The challenges of political transformation in education management: The case of Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education

By

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DECLARATION

Candidate’s Declaration

I hereby declare that this mini dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate’s Signature: _______________ Date: 03 – 08 - 2012

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ABSTRACT

Since 1994, the democratically elected ANC led government has committed itself towards achieving fundamental political transformation of, inter alia, the education system. The government has adopted policies and measures to bring about the goals of equity and redress, and to enhance democracy and participation of all groups on development and decision making processes at all levels. It is acknowledged that the present regime has accomplished a lot in terms of political changes in education within a short period of time and has made numerous strides in enhancing equity, redress, social justice, fair labour practice and transparency.

However, despite all these apparent achievements, this study shows that there have been a number of pitfalls and contradictions in the provisions that have affected the process of bringing about political changes and transformation in the Department of Basic Education. Factors such as political transformation, strategic planning, communication, political will and political deployment affected the formation and the implementation of policies vastly so in that political transformation was slowed down.

Hence, the problem this study addresses is the slow pace of political transformation as a result of lack of strategic planning, lack of communication, political deployment and political will in education management.

OPSOMMING

Sedert 1994, het die ANC se demokratiese verkiese regering hulself verbind tot politieke verandering insake die onderwys stelsel. Die staat het maatstawwe en beleid aangeneem met die doel om gelykheid te bewerkstellig en om deelname van alle rasgroepe op alle vlakke te verbeter. Dit word erken dat die huidige regering binne 'n kort tydperk baie bereik het insake politiese verandering in die onderwys. In die proses is verskeie pogings aangewend om gelykheid te verbeter, sosiale geregtelogie te verseker, regverdige arbeidsverhouding te praktiseer en deursigtigheid te verbeter.

Ten spyte van die duidelike prestasies van die regering bewys die studie dat daar verskeie slaggate en probleme is wat voorgekom het tydens die transformasieproses. Gebrekkige handelinge rondom. Politiese verandering, strategiese beplanning, kommunikasie, politiese reg en ontplooiing affekteer die formasie en die implementering van beleidsrigtings. Die probleem wat die studie aanspreek is die stadige proses van politieke transformasie as 'n
gevolg van swak strategiese beplanning, gebrek aan kommunikasie, ondeursigtige politieke ontplooiing en 'n gebrek aan politieke wilskrag in onderwys - bestuur.
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CHAPTER 1: THE CHALLENGES OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

1.1 ORIENTATION

Several aspects from the previous education system still exist, however, a process of rapid development and change is imminent. It is therefore virtually impossible to study the present South African education system without taking into account the previous one. The previous education system was based on the political principles of the pre-1994 era, namely those of ‘general’ and ‘own’ affairs. According to this system, the Department of National Education was responsible for providing the national educational policy regarding the minimum requirements for educational provision. This national policy was separately implemented for the four population groups, namely the Whites, Asians, Coloureds and Blacks, each with a central education department and its own education institutions (Steyn et al, 2001:14).

The Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education is undergoing changes in connection with administration and management. The transition of administration and management from the Limpopo Province to the Mpumalanga Province was not a smooth one. Some of the officials and civil servants hailed the change as unnecessary and uncalled for, while others were optimists and of the opinion that a new administration would usher in a new era characterised by transparency and healthy workmanship, as well as open doors for job opportunities. However, the transition was marked by a slow pace of transformation, seemingly because of the lack of strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and lack of political will (Human, 1998:46).

According to Duvenhage (2004), transformation, and more specifically political transformation, refers to the rapid, progressive, comprehensive and fundamental change of society (as a reaction against an unjust past), which takes the form of central planning (social and political engineering) with an emphasis on the management of change in general. Political transformation in South Africa aims at the attainment of the goal of ‘a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa’ (Duvenhage, 2004). In general, the success rate of transformation attempts is very low. Between 60% to 70% of all transformation projects failed as a result of reasons related to the following:
- A lack of cooperation at grass roots level,
- A lack of social and political control,
- Limited political, administrative and management capabilities,
- Unsuccessful institutionalisation,
- The ‘weak state syndrome’, which involves the unwillingness and inability of the state ‘to maintain social compliance with official laws, act decisively, make effective policies, preserve stability and cohesion, encourage societal participation in state institutions, provide basic services, manage and control the economy and retain legitimacy’ (Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008). Weak states are characterised by non-existent or unconsolidated democracies that also face problems of legitimacy; a lack of cohesion and national identity; varying levels of institutional capacity and the frequent inability of government to implement policy; and external vulnerability to international actors and forces as a direct result of their internal fragility. In essence, a weak state is a state that lacks social cohesion, an institutional core and organisational capabilities. In addition, the term also signifies a spectrum of conventional bureaucratic state capabilities that exist alongside strong informal political networks (Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008),
- Poor service delivery, and
- Inertia, i.e. lack of desire/ability to move or change (Soanes and Hawker, 2005:517).

Duvenhage (2004) maintains that political transformation as a political change process has the following dimensions:
- Reactive change that is often reactively motivated by an unacceptable past that has to be drastically changed.
- Progressive change lies in the projection of the future as the ideal condition to be achieved.
- Planned change refers to social and political engineering to give expression to progressive ideals. Such change in South Africa originates from documents such as The Freedom Charter (1955), The Harare Declaration, The Reconstruction and Development Programme and the Constitution (1996).
- Fundamental change in a South African context often refers to economic and social empowerment subsequent to political empowerment; the success of political
transformation is measured in terms of change with regard to other aspects of society. It also implies transformation of the value system. According to Human (1998:46), ‘...transformation is of no value unless it involves the transformation of the mind’.

- Rapid change implies that revolutionary results are required, but it has to be obtained through planned evolutionary methods.
- Non-violent change in the transformation mode relies on political management (Duvenhage: 2004).

According to Thompson and Strickland (2003:20), a strategic plan is a statement outlining an organisation’s mission and future direction, near-term and long-term performance targets and strategy. Similarly, Barnett and Wilsted (1989:8) maintain that strategic planning is a process that represents a part of strategic management. It is a process of analysing the opportunities and threats in the market place, while building the strengths and correcting the weaknesses within an organisation.

The tendency towards the political (cadre) deployment to crucial positions, on account of affiliation to a particular dominant political party by certain government officials, has escalated greatly. Davis (2005:5) therefore stresses the most important provision regulating the functions of the public service, that is, section 195 of the Constitution of the RSA of 1996. It contains the basic values and principles governing the public administration and reads as follows:

195(1) Public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the following principles: people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making; public administration must be accountable; transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated; public administration must be representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.
According to Manzini (2010), a lack of political will is actually overriding the views and ideas of political parties other than the governing one; the unwillingness to act or engage with views of other political parties because of not wanting to deviate from the policy of the ruling party; not looking at the flip side of the coin; and the party working within certain paradigms or confinements, viewing things through a particular lens, believing that the party’s policy is all embracing.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem this study addresses is the investigation of the slow pace of transformation as a result of lack of strategic planning, lack of communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and lack of political will in management and administration in the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education. Government officials face an enormous challenge in sensing the winds of change and recognising significant change early in order to initiate adjustments. In terms of the White Paper on Local Government (SA, 1998:8), the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education has undergone changes as a result of the amalgamation process. However, the administration of the Department is still organised in much the same way as previously, and has not made significant progress to transform its service delivery systems.

The administration is still characterised by hierarchical and bureaucratic line departments and authoritarian management practices. Frontline workers remain unskilled, and dis-empowered, and employees are not adequately represented in management echelons. In many cases, the lack of management systems and poor internal communication contribute to inefficiency in service delivery.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With the above discussion as the background, the following research question can be asked: Is the pace of transformation in the education component of the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education so slow that it has a negative influence on the management of education matters? This study therefore sought to find answers to the following specific questions.

1) What is the theoretical foundation of political transformation?
2) What is entailed in political transformation regarding strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and political will?
3) What is the current situation in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge regarding political transformation?
4) How should the current situation be changed to secure smoother political transformation?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
The research objectives of the study are outlined below.
1) To analyse and describe the theoretical foundation of political transformation.
2) To determine what political transformation entails regarding strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and political will.
3) To analyse what the current situation in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge is with regard to political transformation.
4) To determine how the current situation can be changed to secure smoother political transformation.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT
Steyn et al (2001:14) purports that in practice several aspects from the previous education system still exist, but simultaneously there is a process of rapid development and change going on. It is therefore virtually impossible to study the present South African education system without taking into account the previous education system. The previous education system was based on the political principles of the pre-1994 era, namely the principles of ‘general’ and ‘own affairs’. According to these principles, the Department of National Education was responsible for providing the national educational policy regarding the minimum requirements for educational provision and this national policy was separately implemented regarding the four population groups, namely the Whites, Asians, Coloureds and Blacks, each with a central education department and own education institutions.

Duvenhage (1998:7) maintains that change, more particularly radical change associated with political transformation, implies significant disruption and disequilibrium. New identities – however, these may be defined – are activated in the process of rapid change. An endeavour to implement policies comes into play as change becomes vital.
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following section will provide a brief overview of the research methodology used in this study. Thereafter, an overview will be provided of the different research methods applied to gather the data in the study. More details on the research methodology and design are provided in Chapter 4.

The researcher chiefly made use of the case study approach. This approach was used because it could help analyse what the current situation in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge is with regard to political transformation. Also, it could help determine how the current situation can be changed to secure smoother political transformation. Since the study intended to enhance a body of knowledge on the current situation in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge with regard to political transformation, the descriptive case study design is particularly appropriate. The function of the descriptive case study method was to describe systematically the facts and characteristics of the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge, the area of interest (Merriam and Simpson, 1995).

The study was also exploratory in nature. According to Brink and Wood (1998), exploratory research investigates problems that have not been previously studied and attempts to identify new knowledge, new insights, new understandings, and new meanings, and, in addition, to explore any other factors related to the topic. Babbie and Mouton (2001:79) say that this approach is typical when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study is relatively new. Political transformation, strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and political will affect educational management, hence the need to explore the pace of political transformation.

1.6.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology that was used in this study comprised two research procedures: a literature review and an empirical study. In answering the research questions and seeking to achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative empirical research design was followed by utilising data from primary and secondary sources. This research design aimed to answer the questions raised via exploratory and descriptive research procedures. This research design made possible an in-
depth understanding of the current situation in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge in connection with political transformation. Also, it could help determine how the current situation can be changed to secure smoother political transformation.

1.6.2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS
The two research procedures used in the study – a literature review and an empirical study – will now be described.

1.6.2.1 The Literature Review
In order to conduct research of this nature, one needs to consider what is already known. The literature review of the relevant sources related to the research project, therefore, featured prominently in this investigation. The researcher undertook a literature study to provide a broad overview of political transformation in educational management. In view of this, a wide range of journal articles, legislative and regulatory documents, books, theses, dissertations, newspaper articles and other articles, which have any relevance to the study, formed an important secondary source of the investigation.

The limitations of the study are discussed in section 5.5 of the final chapter.

1.6.2.2 The Empirical Study

For the purpose of this study, the research project was undertaken at the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education in the Mpumalanga Province, region of South Africa. The Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education was selected because of the apparently slow pace of political transformation of educational management that has been witnessed over the years. Furthermore, the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education is situated in the former Gazankulu and Lebowa Bantustans. These areas were characterised by ethnic and tribal infighting about educational management.

The qualitative research paradigm was used to conduct the study. According to Thorne (2000:15), qualitative research encompasses varying philosophical positions, methodological approaches and analytical procedures. The qualitative research approach was used, since it is best suited to help the researcher to understand human behaviour and functions. This approach was also good in helping the researcher understand how people feel, and why they feel as they
do. According to Babbie and Mouton (2007:270), qualitative research is the generic approach in social research according to which research takes as its point of departure the insider perspective on social action.

Babbie and Mouton (2007:270) further state that qualitative researchers always attempt to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that this approach is suitable where organisations, groups and individuals are studied. Therefore, this approach was deemed suitable for the research, since individuals and communities were studied.

1.6.2.3 Sampling

The participants of this study comprised three (3) school principals, personnel from the professional services (3), corporate (2), circuit coordination (3), communications (2) and transformation (2) sections that form part of the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education. A total of 15 participants were selected. These participants were purposively selected because they constitute the actors of educational management in the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education and, in the opinion of the researcher, can provide reliable information regarding the pace of political transformation in educational management. All participants at the time of the study had been in their respective offices in the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education for at least six years.

Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents from the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education. The respondents were selected based on their expertise and their job responsibility. According to Mason (2002:124), purposive sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to the research questions, the theoretical position and the analytical framework, the analytical practice, and most important, the argument or explanation that is being developed.

Mason (2002:124) further stated that purposive sampling is concerned with constructing a study group, which is meaningful theoretically and empirically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria, which will help develop or test the researcher’s theory or argument.
1.6.2.4 The Data collection

Data were collected first by conducting a literature review of relevant literature on political transformation in connection with educational management. After conducting a thorough literature review, the data were then collected by doing semi-structured interviews on purposefully selected individuals. Data was also collected by observing the day-to-day activities of the two District Offices namely, Hoxane Multi-Purpose Centre and Mapulaneng Educational Development Centre. The ‘observer-as-participant’ approach was used. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:404), in the ‘observer-as-participant’ approach the observer is known to the group as the researcher and maybe has less extensive contact with the group. In addition, records in the form of policy documents were studied. Data was collected regarding the individual(s), programme(s), or event(s) on which the investigation is focused. These data collection techniques included observations, interviews, records, the library, the internet and documents such as newspaper articles. An extended period of time was spent on site interacting regularly with the focus group. Details about the context surrounding the case, including information about the physical environment and social factors that have bearing on the situation were recorded (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:135).

(a) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The individuals in top management, middle management and line management, were interviewed about facts, their beliefs and perspectives about facts, feelings, motives, present and past behaviours, standards for behaviour, that is, what they think should be done in certain situations, and conscious reasons for actions and feelings, for example, why people think that engaging in a particular behaviour is desirable or undesirable (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:145).

(b) Observations

Observation of day-to-day activities of the sections of the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education was done. The researcher described the study in order to obtain the participants’ consent. The observer was quiet and inconspicuous, meanwhile remaining friendly during the observations (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 138).
(c) Records

Records such as the policy documents, performance instrument monitoring tools, minutes of meetings, legal documents, journals, diaries, memoirs, interviews, speeches, and files were checked (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:87).

