. After completing the interview with principals, I then interviewed teachers and recorded the interview. After interviewing teachers, I then proceeded with those ex-learners that I had managed to locate. I first administered questionnaires and later on set a date for group interviews with the ex-learners.

3.5. Limitations of the study

This study had limitations. First of all, one principal from the urban area refused totally to be part of the study even though she had asked me to produce all my credentials as a researcher. She simply said that she cannot “sweat for me” meaning that she cannot go and ask her staff to give me necessary support and that what I cannot get she cannot get it for me. This was a very negative attitude which was in contrast to the reception I received from other principals from other schools. I must say the general attitude of people in the urban schools, from teachers to parents, presented me with challenges.

This was because as I had to rush from place to place, I would leave messages with them to give to either the principal or in the case of parents, to their children only to return the following day and find out that they did not bother. Whereas in both schools in the rural area, the principals were very cooperative as well as parents in the villages. They wanted to help as much as they could. However one of the problems in the rural area was that some of the parents expected me to pay or give then something in return for allowing their children to be interviewed, which I refused to do.

Furthermore some teachers in the urban area objected to being tape-recorded saying that they do not want to be heard by any one else. This was even after I had assured them that what they will tell me will remain confidential and that I will not reveal their names at all in my report. Again I would have liked to have covered more schools so that when claims are made, it is on the basis of more than 4 schools. But I had only a limited time and could not cover more. These were some of the limitations related to my research, but again the research itself had some limitations of its own. First and of all, it would have been beneficial to me that I utilized ‘observation technique’. This is because this would have afforded me an opportunity to see and understand at close hand, qualities such as capabilities and habituses.

But it was not easy since the learners I had selected for my research were no longer inside school; they were all ex-learners. So I could not possibly observe them in a classroom situation and see how they interact with teachers and other learners. Again I could not make assumptions that their experiences are exactly the same as that of those who are still inside school, so I could not even consider making any claims based on experiences of those inside school. Again because of time constraints, I could not reach more than four schools, which would have been quite useful too. This is because if I had reached more schools, I would have had a broader data which would have been useful in shedding light on some of the issues raised in my research.

However, I was able to get some of the questions answered and this research helped me to better understand some of the inside school factors which are subtly working in pushing learners out of school. Again this study offered me an opportunity to get everyone inside school, from the principal, teachers and ex-learners talking about their experiences in school as well as what they would like to see happening.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The following data was collected from 4 secondary schools in Lesotho. Two schools are located in the rural area, and these I will refer to as school A and school B. The other two schools which I will refer to as school C and school D are located in the urban area. I interviewed three principals and a deputy principal as well as four teachers from each school and I will use the same letter codes to present their responses. As such, “Principal A” refers to the principal from school A and Teacher A refers to the teacher from school A, and so on. Ex-learners’ responses too from both group interviews which I conducted with them and questionnaires which they filled in will be dealt in the same manner.

SCHOOL A: PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

LOCATION: RURAL

School A is situated in the rural area. The school is approximately 35 kilometres north of Maseru which is the capital town of Lesotho. The school is surrounded by many villages of which the closest to the school is about 1 kilometre away. A poor 10 kilometre gravel road connects the school to the main tarred road from the capital. The school caters for both boys and girls and is home to about 580 learners many of which come from the surrounding villages. It has four blocks of classes for Forms A, B, C, D and E. Form D and E share one block. There are two pit-toilets, one for boys and one for girls, as well as one for staff. There is a staff room and an office. Nearby, there is a soccer field and netball field which are in poor condition. The school has no library (TSD, 2008), computer room or science laboratory. The following Table summarises the responses I got from the principal of school A about the resources in the school.

	DOES NOT EXIST	ADEQUATE	NOT ADEQUATE
Classrooms			X
Desks			X
Chairs			X
Chalkboards		X	
Chalk		X	
Chalkboard dusters/cleaners		X	
Textbooks		X	
Stationery (books, pens, etc.)		X	
Sports fields			X
Sports equipment	X		
Laboratories	X		
Gymnasium	X		
Computer rooms	X		
Computers	X		
Toilets			X`
Water		X	
Electricity		X	
Staffroom			X
Staff offices			X
Feeding schemes			X

Table 4.a: School A's Responses to the Check List

School A lacks most of the basic necessities so that learning and teaching can happen. If one looks at such things as desks, classrooms and chairs, it becomes clear that this school does not have adequate facilities as indicated in the school A's checklist above. Perhaps this could be because of what was noted by Setsabi (2007) that many practices of inequalities still exist in Lesotho as far as fair distribution of resources is concerned. The meaning here being that very often, schools in the rural area seem to be neglected, that even with the international campaigns such as EFA, some practices of inequality still persist.

However such things as chalk, stationery, and textbooks are available in this school. This is because the government of Lesotho has as recently as 2000 (Nyabanyaba, 2008) brought into effect what is called 'school books rental schemes'. The purpose of this scheme is to provide schools with textbooks and

stationery with minimum expenses incurred by parents of learners. Learners pay a minimum of M100 which is the equivalent of R100 in South African monetary units or $10.8 when converted to US Dollars. Learners are then provided with all the required textbooks. If one looks at the responses to the availability of such things as sports fields, computers, computer rooms, gymnasium and classrooms, one realises that these are lacking. This is because particularly in schools located in the rural area, they do not have all of these facilities or if they do such as in the case of classrooms, they are not adequate.

When it comes to availability of such things staffrooms and offices, still there is scarcity. One can only imagine what the difficulties faced by this school when it comes to organising meetings, having space to do their work and other things. So what remains a challenge here is that the way learners and teachers function may be affected by the lack of some of these basic necessities. The following Tables 4.b, 4.c and 4.d summarise different responses from teacher, principal and ex-learners from school A

CATEGORIES	TEACHER'S RESPONSES
Drop-outs	
-existence:	-yes
-gender:	-2 girls and 4 boys
-age group:	14+ for girls and boys
-interventions:	-parents contacted, letters written to parents to find out reasons they are not coming to school
Relations with learners	
-bullying	-yes
-punishment	-use of stick, collecting papers, weeding the compound
-gender	-girls not problematic than boys
Class practices	
-learners' unpreparedness	-send them out of class
-treatment	-expulsion from class, send to principal's office
Perceptions of learner's relations	-boys get along with other boys, there are groups of boys or groups of girls
Government response	-not doing enough in terms of providing professional counsellors to help deal with problematic learners

Table 4.b: categories and teacher's responses from School A

The table above gives an indication of responses of teachers regarding questions of drop-outs, relations between all actors inside school, class practices as well as government interventions to counter the high rates of drop-out in schools. When asked if the teacher thinks the rate of drop-out at her school is serious, the teacher said; "yes I think we have a serious drop-out rate at our school particularly with boys who drop out to go to the initiation schools in the mountains". From the teacher's response it can be seen that there is drop-out happening in this school and that a large proportion of those who drop out are boys. At the time of the interview with the teacher, 6 learners had already

dropped out. And this number as shown in the table only indicated those that I could locate for the purpose of the interview and for filling in the questionnaires which the ex-learners from School A participated in and completed. The total number of learners that had dropped out in this school as shown in the Teaching Service Department (TSD) report of (2008) was standing at 24 learners.

Again her response to the question of gender indicated that more boys than girls were dropping out. One reason suggested by Setsabi (2007) is that this trend of boys dropping out of school more than girls may be as a result of many boys adopting 'fatherly' roles in their families due to death of parents. In relation to intervention steps taken by school when a learner drops out, the teacher said; "we usually send letters to the parents inquiring about such learner's absence from school". Upon being asked whether she knows of incidences of bullying at her school, the teacher said; "yes there are, particularly with new ones who are doing form A (equivalent of grade 8 in South Africa), older learners will call them names such as dogs and even threaten to beat them". She further said that in such cases, they investigate thoroughly to establish facts and then give out proper punishment.

She said that for serious cases parents of offenders are invited to the meeting to deliberate on the punishment which should be given to the perpetrators. Relations between teachers and learners seem to be tenser with boys than with girls as the teacher put it; "we seem to have a serious problem with boys at this school because they would go to the circumcision school and when they return, they refuse to be punished in anyway". Those learners who seem not to be prepared in class, the teacher said; "I simply expel them out of class because usually they will be the ones disturbing those who are ready to listen, and I beat them with a stick to bring their attention back".

The government on the other hand is blamed by this teacher as not giving their school adequate support. This is how she puts it; "we usually do not know how to

deal with problematic children and it would be very helpful if the government was to provide schools with proper, qualified personnel to counsel learners who seem to be giving us more problems. Again this could help us take some load off our shoulders so that we can concentrate on teaching". The responses may indicate that there are too many issues that teachers have to deal with and that very often they do not know how, especially with problematic children. The first thing which this teacher seems to suggest is that even though she uses a 'stick', this may not have the desired effects. She goes on to say that by providing schools with qualified counsellors, she thinks a lot can be achieved. The following Table summarise the principal's response

CATEGORIES	**PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE**
Drop-outs	
-reasons	-poverty, school fees and delinquency
-gender	-more boys are dropping out than girls
-age	-between the ages of 14 and 16
-seriousness	-not serious
-grades	-form A and D (grade 8 and 11)
Teachers relations with learners	
-good or bad	-not sure
Non-payment of fees	
-expulsion	-yes
Discipline	
-corporal punishment	-yes
-what offences	-bullying, breaking school rules
Government response	-not enough is being done to help lower drop-out rates

Table 4.c: categories and responses from the principal of School A

The principal in school A lamented that among some of the reasons for the rate of drop-out were poverty, school fees and delinquency. He said; “many parents these days die because of the AIDS pandemic and leave their children with nothing, this impacts negatively on their attendance which usually leads to drop-out”. This point is again reiterated by Nyabanyaba (2008) when he says that these groups of children, due to AIDS pandemic, find themselves in a vulnerable position and having to leave school because of the costs. On the question of who drops out most between boys and girls. He said; “maybe our location is working against us, we are in the rural area and many boys go to initiation schools in the mountain, so boys drop out in large numbers than girls”. This was earlier mentioned by one of the teachers working at this school.