1.6.2.5 Data analysis

Qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded. The first step in the analysis involved transcription of audio-interviews into text. The texts were then coded into themes. Appropriate labels were then given to the categories that emerged. Field notes from the observation were analysed by looking for patterns and relationships. The data collected were transcribed into specific themes; and these were later used to analyze them. Policy documents were read to understand the content.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A letter requesting permission to conduct the research project was presented to the prospective participants (see Annexure A). The letter indicated the purpose of the research, and specified the kind of co-operation requested from the participants (the respondents). Before the data collection was commenced, the aim, purpose and importance of the research were explained to the respondents. As an obligation of ethical consideration, the participants in the research were informed that participation in the research was voluntary, and no one was forced to participate and that they were free to decline to take part, and could withdraw at any point in the research project (see Annexure B). Thus, the researcher dealt with the research subjects in an ethical and responsible manner. All ethical considerations, as stated by Babbie and Mouton (2004:520), were taken into account.

1.1 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The organization of the rest of the mini-dissertation is given as follows:

Chapter 1: Orientation and problem statement

This chapter provides an overview of political transformation, strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and political will.

Chapter 2: The theoretical foundation of political transformation
In this chapter, the researcher analyses and describes the theoretical foundation of political transformation by providing its definition, the rationale of political transformation, as well as its dimensions.

Chapter 3: Education in South Africa and in Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education

This chapter explores and analyses the current situation in education in South Africa and in Bushbuckridge with special reference to strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and political will.

Chapter 4: Empirical study: Data collection processes, analysis, coding and interpretation

In this chapter, the researcher determines whether data gained on political transformation in the education component of the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education indicates that it is so slow that it has a negative influence on education matters.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter summarizes the contents of this study and presents recommendations to secure a smoother political transformation in Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to determine what political transformation entails within the context of strategic planning, communication, the practice of political (cadre) deployment and political will. Due to the extent of the phenomenon and the constraints of a mini-dissertation, it is however not possible to elaborate on the total field of the subject in one chapter.

From a systems approach, political transformation is concerned with the identification of inputs from the environment, the analysis of the inputs, the developing of political strategies to address the inputs and the implementation of those strategies. Feedback will follow to see whether the implementation was successful (Human, 1998:116). The implementation of political transformation strategies must be properly controlled by the policy-makers and that implies normally that opponents of transformation have to be identified and by way of speech, neutralised. According to Drucker (1994:53), no century in recorded history has experienced so many political transformations and such radical ones as the twentieth century. They may turn out to be the most significant event of that century.

Duvenhage (1998:7) maintains that change, and more particularly radical change associated with political transformation, implies significant disruption and disequilibrium. New identities – however, these may be defined – are activated in the process of rapid change. An endeavour to implement new policies comes into play as change becomes vital. This is in line with the definition of policy by Ball (1994:14) as a representation encoded in a complex way via struggles, compromises, interpretations and reinterpretations and this information also decoded
in complex ways via the interpretations and meanings of actors in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context.

A policy is both contested and compromised, thus, changing over time. In other words, one should not see policy as something, which is happily accepted by everyone in society. In the main people will often disagree about policy. Hence, one can conclude that policy is a contested terrain. This is illustrated by the fact that there are very few societies in the world today which are homogeneous. Most societies are heterogeneous that is, they are made up of people of different social origins, different beliefs and religions. These groupings may have different values about education and many different ideas about the purpose of education. It becomes impossible for every single interest group to sit on a committee that formulates policy in order to ensure that everybody’s view is represented. This is the case at Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

According to Duvenhage (2004:33), political transformation has to do with the comprehensive and fundamental change of society (as a reaction against an unjust past) which takes on the form of central planning with emphasis on the management of change in general. Political transformation in South Africa aims at the attainment of the goal of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

2.2.1 Definition of political transformation

Duvenhage (2005:4) describes political transformation as the transition of one political dispensation to another. It may refer to a change in leadership or in political, economic and social policy. Political transformation may be defined, as mentioned, to a rapid, progressive, comprehensive and fundamental political change of society in the form of central planning (social and political engineering). Political transformation also refers to a change in political leadership as well as bureaucratic leadership. This is the case at Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education.

In general, the success rate of political transformation is very low. Between 60% to 70% of all transformation actions failed as a result of reasons listed below (Soanes and Hawker, 2005:517):

- Lack of cooperation at grass roots level,
- Lack of social and political control,
- Limited political, administrative and management capabilities,
- Unsuccessful institutionalisation,
- The ‘weak state syndrome’. The ‘weak state syndrome’ involves the unwillingness and inability of the state ‘to maintain social compliance with official laws, act decisively, make effective policies, preserve stability and cohesion, encourage societal participation in state institutions, provide basic services, manage and control the economy and retain legitimacy’. Weak states are characterised by non-existent or unconsolidated democracies that also face problems of legitimacy; a lack of cohesion and national identity; varying levels of institutional capacity and the frequent inability of government to implement policy; and external vulnerability to international actors and forces as a direct result of their internal fragility. In essence, a weak state is a state that lacks social cohesion, an institutional core and organisational capabilities. In addition, the term also signifies a spectrum of conventional bureaucratic state capabilities that exist alongside strong informal political networks (Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008).
- Poor service delivery, and
- Inertia, i.e. lack of desire/ability to move or change.

With this definition of political transformation in mind, the shift from past practices and dimensions of political change to current practices will be discussed.

2.2.2 Shift from past practices

Beckman and Sehoole (2004:147) state that the fact that South Africans have experienced different educational systems is a significant factor in the transition to a single, national non-racial system. It is therefore crucial to create a transformative, democratic mission and ethos in the new departments of basic education that can completely supersede the separate identities of the former departments. It is the joint responsibility of all South Africans who have an interest/stake in the education system to help build a just, equitable, and high quality education system for all the citizens with a common culture of disciplined commitment to learning and teaching. In this task, the best expertise and experience from the old ethnic departments will be indispensable, just as all inefficient and reactionary administrative and professional practices from the past dispensations must be jettisoned.
Steyn et al (2001:14) purport that in practice, several aspects from the previous education system still exist, but simultaneously there is a process of rapid development and change going on. It is therefore virtually impossible to study the present South African education system without taking into account the previous education system. The previous education system was based on the political principles of the pre-1994 era, namely the principles of general and own affairs. According to these principles, the then Department of National Education was responsible for providing the national educational policy regarding the minimum requirements for educational provision and this national policy was separately implemented regarding the four population groups, namely the Whites, Asians, Coloureds and Blacks, each with a central education department and own education institutions.

Rembe (2006:97) maintains that there were constraining factors identified in the education system before the 1994 election. These included unequal participation of different groups in education policies by decentralised structures and agents of various levels. This was exacerbated by a lack of capacity, lack of adequate resources, lack of commitment and will among some of the civil servants coupled with corruption and mismanagement. The legacy of apartheid and homeland governments, together with existing backlogs added another dimension. Consequently, there were challenges in the economic policy that led to inadequate funding for education.

Cloete and Maasen (2002:23) indicate that global capitalism was never going to make an equitable transformation possible and so the source of the widening gap between institutions must be found in globalisation. They further argue that the new bureaucracy did not have the experience or capacity to implement the over-ambitious, complex policy proposals that were initially developed by intellectuals outside of the bureaucracy.

Human (1998:23) believes that the future of South Africa can only be better and different for all its citizens if the state plays a dominant role in the transformation of society. This will only be possible if the state creates strong institutions, which will aggressively deliver new services and create new structures. Transformation requires extraordinary effort and insight because it is an ‘unnatural process’; it goes against the grain of our psychological and social constitution as creatures of habit. The odds are stacked against those who wish to truly transform the society. There are various reactionary forces that work against real transformation.
Similarly, Human (1998:10) stresses that change in societies is not a process of uniform and constant development, even though some theorists believe that it is possible to effect fundamental change continuously. Some describe change as ‘permanent’, ‘constant’ and ‘continuous’. In a spin-off of this school of thought, managers, politicians, and leaders are often described as agents of continuous change and champions of transformation, and metaphors such as ‘white wares’ and ‘chaos’ are used to describe the environment in which these managers operate. Bray and Beckmann (2001:32) maintain that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 underlines the importance of political transformation in South Africa and upholds the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. To this effect, it provides that good human resources must be cultivated in the public service and in this regard, the government pointed out in its White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) the need for transforming human resource management practices. Since education is such an important vehicle for political transformation, the management and development of human resources in education are vital policy levers in bringing about the ‘new South Africa’ as envisaged in the Constitution.

2.2.3 Dimensions of political change

Duvenhage (2004:43) maintains that political transformation as a political change process has the following dimensions:

- Reactive change that is often reactively motivated by an unacceptable past that has to be drastically changed.
- Progressive change lies in the projection of the future as the ideal condition to be achieved.
- Planned change refers to social and political engineering to give expression to progressive ideals. The planned change in South Africa originates from documents such as The Freedom Charter, The Harare Declaration, The RDP, and The Constitution (1996).
- Fundamental change in a South African context often refers to economic and social empowerment after political empowerment; the success of political transformation is measured in terms of change on other aspects of society. It also implies transformation of the value system. According to Human (1998:46), ‘...transformation is of no value unless it involves the transformation of the mind’.
Rapid change implies that revolutionary results are required, but it has to be obtained through planned evolutionary methods.

Non-violent change in the transformation mode that relies on political management.

With this conceptualisation of political transformation in mind, the focus will now fall on change and management.

2.3 POLITICAL CHANGE AND MANAGEMENT

The discussion will elaborate on strategic planning, communication, political and/or cadre deployment and political will. These are important aspects in describing political transformation and political change. As mentioned, political transformation is a rapid, progressive, comprehensive and fundamental political change of society, which also influences the management functions in an institution. Political transformation also refers to a change in political leadership as well as bureaucratic leadership. These aspects are also important in describing why transformation and change at the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education is presumably not running according to plan. This will be determined in the next chapter. It seems that the planning and communication processes lack depth and that political and cadre deployment and a lack of political will exist (Human, 1998:120).

Each of these aspects will be discussed next against the background of education departments.

2.3.1 Strategic planning

According to Thompson and Strickland (2003:20), a strategic plan is a statement outlining an organisation’s mission and future direction, near-term and long-term performance targets and strategy. By the same token, Barnett and Wilsted (1989:8) define strategic planning as a process that represents part of strategic management. It is a process of analysing the opportunities and threats in the marketplace, while building the strengths and correcting the weaknesses within an institution.

Van der Waldt (2004:100) outlines that strategic plans detail the vision, outcome and objectives that a particular department would like to achieve over a given period of time. Strategic plans also include information about the mix of outputs to be produced and plans about timelines, quantity and quality. Strategic plans usually cover more than one year of operations.
According to Human (1998:120), planning is often a repetitive task. It is one that involves extrapolating from the past in order to know what to do in the future. However, when the context changes, established players change their strategies, or new players enter the arena, one is forced to strategize. Strategy, in this sense, is about managing change. The strategist thus has to manage two contradictions. The first is the tension between the present and the future – the present education departments and the future departments. This involves a fundamental paradox of organisational life.

The relevant public sector institution becomes more efficient through the accumulation of experience, which establishes strong habits and fixed ways of doing things. The second paradox, which the strategist must manage, is the tension between the internal environment of the institution (education department) and the external environment. All public sector institutions are resource-dependent and thus inextricably intertwined with the context in which they operate. No institution is an independent and self-sufficient island, although its members may sometimes act as if this is the case. Public sector institutions exist and survive because they are important to their environment (Human, 1998:120).

Drucker (1954:98) noted that managers not only have to determine ‘what is’ the business of the public sector institution, but they have to determine ‘what will be’ the business in the future. Strategic planning is necessary because the environment that the institution operates in is constantly changing. There are many forces operating in the institution and most of them are outside of the institution’s control. To remain viable in the future, the institution must anticipate the force of changes and act to position itself for success.

According to Loock et al (2006:65), human resource management (HRM) in education has expanded and moved beyond mere administration of traditional activities. Today, HRM in education is much more integrated into both management and strategic planning processes of the education department. One reason for this expanded role is that the organisational environment has become more diverse and complex. Compared with a workforce historically dominated by white males in the middle- and top-management the current diversity in the workforce that includes sex, race, national origin, religion, age and disability presents new and different changes in government requirements, restructuring, technology and management approaches. Byars and Rue (2000:8) purport that organisations must get away from the tradition of ‘fitting employees
into a single corporate mould’. Everyone will not look and act in the same way. Institutions must create new human resource policies explicitly to recognise and respond to the unique needs of individuals.

In his 2010 State of the Nation speech, President Zuma (2010) maintained that the government is a performance-oriented state, which needs to improve planning as well as performance monitoring and evaluation. There is a need to integrate gender equity measures into the government programme of action. This action will ensure that women, children and persons with disabilities can access developmental opportunities. The work of education departments will be measured by outcomes, developed through performance monitoring and an evaluation system.

For the same reason, the president further indicated that the government has placed education and skills development at the centre of its policies. The public service has to respond to the call. In other words, officials should translate and enliven the pronouncements made by the President into faster action and improve department performance (Zuma, 2010).

2.3.2 Communication

Communication is a process of transferring information from one entity to another. It is a process whereby information is enclosed in a package and is channelled and imparted by a sender to a receiver via some medium. Communication is the transmission of ideas, information, opinions, attitudes and feelings through one or more media that produce some response. Effective communication is when the sender’s intended meaning and the receiver’s perceived meanings are virtually the same (Steyn and Van Niekerk, 2005:31).

According to Fielding (1997:29), people in organisations create meanings together by exchanging words and non-verbal messages. By doing this, they develop mutual expectations and begin to work as teams. This interaction creates information and messages. As the institution grows, communication structures have to be set up, developed and maintained. These structures in turn, restrict the ways in which information can flow upwards, downwards and sideways in an institution and also outwards from an institution.

Melkote (2003:135) says that the route of modernisation is to transform the people and to implant new values and beliefs. The transfer of values and information is to be achieved through ‘communication’.
According to Melkote and Kandath (2001:190), the role of communication is to transmit pro-development innovations and skills to an unsuspecting passive audience, mostly through the use of mass media. It is essentially a pro-persuasion exercise to win over followers to the new concept of development. One can in this instance think of new education legislation and the transmitting of it to the education departments. Snyder (2003:172) suggests that alternative pathways to development are put forward. An important element of these new conceptions of development is the participation of the affected people in development planning and implementation. Such participatory approaches stress the importance of the cultural identity of local communities and of democratisation and full participation at all levels of planning, development and the implementation of development initiatives and development communications.

Twigg (2004:166) maintains that functionaries now accept that they have to listen to the people, and problems and solutions must be collectively identified. According to Servaes (2004:61), participation is held as being necessary in order to share information, knowledge, trust, commitment and the right attitude in development planning and implementation. Communities should not be passive recipients of information; and development efforts must be based on faith in the people’s capacity to contribute and participate in the task of transforming society.

Fielding (1997:35) puts forward the argument that if an atmosphere of participation is to be created, there needs to be effective communication. This communication should take place in an atmosphere of trust. People also need to work in an atmosphere of understanding. Teamwork needs to be encouraged and the goals should be set by the whole group, rather than imposed on them. Managers need to coordinate activities and to encourage the flow of social and informative messages through the institution.

Institutions need to pay attention, both to the social value of communication in institutions, and to the productive value. The social messages in institutions are valuable for creating and maintaining relationships. The productive messages give information that gets the job done. The social messages reflect the attitudes, beliefs and expectations of the people who run the institution. People are not predictable and managers should understand that there is no single way to deal with the variety of human problems found in their institutions. It is important for them to be highly sensitive to people’s needs (Fielding, 1997:35). The question now is whether
the previously mentioned aspects are applicable in the education departments and, more specifically, in the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education. This will be addressed in the next chapter.

It is necessary that a public institution should endeavour to communicate its vision and mission through proper channels in order to ensure a shared understanding. In addition, political deployment is a factor that imposes a serious challenge (threat) to public sector institutions. The reason being that often people are appointed in positions they are not fit to occupy.

### 2.3.3 Political or cadre deployment

There is a growing tendency by certain government officials to carry out political or cadre deployment in crucial or strategic positions as a result of affiliation to a particular dominant political party. Reacting to President Zuma’s State of the Nation Address, Zille (2009) mentioned three points that are of particular concern. First, neglecting to mention the key requirement for an efficient public service, namely, public servants who have the necessary expertise to do their job and who are ‘fit for purpose’. Appointing the right people in the right positions is the most important determinant of good governance and service delivery.

If institutions are not backed up by a corpus of skilled, competent and dedicated officials, democratic institutions will atrophy and the public service will cease to be an engine of effective service delivery. Repaying political debts through ‘cadre deployment’ to top positions is the surest way of undermining good governance. If government officials want to make the state functional, they must reject the policy of cadre deployment.

Zille (2009) further illustrates that under the African National Congress (ANC) government, the state has been turned into a closed, patronage-based system – used to reward and repay a cabal within the ruling party through various forms of ‘deployment’. Loyal ANC cadres control all state institutions and serve the interests of a party rather than all the people, which, is in contrast to section 197 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This section provides that the public service should be representative of the people of South Africa. The inevitable result of this downward spiral into centralisation, cronyism and corruption is that state institutions are incapacitated, the state is criminalised and service delivery shuts down. ‘Loyal cadres’ are expected to put the party’s interests above non-party members or the ordinary people of the country. Cadre deployment has also become a vehicle for affirmative action. Too often,
public servants are handpicked by ANC cronies under the guise of affirmative action, regardless of their skills and fitness for purpose. This is an abuse of the concept of empowerment.

Second, President Zuma according to Zille (2009), must explain how he plans to make public servants accountable to the public they serve. It is all very well to talk about fighting corruption in the public service, as the president did, but what are the plans to achieve this.

Third, the intervention that President Zuma proposes is more central planning and greater centralisation of power, which is bound to weaken democratic institutions on lower levels and hamper the delivery of public service (Zille, 2009). She alleges that the President’s promises to ‘speed up the establishment of a single Public Service’ are worrying. The creation of a single public service is likely to reduce the provincial and local spheres of government to mere administrative arms of central government, which would be unconstitutional.

A single public service will enable the ANC government to use a centralised bureaucracy, accountable at national level, to impose its policies countrywide. This will undermine one of the cornerstones of democracy, which is that citizens should be able to choose the policies they think are best and change their government. It will remove vital checks and balances on power abuse. It will disempower local and provincial governments as agents of service delivery, and it will make public servants at local government level, accountable to a centralised bureaucracy.

To make the public service efficient and accountable, President Zuma’s government must take bold and decisive action. That means getting rid of cadre deployment, acting against corrupt public servants and empowering provincial and local governments to fulfil their service delivery functions. In terms of Section 197 (3) of the Constitution (1996), no employee of the public service may be favoured or prejudiced only because that person supports a particular political party or cause. Davis (2005:13) says that it is an imperative of the Government of South Africa that historic imbalances in South African society, which came about as a result of the apartheid ideology, should be redressed and that the inequalities and inequities of the past should be eliminated. There is a need to adhere to the constitutional provisions in all matters relating to appointments or promotions.

Responding to President Zuma’s State of the Nation speech, Zille (2010) argues that the speech was full of symbolism instead of giving some real substance to show exactly how the government will tackle the most serious issues the country faces. She further contends that there
are plenty of assertions about what government is committed to, but no explanation of how it will deliver on its promises. It is the ‘how’ not the ‘what’ that is important. It is easy to say what you want to do; it is far harder to say how you will achieve it. Without the ‘how’ the ‘what’ has little value. The reason that policies so often fail at the implementation stage are precisely because not enough thought has been given to the ‘how’.

In particular, issues related to race and gender are high on the priority list of the Government, and it is therefore to be expected that the national and provincial administrations in the country should be placing these matters in the forefront of their work. To emphasise this point, Section 195 (1) (i) provides that public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

Section 9 of the Bill of Rights embodies the fundamental right to equality. It provides, inter alia, that:

9 (1) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

(2) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.

(3) The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

Lubisi and Mapiloko (2010:6) reiterate that four out of five public servants are accused of fraud, corruption, mismanagement and nepotism in government. This comes at the same time that government is spending millions of taxpayers’ money to investigate misconduct in the public sector – while failing to take action against those implicated. Davis (2005:5) stresses that the most important provisions regulating the functions of the public service is section 195 of the Constitution. It contains the basic values and principles governing the public administration and reads as follows:
195(1) Public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the following principles:

(a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained;
(b) Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted;
(c) Public administration must be development-oriented;
(d) Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
(e) People’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making;
(f) Public administration must be accountable;
(g) Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information;
(h) Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated;
(i) Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

It seems evident that political or cadre deployment could also be relevant to education departments. Whether it is also the case at the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education will be examined in the next chapter.

2.3.4 Political will

According to Soanes and Hawker (2006:1189), political will is defined as an expression of desire, consent, or willingness. They further define it as expressing facts about ability and capacity. According to Manzini (2010), a lack of political will is actually overriding the views and ideas of other political parties; the unwillingness to act or engage views of other political parties because of not wanting to deviate from the policy of the ruling party; not looking at the flip side of the coin; and the party working within certain paradigms or confinement, seeing things through a particular box, believing that the party’s policy is all embracing. This means that they do not need inputs from other parties.
According to McLaughlin (1987:133-152), it is possible to build local capacity through training, if there is sufficient money. However, it is difficult to change people’s beliefs, attitudes and motivation. If a person thinks that a new policy is not worthwhile, or is inappropriate, or demands too much of him or her, they will simply ignore it, or even actively resist it. If a policy is based on values and beliefs that are different from a person’s values and beliefs, it will be very difficult for them to implement that policy. Essentially, policy cannot mandate what matters: it cannot force people to change if they cannot see the reason to do so.

Luyt (2010:6) argues that a lack of political will and shortage of human resources contributed to government’s inaction. The shortage of human resources also contributed to a situation where officials were suspended for a long time without action being taken against them. Policy serves as a guideline to regulate our actions, conduct and thus make people accountable as it is about rules and laws that policy documents impose. Policy provides us with procedures as to who will take action and prescribes the steps to be followed in dealing with transgressions. Policy also describes the vision and mission of an institution bearing in mind the democratic values supported through the co-operation of all stakeholders towards achieving a common goal. Policy serves as a benchmark in an institution.

The impression exists that in education departments, such as the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education, officials may think that new policies are not worthwhile, or are inappropriate, or demand too much of them, and as a result of this, they will simply ignore them, or even actively resist them.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Political transformation especially in South Africa plays a pivotal role in education management. In political transformation, central strategic planning is essential. It is also important to study the trends so that one can know precisely what the needs of the communities are. This can be made possible by analysing the environment, so that strategies can be identified and be used to engage in political transformation. The need to communicate with various stakeholders and the public domain, as a participatory measure, need not be over-emphasised.

People require both pressure and support to change and the necessary support to do so. To simply warn people that they must change their working style, or insist that such managers now work democratically is not very productive. People need support to see how they can implement
changes in the education department and they need the resources and personal development required to make the change.

It is apparent that the focus of this chapter was based on political transformation, strategic planning, communication, political deployment, and political will. Detailed information about these factors will be discussed thoroughly in chapter four when data analysis, data coding and data interpretation are described. The next chapter will focus more attention on the history of the district, education in South Africa, the situation in the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education, and the legislative framework that could have a negative impact on transformation.
CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African education system emerged in 1994 after a national history of three centuries of political fragmentation. Sixteen different geographically and ethnically based departments of education were merged into one system shortly after the advent of democracy in 1994. One of the most challenging tasks was to bring the education systems of the former semi-independent black ‘national states’ or ‘homelands’ (Bantustans) into the national fold. These historically disadvantaged areas tended to lag behind the previously more advantaged areas. As Matomela (2006:10) highlights, in some cases learners still walk as far as 20 km to school and have to bring their own water. This is the typical case in Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education, which is the focus of this study. This chapter will discuss a short history of education in Bushbuckridge, education in South Africa, historical background of Bushbuckridge District and education legislation since 1994.

3.2 SHORT HISTORY ON EDUCATION IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE

Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education is situated in the Mpumalanga Province. It had been part of the Limpopo Province since the 1994 demarcation of provinces, but the Department has now been reallocated to Mpumalanga Province due to pressure from the people living there. Today, the Bushbuckridge District is composed of two old apartheid homelands, namely, Gazankulu and Lebowa, as well as parts of what was then ‘White South Africa’ consisting of white-owned farms and state lands, including military reserves and a large airbase (Thornton:2002).
Over the past years, particularly before 1994, there was a constant conflict between the North-Sotho (especially the Pulanes) and Tsonga-speaking people. The conflict was over land, resources and especially, language. The administration of schools was dominated by Northern-Sotho-speaking people. This denied Tsonga-speaking people participative decision-making and led to conflict. This problem was further compounded by the fact that the two groups were contesting for power to run the district on a day-to-day basis. The Tsonga group argued that the administration of schools dominated by Tsonga-speaking people was not given the necessary attention when it came to the question of equity which was in direct contrast with the provision of section 195 of the Constitution which states that the administration should be representative of all the people of South Africa. Such problems still continue to exist. The former Gazankulu homeland regime reacted in such a manner that it brought about good infrastructure along the borders between the two former homelands, where learning institutions were built in order to cater for the disgruntled learners. However, the conflict continues and led to specific divisions.

The former Hoxane College officials, predominantly Tsonga-speaking people, who were deployed to the district after the closing of the colleges, wanted to retain the centre, its name and their language, and so did the Northern-Sotho-speaking people. As a result, Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education is now administered from two administrative service points, namely Hoxane Multi-Purpose Centre and Mapulaneng Educational Development Centre. The two administrations are pulling in different directions. The district is concurrently administered by an acting facilitating senior official of the Ehlanzeni District. In view of the background, this chapter will explore the current situation in Bushbuckridge, the history of the town, education in South Africa, and the new on education legislation since 1994. The essence of the quality of education that a district may offer depends largely on the extent and commitment to adherence to policy and legislative frameworks. Any strategic plan that deviates from the founding principles runs a risk of throwing the whole system into disarray. In this discussion, one will look at the extent to which the department of education at district level adheres to various national legislation, such as the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, SASA 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, Public Service Act 103 of 1994, The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000.
3.3 EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1976, education in South Africa was in turmoil and experienced a major crisis. This crisis was characterised by, among other things, the provision of equal access to schools, unequal educational opportunities, irrelevant curricula, inadequate finances and facilities, shortage of educational materials, the enrolment explosion and inadequate qualified teaching staff (Botha, 2002:361). In addition to these problems were others such as major inequalities in South African society, high dropout and failure rates, an examination orientation with a major emphasis on learning by rote, and unimaginative teaching methods. South Africa therefore faced enormous challenges.

Considering and addressing these challenges the author points out that change was necessary in South African education (Botha, 2002:361). The attitudes and values of most adult South Africans of this decade were formed in the apartheid era. As a result of the divisions that existed during this era, learners were not always taught to appreciate the different aspirations and perspectives of people from whom they were distanced. Educational change was required to provide equity in terms of educational provision and to promote a more balanced view of the South African society. The new, democratically elected ANC government has been striving to root out apartheid education and to develop a new vision of empowered citizen for the future South Africa.

Steyn et al (2001:14) purports that in practice, several aspects from the previous education system still exist, but simultaneously there is a process of rapid development and change going on. It is therefore virtually impossible to study the present South African education system without taking into account the previous education system. The previous education system was based on the political principles of the pre-1994 era, namely the principles of general and own affairs. According to these principles the Department of National Education was responsible for providing the national educational policy regarding the minimum requirements for educational provision and this national policy was separately implemented regarding the four population groups, namely the Whites, Asians, Coloureds and Blacks, each with a central education department and own education institutions.

Rembe (2006) maintains that there were factors identified in the education system before the 1994 election, constraints and unequal participation of different groups in education policies by
decentralised structures and agents of various levels. This was exacerbated by a lack of capacity, lack of adequate resources, lack of commitment and will among some of the civil servants coupled with corruption and mismanagement. The legacy of apartheid and homeland governments, together with existing backlogs added another layer. Consequently, there were challenges in the economic policy that led to inadequate funding for education. The findings of this study show that competing ideas and interests advanced by groups and networks influence decision-making, policy content and implementation. Therefore, some policies will reflect and maintain the interests of those individual actors, groups and policy networks that exerted most influence. The findings also reveal that institutional norms and rules, inadequate resources, lack of capacity and skilled human resources and economic environment, constrain decision making, policy content and implementation.

UNICEF SA (2008) says that South Africa has the ability to transform the education sector into one of the best on the continent. The groundwork has been laid – the country has adopted the approach of education for all, and development and reform initiatives towards these goals are integrated into national strategic plans, policies and programmes. Primary schooling is compulsory for children aged 7 to 15, while an integrated approach to early childhood development aims to give all children between birth and school-going age the best start in life. A No-Fee Schooling Policy has abolished school fees in the poorest primary schools across the country, helping to attract poor, orphaned, disabled and vulnerable children to school.

According to the SA Yearbook (2009/10), the Systems Planning and Monitoring Branch in the Department of Basic Education provides strategic direction in the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies, programmes and projects. Key policy issues for the next five-year period include:

- Finalising and implementing national norms and standards for providing school infrastructure and funding;
- Strengthening the national Education Management Information System to enhance planning through sample audits of provinces in data collection, development and implementation of the Learner Unit Record Tracking System, a school administration-management system and the Business Intelligence System;
• Analysing and reporting on education expenditure and investment, as well as promoting optimal budget processes to ensure access, equity and redress;
• Ensuring effective and efficient labour relations and the development of education staff to improve the quality of learning, teaching, developing and monitoring, and
• Providing legal and legislative services.