Furthermore the principal, said; “in our school, the drop-out seems to be worse in form A and form D, but drop out is every where in our schools, we need to find the solution before things get out of control”. Even though the principal seemed to be playing down the seriousness of drop out, when I checked the TSD report of (2008) it indicated that out of 580 learners, 24 learners had already dropped out. When asked what happens to those who fail to pay school fees he said; “for those who fail to pay school fees, we expel them because we cannot function as a school without school fees, we depend on such collection to pay our teachers who do not have grants from the government”. Such learners are expelled until such time that they can pay their school fees. Pertaining to learners’ relations with teachers, the principal said; “I am not sure whether the relations are good or bad, but we have our fair share of problems like any other school, we have to deal with ill-disciplined learners and teachers daily”.

In terms of incidences of bullying, the principal said; “we deal with such acts harshly and those that are found to be bullying others are severely punished”. When asked whether they still practice corporal punishment, the principal said; “yes, we still do but this is done in a more regulated manner. The policy allows for that kind of punishment but it has to be in such a way that you do not injure

learners”. On the question of whether they are getting enough support from the government the principal said; “we are not getting enough support from the government because they are slow in delivering textbooks to learners, sometimes they will only bring textbooks as late as March”.

One realises that there may be a problem as far as service delivery is concerned regarding provision of resources at schools. To get the required textbooks in March as the principal said means that it becomes difficult to learn and teach if necessary conditions have not been met. Circumcision schools seem to be having a role in pulling learners out of school especially in schools located in the rural area. Again even if such learners return to school, one teacher in this school pointed out that they are very defiant and will refuse instructions or punishment. The following Table summarises responses from ex-learners from school A.

CATEGORIES	EX-LEARNERS RESPONSES
Drop-out	
-reason	-lack of school fees, parents' death and poverty
Relations with teachers	
-good or bad	-good with some and bad with some
Relations with learners	
-good or bad	-good with many and bad with few
Safety	
-at school grounds/in class	-not safe at school grounds because of senior boys and girls and in class because of abusive teachers
-bullying	-yes
-measures taken by learners	-fight back to protect ourselves
-by school	-punish the offenders
Facilities	
-classrooms	-no
-science laboratory	-no
-computers/computer labs	-no
Abuse at school	
-by who	-by some teachers and some learners
Failure to pay school fees	
-expulsion	-yes

Table 4.d: ex-learners responses from School A

From Table 4.1d above and the responses that are given by ex-learners, it is clear that poverty has negative repercussions on the learners schooling. When asked why they have dropped out of school, one boy said; "my parents are not working and I could not pay school fees", one girl said; "my parents died in 2006 and I was told that they had AIDS, I am living with my grandmother and she does

not have money to pay for all my needs at school", one boy said; "I did not have money to pay for my transport to school and arrived late to school every day".

It was again revealed that the relationship between teachers and learners is a tense one. This was revealed by the responses which learners gave that their relations with teachers were so tense that they at times feared going to school. On this question one boy said; "I do not get well with many teachers as some of them seem to enjoy beating students", one girl added; "I feared coming to school because of teachers who will beat you even for a minor error and embarrass you in front of your classmates". This is because as they said, corporal punishment is still practiced in Lesotho. Relations with other learners also emerged as having negative impact on learners dropping out. This is shown by the response of one boy who said; "I did not get along with many older boys who used to call me names and as a result I used to fight because reporting it is useless as teachers cannot help you", and another boy said; "I hated being bullied by older boys who think the school belongs to them and will make your life miserable", one girl added; "I feared going to school because even if you report those who bully you to the teachers they do not do anything".

From these it may be said that there were usually some bullies who made other learners lives unbearable, and this deterred them from participating in class and ultimately leaving school. Many of the learners, as a result of bullying, felt unsafe in classrooms and on the school grounds. What made the situation worse is that they said that they usually fight back when bullied because usually when they report to teachers, nothing is done. This made them think that fighting back is the only way they can deal with this problem. And they lamented the fact that part of fearing to go to school as I indicated was because of harassment they suffered at school because of some teachers and learners. Failure to pay school fees as the government does not provide bursaries for all learners, compelled learners to stay away from school because they knew that they will be expelled. This included those whom the ministry of education was paying school fees for. This

is because if the government does not process their bursaries on time, schools expelled them and told them to go to the ministry and ask that their bursaries be processed and sent to such schools.

SCHOOL B: PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

LOCATION: RURAL

This school is situated in the rural area and it is approximately 29 kilometres from the capital town of Lesotho. It is fairly accessible by the main road from Maseru. It is a mixed school for boys and girls. Some learners travel from the capital town to this school, but these are few as the main population of the school comes from the nearby villages. This school accommodates about 630 learners from form A up to form E. It has 5 blocks of classes for each stream. It has one science laboratory, staff toilets as well as learners' toilets of which all are pit latrines, a soccer field, a netball field and a basketball court. There is a separate principal's office and one staff room. The following checklist summarise the responses I got from the principal of school B.

	DOES NOT EXIST	ADEQUATE	NOT ADEQUATE
Classrooms			X
Desks			X
Chairs		X	
Chalkboards			X
Chalk		X	
Chalkboard dusters/cleaners		X	
Textbooks		X	
Stationery (books, pens, etc.)		X	
Sports fields			X
Sports equipment	X		
Laboratories	X		
Gymnasium	X		
Computer rooms	X		
Computers	X		
Toilets			X
Water			X
Electricity		X	
Staffroom			X
Staff offices	X		
Feeding schemes			X

Table 4.e: School B responses to Check List

This checklist from school B reveals that this school lacks in such basic necessities as classrooms, and desks. This is worrying because if the school does not have enough of the above mentioned necessities then it becomes difficult for effective teaching and learning to occur. This again says that there is a lot that still needs to be done in terms of rooting out some of the problems that may be responsible for low retention rates and drop out rates in Lesotho schools

What can be seen from the above checklist is that only such resources that are provided by the government seem to be available in this school. This school does not have such things as sports fields, gymnasium, laboratories and computers nor computer rooms. What is worrying here, just like school A, is the fact that there seems to be no other means of interacting with learners outside of the

school setting in the sense of sports activities in which learners can interact with teachers and other learners outside the classroom.

Moreover, this school lacks proper toilets and water. This was revealed in the TSD report in which it was indicated that the only functioning toilets are pit toilets for both learners and teachers. Again this school gets its water from the nearby borehole, which can present hazards for learners because usually water from here is used without being purified. There are inadequate staff offices as well as staffrooms. The one single block that exist, serves as the staffroom and the principal's office. The following Table summarises teacher's responses from school B.

CATEGORIES	**TEACHER'S RESPONSES**
Drop-outs	
-existence:	-yes
-gender:	- 1 girl and 5 boys
-age group:	-usually from age 14
-interventions:	-talk to them and find out their problems
Relations with learners	
-bullying	-yes
-punishment	-yes
-gender	-boys more troublesome than girls
Class practices	
-learners' unpreparedness	-expulsion from class
-treatment	-punish them
Perceptions of learner's relations	-boys get along with other boys as well as do girls
Government response	-not enough aid in terms of giving us support during book distributions

Table4.f: Teacher's responses from School B

As with school A, the teacher agreed that drop-out existed in school B as well. This is how she responded; “the rate of drop-out is serious I think but the problem is mainly with male students who usually go to circumcision schools and do not always return as they feel they are men”. At the time of the interview, the school’s TSD report of 2008 indicated that out of the total number of 630 learners, 26 had dropped out and that there was fear that more will still drop-out because of the inability to pay exam fees. Of the total number of those who dropped-out, more were boys. Again as it was the case with school A, many boys who had dropped out had done so because they had gone to the circumcision school and never returned to school.

On the question of what measures are taken if a learners drops out of school the teacher said; “well if a learner just drop-out without any information being given to the school, we send some learners or teachers to find out why a learner is no longer coming to school as parents will not tell us anything until we ask”. In this respect, the teacher, seem to be lamenting the fact that parents will not inform them in time when learners had problems so that proper measures can be taken, they will wait until later. This may point to lack of cooperation and communication between parents and teachers. Teachers’ relations with learners were also indicated to be problematic as the teacher said; “I get along with most of the learners, but boys seem to be more troublesome even in class and this seems to often spill into the classroom”. As the teachers seem to suggest the group that seems to be giving teachers more problems were boys and a few girls.

On the question of what measures she takes in case of bullying and disturbances in class, the teacher said; “for me punishment works best because these kids are so stubborn you will spend the whole lesson telling them to keep quite but they will not”. The teacher conceded that she beats those that are ill-disciplined and those that bully others. In class, when learners were giving problems the teacher again said; “I punish those that are causing disturbances in my class and I am telling you it works”. When asked if she thinks the government is doing enough to

address the high drop-out rates at their school she said; “the government will always delay to deliver books textbooks on time and then they will blame principals for bad results”.

There seem to be some kind of similarities between the experiences of teachers in school A and B which are both located in the rural area. These schools seem to be badly affected by circumcision ceremonies. This affects them badly because after circumcision many boy learners do not return to school or if they do, they are ill-disciplined. This again extends to the way they relate with other learners and teachers. This is confirmed by one teacher in school B who says that when these learners return from circumcision schools, they are often very defiant as they think they are ‘men’ and cannot be punished. Table 4.g summarises the principal’s responses from school B

CATEGORIES	**PRINCIPAL’S RESPONSE**
Drop-outs	
-reasons	-lack of support from parents and government
-gender	-more boys are dropping out than girls
-age	-from age 16
-seriousness	-serious
-grades	-form D (grade 11)
Teachers relations with learners	
-good or bad	-good
Non-payment of fees	
-expulsion	-yes
Discipline	
-corporal punishment	-yes
-what offences	-bullying, breaking school rules
Government response	-not enough is being done

Table 4.g: principal’s responses from School B

On the question of what he thinks are the reasons for the high drop-out at his school the principal said; “I think this is caused mainly by lack of support from both parents and government in that government fail to fulfil their promises and parents are reluctant to attend meetings to discuss ways to improve our school”. He further said; “boys here seem to be dropping out of school more than girls, this could be because we are in the rural area where we circumcision schools are mostly located”. There seems to be no significant gap in terms of age as the age range of those who drop-out is between 14 and 16. Drop-out seems to be at its worst in form D at this school.