According to UNICEF SA (2008), the power of education to transform societies cannot be underestimated. Education can break the generational cycles of poverty and disease and is key to a nation’s development and prosperity. Quality education equips and empowers people with the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives, protect themselves against HIV and shape the course of their communities. Girls, in particular, benefit tremendously from a rights and gender-based approach to learning, which empowers them to challenge gender discrimination and take charge of their lives.

According to SA Yearbook (2009/2010), South Africa has one of the highest rates of government investment in education in the world. In 2009, following the appointment of the new government administration, the ministries of basic education and of higher education and training were established. The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, empowers the ministers to determine national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The principle of democratic decision-making is exercised within the context of overall policy goals. In determining policy, the ministers take into account the competence of provincial legislatures and the relevant provisions of any provincial law relating to education.

According to the SA Yearbook (2009/2010), the Department of Basic Education includes all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, as well as adult literacy programmes. Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels – General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education (HE). The GET band consists of the Reception Year (Grade R) and learners up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) qualification. The FET band consists of grade 10 to 12 in schools and all education and training from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels two to four (equivalent to grades 10 to 12 in schools), and the N1 to N6 in FET colleges. The HE band consists of a range of degrees, diplomas and certificates up to and including postdoctoral
degrees. These levels are integrated within the NQF provided by the South African Qualifications Authority.

The SA Yearbook (2009/2010) further states that learners attend school for 13 years. The first year of education, Grade R, and the last three are not compulsory. In 2009, of South Africa’s 24,974 schools, 14,485 were no-fee schools and about 1,500 were former Model C institutions.

3.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BUSHBUCKRIDGE DISTRICT

The Education District Department is called Bushbuckridge, and according to Thornton (2002), the town of Bushbuckridge is a small trading and administrative centre approximately midway on a north-south line between Nelspruit, the capital city of Mpumalanga Province and Tzaneen, a major centre of commerce and agriculture in the Lowveld of Limpopo (see Annexure E figure 1). Bushbuckridge is bounded on the east by the Kruger National Park, one of the largest game parks in South Africa and on the west by the sensitive watershed and forests of the Drakensberg Mountain range. The southernmost extension is formed by the great African rift valley and mountain system. Bushbuckridge is one such ridge, and is the feature from which the district takes its name.

The Bushbuckridge Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan (2010/2011:21) declares Bushbuckridge as a gateway to the major tourism attraction points in Mpumalanga and the south-eastern part of the Limpopo Province. (See Annexure E figure 1.) It is characterised by a high unemployment rate, poverty and unregulated influx of nationals from Somalia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. This district has a number of challenges to address, such as high poverty levels, crime, and unemployment, a backlog of service delivery, a skills shortage, high illiteracy, a rural nature, HIV/AIDS and inadequate access to basic services. The area has 213 primary schools, 119 secondary schools, one NEPAD e-school, four combined schools and a further education and training institution. Access to basic education is realized and made possible through the provision of free learner Support Materials and by also declaring other schools such as Mathibela High School, Shanke High School, Hobo Secondary, HoyoHoyo High School, and Mogoroshi High School as no-fee schools in trying to address the disparities of the past. Serious problems such as overcrowding, a high failure rate and poor education infrastructure and facilities are evident. Currently there are two public libraries to serve the community of
Bushbuckridge, one at Mkhuhlu and another at Dwarsloop. It is evident that they cannot satisfy the learning organisations within their proximity (GIS: school information).

According to Manyike (2010), the Bushbuckridge District had been part of the Limpopo Province since the 1994 demarcation of provinces, but people in the area felt that they should, for various reasons, i.e. economic progress, be incorporated into Mpumalanga Province. Bushbuckridge now has 14 circuits of education. According to Nyama (2010), a circuit is an area of land marked off by the relevant district department of education for administrative purposes, forming a link between schools and the district, whereby circuit managers are assigned a number of schools which they monitor and oversee. The population consists of Siswati, Sepedi, Xitsonga and Zulu-speaking people. Diverse cultures and religions are thus practised in this area.

Thornton (2002) points out that in 2007, the entire district was divided between two new provinces namely, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Historically, boundaries and centres of power of pre-colonial African politics had always had force in people’s imagination, but these became suddenly real points of negotiation with land reform initiatives. Initiatives began in 1992. The provincial governments of Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, both newly created out of the old Transvaal Province in 1994, could not agree over who should administer the Bushbuckridge District. People in the district believed that they were to be governed by Mpumalanga Province.

When it was finally decided that the district would be part of the much poorer Limpopo Province, activists mounted angry protests against the central government decision, while the provincial ANC party endorsed and supported the decision. Great resentment has continued to exist at the local level until this day (Thornton, 2002).

For the same reason, Thornton (2002) maintains that a complex political terrain overlies environmental and ecology issues. The district is composed today of inhabitants, from two old apartheid homelands, Gazankulu and Lebowa, as well as parts of what was then ‘white South Africa’ consisting of white-owned farms and state lands, including military reserves and a large air-base. The border of Bushbuckridge was patrolled by the military to prevent infiltration of anti-apartheid forces until the early 1990s and was controlled by electric fences. While the Kruger National Park and other nature, forestry and watershed reserves were controlled by the Transvaal Parks Board, the homelands were divided into Tribal Trust Lands and ruled by Tribal Authorities, mainly chiefs. The remaining land called ‘common South Africa’ or White South
Africa, mostly white-owned farms and state land was controlled from Pretoria by the central government (Thornton:2002).

3.5 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION.

The Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education uses two administrative offices, one based at Hoxane Multi-Purpose Centre (former Hoxane College of Education) and the other at Mapulaneng Educational Development Centre (Mapulaneng EDC formerly Mapulaneng College of Education). Bushbuckridge has, as mentioned, a high unemployment rate and depends mostly on seasonal workers. As of now, the envisaged transformation in the education management of the district has not taken off the ground. The use of two administrative offices worsens the situation even more. One may conclude that it is a waste of resources and duplication of programmes that they operate in two centres, namely, Hoxane Multi-Purpose Centre and Mapulaneng EDC (See Annexure E figure 2). These different geographically and ethnically based departments of education cause division and separate people along tribal and ethnic lines.

The Hoxane administrative office, which was administratively based in the former Gazankulu homeland, consists mainly of Tsonga-speaking people. This office was well administered, especially as this homeland was well provisioned in terms of educational infrastructure, compared to the Mapulaneng administrative office, which was poorly administered, as schools did not have proper classrooms, sanitation and running water. These sentiments were echoed by Matomela (2006:10) when he reported that in some cases learners still walked as far as 20 km to school and had to bring their own water. Among the teacher unions, there is a general impression that the provincial departments of education are neglecting these schools.

The departments of education supply little transport for the learners, they do not train members of governing bodies (Maluleka, 2008) for their tasks, the feeding schemes are inadequate, or inconsistent, and the lack of infrastructure (such as electricity and new textbooks) at schools does not receive adequate attention. Renovation programmes are far behind schedule (Mbeki, 2006:5). Special efforts by the provincial departments are required because of the abject poverty still prevalent in the rural areas (Mbeki, 2006:5). Thus ethnicity, particularly tribalism, continues to
exist even now, so much so that the pace of political transformation becomes very slow (Matomela, 2006:10).

Presently, both administrative offices are in a state of dilapidation, as they are not properly administered. There has to be a management programme in place to ensure that the surroundings are neat so that the environment is user friendly. From the look of things, there is no proper administration for these building structures.

More likely than not, the matriculation results are in shambles due to education management problems. Poor planning, for instance, is caused by the fact that both administrations are focussing on their own administrative activities, which leads to uncoordinated activities. The existence of the two administrative offices thus hinders coherence. The administrative office at Hoxane seems to receive more attention in terms of resources. This office becomes a centre of focus as more day-to-day administrative work is done there, while the office at Mapulaneng is only used on an emergency basis, for instance when files for educators and other personnel are needed (Sibeko, 2010).

This demands that there has to be a managerial decision to curb this malpractice of overspending. The Batho Pele principle is compromised. For example, employees may need their files urgently, but then they are delayed because they have to be checked at the Mapulaneng administrative office. In order to save the cost, activities have to be integrated into a single locale. However, this district is undergoing a turn around strategy, which is as a result of the dissolution of the defunct Bushbuckridge region. It is now administered concurrently with the Ehlanzeni District by an acting facilitating official. This facilitating officer is responsible for the smoother transition of the new district, called Bohlabela District. Another burning issue is the poor matriculation results in Bohlabela District (Ndlovu, 2010).

For now, there is currently in place an intervention by the provincial government of Mpumalanga to rescue the district from the high failure rate of matriculants. There are attempts to resuscitate the culture of teaching and learning, which is welcomed by various stakeholders, including parents, SGBs and teacher formations. The status quo did not change, as the modus operandi is still to use the prescriptions of the former Gazankulu and the Lebowa homelands, respectively. For example, the question of a language is still a problem in schools based in the former Gazankulu, which are still predominantly using Tsonga. They, therefore, pose a serious problem
because it contravenes the provision of the Constitution Section 30 and Section 6 of the SASA Act 84 of 1996, which determine language policy in public schools.

Bearing in mind the problems mentioned, it is necessary to analyse the education system in South Africa to contextualise the education activities in Bushbuckridge.

3.6 A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION

Steyn et al (2001:14) purport that in practice, several aspects from the previous education system still exist, but simultaneously there is a process of rapid development and change going on. It is therefore virtually impossible to study the present South African education system without taking into account the previous education system. The previous education system was based on the political principles of the pre-1994 era, namely the principles of general and own affairs. According to these principles, the Department of National Education was responsible for providing the national educational policy regarding the minimum requirements for educational provision and this national policy was separately implemented regarding the four population groups, namely the Whites, Asians, Coloureds and Blacks, each with a central education department and own education institutions.

In the White Paper on Local Government (SA, 1998:8), the system of general and own affairs underwent huge changes as a result of the amalgamation process. In future, all race groups in the country were to be represented in one Education Department. Despite the current changes in education, the administration in education is still organised or structured in much the same way as before and many have not made significant progress with respect to transforming service delivery systems. Many administrations are still characterised by previous hierarchical and bureaucratic line departments and authoritarian management practices. Frontline workers remain de-skilled, and disempowered, and people are not adequately represented in management echelons, i.e. not adequately represented in levels or ranks in an organization. In many cases, the lack of management systems and poor internal communication contribute to inefficiency in service delivery.

3.7 EDUCATION LEGISLATION SINCE 1994

According to Botha (2002), when the new democratically elected government assumed political power in 1994, they inherited an education system consisting of 14 different and independent
departments, which had to be consolidated into a single national entity. The quality of education offered under the apartheid system, specifically to Black learners in the Independent States, was very poor. New legislation was thus promulgated by the new government to address the outdated laws of the old system.

Oosthuizen and Van der Westhuizen (2003:15) and Joubert (2003:90) state that the Constitution is the supreme law of the country and determines the powers and functions of the central organs of the state. Section 195 (1) of the 1996 Constitution provides principles that should inform Public Service delivery such as the following: there has to be good human resource management, career-development practices to maximise human potential must be cultivated; services must be provided impartially; objectivity; fairly; equitably; and without bias; and people’s needs must be responded to. It can also be concluded that the introduction of new legislation since 1994 was not happily accepted by everyone in society. In addition, it was also difficult for government officials to follow the statutes to the letter, mainly because of lack of exposure such that they acted beyond their legal authority. The success of legislation depends on capacity and will. The following are some of the more important acts related to education:

3.7.1 National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996

This Act provides a framework for the determination of a national policy on education. It also provides the legislative framework within which the South African Schools Act (SASA) is situated. It determines the national policy for education with the purpose of facilitating the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one that serves the needs and interests of all and upholds their fundamental rights. It identifies a list of matters on which the minister may determine national policy. In terms of Section 3(4), for example, the planning, provision, financing, staffing, co-ordination, management, governance, programmes, monitoring, evaluation and well-being of the education system, establishment and registration of educational institutions, compulsory school education and admission of learners to educational institutions are controlled. This section also regulates the determination of the age of admission to schools, language in education, as well as control and discipline of learners and prohibition of corporal punishment (NEPA No 27 of 1996).

3.7.2 The South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996
The aim of this Act is to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith (SASA No 84 of 1996).

According to Shaba et al (2003:23), the following important points are the essence of the SASA:

- **Historical background:** before the SASA in 1996, the South African education system was characterised by racial discrimination of unparalleled proportions. Hence there is a history of racially based legislation like the Bantu (Black) Education Act No 47 of 1953, the National policy for General Education Affairs Act No 10 of 1986, the Education Affairs Act No 70 of 1988 and the Education and Training Act No 90 of 1979. The SASA of 1996, however, repealed all the above acts and thus attempted to undo all racial discrimination in education.

- **Improving education:** a further basic aim of the SASA is that the quality of education of all learners must be improved. For example, there have to be better-trained educators, better methods of teaching and better school conditions.

- **A culture of human rights:** through various provisions, the SASA, within the context of the new constitutional dispensation, aims at ensuring a culture of respect for fundamental human rights as enshrined in Chapter 3 of the Constitution.

- **Heterogeneous character of the South African society:** the SASA recognises the fact that South Africa consists of different language and cultural groups. The rights of such groups, whether they are in the minority or majority in respect of language and culture, are guaranteed by this Act.

- **Transparency and consultation:** one fundamental aim of SASA is to ensure a culture of transparency and consultation amongst all stakeholders in education. This gives rise to a partnership amongst learners, educators, parents, the department and the private sector, and thus ensures accountability in education.

### 3.7.3 Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998

On 2 October 1998, the EEA of 1998 replaced the EEA No 138 of 1994. This Act provides for the employment conditions of educators and applies to educators employed in Public Schools, further education and training institutions, departmental offices and adult basic education centres. The Act only applies to educators employed in terms of the EEA, 1998 and excludes
educators employed by governing bodies. It clearly stipulates the different categories of employers for educators in Section 3 as follows: the DG is the employer of education in the services of the Department of Education (National Department of Education (NDE)); the HOD is the employer of educators in the services of the Provincial Department of Education (educators at head offices, regions, districts, circuits and learning institutions); the Minister of Education is the employer for purposes of the salaries and conditions of service for all educators; for the purpose of creating posts in the NDE, the Minister of Education is the employer whilst the MEC in the province is the employer at provincial level; a public school is the employer of educators employed by the governing body outside the EEA, 1998, in circumstances where such a governing body pays for the salaries of such educators and determines the conditions of service for such educators; and a further education and training institution may also be the employer in terms of the EEA, 1998 and the PSA, 1994 for educators and non-educators respectively (EEA No 76 of 1998).

3.7.4 South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act 31 of 2000

SACE is a professional body of educators that regulates the teaching professional ethics. Each educator who wants to be employed has to be registered with this council. The educators who are registered with the South African Council for Educators acknowledge the noble calling of their profession to educate and train the learners of our country; acknowledge that the attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct of the teaching profession determine the quality of education in this country; acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa; commit themselves to do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession, as expressed in this code; and act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute.

3.7.5 Public Service Act (PSA) 103 of 1994

Directors-General (DG) of education, the deputy-directors general, chief directors and most directors in education including public servants employed by the state in the departmental offices and institutions of learning and other non-educator personnel are all employed in terms of this Act. A secretary or administration clerk employed by the state and not the governing body in a public school, technical college, etc., is not employed in terms of the EEA, 1998. Instead, such a
person is employed in terms of the PSA. The conditions of service of such a secretary or clerk differ from those of educators although they are employed and work alongside each other in the same educational institution or office. The Act also provides conditions such as:

- Appointment, promotion and transfer of public servants;
- Termination of service;
- Obligations, rights and privileges of officers and employees; and
- Miscellaneous issues such as remuneration of officers, limitation of actions, limitation of liability, regulations and the Public Service staff code.

3.7.6 The Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995

The purpose of this Act is to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace by fulfilling the primary objects of this Act, which are: to give effect to and regulate the fundamental rights; to give effect to obligations incurred by the Republic as a member state of the International Labour Organisation; to provide a framework within which employees and their trade unions, employers and employers’ organisations can collectively bargain to determine wages, terms and conditions of employment and other matters of mutual interest and formulate industrial policy; and to promote orderly collective bargaining, collective bargaining at sectoral level, employee participation in decision-making in the workplace and the effective resolutions of labour dispute (LRA 66 of 1995).

3.7.7 Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) 75 of 1997

The main purpose of this Act is to give effect and regulate the right to fair labour practices conferred by Section 23(1) of the Constitution. Section 3(1) of this Act clearly states that it applies to all employees except members of the National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service. The main aim of the Act is to improve minimum conditions of employment. It lays down basic standards for working time, leave and notice periods, it sets certain prohibitions and outlines the extent and the circumstances under which these standards may be varied. It also regulates the extent to which the legislation affects:

- Agreements; Section 5 states that anything done under this section takes precedence over any agreement, whether entered into before or after the commencement of the Act;
• The contract of employment: Section 4 states that a basic condition of employment contained in the Act constitutes a term of any contract of employment except to the extent that any other act provides a term that is more favourable to the employee, or the basic condition of employment has been replaced, varied or excluded in accordance with the provisions of the Act, or a term of the contract of employment is more favourable to the employer than the basic conditions of employment.

3.7.8 Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

The aim of this Act is to provide for employment equity and to provide for matters incidental thereto. Recognising that as a result of apartheid and other discriminatory laws and practices, there are disparities in employment, occupation and income within the national labour market; that those disparities create such pronounced disadvantages for certain categories of people that they cannot be redressed simply by repealing discriminatory laws, Therefore, in order to promote the constitutional right of equality and the exercise of true democracy; eliminate unfair discrimination in employment; ensure the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination; achieve a diverse workforce broadly representative of our people; promote economic development and efficiency in the workforce; and give effect to the obligations of the Republic as a member of the International Labour Organisation.

3.7.9 Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000

This Act seeks to give effects to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and the right to written reasons for administrative action. ‘Administrative action’ in terms of the Act simply means any decision taken or any failure to take a decision by: an organ of state when exercising power in terms of the Constitution or a provincial constitution and exercising public power or performing a public function in terms of any legislation; or a natural or juristic person, other than an organ of state, which exercises public power or performs a public function in terms of an empowering provision, which adversely affects the rights of any person and which has a direct, external legal effect, but does not include some of the administrative actions specifically alluded to in Section 1 (b) of the Act. An educator aggrieved as a result of non-promotion, for instance, may now use the provisions of this Act to demand reasons for such non-promotion in order to weigh the prospects and merits of a labour dispute on promotion.
3.8 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 195 (1) of the Constitution 1996 provides principles that should inform Public Service delivery such as the following: there has to be good human resource management, career-development practices to maximise human potential must be cultivated; services must be provided impartially; objectively; fairly; equitably; and without bias; and people’s needs must be responded to. From critical analysis, one can deduce that despite the good intentions of the legislation and policies, there is one dominating factor, which is a teacher formation (union) that has dominion over others particularly when it comes to appointment and the absorption of civil servants into promotional posts. The fact that the union is vocal and uses all the tactics at its disposal, means that people are unduly appointed, which in one’s view is nepotism at its best, or worst. It is still difficult to form a single united department of basic education as a result of the current operating administrations, such as the Hoxane Multi-Purpose Centre and Mapulaneng Educational Development Centre.

In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, (SASA) Section 10 (1), no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner. Some of the provisions envisaged by the statutory framework cannot be realised in that teachers still believe in the use of corporal punishment as a way of restoring order and stability in schools. This is surprising given the culture of human rights and democracy that was introduced in the country sixteen years ago. The essence of the matter is that the rights are coupled with responsibilities, which apply to learners, teachers, parents, SGBs, the district, the provincial department of education as well as the state. Education is an enterprise comprised of varied stakeholders who are united in ensuring that the goals are realised. It is a partnership.

Section 17 of the Employment of the Educators Act 76 of 1998, states explicitly that educators who have sexual relationship with learners should immediately be scrapped from the roll of educators. Yet, teachers continue to molest and abuse learners despite the provisions. Another worrying factor is that one has never heard of SACE taking decisive actions against perpetrators of abuse and molestation within the district, despite it being a daily occurrence in schools.
Section 18 (1) (j) of the Employment of Educators Act, No 76 of 1998, stipulates that misconduct refers to a breakdown in the employment relationship and an educator commits misconduct if he absents himself from work without a valid reason or permission. Furthermore, teachers continue to absent themselves from work without valid reasons and also fail to honour their classes. In trying to deal with this unruly behaviour, principals do take disciplinary measures, but unfortunately they do not know the procedures to be followed in disciplinary hearings, which poses a serious threat to the working relations within institutions. However, in terms of the LRA, No 66 of 1995, the district is doing fairly well in that there is intervention that tries to mitigate problems emanating from abuse of liquor and teachers who frequently absent themselves without valid reasons.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the current situation in Bushbuckridge; the history of the town; education in South Africa and the new legislation since 1994. The essence of the quality of education that a district may offer depends largely on the extent and commitment to adherence to policy and legislative frameworks. Any strategic plan that deviates from the founding principles runs a risk of throwing the whole system into disarray. In this discussion, the researcher looked at the extent to which the department of education at district level adhered to national legislation such as the Constitution, National Education Policy Act; SASA; Employment of Educators Act; Public Service Act; The Labour Relations Act; Basic Conditions of Employment Act; Employment Equity Act; and Promotion of Administrative Justice Act.

In chapter 4, the emphasis will be on data collection processes, data analysis, data coding and data interpretation. Data collection techniques such as observations, interviews and checking of records and documents will be made. Data will be gathered in various administration sections within the district namely, professional services, corporate services, circuit co-ordination, communication, and transformation. Observations will be conducted in the two district administrative offices, two circuit offices and four schools. Interviews will be held in the two district administrative offices, the two circuit offices, the four schools and also the two union bases.
CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL STUDY: DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES, ANALYSIS, CODING AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a case study focussing on the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education. According to Cohen, et al. (2000:181), a case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle: that is, it is ‘the study of an instance in action’. Case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis. Case studies can establish cause and effect, indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. Contexts are unique and dynamic hence, case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance. With this as point of departure, this chapter will be presented.

In chapters 2 and 3, an overview of discourse and the role it played was provided. In this chapter, the findings of the study will be presented and discussed. The first part of the chapter provides information on how the research was planned and undertaken. The discussion in this section will include an explanation of the research design, how the research was planned and undertaken, as well as the reason for the selection of the methodology utilised in undertaking the study. The second part focuses on how the actual empirical research unfolded; and it presents and discusses the findings that were derived from the study. The manner in which data was collected and analysed, in order to underline the aspects mentioned in the first paragraphs, will be discussed in this chapter.
4.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

Data was gained from the following organisational components within the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education, namely:

- Professional services,
- Corporate services,
- Circuit co-ordination services,
- Communication services, and
- Transformation services.

The Department of Bushbuckridge District of Basic Education provided an organisational chart that assisted the researcher in selecting the organisational components which acted as basis of the study. Each organisational component is represented by a section head from the district itself, two circuits and four schools. The individual heads of the organisational components being five chief directors, with two circuit managers, and four school principals. In addition, two participants were selected from two teacher unions. The reason for this is that their experience is likely to produce valuable data for the study (see organisational chart in annexure F).

In effect, the respondents were selected with a specific purpose in mind, which reflects particular qualities of the officials chosen and their relevance to the topic under investigation. A non-probability purpose sampling technique is followed where one will gain information from the participant’s points of view. One justification for using a non-probability purposive sampling is that it stems from the idea that the research process is one of ‘discovery’, rather than a process of testing hypotheses (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:206). It is a strategy that is described as ‘emergent and sequential’. Almost like a detective, the researcher follows a trail of clues, which lead the researcher in a particular direction, until the questions have been answered and the phenomenon can be explained (Lincoln and Guba, 2003:105).

4.2.1 Data collection

Data was collected from individuals in the mentioned components on which the investigation focused. Data was collected by means of:

- Observations,
• Conversations/interviews, and
• Analysis of official records and documents.

Each of these techniques will be discussed next.

4.2.1.1 Observations

Observations were conducted over a period of four months in the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education. The two district administrative offices namely, Hoxane Multi-Purpose Centre and Mapulaneng Educational Developmental Centre acted as bases; visits and observations were made regarding structures, functions and personnel. These visits totalled 12 encounters per administrative office, 12 visits per circuit and 12 visits per school.

In terms of the basic functionality of the district, the observations reveal that there are effective policies and procedures in place since 1994, which were developed by the provincial department of basic education. The implementation of these policies and procedures, however, lacks sound principles, such as accountability and legitimacy. Systems and procedures to deal with absenteeism and late coming were not well monitored. Some offices were even closed during working hours. Leaders at various levels of management within the District Department of Basic Education did not provide clear strategic direction.

The study also indicated that there were problems with communication aspects. The management did not effectively communicate its intentions to other stakeholders and schools. This poor communication situation was further compounded by a defiance campaign orchestrated by teachers’ unions who were not happy about poor services to address teachers’ needs. Among the teacher unions, there was a general impression that the provincial departments of education were neglecting the schools.

Teacher unions also argued that there was political interference, especially when it came to appointments of senior managers. Teacher union officials manipulate the appointment of staff based on membership of a particular union (Hayward, 2011:15). It also emerged that challenges facing the district were discussed, such as centralisation of power and poor planning. Finances were centralised by the province, but there has been misappropriation of provincial funding which was earmarked for skills development training. Regarding employee development, there is, however, progress, even though the gap is not yet narrowed.
Most of the employees still lack proper skills. On the other hand, the provincial department of education also failed to pay service providers, which in turn, hampers the training action (Hayward, 2011:15).

Hoxan Multi-Purpose Centre and Mapulaneng Educational Development Centre – are noted for their dilapidated building structures, and unattended programmes to look after basic facilities. There are no preventative maintenance programmes in place for ensuring that the basic facilities of the institutions such as toilets, are repaired on a regular basis. Observation also indicated that as far as institutional infrastructure is concerned, buildings are old and dilapidated. There are no systems and programmes to monitor the use and maintenance of the buildings and surroundings. The surrounding areas are not maintained and for instance, there is no proper supply of water and sanitation.

4.2.1.2 Conversations and interviews

Unstructured conversations as well as semi-structured interviews were conducted with officials at the relevant institutions. The conversations were recorded and described as field notes. Semi-structured interviews were also utilised during the research.

Interviews were often in the form of brief conversations during office hours, interviews by appointment and phone conversations. Interviews were also conducted with participants with the view to establish how they interact with programmes and events and how they affect the management of education in the process of political transformation. Interviews were taped and have been transcribed in-depth; observer comments were embedded in transcribed text as reviewed. Informal conversations were written up as soon as possible, and when possible, were written up during conversations according to the comfort level of the participants whereby their inputs were noted.

4.2.1.3 Official records and documents

Official records and documents were another source of information utilised to gain information on the topic. Files were examined and the focus fell on political transformation, strategic planning, communication, appointments, skills development, procedures and structures. This information proved to be of specific value for this study.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS
According to Mouton (2001:108), data analysis involves “breaking up” the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. The purpose of analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one’s data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, constructs or variables. Analysis helps the researcher to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data.

After completing the data collection stage and when qualitative data from field sources such as interviews were rendered into textual form by transcription, as suggested by Lee and Fielding (2004: 53), it was found that large volumes of data had been accumulated. Data was organised from observations, interviews and records into what Yin (2003) calls a case study database. The case study database was organised into a chronological order so as to move through the data from the beginning to the end of the process. According to Merriam (1998:178), this allows one to perceive the progression of the process throughout and to make sense of the data. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:136), data analysis in a case study typically involves the following steps:

- Organisation of details about the case: the specific facts about the case are arranged in a logical order.
- Categorisation of data: categories are identified that can help cluster the data into meaningful groups.
- Interpretation of single instances: specific documents, occurrences, and other bits of data are examined for the specific meanings they might have in relation to the case.
- Identification of patterns: the data and their interpretations are scrutinised for underlying themes and other patterns that characterise the case more broadly than a single piece of information can reveal.
- Synthesis and generalisations: an overall portrait of the case is constructed. Conclusions are drawn that may have implications beyond the specific case that has been studied.

The multiple sources of data collection were used to ensure reliability and validity. These two aspects will be discussed next.

4.3.1 Reliability
According to Merriam (1998:205), reliability is conceptualized in terms of how reliable, accurate and precise the research tools or instruments are, determined empirically through several types of procedures and whether the results are consistent with data collected. In order to achieve reliability in this study, research questions and interview questions were pre-reviewed in a pilot study (Hoxane EDC), to check for unclear and ambiguous questions. In order to be as non-threatening as possible to participants and to ensure reliability of the data, the participants were informed beforehand about the mission of the researcher within the district. Participants were encouraged to air their views about the visit of the researcher to the district.

Reliability as prerequisite in qualitative observation revolves around detailing relevant information correctly. This can be acquired by following the suggestion of Spradley (1980:73) that observers should keep short notes made at the time and then expand the notes as soon as possible after each field session.

4.3.2 Validity

Maxwell (1996) indicates that the validity of an instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. However, qualitative research generates data that do not take the form of a clearly standardized set of measurements. To ensure validity, one employed triangulation as suggested by Creswell (1994) which is integral to case study design. According to Merriam (1998:204), triangulation is defined as using multiple investigations, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings. Methodological triangulation was employed in this research since the researcher used three forms of techniques namely: interviews, observation and analysis of records.

After comparing the responses from the participants, one looked into the most repeated words or themes and coded them into sub-categories.