On the question of what kind of relations exist between his teachers and learners the principal said; “I would say the relationship that exist between them is a healthy one, we have never experienced serious disciplinary problems from our teachers and learners”. For those who fail to pay their fees and other school costs, the principal said; “I have no option but to send them home until such time that they are able to pay their school fees”. The reason given for expulsion being that for them to continue to function, they need money collected from school fees and that if learners do not pay fees, that puts them in a bad position. Corporal punishment is still practiced at this school for such offences as bullying, stealing and breaking of school regulations as the principal puts it; “we severely punish those that harass other learners, steal or break school rules like bringing weapons and fighting”. And on the question of whether he thinks the government is doing enough to help them deal with the high rates of drop-out he said; “the government is not doing enough, they delay in delivering services to us schools in the rural area and when our schools do not perform well we are blamed”. One would say there seems to be an agreement between principals in school A and B that the government delays in providing them with necessary tools to start teaching. This seems to reflect on the kind of results which they get at the end of the year and as the principal from school B said, they are the first to take the blame. Table 4.h below summarises ex-learners responses from School B

CATEGORIES	EX-LEARNERS RESPONSES
Drop-out	
-reason	-lack of school fees, did not want to go to school
Relations with teachers	
-good or bad	-not good with some
Relations with learners	
-good or bad	-good with many and bad with few
Safety	
-at school grounds/in class	-not safe because of fear of being harassed by teachers and learners
-bullying	-yes
-measures taken by learners	-fight back to protect ourselves or report to teachers
-by school	-punish the offenders
Facilities	
-classrooms	-no
-science laboratory	-no
-computers/computer labs	-no
Abuse at school	
-by who	-by some teachers and some learners
Failure to pay school fees	
-expulsion	-yes

Table 4.h: ex-learners response from School B

When asked to give reasons for dropping out of school one boy said; “I hated being punished in front of my class-mates”, one boy added; “I feared being embarrassed by teachers who called me stupid and other insulting names in front of the whole class”, and one girl responded thus; “many teachers treated me

badly and I felt humiliated every time they insulted me". When probed further, this girl learner said that some teachers were using abusive language when talking to her and that she really hated being embarrassed in front of the whole class as seems to be the general practice at this school. And this is how she puts it; "many teachers use insulting language like I am ugly and that I am stupid and all these make me to hate school". On the question of teachers relations with learners one boy said; "I relate well with some teachers and not so well with some who like beating me for small mistakes". Another boy said; "there are teachers who are good to me but most of them are cruel to me as they like to beat me severely even when I am asking for forgiveness". This kind of treatment may lead to learners feeling that they are not safe; firstly, in class because of some teachers who use degrading language when they talk to them, secondly because of some learners who bully them.

As a result of these tense relations, one girl said "I do not feel safe when I am at school because I am afraid that I may be embarrassed or beaten", and one boy said; "I do not feel safe because even if one reports bullies to teachers they do not help and one ends up getting beaten for retaliating". From their responses one gets a feeling that they think those who bully them do not get punished as they would wish, they usually find themselves having to fight back and in the process get into further trouble. This as can be seen as perpetuating the tense relations even further and may further polarise them and breed more animosity. This school has no adequate classrooms and desks. On the question of whether they are allowed to continue schooling when they have not paid their school fees, one boy said; "the principal expels you if you have not paid your fees", and another boys said; "we are expelled until we can pay our school fees". One can conclude that failure to pay school fees ends in expulsion for those who do not have the money to pay the school fees. As one learner commented, this may make learners want to stay away from school if they know that they have not yet paid their fees.

SCHOOL C: PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

LOCATION: URBAN

This school is located in the middle of the capital town of Lesotho, Maseru. It caters for mainly learners with very serious social problems like orphans, learners from very poor backgrounds as well as those who have committed petty crimes such as stealing. The average age of learners in this school is 16 and most of them work part time, mainly after school. The school has many large blocks of classes and a hall. The toilets for learners and staff are all with running water. There are two staff rooms, one for males and one for females. There are two science laboratories; one library, one computer room, basketball court and a soccer field, though in bad condition. This school is home to about 820 learners, coming from all corners of the country. The checklist that follows and Tables 4.i, 4.j, and 4.k indicate teacher's, principal's and ex-learners' responses from School C.

	DOES NOT EXIST	ADEQUATE	NOT ADEQUATE
Classrooms		X	
Desks		X	
Chairs			X
Chalkboards		X	
Chalk		X	
Chalkboard dusters/cleaners		X	
Textbooks		X	
Stationery (books, pens, etc.)		X	
Sports fields			X
Sports equipment			X
Laboratories		X	
Gymnasium	X		
Computer rooms		X	
Computers			X
Toilets		X	
Water		X	
Electricity		X	
Staffroom		X	
Staff offices			X
Feeding schemes		X	

Table 4.i: School C responses to Check List

School C is located in the urban area and has almost all the necessary requirements for teaching and learning to happen. Classrooms, desks, and chalkboards are available in this school, except for chairs. The reason I got for lack of chairs here was that the number of enrolment has increased, but with school A and B, the reason was that even with their small numbers of enrolment they had never had enough chairs. Sports fields and equipments are available at School C. The only problem being that the existing sports fields are neglected and as such are in a very poor condition. This is again included in the TSD report (2008).

Science laboratories and computer laboratories are available at this school and they have both the senior computer block as well as that for junior learners. Perhaps this again takes one back to what Nyabanyaba (2008) indicated that schools in the urban area seem to benefit more from government programmes than schools in the rural area, which gives one a picture of unequal distribution of resources by the government. School C has ample offices for the principal and two staffrooms for male teachers and female teachers (TSD report, 2008). Electricity is not problem at this school.

CATEGORIES	TEACHER'S RESPONSES
Drop-outs	
-existence:	-yes
-gender:	-8 boys
-age group:	-from as young as 13 years
-interventions:	-find out from parents
Relations with learners	
-bullying	-yes
-punishment	-yes
-gender	-boys are more problematic
Class practices	
-learners' unpreparedness	-expulsion from class
-treatment	-beat them
Perceptions of learner's relations	-boys get along with other boys as well as do girls
Government response	-not enough in terms of providing us with professional counsellors

Table 4.j: teacher responses from School C

On the question of the seriousness of drop-out at school C, the teacher said; "yes I think we really have a problem of learners dropping out in our school and these are boys most of the time but we have girls too who drop out". Those who dropped as indicated by the teacher's response are mainly boys. This is again captured in the schools TSD report of 2008. In fact at the time of the interview the total number of drop outs was standing at 27 which is the highest between schools A, B, and D. When I located these learners who had dropped out, I only reached 8 learners and all of them were boys.

The teacher in this school confirmed that relations between learners and teachers are not at their best as she said; "we have very bad relationships with most of our learners, may be it is because our school caters for learners who

have criminal records and have been referred here by the government. Some are married, some work as security guards during the night and usually this group give us the most problems. Some will disobey you to challenge you and we usually do not know how to deal with such cases".

When asked what disciplinary measures they take to punish offenders she said; "when there are cases of bullying or harassment we investigate and give proper punishment but this does not seem to stop incidences of harassment and bullying among our learners". One can see that whatever measures that they take to stop incidences of bullying seem not to be effective as the teacher herself said.

Classroom practices also seem to have a bearing on large number of drop-outs. This is because the teacher herself says on the question of how they deal with problems of discipline; "we correct the situation the only way we know how, by beating them and I must say this may have a negative impact on learners because after being beaten some will not turn up for classes or stop altogether". And the question is, are these methods helpful? And it would seem that the answer is no when one realises that the existing classroom practices has a bearing on drop-out rates at this school.

On the question of whether the government is doing enough to help them deal with drop-out rates at this school the teachers said; "not at all, we are teachers not psychologists or counsellors, our knowledge is very limited and we usually find our lives in danger because we do not know how to handle such learners, but the government is keeping quite". So the government is directly being blamed for not doing enough to send in professional counsellors to deal professionally with problematic children.

Compared to school A and B, school C does not have any problem at all as far as resources are concerned. Learners in this school are quite different from

learners from school A and B in that many learners in school C have criminal records while others come from really poor homes. Principals and teachers in schools A and B complain of not getting textbooks and other school requirements on time, while in school C the school complains of not being provided with professional counsellors to deal with problematic learners. What remains similar in schools A, B and C is that they all seem to resort to corporal punishment which may not be the solution. Table 4.1h shows the principal's responses.

CATEGORIES	DEPUTY-PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE
Drop-outs	
-reasons	-lack of support from parents and government
-gender	-more boys are dropping out than girls
-age	-from age 16
-seriousness	-serious
-grades	-form D (grade 11)
Teachers relations with learners	
-good or bad	-do not know
Non-payment of fees	
-expulsion	-yes
Discipline	
-corporal punishment	-yes
-what offences	-bullying, breaking school rules
Government response	-not enough is being done

Table 4.h: Deputy-principal's responses from School C

On the question of what she thinks are the reasons for the high rate of drop-out at school C, the deputy-principal responded thus; "I blame parents who do not want to take part in their kids' schooling but shove every thing to us, and our government is to blame as they do not provide us with qualified personnel to help us with deal with offenders in our school". At the time of the interview there were

about 27 learners who had dropped out of school. Among other things, the deputy-principal confirmed that; “boys seem to be dropping out in large numbers than girls. This is because some of them feel they are old enough and cannot be punished especially those who work as security guards during the night”.
When asked whether she thinks the rate of drop-out is serious she said; “yes it is very serious as you may have seen from our report to TSD”. The deputy principal again said that she thinks that the rate of drop out is serious at this school.
The class that came out highest in terms of drop-outs is form D, just as it was with schools A and B.

When I asked her what kind of relations existed between the teachers and learners at this school she said “I do not know. You can get answers from different teachers”. Again on the question of failure to pay school fees she said; “in my knowledge the principal expels them, but this constitutes a small number as many of our learners are government sponsees”. So, non payment of fees for few who are not sponsored by the government were expelled as it was with the schools A and B. Corporal punishment again was practiced here as the deputy-principal puts it; “we do carry out corporal punishment even though it exposes us to danger as some learners come to schools with weapons”.

What emerges here is that even though this school is well resourced in terms of classrooms and computer rooms, it has a serious problem when it comes to controlling and disciplining learners. This is because many learners as the deputy-principal say come to school carrying dangerous weapons and to try to punish such a learner may put their lives in danger. The deputy-principal highlighted the problem of not being able to deal with such problematic learners as one of her worries. She went further to say the government should take responsibility and bring to them properly qualified people to deal with such cases.
The following Table summarises ex-learners responses from School C.