4.4 CODING

According to Struwig and Stead (2001:169), the information gathered is grouped in terms of themes by using codes. Codes are labels that assign units of meaning to the information obtained.
Codes may be used to study brief actions, more durable activities, interview transcripts of participants, the participation of people in a setting, the relationships between people, or entire settings. A code could be linked to a word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or larger sections of data when analysing an interview transcript. Codes should be interpreted within a certain context and in relation to other codes. Codes are seldom isolated units of meaning. Codes or categories can be divided further into sub-categories and this is known as ‘splitting categories’. Thus, levels of sub-classification are constructed. Thereafter, central categories are sometimes sought by integrating some of the categories that have been split. This process of seeking broader categories is known as splicing (Struwig and Stead, 2001:169).

Struwig and Stead (2001:170) describe various types of coding techniques, such as the constant comparative method, content analysis, open, axial and selective coding, domain analysis, pattern coding, and analytic memo writing. Data obtained from interviews were organised by using simple content analysis as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Struwig and Stead (2001:170). According to Merriam (1998:179), data was coded into small units of meaning, which could be as small as a word a participant uses to describe a feeling and should reveal information relevant to the research. These coded units of meaning were then categorised to reflect the purpose of the research in an attempt to answer the research question.

Categories were derived from data analysis. Following Henning et al (2004), the transcribed data was read and codes were generated. Data were first divided into small units of meaning and then coded according to the significance of the unit. Following Creswell (1998:154), the codes with their references to specific lines, were printed out onto paper and cut out into separate pieces. Codes with common elements within the data that had issue-relevant meaning of significance for the study were looked for. Related codes were then grouped together into categories by clustering them into groups. The five main categories that emerged from this simple analysis were political transformation, strategic planning, communication, political deployment, and political will. The main categories were further divided into sub-categories. Following this, the interpretation of the data took place.

4.5 INTERPRETATION OF DATA
According to Mouton (2001:109), interpretation of data involves the synthesis of one’s data into larger coherent wholes such as sections in chapters. One interprets and explains data by formulating hypotheses or theories that account for observed patterns and trends in the data. Interpretation means relating one’s results and findings to existing theoretical frameworks or models, and showing whether these are supported or falsified by the new interpretation. Interpretation also means taking into account rival explanations or interpretation of one’s data and showing what levels of support the data provides for the preferred interpretation.

The aim of this study was to establish factors that have to do with political transformation, which includes among others: strategic planning, communication, political-deployment and political-will. Based on data collected, the following actions were undertaken. Open-ended/unstructured questions were asked to the fifteen senior officials in the District. The researcher chose to utilize open-ended/unstructured interviews because unstructured interviews are more flexible and more likely to yield information that the researcher hadn’t planned to ask (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001: 159). The following questions were asked:

- **POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION**
  - In your view, what do you think transformation is all about?
  - What is your view on political transformation?
  - Was it necessary for Bushbuckridge to be transformed?
  - How do you rate the pace of political transformation in the district?
  - Do you think the district is supportive to schools?
  - How would you describe the level of political transformation with reference to services rendered to schools?
  - What is the current situation regarding transformation in the district?

- **STRATEGIC PLANNING**
  - In your view, what do you think strategic planning entails?
  - Tell me about your strategic plan. Is it a good or a poor plan?
  - Do you think the district has the mandate to carry out its duties as planned? Give reasons for your answer.
• Does the district have its strategic plan in which to deliver resources to schools in time, in place? If yes, how?
• What is your view of the QUIDS UP Programme?

• COMMUNICATION
• How effective is co-ordination between the districts and the schools?
• What is your understanding of Integrated Human Resource Management?

• POLITICAL DEPLOYMENT
• What is the staffing situation at the district?
• Which challenges are encountered in establishing a new organisational structure?
• Do you think the district has institutional capacity?

• POLITICAL WILL
• What are the responsibilities of the district?
• What are the powers of the district?
• Are civil servants willing to implement policies?

The results of the answers given by the respondents to the above-mentioned questions will be discussed next. Although this is a qualitative study, the number of respondents who participated is being given sporadically to indicate the number of participants.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.6.1 Political transformation

4.6.1.1 In your view, what do you think transformation is all about?

Three quarters (67%) of the respondents were of the opinion that they understand transformation as changes that may have positive effects on the functioning of an institution. They believe that transformation in the Bushbuckridge Department of Basic Education is mainly concerned with correcting of past imbalances and empowering of officials to present effective and efficient
education services to the community. It relate to how things were done and how things should be
done to achieve set objectives and goals.

The respondents further answered that transformation entails informed collective change. ‘It warrants looking back at what have been achieved and what have not been achieved’ on a political level. This includes, ‘excel on our successes, and improving on what we failed to achieve well’. The education system is ‘undergoing transformation and change aimed at meeting the demands made by the national department of education and ultimately, community’. ‘Transformation is about doing things differently, looking at policies, regulations and statutory framework’.

The majority of the respondents, however, indicated that they are not satisfied with the transformation process in the Department as they believe that the transformation changes were imposed on them, i.e. they were not part of the decision making process. It was, inter alia, quoted that the Constitution, Act No. 108, Section 195 (1) (e) which provides that people’s needs must be responded to, and the public be encouraged to participate in policy-making was not adhered to.

A minority of the respondents were neutral towards the questions and no positive contributions were made.

4.6.1.2 What is your view on political transformation?

A large majority of the respondents (85%) affirm the literature review, which suggests that political transformation is about political change in structures and procedures at school level, circuit level and the district itself. Certain trends that were ignored in the past are addressed in the current state of affairs by setting up structures that would address such disparities that were held by the previous political regime. The Parliament passes laws and creates policies and regulations to bring about stability in learning institutions to ensure that they are governable.

The policies that the ANC government enacted are the South African Schools Act (SASA), Employment of Educators Act No. 76, Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998, National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, etc, with the notion to create change. The respondents view the implementation of these policies as a challenge because ‘senior managers and their subordinates at various institutions were not thoroughly trained to do so’. The respondents also
expressed ‘concern that practically, there is no structural change in the district’ even though there are the mentioned legislation and policies.

The respondents commented in terms of employment practices, service delivery process, and systems, collectively that: ‘there is existence of nepotism, unfair labour practice and poor service delivery processes, resulting from ethnicity and tribalism, particularly the Tsonga speaking people and the North-Sotho (Pulanes) speaking people’. This is also indicated by comments made by some of the participants: ‘... ignorance of the existence of legal stipulations, being uninformed about the full implications of such legal requirements, misinterpretation of the law or, alas, wilful transgression of the law’.

The participants thus responded that political transformation is the political change that revolves around politics. This implies moving from one political set up to another involving people. This is a situation where people have a say in their political welfare, as opposed to the era where people were dictated to by their leaders. According to Duvenhage (2005:4), political transformation is the transition from one political dispensation to another. It may refer to a change in leadership or in political policy. This is the case at Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education. Hence, the word progression plays a vital role. Political transformation did not correct the past imbalances by empowering and developing people’s livelihood, such that they have a say in their political welfare and therefore ensuring change in the workplace.

According to the participants, the problem here is that the past imbalances are not addressed yet, people still operate in the old order, and tribalism and ethnicity is very rife. This is illustrated by the following quote: ‘... there is little political, administrative and management capabilities as well as lack of political control’. As Cloete and Maasen (2002) contend that, ‘the new bureaucracy did not have the experience or capacity to implement the over-ambitious, complex policy proposals initially developed by intellectuals outside of the bureaucracy.’

4.6.1.3 Was it necessary for Bushbuckridge to be transformed?

Eighty five percent (85%) of the respondents felt that it was necessary for Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education to be transformed. Bushbuckridge compared with other districts within the province in terms of demography, is large and it was under the caretaker of
the Ehlanzeni District who had to run two districts concurrently. Bushbuckridge as such a vast area needed many human resources. Unfortunately, such resources were not availed because not much focus was directed to it via the district. This lack of focus on the district had to create a lot of tracking in terms of the programmes, which were supposed to be unpacked. Senior posts were put on hold because of lack of funds. This has had an impact on the transformation of the district itself. For example, there is no subject advisor for IsiZulu. This situation jeopardises or compromises the effectiveness of teachers in schools, who needed the expertise from the subject advisors. In a way, it goes back to the strategic planning, which indicates that there is no will from the HOD and the MEC to fund projects that will enable schools to be effective.

In summary, the respondent however pointed out that there was a lack of transparency, hence the notion ‘... there were posts which were reserved for certain people who were close to the senior officials who were architects of job reservation. People could not be briefed about the availability of posts, other service points and service delivery, for example, posts were there but not advertised, instead, people were just affirmed secretly so’. In their view, the respondents believe that such a practice is corrupt.

Eighty five percent (85%) of the participants assert that the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education would come up with a mechanism that would defeat all these odds and limitations in order to come up with a district that would be fully representative. The respondents declare that South Africa has created an exquisite legal framework and policies to ensure that values, human rights and democracy become the pillars of our society. In the main, these pillars will ensure a smoother running of Bushbuckridge as a district. In the view of the respondents, values, human rights and democracy must be in the hearts and minds of every citizen. Hence, the respondents feel that ‘... values, human rights and democracy must be learnt and lived by everyone who engages into service delivery’.

The participants believe that Bushbuckridge is one unique and peculiar district that boasts of a multi-cultural and multi-lingual society with all its complexities. The advent of political transformation will accord the district an opportunity to explore the expertise the people have and to make a better use of such materials so that the district can achieve much better. People in the district see political transformation as necessary in order to cater for the three divisions,
namely: the former Lebowa homeland; the former Gazankulu homeland; as well as parts of what was ‘White South Africa’ which were established by the apartheid regime.

The respondents further indicate that political transformation is necessary because diversity and inclusivity (particularly the inclusion of women and the disabled) were ignored. Women and the disabled were not involved in key positions from various administration components (see the organisational structure in annexure F). Ignorance of diversity and inclusivity are among those factors that compromise the pace of political transformation. Evidence of this can be found in the quote of a participant: ‘... there is no commitment towards achievement and maintenance of diversity and equity in employment, especially of gender and disability’.

Furthermore, the respondents alluded to the fact that the district was not financially accounted for by either Limpopo or Mpumalanga Province. There were limited points for service delivery. Participants commented that: ‘... Bushbuckridge District did not receive necessary attention in terms of services from government because it was not clearly demarcated’. There was lack of transparency within the district. The respondents added that transformation would help to change the old order by addressing the past imbalances. This transformation will ensure that democratic values, norms and standards are realized, as there are low morals and values. The existing infighting or bickering caused by ethnicity, tribalism and regionalism can be dealt with accordingly when transformation occurs.

**4.6.1.4 How do you rate the pace of political transformation in the district?**

All the respondents rate the pace of political transformation in the district as far too slow. This indicates that the service points, the Hoxane and Mapulaneng administrative offices, fail to meet the political mandate, particularly what is needed to achieve their set goals, such as political transformation. Bushbuckridge needs an effective organisational structure with a sound political culture in which expected objectives are met. The district is not stable as a result of the current turmoil that leads to political interference, which further aggravates the current changes that are unfolding. The respondents raised serious concern about the pace of political transformation as the following quote indicates: ‘... service providers assisted by trade unions, are involved a lot in politics instead of service delivery and transformation’. 
The respondents also point out that ethnicity and tribalism, provincial administrative hiccups, such as moratoriums, power struggles, contestations over resources, and political heads lacking control as a result of financial constraints lead to a slow rate of transformation.

4.6.1.5 Do you think the district is supportive to schools?

The majority of the respondents (70%) perceive the district as being supportive to schools as education systems are in place. To cite a few examples, stationery and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) are delivered in advance, i.e., a year before in preparation for the preceding academic programme, a nutrition programme covering all primary schools and about eight secondary schools out of sixteen within the sampled scope of the study (i.e. the two circuits) benefit from the programme, and there is curriculum support. Support is usually seen in cases where less capital is required.

However, support by the district is hindered as a result of power contestation, political interference, ethnicity and tribalism, a defiance campaign that barred officials from entering learning institutions for purposes of providing support services, incompetency of officials, and lack of capital, such that the matriculation results dwindle in the district. The gap in terms of service delivery is wide, but better than before 1994.

Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents rate the support of the district as inadequate because circulars usually reach institutions late so that people operate under crisis management, always rushing out programmes just for the sake of fulfilling their duties. This is apparent in some of the quotes of the respondents: ‘...the support from the district is highly compromised as a result of power contestation, for example, the suspension of a senior official at the district and the presence of a caretaker’.

The respondents mentioned that the district does not have field workers, auxiliary services and psychological services. Psychological services are necessary in that they would deal with changes in terms of the learners and educators. What is also of concern is when a teacher passes on; he is not immediately replaced, leaving learners without a teacher at times.

4.6.1.6 How would you describe the level of political transformation with reference to services rendered to schools?
All the participants are of the view that political changes in the district negatively affect the smooth running of the schools, particularly when the leadership is changed.

Leadership styles differ, for example, senior managers at circuit level were used to the senior official at district level, and now they have to grapple with the new leadership styles of the district caretaker. The participants further assert that the basis would be the powers given to schools as provided by the South African Schools Act (SASA). SASA gives powers to the school governing body to be part of governance. It enables the level of engagement, which would then see the community, the teachers and the learners working together. The provision of SASA is one area of political transformation that was tailor-made to ensure that service delivery takes place in schools.

4.6.1.7 What is the current situation regarding transformation in the district?

Half of the respondents view the current situation as volatile because Bushbuckridge District is under constant pressure to transform. With this come political interference, interference from trade unions and interference from politicians. The respondents highlighted the fact that some people are of the opinion that the district should be incorporated into Ehlanzeni, while others wish that it would be incorporated into Thaba’Chueu. This difference of opinion becomes a severe obstacle towards effective political transformation.

Some of the respondents believe that the current situation is far from ideal but still better than before 1994. According to the participants, this was influenced by the present regime that enacted new policies, which are too ambitious, no matter their merit. The policies were not happily accepted by everyone in society. People often disagree about policies. These policies are therefore contested because of heterogeneity. The participants claim that there are enormous challenges that hinder the pace of political transformation.

Challenges, such as uncertainty about their work climate and culture, as well as the future of their employment, ethnicity that prevails between the two ethnic groups, i.e. the Tsongas and the North-Sotho (Pulanes- speaking people, the moratorium whereby the employer reverses the process of appointing personnel to occupy vacant posts because of lack of finances, nepotism, greediness, employees wrongly placed, officials removed and replaced (called the ‘devil strategy’ by officials), and some suspended and re-instated without clear explanation. This was highlighted by information the respondents provided: ‘... some officers were suspended and
reinstated without clear explanation, nobody is free, particularly those sympathising with the suspended senior official’. This situation amounts to immense pressure from various stakeholders. It is a situation out of proportion, leading to political interference.