CATEGORIES	EX-LEARNERS RESPONSES
Drop-out	
-reason	-fear of being bullied, fear of being harassed, did not like school
Relations with teachers	
-good or bad	-not good with many
Relations with learners	
-good or bad	-good with many and bad with few
Safety	
-at school grounds/in class	-not safe because of fear of being harassed by teachers and being punished for minor errors
-bullying	-yes
-measures taken by learners	-fight back to protect ourselves
-by school	-nothing
Facilities	
-classrooms	-yes
-science laboratory	-yes
-computers/computer labs	-yes
Abuse at school	
-by who	-by many teachers and some learners
Failure to pay school fees	
-expulsion	-yes

Table 4.i: ex-learners response from School C.

When asked to give reasons for dropping out of school one boy said; “I feared going to school because of cruel teachers who seem to enjoy hurting me”. The other boy said; “I hated school because of teachers who will insult you and say you are useless in front of all students”. Another boy added; “I did not want to be

beaten by teachers every time even for silly mistakes", the other boy simply said; "I hated school". Reasons relating to hating school included teachers' brutality and fear of being harassed which emerge from ex-learners responses in this school.

It seemed that almost all the 8 boys whom I interviewed from this school had suffered one way or the other, the brutality of teachers at this school which forced them to leave school as evidenced by their responses. The relations that existed here at this school really seem to be very tense as some of the ex-learners I interviewed said. One boy said; "I do not get along with most teachers as many of them are cruel and love hurting me". Another boy said; "I did not relate well with some teachers because they used to insult me and say that I will never go anywhere in life". As it can be seen they seem to say they have problems with 'most of the teachers' and get along with few teachers. There again seems to be a problem with other learners as there were incidences of bullying at this school.

One boy said; "I fear being bullied at this school because of senior boys who like calling us names and beating us". The other boy responded thus; "I do not feel safe at this school because of bullies and when I fight them I am the one who gets punished". Many ex-learners from this school dealt with being bullied by fighting for themselves as one ex-learner remarked that "reporting does not help because they do not stop".

As a result of this tense atmosphere, ex-learners at this school confirmed that they do not feel safe at all at this school especially since as they say, "this school did nothing to discipline those who bullied others". The relations between learners and other learners too were not a smooth one. This school has laboratories and other basic necessities to make teaching and learning a good experience. As it was with school A and B, failure to pay school fees and other costs meant expulsion for learners.

SCHOOL D: PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL

LOCATION: URBAN

School D is situated in the centre of Maseru and it is home to about 780 learners. This is a mixed school serving both boys and girls. This school has many large blocks of classes for all streams. Learners come from Maseru and from the surrounding village outside Maseru. It has large fields of soccer grounds as well as for netball and basketball. The school has two large staff rooms for both females and males as well as an office for the principal. The school has one computer room, a library, a science laboratory and toilets for boys and girls as well as for staff with running water. The following checklist shows the responses of the principal from school D.

	DOES NOT EXIST	ADEQUATE	NOT ADEQUATE
Classrooms			X
Desks		X	
Chairs			X
Chalkboards		X	
Chalk		X	
Chalkboard dusters/cleaners		X	
Textbooks		X	
Stationery (books, pens, etc.)		X	
Sports fields			X
Sports equipment			X
Laboratories		X	
Gymnasium	X		
Computer rooms			X
Computers			X
Toilets			X
Water		X	
Electricity		X	
Staffroom		X	
Staff offices	X		
Feeding schemes			X

Table 4.j: School D responses to Check List

School D lacks in such things as classrooms and chairs. This school like school C is in the urban area. Almost all the necessary requirements for learning to take place seem to be available, even if not altogether adequate. What the government provides, such as stationery, textbooks and dusters are all available. This school does have sports fields but these are inadequate. And as I found out in the TSD report (2008), this school has sports fields but these are now very old and have not been upgraded that is why they were listed as being available but inadequate.

This school had laboratories for both senior classes and junior classes (TSD report, 2008). Computer rooms and computers were available even though not adequate. There were toilets for males and females, all these were water toilets not pit toilets. Staffrooms were available but there were no staff offices. Learners could get their lunch at this school even though there were problems now and then pertaining to food not being delivered. Table 4.1k shows teacher's responses from school D.

CATEGORIES	TEACHER'S RESPONSES
Drop-outs	
-existence:	-yes
-gender:	-2 girls and 3 boys
-age group:	-from 14 years
-interventions:	-communicate with parents to find out reasons
Relations with learners	
-bullying	-yes
-punishment	-yes
-gender	-boys are more give us more disciplinary problems
Class practices	
-learners' unpreparedness	-talk to learners find out what makes them not to do school work
-treatment	-punish them
Perceptions of learner's relations	-boys get along with other boys as well as do girls
Government response	-not enough is being done

Table 4.k: teacher's responses from School D

On the question of the existence of drop-out in this school the teachers responded thus; "yes we have a serious problem of drop out here and the reason could be that we are located near the taxi rank and our learners get bad influence from such places, they will usually come to class and talk all obscenities they heard from the taxi rank". At the time of the interview according to the TSD report of 2008 a total number of 23 drop-outs had been recorded in this school. Among the total number of drop-outs, only 5 were successfully traced for the purpose of interviewing them. Of this 5, two were girls and three were boys. It was again revealed that when learners drop-out, necessary measures are taken to find out why such learners are no longer attending school. And this is how the teacher

responded; “we usually send a teacher who was the class-teacher when such a learner dropped out to find out why she/he is no longer attending school”.

On the question of what kind of relations exist between learners and teachers the teacher said; “I think we relate well with most of our learners the only problem being that there are boys who because of the relations they have with their friends who are taxi conductors, will defy you, but girls do not give us many problems”. As one can understand from the above response the teachers seem to suggest that there are no major disciplinary problems as far as girls are concerned, but that “boys who have friends in the taxi rank” seem to be giving disciplinary problems.

Location of the school which is in the middle of the capital town was cited as causing problems for the escalating disciplinary problems with boys as the teacher said that since they are near the taxi rank some boys go there and later on return to class having copied some of the behaviour from there which may not be appropriate in a school setting. As the teacher shows above some will come to class and talk in obscene language which is not appropriate in class. On the question of what measures they take to deal with discipline the teachers said; “I first try to talk to them and find out what the real problem is before I can think of a punishment to give”. On whether the government is doing enough to help them, deal with drop-out rates the teacher said; “our government is not doing enough, for example when we have serious problems of ill-disciplined kids, they will say we should refer such cases to them and keep such learners, but usually they end up doing nothing”.

What comes out consistently from school D is that they too, like school C, have problems dealing with problematic kids. School D too cites location as hampering their efforts to control learners as the teacher from school D said that their learners copy obscenities from the taxi rank. On the other hand schools in the rural area were saying that they blame the location of their schools because they

are near circumcision schools and this contributes to learners dropping out. The following Table summarises the responses from the principal in school D.

CATEGORIES	PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSE
Drop-outs	
-reasons	-poverty
-gender	-boys are dropping out more
-age	-from age 14
-seriousness	- yes it is serious
-grades	-form D (grade 11)
Teachers relations with learners	
-good or bad	-generally good
Non-payment of fees	
-expulsion	-yes
Discipline	
-corporal punishment	-yes
-what offences	-bullying, breaking school rules
Government response	-not enough is being done

Table 4.l: principal's response from School D

Poverty emerged as a cause for drop-out at this school and boys were dropping out more than girls. The age range of those who dropped out was from 14 years of age. At this school it became clear as evidenced by the principal's response who said; "I think that the most contributing factor for the high drop-out in my school is that many of our people in Lesotho live in abject poverty and the government does not sponsor all learners who are poor". Again the drop-out rate was worse at Form D than in any other forms. When asked what kind of relations exist between learners and teachers the principal said; "it is good I

think, I know of many learners who will come to teachers when they have problems".

Again on the question of measures taken if a learner cannot pay her/his school fees the principal said; "we expel such learners until they pay what they owe the school and it is unfortunate because some learners miss classes for up to three weeks while they are trying to raise funds to pay their fees". This means that it is possible for some learners to miss lessons for many days as the principal indicated. In the process, they miss important parts of lessons which lead to their failure at the end of the year. The principal confirmed that they still practice corporal punishment even though he said that it is 'regulated'. He said; "yes we do practice corporal punishment but we do it in a more regulated way".

On the question of whether the government is providing them with enough support to deal with drop-out rate he said; "the government blame us for everything, they will not deliver on their promises but should the result be bad, they are the first to point accusing fingers at principals". What can be deduced from the responses here is that the principal concurs with all the principals from the other schools that they still practice corporal punishment even though it is not with the same severity as it used to be. The following Table summarises the responses of ex-learners from School D.

CATEGORIES	EX-LEARNERS RESPONSES
Drop-out	
-reason	-no school fees, did not like school
Relations with teachers	
-good or bad	-good with some
Relations with learners	
-good or bad	-good with many and bad with few
Safety	
-at school grounds/in class	-no because of bullies
-bullying	-yes
-measures taken by learners	-report
-by school	-rarely punish the offenders
Facilities	
-classrooms	-yes
-science laboratory	-yes
-computers/computer labs	-yes but not enough
Abuse at school	
-by who	-by some teachers and some learners
Failure to pay school fees	
-expulsion	-yes

Table 4.m: ex-learners responses

When asked why they have dropped out of school one boy said; “I hated school because of teachers who made my life miserable”. Another boy said; “all my friends were making money travelling with taxis, and I did not want to miss that”, And, another boy said; “I could not pay my school fees as my parents were not working”. So what comes out here is that at this school is inability to pay school

fees and hatred of school emerged as some of the reasons learners gave for dropping out of school.

On whether their relations with their teachers were good or a bad, one boy said; “I relate well with some teachers and some were really helpful but there were those that were not”. One girl said; “I got on well with most teachers some even helped me when I did not have money for transport”. Another girl said; ‘there are those teachers who seem to enjoy embarrassing me and such teachers I hated and did not feel safe in their presence”. This may mean that there were those teachers who made learners feel bad and that very often this was done in the view of the whole class.

On the question of how they deal with bullying at school one girl said; “I stay away from such people but they always find you and if you report nothing is done”. One boy said; “I fight for myself because reporting is useless as the bullies do not stop”. As one girl learner said, this kind of treatment made her feel unsafe at school and at the sports ground as they always had to be on the look-out for bullies. This situation made matters worse because when victims reported bullying to the teachers, nothing was done to protect them, rather incidences of bullying escalated. This is why learners said that to deal with this problem; they take matters into their own hands and fight back. And of course this landed them into more trouble. Facilities were available at this school, classrooms were large enough, and there were computers and computer rooms.