4.6.2 Strategic Planning

4.6.2.1 In your view, what do you think strategic planning entails?

Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents claim that strategic planning is future-orientated and ranging from three to five years. Strategic planning is guided by the vision, mission and objectives of the organisation. It looks at the past mistakes, correcting them through a SWOT-analysis, aligning the strategy according to a desired future, and using a cost-benefit analysis approach. This is supported by Thompson and Strickland (2003:20) who assert that a strategic plan is a statement outlining an organisation’s mission and future direction, near-term and long-term performance targets and strategy. Similarly, Barnett and Wilsted (1989:8) define strategic planning as a process that represents part of strategic management. It is a process of analysing the opportunities and threats in the marketplace, while building the strengths and correcting the weaknesses within an organisation.

Furthermore, Van der Waldt (2004:100) outlines that strategic plans detail the vision, outcome and objectives that a particular department would like to achieve over a given period of time. They also include information about the mix of outputs to be produced and plans about timelines, quantity and quality. Strategic plans usually cover more than one year of operations. The majority of the respondents (90%) state that strategic planning is intended to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, in different sections of the district. It involves implementing policies, curriculum and establishing monitoring tools and methods. Budgeting plays a major role in strategic planning. Strategic planning is geared for success when properly orchestrated. Sixty five (65%) percent of the respondents reveal that the vision, the mission and the goals in the district are misunderstood because people who are supposed to carry them through were not part of the formulation and it has therefore been imposed on them.

4.6.2.2 Tell me about your strategic plan. Is it a good or a poor plan?

The majority of the respondents (90%) commented that in the main, the strategic plan is a good plan in the district although it is not fully functional. Implementation is highly affected by power
struggles emanating from ethnicity and tribalism. It is rather ambitious although it does not specify strategies, which hinders implementation in the end. Furthermore, the respondents are of the view that planning is not good in that only the province formulates strategies, while the district is only expected to implement the plans.

4.6.2.3 Do you think the District has the mandate to carry out its duties as planned? Give reasons for your answer.

Most of the participants (80%) responded that the district has the mandate and delegated power from the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) and the Head of Department (HOD) given by the provincial department of education to carry out duties as espoused by the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996. There is a persistent perception from respondents that the mandate of the district is hampered by minority political self-serving interest groupings. In the process, consultation, transparency, honesty and many other democratic principles such as, the buy-in principle, communication, integrity and inclusivity, are compromised. Critical decisions are taken without adequate inputs from stakeholders. Respondents also reflected on the fact that the acting District Director is responsible for two districts, which means that his attention is divided between two huge districts. This dual responsibility hampers the execution of work in the district.

4.6.2.4 Does the District have its strategic plan to deliver resources to schools in time, in place?

According to the point of view of participants (75%), the district has a plan to deliver resources such as learning and teaching support materials in time and in place, although the pace of procurement and tender process is too slow. One major problem the respondents revealed that causes this situation is because ‘...the province centralises financial management. In addition, schools submit inaccurate data and. requisitions leading to resources being delivered poorly’.

Another comment is ‘it seems the strategic plan to deliver resources is not fully in place.’ ‘Whether there exists such a plan, is not clear to other respondents.

4.6.2.5 What is your view of the QIDS-UP programme?

Regarding QIDS-UP, thirty five percent (35%) of the respondents understand it as a programme that seeks to fast track school development, particularly the lower grades and also developing
educators by empowering them with training in computer literacy. According to M. P. Mokoena (2010), it is a good programme that brings more resources such as computers to schools, but not popular in secondary schools as it focuses too much on lower grades. The programme is aimed at improving literacy and numeracy of people. On the contrary, all the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with regard to lack of proper training. Another concern is that most of the stakeholders, such as teacher formations, parents and learners are not familiar with this programme and the clash that exists between QIDS-UP and the general timetable of learning institutions.

**4.6.3 COMMUNICATION**

**4.6.3.1 How effective is communication between district and schools?**

The majority of the respondents (85%) alluded to the fact that in terms of communication, there is poor co-ordination, incoherence and no complementary communication. There are however, clashing programmes which are erratic, display crisis management, and circulars not reaching schools on time. There are those schools which are very far from the district, have inadequate human resources and lack of operational resources. These factors caused the pace of transformation to be most unsatisfactory. The participants also reported that, ‘... other forms of communication such as faxes and e-mails should be used as a means towards achieving effective and coherent co-ordination’.

**4.6.3.2 What is your understanding of Integrated Human Resource Management?**

Sixty three percent (63%) of the participants feel that their understanding of Integrated Human Resource Management (IHRM) is average. According to them, IHRM is about management of human resource, outsourcing human resources, pure human resources, human resource development, employment relations, Human Resource Information Systems and representativeness, where employees from different sections within the District Department of Basic Education, work collaboratively in a coherent and complementary manner. Bray and Beckmann (2001) point out that that the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa underlines the importance of political transformation in South Africa. It upholds the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. To this effect, it provides legislation so that good human resources must be cultivated in the public service. Furthermore, the government pointed out in its White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) that there is a
need for transforming human resource management practices. Since education is such an important vehicle for political transformation, the management and development of human resources in education are vital policy levers in bringing about the ‘new South Africa’ as envisaged in the Constitution.

According to Loock et al (2006,) human resource management (HRM) in education has expanded and moved beyond mere administration of traditional activities. Today, HRM in education is much more integrated into both management and strategic planning processes of the education department. One reason for this expanded role is that the organisational environment has become more diverse and complex. Compared with a workforce historically dominated by white males in the middle- and top-management, currently diversity in the workforce, including sex, race, national origin, religion, age and disability, presents new and different changes in government requirements, restructuring, technology and management approaches. Byars and Rue (2000:8) purport that organisations must get away from the tradition of ‘fitting employees into a single corporate mould’. Everyone will not look and act the same. Organisations must create new human resource policies explicitly to recognise and respond to the unique needs of individuals.

4.6.4 POLITICAL DEPLOYMENT

4.6.4.1 What is the staffing situation at the district?

Pertaining to political deployment, ninety percent (90%) of the respondents reveal that, in terms of the staffing situation, there exists, among other things, nepotism, and inadequate human resources in that some sections are grossly understaffed hindering effective administration and progress, there is uncertainty of employees about the future of their employment, employees working in an acting capacity, staff establishments not balanced as a result of inaccuracies in statistical data.

This situation is chaotic, and it results in ineffective and inefficient human resource administration. This is indicated by the general comment of the participants: ‘... there was an outcry regarding the employment of the curriculum implementers in that they were just hand-picked, without the posts being advertised’. This concern is in line with Zille’s argument against cadre deployment.
4.6.4.2 Which challenges are encountered in establishing a new institutional structure?

There are challenges however, affecting the new organisational structure. This is caused by ethnicity, regionalism, political affiliation and political interference, appointments based on tribal trends, unfair labour practice, and lack of capacity, moratorium, understaffing, policy contestation, and laziness. The respondents emphasise that there is a lack of institutional memory and the co-existence of the old and new bureaucracies exacerbating the challenges of building a new institutional structure. The respondents (75%) indicated that there is limited administrative and management experience among the officials in education. As shown earlier on, the new institution service had no collective (institutional) memory in its ranks about such important matters as the rule of law, public accountability and public service. Complicating the situation in the district administration was the widespread confusion between politicians and senior public servants, which, in a number of cases, resulted in conflict that contributed to an unacceptably high turnover of senior officials. The effects of all those factors were bickering and infighting over resources and power. The respondents made, inter alia, the following claim, ‘... unions are fighting for positions, recommending their own cadres to occupy senior positions without relevant qualifications or skills’. In terms of Section 197 (3) of the Constitution (1996), no employee of the public service may be favoured or prejudiced only because that person supports a particular political party or cause. Davis (2005:13) provides that it is an imperative of the Government of South Africa that historic imbalances in South African society, which came about as a result of the apartheid ideology, should be redressed and that the inequalities and inequities of the past should be eliminated.

4.6.4.3 Do you think the district has institutional capacity?

Among the aspects that undermine the capacity of the district as an institution are the following:

- The dual responsibility of the district director as mentioned earlier in 4.6.2.3.
- The lack of institutional capacity, which shows that people are not capacitated to do their work. There is a wrangle between stakeholders, inadequate resources, nepotism, and political interference. Policies and regulations are compromised. Employees are demotivated in their work environment.
• Ethnicity plays a role in undermining the capacity of the personnel. This is further compounded by markers for grade 12 scripts when they pass comments that undermine educators’ and learners’ scripts from Bushbuckridge.

• Teacher unions are not given equal treatment, which undermines the potential and capabilities of personnel. An individual from a dominant union is given preferential treatment over others.

• Posts are reserved for personnel with certain political affiliations.

• Inappropriate use of resources, especially capital, where workshops are organized for fulfilment rather than addressing what should be done, compromising value for money. Workshops are organized at particular times expecting particular people to attend them.

• Allowing people to act for a long time instead of being appointed, raising doubts of ever getting an appointment.

4.6.5 POLITICAL WILL

The quotations about political will by Manzini (2010) and Luyt (2010) at point 2.3.4, should be read as a background to this section.

4.6.5.1 What are the political responsibilities of the district?

According to the data collected from the respondents, with regard to political responsibility, seventy percent (70%) of the district represents the Provincial Department of Basic Education through mandate and delegated power to deliver. The mandate and delegated power are centred on policies informed by professional ethics so that quality support to schools is realized. The circuits and schools must get political direction from the district. However, politics supersedes the organisational responsibility, particularly when there are instances compromising implementation such as the defiance campaign and the undermining of equity in the work environment.

This may have a detrimental effect on curriculum management, which should match the national standards. According to McLaughlin (1987), it is possible to build local capacity through training, if there is sufficient money. However, it is difficult to change people’s beliefs, attitudes and motivation. This is in line with what some of the respondents mentioned for example, if a person thinks that a new policy is not worthwhile, or is inappropriate, or demands too much of
him or her, they will simply ignore it, or even actively resist it. If a policy is based on values and beliefs that are different from a person’s values and beliefs, it will be very difficult for them to implement that policy. Essentially, policy cannot mandate what matters: it cannot force people to change if they cannot see the reason to do so.

4.6.5.2 What are the political powers of the district?

The majority of the respondents (80%) claim that the district implements policies and regulations as per their mandate and power bestowed on them by the province. The respondents assert that one of the significant directives on the South African scene is the decentralisation of power, whereby the statutory powers are vested in districts going down to circuits and subsequently reaching schools where SASA plays a pivotal role. The participants further stated that various stakeholders engage in participative management where all interested parties have a say in decisions affecting them. However, the respondents also show that the district has limited political power; this is because political interference, the devil strategy, and the defiance campaign are predominant, although the district has the mandate to implement policies and regulations.

4.6.5.3 Are civil servants willing to implement policies?

Eighty per cent (80%) of the respondents reveal that the will to implement policies is influenced by attitudes, beliefs and perspectives of the employees. The respondents view this aspect as an enormous challenge in that civil servants in positions of responsibility lack a sense of accountability, which compromises liability for their actions. The civil servants cannot be held accountable for their deeds, they evade liability for their actions and decisions, which eventually paves the way for corruption and nepotism and therefore undermines democratic principles. Participants expressed their deep concern that people feel obliged to implement policies because of the fear of losing their jobs and it is not always out of passion to do the job. There prevails instead, laziness, lack of commitment, employees just filling posts, policies not followed and lack of training.

4.7 CONSOLIDATION OF DATA

Category A reveals that political transformation is about political change in structures and procedures such that public needs are better met. It is actually the constructive change that
revolves around politics, seen as the reconfiguration of the political, social and economic landscape. The challenge with transformation is that people were not happy with this change as it was imposed to them.

Category B expresses strategic planning as long-term planning which is advanced, ranging from three to five years, guided by the vision, mission and objectives, looking at the past mistakes and correcting them through SWOT-analysis, intended to ensure the effectiveness and the efficiency in different sections of the district. Implementation of the strategic plan is highly affected by power struggles emanating from ethnicity and tribalism.

Category C indicates that there is a lack of coherence, co-ordination and integration so much so that the situation becomes erratic and chaotic.

Category D reveals that the staffing situation is poorly managed to the extent that nepotism; ethnicity, job reservation and regionalism exist.

Category E shows how beliefs, attitudes and perspectives can influence political will, which will in turn influence political power, political responsibility and will to implement policies.

**4.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on data collection processes, data analysis, data coding and data interpretation. Data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, checking of records and documents was done. Using the five main categories and sub-categories that emerged, the data were analysed and presented. The five main categories are political transformation, strategic planning, communication, political deployment and political will.

1) Political transformation focused on the understanding of transformation; the rationale for Bushbuckridge to be transformed; the pace of political transformation in the district; the district’s support to schools; the level of political transformation in the district regarding service delivery to schools and the current situation regarding political transformation in the district.

2) Strategic planning was mainly concerned with understanding strategic planning; nature of strategic planning; district’s mandate to carry out duties as planned; district strategic plan to deliver in time, in place; and understanding of QIDS-UP.
3) Communication mainly focused on co-ordination between the district and the schools, and the understanding of Integrated Human Resource Management.

4) Political deployment focused on the staffing situation at the district; challenges encountered in the district in establishing a new institutional structure; and institutional capacity of the district.

5) Political will focused on political responsibility of the district; political powers of the district, and willingness of civil servants to implement policies.

Ethnic tension, political (cadre) deployment, lack of political will, lack of proper communication, lack of proper planning and lack of capacity led to a slow pace of political transformation, hence the question: “Is the pace of political transformation in the education component of the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education so slow that it has a negative influence on management matters?”

Data gained involved administration sections within the district, namely: professional services; corporate services; circuit co-ordination; communication and transformation. The next chapter will present the summary, conclusion and recommendations to secure a smoother political transformation.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters focused on the theoretical foundation of the study as well as the empirical study (data collection processes, data analysis, data coding and data interpretation). This chapter aims to summarize the contents of this study and to present recommendations to secure a smoother political transformation in Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education. The consolidated, analyzed data will be interpreted against the background of the conceptual and theoretical framework.

5.2 REACHING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were the following, to:

- Analyze and describe the theoretical foundation of political transformation;
- Determine what political transformation entails regarding strategic planning, communication, political deployment and political will;
- Analyse what the current situation in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge is with regards to political transformation, and
- Determine how the current situation can be changed to secure smoother political transformation.

The objectives have been reached, which is one of the indications that this study was a success.

The central theoretical statements in Section 1.5 guided the study. The first was based on the statement by Steyn et al (2001:14) that ‘in practice several aspects from the previous education system still exist, but simultaneously there is a process of rapid development and change going on’. The second one as provided by Duvenhage (1998:7) ‘Change, more particularly radical change associated with political transformation, implies significant disruption and disequilibrium.’