Similarities and differences given by principals from school A, B, C and D

The principals in schools A, B, C and D seem to share a common view on the question of why learners drop out of school. They all seem to suggest that learners drop-out because the government fails to give them proper support and in time. Reasons why they blame the government range from the fact that they fail to deliver textbooks on time sometimes kids will go to school up to March without textbooks as principal from school A said. Furthermore the government

will delay in paying for those learners that they sponsor and in the process such learners are expelled and have to go to the government offices to push them to process their bursaries quickly.

Parents do not seem to be playing an active role in their kids' learning. In schools A and B parents did not report to schools why their kids were no longer coming to school. This, disturbed teachers because they had to find out from other learners who may not always be reliable. In school C the deputy-principal stressed the fact that parents seem to enjoy pushing learners to school and leaving every thing in the hands of teachers and this creates problems for teachers. Schools A and B principals seem to agree that the drop-out rate is not serious at their school as they said whereas schools C and D said that they think the drop-out rate is a cause for concern in their schools. To me this was quite strange to say that the drop-out rate is not serious by principals from school A and B. This is because the TSD reports showed that the drop-out rates from these four schools were not that different.

Both principals from school A and B said that they think teachers and learners relationships seem to be good even though they have problems here and there but it was nothing to worry about. This was different from what principals from schools C and D said. They pointed out that there are problems and that most of the time they had to intervene to stop learners clashing with teachers.

What one sees is that as far as discipline is concerned, principals in the rural schools did not complain as much as those in the urban area even though the methods of punishment were almost the same in all these schools. All the 3 principals and 1 deputy-principal concurred that they expel learners who fail to pay their school fees. In terms of corporal punishment again all principals and the deputy-principal agreed that it is still practiced in their schools.

On the one hand schools C and D had facilities even though they were neglected. This is again highlighted in the checklist from all these schools. Schools C and D have computers and classrooms large enough whereas those from schools A and B did not enough classrooms and no computer. On whether the government is doing enough to help them deal with drop-out rates all principals and the one deputy-principal seem to think that the government is not doing enough. Reasons given were almost the same for schools A and B as well as for schools C and D.

School A and B principals' major complaints seem to be centred on delivery of resources and this to them presents problems as they cannot fully operate without such things. School C and D problems with government seem to be on the issue of discipline. The deputy principal from school C said that the government need to help them with qualified counsellors to help them with problematic learners as their lives are sometimes endangered and this was echoed by the principal from school D. A pattern that emerges between schools in the rural and urban area seems to point to the uneven way in which learners experience schooling in these two settings. Those that attend school in the urban area seem to have most of what is required for learning and teaching to happen, whereas those in the rural area struggle to get resources and often have poor infra-structure.

Both school A and B blamed their location for drop-out rate especially among boys because they claim that their learners get pulled away from school by circumcision schools in their area. On the one hand the principal from school D too blame the taxi rank near her school as causing students to drop-out because they see other young people selling things and making money and this to her pulls them out of school.

In all schools there seems to exist a tense atmosphere in which learners may feel they do not want to continue schooling. This seems to be caused by negative

attitudes of teachers towards learners and learners towards teachers. Teachers blame students for ill-discipline while learners too blame teachers for ill-treating them. Perhaps in this we see actors engaged in ‘strategies to cope’ to use Woods (1983) words.

Similarities and differences in the responses given by teachers from schools A, B, C and D

Responding to the question of which group drops out the most between boys and girls, teachers in schools A, B, C and D all seem to point to the fact that boys drop out the most in their respective schools. Circumcision in the rural school was blamed for pulling learners out of school whereas in schools in the urban area discipline seem to be pointed out as a contributing factor among boys learners. What I suspected here was that it was indirectly said that in terms of discipline, those from the rural area are ‘well behaved’ than those from the urban area, though this will need to be further researched.

On the question of who drops out the most between boys and girls, all teachers concurred that boys drop out more than girls in all these four schools regardless of location. Steps taken to find out why learners were not coming to school included asking friends, writing letters to parents or guardians to find out why learners were no longer attending school. And there was a general feeling between all teachers that parents will not voluntarily come to schools and report when their children have problems so that means of helping them can be devised.

Teachers from schools A and B again seem to suggest that they think their relationships with the learners are good. Their counterparts on the other hand said that their relationships with learners are strained. On the question of whether they still practice corporal punishment, all teachers said they still do though they claim they do this in a ‘regulated’ manner because the policy. Teachers in the rural area still carry out corporal punishment and seem not to take into account

that the MOET (2007) states that corporal punishment is not allowed in schools. Those teachers in the urban area seem to be aware of this even though they agree that they still practice it, but they are aware that learners have a right to take them to court.

Bullying seems to be happening in all schools as revealed by the responses of teachers on the question of whether there are bullies at their school. Learners in all schools were not expelled from school if they did not have proper school uniform though learners were encouraged to try to buy the school uniform. Again there seems to be a general feeling that they think the government is not doing enough to help their schools deal with the high rates of drop out at their schools. The one thing that keeps coming up is that schools in the rural area complain of lack of support in terms of facilities and resources whereas those schools in the urban area complain of government failure to respond to cases of discipline in terms of providing them with qualified personnel to help them with kids who are problematic. This comes persistently from school C.

Similarities and differences in the responses given by ex-learners from schools A, B, C and D (girls)

Inability to pay school fees came out as one of the reason why learners dropped out of school especially those from school A and B which are situated in the rural area. Some learners cited poverty as a cause for their dropping out, while some said that they have lost either one or both parents and as a result, could not continue schooling. Almost all learners from these four school said that they do not relate well with their teachers mainly because of the kind of treatment teachers give to them which seem to be aimed at embarrassing them than correcting the wrong.

They went on to say that there are those teachers who seem to go to school ‘with the sole purpose of humiliating learners’. They said that it is not all teachers who ill-treat them that there are those that are really very helpful and ready to help

them in times of difficulties. This treatment resulted in strained relationships and an atmosphere of distrust between teachers and learners. This means that they feared going to school as many conceded that they feel very unsafe at school mainly because of cruel teachers as well as other learners who bullied them at school. Incidences of bullying seem to happen in all schools whether in the rural or in the urban area. The similarity with which they responded to the question of whether they have been bullied and how they dealt with being bullied indicated that practices of bullying are wide spread and that usually measures taken by those in authority to deal with them left much to be desired.

On the question of whether they had sporting facilities at their respective schools, they responded that they do have them but that they are in such a bad condition. And this could only mean that all the sporting facilities whether in the rural or urban area were not properly maintained and as a result deteriorate as time goes on. All girls from schools A, B, C and D showed an enthusiasm to return to school should such an opportunity come up. They all answered “yes” when I asked them if given a chance they would go back to school.

Similarities and differences in the responses given by ex-learners from schools A, B, C and D (boys)

On the question of why they have dropped out of school, many boys just like girls, indicated that they could not afford to pay school fees and other school costs because of poverty in their families. Some were orphans and they pointed out that they had to go out and find work so that they could help their families. However, unlike with the girls, some boys indicated that they did not like school anymore. They reasoned that their friends were making money selling things while they wasted time in class and that they hated being beaten in front of other learners. Boys from schools in the urban were more verbal on this issue than those from the rural area.

Of the majority of the learners who had dropped out of school from schools C and D, harsh treatment from teachers was cited as one of the reasons they had to quit school. On the question of how they relate with their teachers it was again clear that those in the rural area are doing better than their counterparts from schools in the urban area.

Again it was clear that learners in the rural area schools, even though corporal punishment continues unchecked which is not the case with schools in the urban area, felt relatively safer at school than those learners from the urban area. Again all boys from all the four school responded with a resounding “yes” that they have been bullied at their different schools and that usually they had to fight for themselves as nothing was ever done to stop the perpetrators from bullying them. This was similar with the responses given by the girls. When asked what it is that they were doing now and if they would want to go back to school if given a chance many boys showed reluctance to go back to school. And for those who wanted to go back to school, they said that they would rather go to a different school.

4.1. What the findings from teachers, principals and ex-learners indicate

As it can be seen from the four checklist responses in terms of materials and other school resources availability, such as classrooms, chalks, chairs and desks, there seem to be some sort of similarities between schools in the rural area and schools in the urban area. For example, both schools from the rural area seem to have a problem when it comes to such things as classrooms, chairs and tables. This is evidenced by the identical answers from the two principals from school A and school B. In other words schools in the rural area seem to be struggling more with issues of resources availability than their counterparts from urban schools

This maybe caused by the tendency as Nyabanyaba (2008) indicates ”of the ministry of education’s uneven distribution of resources, so that very often

schools in the rural area suffer while those in the urban area are the first to benefit from any programmes intended to help schools in the country". Teachers and principals from schools A and B again seem to share the same belief that the ministry of education is neglecting them because even if they send their grievances to the ministry, it takes ages before they can get any help. They again seem to suggest that schools in the urban area seem to be the first to benefit from programmes aimed at helping all schools.

And one may even see this from answers obtained from learners from this area who reiterated that they, most of the time do not have enough space as their classes can be too full. In contrast those schools which are located in the urban area seem to enjoy many things in terms of materials available. These schools have classrooms to accommodate all learners and it is only very few learners who confirmed that their classes can be too full at times. Many seem to think that they have enough classes to accommodate all learners. This point is again reiterated by the responses from teachers and learners from schools C and D.

In terms of books and stationery, there seem to be a general agreement that all schools now have adequate books and stationery as indicated by all responses from the four schools' representatives. This is because the Lesotho government has started a "book rental scheme" in which all learners are provided with books and stationery (MOET, 2005). This is why all the teachers and even principals affirmed that they do expel learners who do not have necessary textbooks because this is provided to them by the government and as such there is absolutely no reason why they do not bring their textbooks with them. In short if they do not have textbooks, it is only due to their irresponsibility, not because they do not have the required books.

As far as the seriousness of drop-out is concerned, two principals out of four seem to think that it is indeed serious. Others think that it is not that serious. But again what is important here is that the numbers reveal something totally

different from what they are saying. This may mean that some principals may not want to say that indeed the drop-out is bad at their schools, maybe for fear of putting their schools in a bad light. On average, the drop-out at these four schools is standing at around 5.4%, which I think count as being serious. Especially when one realise that MOET is aiming at reducing the number of drop-out rates from 5% to around 2% nationally.