5.3 CONCLUSION OF STUDY
Since 1996, the South African government has introduced several relatively new reform mechanisms in the form of education policies and legislations, intended to democratize education and school practice. The most comprehensive of these reforms are catered for in two Acts – the South African Constitution of 1996 and the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996. Since the establishment of these Acts, the expectations imposed on educators on central and provincial level have prompted a significant change in the nature and scale of their day-to-day functioning. As stated by Maile (2002:326), education at district level can only be effective if all role players (consequently both junior and senior managers as well as educators) understand all their responsibilities and act accordingly in embracing political transformation.

The aim of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 is to provide for a uniform management system for the organization and governance of education activities. The district which is part of the education system should provide education of progressively high quality for all beneficiaries. In so doing it will be:

- laying a strong foundation for the development of all our people’s talents and capabilities,
- advancing the democratic transformation of society,
- combating racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance,
- contributing to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society,
- protecting and advancing our diverse cultures and promoting the acceptance of responsibility for the organization, governance and funding of institutions in partnership with the State.

Chapter two provided a theoretical foundation of the study and described the pace of political transformation in the education component of the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education. This is proved to be so slow that it has a negative influence on the management of education matters there.

Chapter three focused on the current situation in the Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education. The study provided a historical background of the district; overview of education in South Africa; and education legislation since 1994.
Chapter four focused on data collection processes, data analysis, data coding and data interpretation. Through this chapter it was possible to pinpoint specific limitations that hindered the pace of political transformation. It showed that the management of education matters in the District Department of Basic Education in Bushbuckridge is not effective and efficient owing to the slow implementation of political transformation.

Chapter five gives an overview of the study conducted in chapters one to four through the findings. The findings of the empirical research provide guidelines in which these limitations can be overcome. The significant contribution of this chapter is based on the indicated limitations established in the findings and the recommendations that are provided in order to secure a smoother political transformation.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings one presents the following recommendations to secure a smoother political transformation:

- Section 195 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides that the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making. According to Steyn et al (2001:117), various persons and groups want to be consulted and represented in education management matters. They expect the district and the district management to reflect and protect their values and norms. The opportunity for participation in district matters in terms of political transformation helps them to identify with the district. This creates a feeling of ownership regarding the district. The involvement of people will ensure representativeness, which is a democratic concept promoted by participative management.

- There has to be retraining and replacement. According to Van der Waldt (2004:38), retraining and replacement are mechanisms through which people can be changed. Personnel may be taught new skills as a result of redefined duties, responsibilities, and job qualifications. Section 195 (1) of the Constitution stipulates that public administration must be development-oriented.

- There should be structural reorganization. Van der Waldt (2004:37) asserts that structural reorganization is simply a reorganization of the system or structure. It means changing
such things as the size of the unit, staffing procedures, physical arrangements, or budgeting processes. Section 197 (1) of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa stipulates that within public administration there is a public service for the Republic, which must function and be structured in terms of the national legislation, and which must loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day.

- The public administration within the district must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. Section 1 of the Constitution lists these values as human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism. Section 195 (1) provides principles that should inform public service delivery, such as the following: there has to be good human resource management, career-development practices to maximize human potential must be cultivated; services must be provided impartially, objectively, fairly, equitably, and without bias, and people’s needs must be responded to.

- The district should outline clearly the vision, mission, and the goals in order to ensure a smoother running of learning institutions it serves.

- The district should improve means of communication in order to achieve good coordination, coherence and put in place programmes that are complementary.

- The district should brief people about the availability of posts by advertising them and appoint people on a permanent basis to ensure accountability.

- People appointed should have relevant capacity and qualifications in order to ensure effective and efficient service delivery.

- Public servants need to take the concept of continuous transformation in education seriously in developing their expertise, as servants who take ownership of their professional development are better skilled and more likely to experience a change of attitude towards a better understanding of political transformation.

- Civil servants within the district should receive continuous in-service training to upgrade their knowledge base with regard to current policies with a view to re-skill and sharpen their attitude in executing their responsibilities.
• There should be a deliberate policy from the district in place to guide civil servants in understanding transformation. This policy should also be monitored to ensure that civil servants are adequately supported.

• Civil servants must be made aware of the fact that their authority and power to act in the district is delegated by the Head of the Department (HoD) and that the misuse of power will not be tolerated. The district officials should apply a zero-tolerance approach towards any person who in his line of duty misuses his position of authority to intimidate or ill-treat people who seek his service.

• The district should play a major role as an important partner in education by providing support services. The support services may include the provision of field support personnel whose function is to visit schools and offer advice on management.

• All role players must account for their actions to the bodies that represent all of these role-players. For example, the principal should be accountable to the Department, to the school governing body, to the teachers, to parents and students. Similarly, the school governing body should be accountable to these stakeholders.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH
Since the study was limited in scope, areas for further study might be conducted in other research ventures using a larger sample group, parents, educators, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), district officials, unions and other interested parties. A comparative study could also be conducted between independent and public schools to see if the study could not yield good results.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
The results of the study may be open to different interpretations since the interpretations depend on the background of the researcher. The extent of the study did not allow for the collection of data from the whole population. The coding used in the analysis of data might lead to data loss. This serves as a limitation, but it does not put the findings of the study in jeopardy. Merriam (2001:208) suggests that despite this limitation, one may be able to contextualize the findings.

5.6 CONCLUSION
According to Joubert (2006:92), the administration of education does not take place in a vacuum, and in order to grasp the nature of the administration of the education system in South Africa, it is important to be aware of the provisions which relate to ways in which our country is politically structured, as well as the main principles which underpin public administration in this country. The writer further indicated that public administration in South Africa is hierarchically structured and bureaucratically controlled. This means first, that there are various levels of seniority within public service, with one person at the head of each Department of state, and numerous categories of employees of lower status who report to the official of higher or senior status. It means, second, that although politicians take policy decisions, their actual implementation is the function of the bureaucrats. Public office bearers in the administration derive their right to act in a particular capacity from laws, which are passed either by parliament or by provincial legislation. It is imperative for the government of South Africa to see that the historical imbalances in South African society which came about as a result of the ‘apartheid’ ideology should be redressed and that the inequalities and inequities should be eliminated. In particular, issues related to race and gender are high on the priority list of the government, and it is therefore to be expected that the national, provincial administrations and the districts in the country should be placing these matters at the forefront of their work. This provision is echoed in Section 195 of the Constitution, and legislation and policies have been drafted to implement and enforce affirmative action in the public service. For example, to pursue the ideal of equality in the workplace, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 was passed by national legislature. This Act fulfils this constitutional duty. The principal objective of this Act is to achieve equity in employment through equal opportunities and fair employment practices and eliminate unfair discrimination in employment.

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ANNEXURE A
LETTER SEEKING CONSENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT BUSHBUCKRIDGE / BOHLABELA DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Alexandria Trust
P. O. Box 2228
Hazyview
1242

The District Director
Bohlabela District Department of Education
Private Bag x 1024
Hazyview
1242

14th September 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY
I am currently studying for Masters Degree in Development and Management Governance and transformation. I am expected to conduct a research study as a requirement for the degree. Could I therefore request your permission to conduct this study in the Bohlabela Department of Basic Education.

The title for my research is “The challenges of Political Transformation in Education: The case of Bohlabela/Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education”.

The execution of the study will under no circumstances disrupt the normal activities of the district. Participation is absolutely voluntary. It is my responsibility to explain the study to the participants and to request them to participate voluntarily in the study. The participants will have to sign an informed consent form as attached in this letter.

Thanking you in anticipation
Yours Truly
Mkhabela M.T. (Mr)

ANNEXURE B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

As part of my studies for the Masters Degree at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus), I have to complete a practical research. The research title is as follows: “The challenges of Political Transformation in Education Management: The case of Bohlabela District Department of Education”

I am asking you to participate as part of the study

It is important that you also read and understand the following general principles:

1. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and no pressure, however subtle may be placed on you to take part.

2. It is possible that you may not derive any benefit personally from your participation in the study although the knowledge that may be gained by means of the study may benefit other persons or communities.

3. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without stating reason and you will in no way be harmed by so doing. You may also request that your data no longer be used in the study.
4. You will be given access to your own data upon request.
5. You are encouraged to ask me any questions you may have regarding the study and the related procedures at any stage. I will gladly answer your queries.
6. The study objectives are always secondary to your well-being and action taken will always place your interest above those of the study.

I, the undersigned, have read the preceding premises in connection with the study, as explained in this informed consent form, and have heard the oral version thereof and I declare that I understand it. I was given the opportunity to discuss the relevant aspects of the study with the researcher and hereby declare that I am taken as part of the study voluntarily.

Participant’s signature _________________________ Date ____________
Social Security Number ________________________
Researcher’s signature ________________________ Date ____________

ANNEXURE C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
1. Gender: __________________________________________________________
2. Age in years: ____________________________________________________
3. Race: ___________________________________________________________
4. Nationality: _____________________________________________________
5. Marital Status: ___________________________________________________
6. Occupation:  _______________________________________________________________
7. Position held:  ___________________________________________________________
8. Experience to current job:  ________________________________________________
9. Profession registration:  _________________________________________________
10. Qualifications:  _________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
B. POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

1. In your view what do you think transformation is all about? 
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. What is your view of political transformation? 
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. Was it necessary for Bushbuckridge to be transformed? 
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
4. How do you rate the pace of transformation in the district?

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5. Do you think the district is supportive to schools?

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6. How would you describe the level of political transformation with reference to the services rendered to schools?

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7. What is the current situation regarding political transformation in the district?

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C. STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. In your view what do you think strategic planning entails?
2. Tell me about your strategic plan. Is it a good or poor plan?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. Do you think the district has the mandate to carry out its duties as planned?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Does the district have its strategic plan to deliver resources to schools in time in place? If yes, how?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. What is your view of the QIDS UP programme?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
D. COMMUNICATION

1. How effective is co-ordination between the districts and the schools?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. What is your understanding of Integrated Human Resource Management?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

E. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. What is the staffing situation at the district?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. Which challenges are encouraged in establishing a new organisational structure?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

F. POLITICAL WILL

1. What are the political responsibilities of the district?
2. What are the political powers of the district?

3. Are civil servants willing to implement policies?

ANNEXURE D
PERMISSION LETTER
ANNEXURE F: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Source: Bushbuckridge District Department of Basic Education
ANNEXURE G: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

RESEARCH FINDINGS

After careful interpretation of analyzed data from the participants’ point of view and literature review, one presents the following findings:

- People are not happy about the transformation because they believe that it was imposed to them.
- There is a lack of participative decision-making to ensure representativeness.
- Implementation of policies is an enormous challenge because senior managers and their subordinates are not thoroughly trained in this field. Policy implementation became one of the most difficult challenges South Africa had to contend with. It necessitated the development of the capacity of the state and its people to implement policy.
- There is ignorance of legal stipulations, being uninformed about the full implications of such legal requirements, misinterpretation of the law or, alas, wilful transgression of the law.
- There is no structural change in the district even though there are policies and procedures in this regard. There is existence of nepotism, unfair labour practice and poor service delivery resulting from ethnicity and tribalism, particularly the Tsonga speaking people and the North-Sotho (Pulanes) speaking people.
- There is little political, administrative and management capabilities as well as lack of political control.
- Bushbuckridge is a relatively large district which needs a lot of resources (i.e. human resources and financial).
- There were posts reserved for certain people who were close to senior officials.
- People could not be briefed about the availability of posts.
- Some posts were not advertised and people were affirmed secretly.
- People were appointed not on capacity but on tribal trends.
- There is little understanding of human rights, values and democracy.
- There are ongoing in-fights or bickering caused by ethnicity and tribalism.
• There is no commitment towards achievement and maintenance of diversity and equity in employment, especially of gender and disability.
• Bushbuckridge District did not receive the necessary attention in terms of services from government because it was not clearly demarcated.
• The pace of political transformation is far too slow.
• The district is not stable resulting from the current turmoil that leads to political interference such that service providers assisted trade unions involve a lot of politics instead of service delivery.
• Lack of resources, power contestation, defiance of officials from the district to access institutions of learning to provide support devastated the whole process such that the results for matriculation dwindled in the district.
• The district does not have field workers, auxiliary services and psychological services.
• The situation is chaotic as the district undergoes a lot of pressure caused by political interference, trade unions influencing political transformation particularly on hiring personnel such that their selfish interests are served.
• The situation is far from ideal but better than before 1994.
• Some officials were suspended and reinstated without clear explanation.
• The vision, the mission and the goals are not well understood by people especially that they contend that they were not part of the formulation and that they were imposed to them.
• Implementation of strategic planning is affected by power struggle emanating from ethnicity and tribalism.
• Less capital projects are done well while more capital projects are failing.
• There is centralization of financial management by the province.
• Schools submit inaccurate data and requisitions leading to resources being delivered poorly.
• Most stakeholders are not familiar with QIDS-UP.
• There is poor co-ordination, incoherence, and clashing programmes that do not complement each other.
• Understanding of Integrated Human Resource Management is average.
• Most employees work on acting capacity.
• Employees are not certain about the future of their employment.
- Staff establishment is not balanced.
- There is lack of institutional memory.
- Co-existence of the old and new bureaucracy exacerbates the challenges of building a new institutional structure. There were outbursts, because people could not accept change. Old officials in the new department impede new policy agenda. The new bureaucracy faces the challenge of being amalgamated with the old one.
- Lack of capacity of employees whereby unions are fighting for positions, recommending their own cadres to occupy senior positions without relevant qualifications or skills.
- Politics supersedes institutional responsibilities.
- Political will is affected by beliefs, attitude and motivation.
- The district has limited political power caused by political interference, the devil strategy and the defiance campaign.
- Servants’ willingness to implement policies shows that there is lack of accountability. This is in total contrast of the provision provided in Section 195 (1) (f) which stipulates that public administration must be accountable.
- The complexities of the people development environment in the district create a range of challenges for development. Lack of accurate statistics compound the problem further, in that large amounts of moneys paid to ghost workers are not accounted for such that it has a negative impact on the ‘shoe-string’ budget and planning. This context requires that comprehensive assessment mechanism be put in place to address underdevelopment.
- The district in the first place did not conduct baseline study on training needs hence we have civil servants who idle in offices doing nothing. According to Section 195 (1) (a) a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained. It can be deduced that there is a strong need for induction and training along their line of duty and secondly, the district did not take into consideration the organizational requirements of the anticipated training. For example, managers who are responsible for running training programmes of curriculum are awarded to friends and their cronies. This awarding of tenders to friends constitute a violation of Section 195 of the Constitution, which states that public administration must be representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.
• The policy deployment processes of the Bushbuckridge District Department of Education (of ensuring that the governmental policies for quality, cost and service delivery is understood from the highest to the lowest level of the organization) are fraught with problems that undermined basic understandings of the Education Management Development training programme. This implies that public administration must be developmental-orientated and services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.