Furthermore, when it comes to such things as sports grounds and fields, there seem to be a problem in terms of maintenance of these things. In fact, all schools indicated on the checklist that even though they do have sports fields, they are inadequate. What they mean by ‘inadequate’ was made clear by many learners from all these schools that they do have some sports fields, but that these are so ‘old’, ‘bad’ and ‘poor’ that it is almost impossible to play there. The responses from all principals and the deputy principal indicated that indeed they felt that what they have is very inadequate.

In as far as relationships between all actors in these four schools is concerned a substantial number of learners answered in the affirmative that their relations are not smooth. This as they reasoned was caused by teachers who seem to enjoy ‘hurting’, ‘embarrassing’, ‘insulting’ and humiliating learners. These learners as a result of this treatment feel that they cannot continue coming to school and consequently dropped out. Again there seem to be no credible measures taken to protect those that are victimised by bullies. This point is illustrated by learners who said that when bullies confront them, they defended themselves by fighting back and this helped to perpetuate the situation even further. They resorted to fighting because as they said, reporting does not help.

However principals and teachers seem not to see this as a problem and this attitude again may exacerbate the situation further. This is because teachers will continue treating learners the way they do and this will consequently make learners feel that they are being ill-treated and this may lead to other adverse

behaviours. Boys seem to be dropping out in large numbers as indicated by responses from principals and teachers. This could be explained by the fact that many boys seem to think that many teachers target them because they think that they are stubborn and defiant. So even punishment which they receive is usually harsher than that which may be given to girls. And they may interpret this to mean that they will suffer more than girls.

School fees, treatment received from teachers, bullying from other learners and poverty seems to come out consistently as some of the reasons which forces learners to drop-out of school. Even though some learners are government sponsees, this does not exempt them from being expelled from school. This was echoed by one principal who lamented the fact that the ministry will not pay for their sponsees in time and this makes it difficult to operate without funds. Corporal punishment again is still practiced and this was a major barrier especially with boy-learners. They indicated that they fear being beaten severely by some teachers who seem to enjoy doing this.

When it comes to such things as feeding schemes, it became evident that there is a need for the ministry to do something. This is because many learners said that their parents are dead and one of the reasons they could not come to school was because of hunger and some learners who would make fun of them that they do not have money to buy even a simple fruit. This is a direct result of poverty.

This is a worrying thing, and this is why I say something must be done because if children will leave school because of hunger and poverty, then steps must be taken to try to alleviate the situation. This reminds me of Sen (2001) who argues that poverty should be seen as a capability depravation. This is because as it can be observed, many learners leave school because of lack of money, hunger and so forth and as such they cannot exercise their capabilities to lead the kind of lifestyles they choose. This was again illustrated in the reports which had been

prepared by the four schools to the teaching service department. All schools had alarming number of learners who were orphans. Many were single orphans but a substantial number of learners had lost both their parents.

Numbers of orphans seem to be the highest in schools in the urban area than in the rural area. This again is in concordance with what Nyabanyaba (2008) and MOET (2005) indicated that many learners will relocate to the nearing towns with their relatives or siblings to look for work while they go to school during the day. This point was again picked by some learners in their questionnaires when asked what it is that they are doing now, they said that they work in the Chinese factories or as security guards during the night and go to school during the day. This could explain why there are large numbers of orphans in the urban area than in rural area. Further the report indicated that the rate of drop out is slightly higher in the urban area than in the rural area. There were more boys dropping out in all the four schools. This again was reiterated by the MOET (2005) that large numbers of boy-learners seem to be dropping out of school than girl-learners.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

The findings indicate that there are some internal school factors that may play a significant role in helping to push learners out of school. These internal factors first of all lead to among other things:

- Fear and insecurities
- Lack of motivation to attend school
- Creation of a tense atmosphere between different actors within school
- Persistent distrust and feeling of hatred towards teachers by learners and vice-versa, and among learners in terms of bullying.

All these feelings may lead to learners dropping out of school because of the existing atmosphere which is full of animosity.

One observes that as Glassner (1980) remarks, social actors create their own existence through interpretation of messages from others in the whole system. And this is how meaning is made. By interacting with teachers, learners create their reality and so do teachers. As it can be observed this is an active process which affects all actors. For example, in the findings it is revealed that learners seem to be full of fear. This did not happen overnight, it took years of listening, observing and the acting. In this case, the way each group act will create a reality which will be reproduced. This is seen in the general feeling of despair and distrust experienced by these learners towards their teachers. One might add, this feeling then creates a psychological barrier (Sen, 2001) which is a form of 'unfreedom' (Sen, 2001) which may hinder them from living desired lives.

This feeling of fear that is internalized, has become a part of their world which they have to understand and this then becomes their 'habitus' to use Bourdieu's (1977) idea of how reproduction of human cultures can be understood. And once this fear is internalized they engage in 'coping strategies' (Woods, 1983). This they do by finding ways of coping and making meaning out of the situation they find themselves in. In the process, some learners may have to drop out while others may find themselves being assimilated in the system. A case in hand is

that of learners who come from the rural areas. Once they relocate to schools in the urban area, they are badly treated because they are considered “backward” by both teachers and learners. They are told they do not “talk” and “walk” ‘properly’ as per urban standards. Some will adopt these urban styles of walking and talking, while those who cannot remain objects of ridicule until this gets too much and they drop out of school. They may drop out because they may interpret their counterparts’ messages to mean that they are unwanted and that they are outsiders who should be excluded.

The most interesting thing in Lesotho is that the education policy is trying to bridge the gap so that all learners are included as it was the case in the study on educational exclusion and inclusion in Indian schools and South African schools (Sayed et al, 2007), but still, it was found that there were some practices of exclusion still happening inside schools. In this case all schools in which the research was carried out were not at par even though they had one policy, some were strongly inclusive, some moderately inclusive while others were weakly inclusive (Sayed et al, 2007). Aspects of governance and access were closely examined to determine whether a school was strongly, moderately or weakly inclusive. What emerges from my research in some Lesotho secondary schools may not be similar since I did not use the same structures but concentrated on the relations between actors inside schools. But similar patterns can be drawn as I will show.

For instance, where learners’ relations with their teachers were good and they were accessible to their learners, in terms of being able to communicate freely, asking questions without fear of being ridiculed, and participating fully in classroom, I categorised such schools ‘strongly inclusive’. But where these were marred with reluctance and some reservations from either teachers or learners, I categorised them ‘moderately inclusive’ and where these were non-existent I categorised them ‘weakly inclusive’. For example, school A and B were found to be moderately inclusive. This was because ex-learners from these schools find it

easier to access their teachers and have a near-normal relationship as compared to their fellow ex-learners from school C and D which were weakly inclusive in this regard.

To illustrate the point above, in school C and D teachers resorted to beating learners who were giving them disciplinary problems, calling them names, generally ill-treating them and this resulted in an atmosphere which was always tense. Perhaps it is important to note that those who suffered most seem to come from poor families as opposed to those from rich families. One observes that those from poor families reacted by dropping out of school. Teachers too insulted and further marginalized learners from poor families hence reinforcing the existing status quo between those who are rich and those who are poor.

The explanation offered by Bourdieu (1999) in regard to the above point is quite apt and sheds light as to why things happen the way they do even though there may be steps to correct the situation, he says:

> The habitat shapes the habitus, the habitus also shapes the habitat through the more or less adequate social usages that it tends to make of it. This certainly throws doubt on the belief that bringing together in the same physical space agents who are far apart in the social space might bring them closer socially; in fact socially distanced people find nothing more intolerable than physical proximity (Bourdieu, 1999).

This to me indicates that even though the government has done all it can to bring together and include all people in the education so that all can have meaningful access, there are those who continue to find themselves victims of discrimination.

Actors have different dispositions (Bourdieu, 1999) and it is only when an understanding of why they do things the way they do that proper channels can be followed to help them to become what it is that they want to be, and this will help set proper means (Sen, 2001) in place. For example some boys from schools A

and B which are located in the mountain region complained that teachers treat them badly once they return from circumcision schools because they are seen as being “stubborn and defiant”. Upon being asked what it is that they want to see in their school so that they do not drop out, they said that they want their teachers and their fellow learners to treat them as “one of them” not as outsiders as it was the case. This suggests that teachers react by alienating and isolating these learners when they return from circumcision schools which do not help as learners react by being insubordinate. This does not help and a solution needs to be found so that these two groups can find a common ground.

Admittedly, this is not an easy task because this is an embedded thing which has become their habitus (Bourdieu, 1999). Furthermore, Giroux and Aronowitz (1993) aptly points out that people therefore go through processes of “socialization that are not only intellectual but also emotional, sensory and physical”. In other words, when learners or teachers create their realities, it happens in all levels of their being, from the social level, physical level and emotional level. One may say that it seems that ‘habitus’ is therefore acquired through people’s acculturation or socialization into certain groups such as social class, gender or peer groups. The way in which ‘social class’ shapes many learners dispositions and choices is understood when one considers different kinds of reasons learners in Lesotho give for dropping out of school.

There are those who drop out because they could not meet their school costs, there are those who drop out because they hated school and did not enjoy good relations with their teachers, there are those who dropped out for fear of being bullied and those who dropped out because their parents did not motivate them. In my view, there seem to be forces within schools operating so that some learners will drop out while others will remain. Some of the forces, Bourdieu (1977) captures them thus: “the cultural capital and the ethos, as they take shape, combine to determine behaviour in school and the attitude to school which make up the differential principle of elimination operating for children of

different social class". In other words schools too adopt ways of doing things as the 'ethos' of such a school may dictate. And by school I mean actors inside the school. When learners interact with teachers and vice-versa, they engage in meaning making and depending on their dispositions learners may see their teachers as their enemies and people who need to be treated with fear if teachers give them such impression. What this indicates is that teachers on the one hand had come to interpret learners' attitudes towards them as inappropriate.

Teachers may see some learners' behaviour as inappropriate because as Bourdieu (1977) suggest "teachers are products of a system whose aim is to transmit an aristocratic culture and are likely to adopt its values with great ardour in proportion to the degree to which they own their own academic and social success". It then means that the manner in which they treat learners is not accidental at all, but a reflection of their dispositions in terms of how they too were socialized. Teachers come into their 'field' with notions of how an 'appropriate learner should talk, walk and dress' (Bourdieu, 1999), and should a learner deviate from these "expectations", such a learner is labelled as being difficult and presenting challenges. This comes out clearly in schools C and D which are located in the urban area. Learners in these schools complain that their teachers will beat them 'severely' for 'minor' things like 'not tucking in your shirt' or 'speaking aloud'. All these point to the very fact that these people are operating from different 'social spaces' and that there exist psychological barriers between them which may make their working relationship difficult

However the point remains that as teachers, they are duty bound to overlook where learners are coming from and concentrate on the work at hand. My point is however difficult it may be to share the same 'physical space' with those considered not in their 'league', they must do their work and help learners to work towards achieving their desired quality of life not help them drop out. This is because when they drop out they may not have means to survive and lead

healthy lives. Sen (2001) says that to survive today and to ensure life people need instrumental capabilities which mean that they need their education which they can then use to survive and live better improved lives. Dropping out of school therefore, in my view, may have adverse repercussions which can have negative impact on the lives of learners in the long run.

The tense atmosphere again creates a sense of hopelessness in learners so that they may in the process develop adverse attitudes towards school. They may see school as a place where they are exposed to ill-treatment. This view in turn may compel them to again develop adverse attitudes to those they see as their perpetrators, namely teachers and bullies. But the point is if they decide to drop out of school, this does not improve their lives, rather it is a constant cycle in which learners drop out of school and teachers ill-treat learners and so on.

So in dealing with the question of high levels of drop-out in schools means that other factors inside school should be addressed and not dismissed as minor. These are some of the inside school factors that emerged from my research and need to be addressed.

- Mode of punishment given to learners
- Learners and teachers safety inside school compounds
- Bullying
- Use of abusive language by teachers towards learners
- School costs and fees
- Facilities.

From the responses I got from learners, principals and teachers, it was very evident that there exist some factors within schools and that these factors which I have mentioned above may be responsible and could shed light on why some learners will want to drop out of school. Corporal punishment came out as one of the reasons learners were dropping out of school in large numbers and in my view, this ‘structured’ (Bourdieu, 1999) practice is so steeped into teachers’

systems that even when the education policy clearly says that learners should not be exposed to corporal punishment, teachers still do it. By asking teachers to tell why they still practice corporal punishment, some said that “in our country children have to be punished”, one principal said “it is our custom”.

So it really became clear that this is so steeped and embedded in them. The sad part being that this was further polarizing learners and teachers and causing damage to learners’ future prospects of a better live. It was as if learners saw this as pure persecution and interpreted this to mean that teachers cannot communicate with them in any way but via corporal punishment. So it is crucial that any mode of punishment given to learners does not impact negatively in their lives, such punishment should not create a barrier between learners and teachers, but rather it should serve as a corrective measure.

Practices of bullying inside school also made learners feel that their lives are in danger. This is because as learners said, they did not feel part of school set-up because there were teachers and learners who seem to enjoy humiliating them and making them feel less human especially those from the rural areas who lamented the fact that they usually suffer the most because of the stigma that is attached to people from the rural area. These practices do not only hamper and derail learners’ dreams of getting education but they also reinforced the existing attitudes among learners as far as school is concerned in these four schools, that is school is a place of ‘pain’ and that teachers are ‘cruel’ which is an unfortunate thing. This then made learners fear going to school

The intimidation part may point to creation of psychological barriers on the part of learners as Sen (2001) illustrates that even if capabilities of individuals from the instrumental perspectives are released, they cannot fully utilise them if psychological impediments are not dealt with. What this means is that, capabilities within us go hand in hand with capabilities for instrumental purposes. They need to be released so that human beings can function fully. And so, it

remains a challenge for the government of Lesotho as well as the teachers within the system to accept that there exists barriers within schools and that these make the learning and teaching experience bad.

Education as I said does not only help individuals to release their capabilities but it helps in the development of individuals and the country. This is why Levin (1987) says that education is a cornerstone on which economic development is built. This refers to the role education seem to play in development of countries economies. As Sen (2001) says in the post-global political economy, people need education which is a capability to be able to use it to live better and improved lives. Improved lives of individuals can have a positive impact on the country as a whole. This is because if individuals can use education as a tool to improve their lives, they will be in a better position to make informed decisions, avoid some of the impediments which can have negative impact in their lives. These are such things as early death, freedom to move around (Sen, 2001) and be productive members of the society.

Education as a right give people opportunity to live free lives from many unfreedoms that people without education can find themselves in. It is equally important from this perspective that individuals have education. This is enshrined in the Lesotho constitution and elsewhere like in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All people regardless of their standing in the community or their creed must have this right and it does not only end there, it is through education that they can exercise their other rights. For example to be able to participate in political discussions relating to their lives, engage in economical ventures which will benefit them and their communities.

Interactionism has been very useful to me in this research. This is because through it, questions relating to learners and teachers social existence, emotional existence and physical existence were examined. This was very important because it was only when these questions were examined that one can have an

understanding of how realities are reproduced in societies. And through interactionism I was able to further understand how these realities come into existence through active strategies employed by learners and teachers to understand the world in which they live in. Of great importance was the fact that through interactionism, a light was shed on the factors within schools in some of Lesotho secondary schools which could contribute towards the high drop out rate.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

It is apparent from my findings that there exists some barriers inside schools and that these barriers can perpetuate practices that may lead to oppressions, injustice and inequality. These practices are entrenched in schools and form part of the school's ethos. It may take quite a while to truly eradicate these as they are part and parcel of actors within schools and seem to define them. But this is not how things should be, if some practices serve to make other people feel less human then such practices are not good. If some people will feel that they are being discriminated against then there is a problem because such people may not fully engage in structures that are meant to protect them. In fact, this will make them feel unsafe as it is the case with many learners who drop out from the Lesotho schools I researched.

The question is what then should be done to unshackle these peoples' capabilities so that they can get out of this situation? And the way I see this does not lie with the government or organisations. I believe that people should take charge of their lives, be responsible and act against such practices. When teachers use abusive language towards learners or when they are bullied by other learners, this only serves to create an unfriendly atmosphere and proper learning and effective teaching cannot happen. Learners need to know that they too have a role to play in their education. Active participation on their part should be encouraged.

Teachers as leaders in schools need to understand their positions and use it to benefit learners not to abuse them. As I said learners too have a responsibility, they need to see that they cannot live the kind of lives they desire if they continue engaging in activities that will hamper their prospects of a bright future. It is crucial that learners are engaged in programmes that expose them to necessary life skills that they can use later in their lives. Career guidance and counselling among others are important as one teacher said. This is because learners will be in a position to make informed judgements when faced with real life situations.

Apart from that, learners will also be equipped with necessary tools to use so that they do not become victims and are able to reason and weigh their options. For example dropping out because one sees his friends making a lot of money selling sweets is very unfortunate. Such a learner should be able to say but is this the kind of future I want? What are my options? So learners need to take into account the fact that if they have an opportunity to go to school and learn, they should do so.

Complaining that the government is not doing this or that as some principals said does not help, rather it becomes internalized and hinders people from seizing and opportunity. What I mean here is that principals should not always complain that the government is not doing this or that; they must also take initiatives and work towards improving their schools. This they can do by raising awareness among their teaching staff as well as among learners that they have a role to play in the improvement of their school and that it does not only rest with the government alone.

The government can provide necessary conditions for learning and teaching to happen, it remains the responsibilities of learners and teachers to effectively use the conditions to improve their lives. Such conditions include provision of democratic structures and ways of doing things so that all inside schools work hand in hand without infringing on the other persons rights. Even though it is stated in the MOET (2007) policy that no learner should be subjected to corporal punishment schools seem to be doing this. This is making matters worse because many learners lamented the fact that if they dropped out of school because of the kind of treatment they were receiving from their teachers who would beat them severely in front of everybody.

To them, this means that teachers are out to get them and they end up ‘hating’ teachers with a passion. The existing belief in Lesotho that learners have no ‘rights’ perpetuates this as teachers continue to practice corporal punishment

even though outlawed by MOET. And this may make learners feel that they have no freedom which is necessary if they are to participate in their learning. The government should take note that apart from factors outside school, there exists other factors inside school which can have a profound effect on whether the rate of drop-out escalates or goes down.

Factors inside schools as my findings indicate range from corporal punishment, feelings of distrust which result in the general atmosphere of animosity between learners and teachers, bullying and negative perceptions that exist between learners and teachers. However there are outside school factors that are at work such as poverty, AIDs pandemic and school fees and school costs. These too, may have a negative impact on learners. My research has shown that inside school factors are as crucial and that they need to be recognised as contributing towards the high drop-out in some of Lesotho secondary school. It is only when they are accepted as challenges that various steps can be taken by all stakeholders to fight them. Fighting them will make learning and teaching experiences of actors within schools to be more meaningful and all will be in a better position to contribute to their development.

Furthermore I got a sense that these inside school factors are, in a way, socially constructed and as such, they play themselves out even when actors within schools are unaware. This is explained by Bourdieu (1999) as well as Woods (1983). One important factors which I deduce from what they are saying is that, these ‘habituses’ and ‘an explanation of reality’ can happen at more than one level; that is they happen emotionally, physically as well as on the psychological space of individuals. In other words there are expectations from each ‘social group’ relating to how other group talks, sits, eats and behave generally.

These expectations as Bourdieu (1999) shows are later internalized and absorbed into each social group. This is seen when these two groups from two different social groups interact with each other. My findings made it easier for me

to understand this as some learners said that they see many of their teachers as their opponents since they are always fighting. On the one hand teachers complained of learners who are openly defiant and as one teacher commented that “that is how learners are, always up to no good”, hence the animosity that existed between these groups is seen at work here and reproducing. However it is equally important that a common ground is sought by all actors within schools so that people can release and realize their capabilities to live better improved lives. This is because if learners drop-out, then their capabilities are greatly curtailed as they cannot exercise their true potentials to live as they want to. Rather, they will always find themselves in a situation that adversely affects their lives and productivity as long as they cannot use education for their betterment. For me, education should liberate learners from many ‘unfreedoms’ that societies may impose on them knowingly or not.

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Appendix A

Wits School of Education

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Ggg

STUDENT NUMBER:

0718381F

Protocol: 2008ECE

20 October 2008

Mr. Masilo Setlolela
WSoE

Dear Mr. Setlolela

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

I have a pleasure in advising you that the Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has agreed to approve your application for ethics clearance submitted for your proposal entitled:

An investigation of the values in education using one high school in Johannesburg as a case study

Recommendation:

Ethics clearance is granted

Yours sincerely

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

Cc Supervisor: Dr. N Carrim (via email)

Appendix B

PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Purpose: To understand from the principal's perspective what are the factors which contribute towards the high drop out rate as well as what he/she thinks can be done to counter the high drop out rate.

Interview data:

Date: _____

1. Statistics indicate a high drop out rate in Lesotho primary and secondary schools, in your opinion what could be contributing to this high drop out rate?
2. The Ministry of Education and Training among its plans is to increase the through put rates from primary to secondary. From the past two years how many learners have dropped out at your school?
3. How serious is the learners' drop out rate at your school?
4. Can you give me access to the school enrolment and drop out rates list?
5. At which grade/s do these learners tend to drop out?
6. From your observation, between boys and girls which learners tend to drop out more and are they older or younger, from which region that the learners come from is the drop out the highest?
7. How many of your teachers are qualified and how many are not?
8. Would you say relationships that exist between your teachers and learners are a good or bad?
9. Explain why you think the relationships are good or bad.
10. If a learner fails to pay his/her school fees what do you do?
11. Do you allow learners to come to school if they do not have school uniforms or prescribed textbooks?
12. Do you think that the Ministry and the existing policies in Lesotho are taking into account the kind of experiences you have in your school regarding learners who drop out? If so, how? If not, what do you think the

Lesotho Ministry of education and policies should do to address learner drop out rates in schools?

Appendix C

TEACHERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Purpose: To find out from the teacher's point of view what they see as contributing factors for learners' dropping out, finding out whether there are any structures inside school's that can be used to help learners that are disadvantaged.

Interview data:

Date:_____

1. How many learners in your class have dropped out since the beginning of this academic year of 2008?
2. From your observation, between boys and girls, which group drops out the most?
3. Are those who drop out usually older or younger? Provide as much detail as you can on what kind of learners have dropped out of your school.
4. When a learner suddenly drops out what do you as a teacher do? Do you accept it? Or do you try to tell them not to drop out? Provide as much detail as you can on what you do when a learner tells you he/she wants to drop out.
5. Is corporal punishment practiced in this school? Yes/no
6. What do you do when a learner is giving you disciplinary problems?
7. How do you relate with your learners?
8. Do you relate better with boys or girls?
   What do you think is the reason for your answer in question 8?
10. If a learner seems not to be paying attention in class what do you do?
11. If a learner reports an incident of bullying to you what measures do you take?
12. From your observation do boys get along well with other boys or

with girls?

13. Explain your answer in question 12 above.
14. What do you do when a learner does not have a prescribed textbook?
15. Do you think enough is being done in your school to counter the high drop out rate?

Appendix D

EX-LEARNERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Purpose: to mainly probe further what was found in the questionnaire responses..

Interview data:

Date:_____

1. When did you drop out of school?
2. Why did you drop out of school?
3. How were your relationships like with your teachers?
4. How did your fellow ex-learners treat you? Were they friendly or hostile towards you?
5. Explain your answer in question 4 above.
6. Did you feel safe at your ex-school's compound?
   Yes/no
7. If not, why did you not feel safe?
8. Have you ever experienced or seen any acts of bullying in your ex-school?
   Yes/no
9. If yes what did you do? And was anything done about it?
10. Did your ex-school have any sporting facilities? Yes/no
11. Did you take part in any and did you enjoy it?
12. Between boys and girls who did you get along better with and what do you think was the reason?
13. Did you have enough classrooms to accommodate all learners at your ex-school?
14. Do you want to go back to school?
15. If you had a chance of going back to school would you go back to your ex-school? Yes/no. Explain your answer.

Appendix E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EX-LEARNERS

Purpose: To find out factors that contributed to learners' dropping out and how they cope after dropping out.

Questionnaire data:

1. When did you drop out of school?

2. Why did you drop out?

3. Did you want to drop out of school?

   Yes/no

4. Give as much detail as you can for your answer in question 3 above

5. How did your ex-school respond when you dropped out of school?

6. How did your parents/guardians react when you dropped out of school?

7. What kind of relationship did you have with your ex-teachers?
   Good relationship/bad relationship
8. Provide as much information as you can for your answer in question 7 above.
9. With your fellow ex-learners, what was your relationship like? Good/bad
10. Give as much detail as you can for your answer in question 9 above.
11. Did you ever experience incidences of either verbal or physical abuse from your teachers or other learners? Yes/no
12. In either case, what did you do?
13. Who did you relate better with between boys and girls when you were at school? Boys/girls
14. Provide as much detail as you can for your answer in question 13 above.

15. How much did you pay for your school fees per year? And who paid for you?
16. What happened if you failed to pay you school fees on time?
17. What other expenses did you have apart from your school fees?
    List them.
18. Could you estimate how many learners were with you in a classroom?
19. Were your classrooms large enough to accommodate all the learners in the
    the class? Yes/no
20. Did you have science laboratory at your ex-school? Yes/no
21. If no how did you carry out your experiments?

22. Which sports facilities did you have at your ex-school?

23. Did you take part in any and did you enjoy it?

24. Would you want to go back to school? And if you were to go back to school Would you go back to the same school? If not why not?

25. What are you doing now after dropping out of school?

Appendix F

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR: THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

My name is Isaac Setlolela. I am a Masters in Education student at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. As part of my degree, I am conducting a research study on the factors that contribute towards the high drop out rate in Lesotho secondary schools. My aim in this research is to find out what factors contribute to the high drop out rate in Lesotho secondary schools. Also I want to find out what are the effects of dropping out on the lives of those who have dropped out. The request that I make is to be allowed to visit four schools so that I can get access to the schools registers as well as school data sets. These will help me to find names of those who have dropped out and locate them for the purpose of conducting interviews with the learners who have dropped out of school and to administer questionnaires with them. I will also interview the four principals and four teachers from these four schools. Those who participate will be informed that participation is voluntary and that any information which they provide will be treated with confidentiality and their anonymity will be ensured. Below is my number should you wish to find anything relating to my research.
Yours sincerely

Isaac Setlolela
Tel: 078 352 4858

I have been informed about this research and its purpose. I do hereby give Mr Isaac Setlolela permission to conduct this research in 4 schools in Lesotho.
Signature: _____
Date: _____

APPENDIX G

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

My name is Isaac Setlolela. I am a Masters in Education student at the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, South Africa. As part of my degree, I am conducting a research study on the factors that contribute towards the high drop out rate in Lesotho secondary school. My aim in this research is to find out exactly what are the contributing factors in the high drop out rate in Lesotho secondary school as well as looking at what can be done to counter this problem. I request that you as the parent/guardian of a learner who has dropped out of school to allow me to interview as well as administer questionnaires to these ex-learners. The contents of the interview will be audio taped for the purpose of analysis later on. This will help me very much in my research. Participation of these learners is absolutely voluntary; they can withdraw at anytime should they feel they do not want to continue. I will not use their names or names of their former schools at all. Information which they reveal to me will only be shared between me and my supervisor and will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Below is my number should your want to find out anything relating to my research.

Yours sincerely

Isaac Setlolela (078 352 4858)

I_____ hereby give consent for my child/ward to be part of this research. I have been informed about the content of this research, and understand that my child/ward will be asked to fill in a questionnaire and participate in an interview which will be audio-recorded.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES (PRINCIPAL)

I understand the aims of this research and the procedures involved. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw any time I want to. I understand that my name will not appear on the interview schedule and it will not be used in the final report. Any information I reveal to the researcher will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. I agree to take part in the study by answering questions that I can during the interview and be tape recorded.

Signature of the interviewee:_____
Date:_____

I Isaac Setlolela have explained the procedures and the aims of my research to the best of my ability. I have assured the participant that participation is voluntary and that he/she can withdraw at any time she/he wants to. I have also guaranteed the participant that information which will be revealed to me will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. No names or any revealing data will be used in my final report.

Signature:_____ Isaac Setlolela
Date:_____
Tel: 078 352 4858

APPENDIX I
INFORMED ASSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES (EX-LEARNERS)

I understand the aims of this research and the procedures involved. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw anytime I want to. I understand that my name will not appear in any way and that it will not be used in the final report.

Any information I reveal to the researcher will be treated with confidentiality and I agree to take part in the study by answering questions that I can during the interview as well as to be tape recorded. I again assent to filling in the questionnaires.

Signature of the interviewee:_____.

Date: _____.

I, Isaac Setlolela have explained the procedures and the aims of my research to my best ability. I have assured the participant that participation is voluntary and that he/she can withdraw anytime she/he wants to.

I have also guaranteed the participant that the information revealed to me in the interviews or in the questionnaire will be treated with confidentiality and that his/her names will not appear on the interview schedule and it will not be used in the final report.

Signature:_____ Isaac Setlolela

Date:_____

Tel: 078 352 4858

Appendix J

SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET FOR: EX-LEARNERS

My name is Isaac Setlolela. I am a Masters in Education student at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg South Africa. As part of my degree, I am conducting a research study on the factors that contribute towards the high drop out rate in Lesotho secondary schools.

My main aim in carrying out this research is to find out exactly what contributes to the high drop out rate and the effects that it has on the lives of those who have dropped out. My concern is also to find out what can be done in the future to counter this high rate of drop out.

Your participation in this study will be valuable. Please note that your participation is totally voluntary. There will be no negative repercussions should you choose not to participate in this project. Should you agree to participate in the study, you will be given a questionnaire to fill as well as take part in a group interview which will be audio taped. The filling in of questionnaires will take approximately 40 minutes. The interviews will take about 40 minutes, and will be done after I have collected and analysed the questionnaires. After completion of the questionnaire and interviews, all data that I collect will be used in my report.

Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time, should you feel that you do not want to continue. Information which I will collect from this study will be treated as private and confidential. Under no circumstance will any of your responses be shown to anyone other than my research supervisor and myself. No identifying data will be included in the final report.

Yours sincerely

Isaac Setlolela (researcher)
Tel: 078 352 4858

Appendix K

Please indicate with a cross (X) whether each of the following resources and facilities are available in your school. If they are not available, put a cross in the "does not exist" box. If they do exist, please indicate if you think they are "adequate" or if you think they are "not adequate".

	DOES NOT EXIST	**ADEQUATE**	**NOT ADEQUATE**
Classrooms			
Desks			
Chairs			
Chalkboards			
Chalk			
Chalkboard dusters/cleaners			
Textbooks			
Stationery (books, pens, etc.)			
Sports fields			
Sports equipment			
Laboratories			
Gymnasium			
Computer rooms			
Computers			
Toilets			
Water			
Electricity			
Staffroom			
Staff offices			
Feeding schemes			