



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

## Research Commons at the University of Waikato

### Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**THE DECENTRALISATION OF EDUCATION IN A  
DEVELOPING COUNTRY: THE CASE OF  
COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS  
IN  
SOLOMON ISLANDS**

**A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
at the  
University of Waikato  
by**

**DAVID DEREK SIKUA**

**Hamilton  
New Zealand  
2002**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study was undertaken to investigate the decentralisation of education through the establishment of Community High Schools (CHSs) in a developing country - Solomon Islands. The study examines, in particular, the local and global forces which have influenced the establishment of CHSs and the factors which may be facilitating or impeding their development at the level of implementation.

A major interest of the study is to examine the extent to which the establishment of CHSs have reflected local concerns or international influences in the light of involvement by the World Bank and other international aid donors. Specific research questions were posed to investigate the efficacy of educational decentralisation through the establishment, development and operation of CHSs in Solomon Islands, and the role played by the people responsible at four levels namely; the central government, church and provincial education authorities, schools, and communities during the implementation process. The study participants at these four levels were asked to describe what they perceived as the goals or reasons for establishing CHSs, where they saw the forces or factors for establishing CHSs were coming from, and to identify any tensions which they may have created. Participants were also asked to comment on the consultation procedure used by concerned parties when establishing CHSs, their views on whether the CHSs have achieved their goals or aims and how have these been monitored or evaluated. The additional benefits to be gained from establishing CHSs were then elucidated from participants before inquiring about the financial and other inputs from local and international sources for establishing CHSs and the impact of the involvement and contributions from parents and communities. Research questions were also posed to determine how CHSs were being managed, the provision of relevant training for those responsible, any plans in place to establish more CHSs, and any moves to decentralise more control of CHSs to the school, and parents and community levels in future. Finally the study sought responses from study participants on the major forces or factors they perceive as impeding the establishment development and operation of CHSs.

A qualitative-oriented methodology was used to collect the data in order to answer these questions. The techniques used include: interviews, questionnaire, content analysis and observation study. The major data gathering was carried out during two intensive rounds of fieldwork in Solomon Islands during January – March 2000 and November – December 2000.

The study found that participants from the four levels strongly supported the original aims for establishing CHSs as determined by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) and the World Bank. The study also revealed that these goals or aims formed part of the local forces or factors for establishing CHSs besides other factors regarding the demographical, geographical, socio-cultural, and political nature of the country. Participants also indicated the influence of external forces or factors for establishing CHSs, particularly those being exerted by the World Bank, sectoral studies commissioned by the MEHRD through bilateral donor funding and other publications, and similar decentralisation moves being undertaken in other countries. These external forces have been found to create some tensions between the World Bank and bilateral donors, and MEHRD officials, while the local factors have exacerbated on-going conflicts at the national and community levels.

The study also revealed that there was insufficient consultation between all the concerned parties concerned in the process of establishing CHSs, resulting in the neglect of proper procedures and the seemingly unrestrained establishment of CHSs. Nonetheless, study participants felt that CHSs had achieved their goals. The study was unable to identify any proper mechanism in place to demonstrate how the MEHRD has or is going to effectively monitor or evaluate the aims it had set for CHSs to accomplish.

It was apparent from the data that respondents considered CHSs as having additional benefits beyond those expressed by the MEHRD and the World Bank. Seeing that CHSs are being located within the communities, there was strong support for them to include in their curriculum the teaching of the local language and cultures, and for local participation in the development of materials for such use. Respondents felt that

these have not been emphasised well enough in boarding NSSs and PSSs because of their heterogeneous student intake. The use by the community of CHSs facilities for adult education and vocational training courses after school hours or during the holidays was also seen as an advantage.

Apart from the five World Bank funded CHSs, the study found that funding for the other CHSs from external sources have been minimal whilst the payment of annual grants from the central government or church and provincial education authorities was either sporadic or non-existent. On the other hand, the data showed that the involvement and contributions from parents and communities has been the foundation of the CHS success story. It was also revealed that the overwhelming support displayed by parents and communities for school committees, principals and teachers in the establishment, and ongoing operation and management of their respective CHSs has instilled an overall sense of pride and ownership for the school. This led to the central, and church and provincial education authorities being content to leave an increasing share of management matters to the schools and their school committees. Nevertheless, the data pointed to the fact that relevant training had not been provided for school level managers and members of the school committees to prepare them for their new roles. Study participants suggested that such training must be developed and immediately embarked upon by the MEHRD in view of existing plans to establish more CHSs as well as the planned moves to decentralise more control to the lower levels. Furthermore, respondents saw financial, logistical, supervision, staffing, land, politics, management, and geography as some of the forces or factors as important in impeding the establishment and operation of CHSs.

Based on the study objectives and findings identified from the data, recommendations were made on how to improve the management and operation of CHSs in order to make them more responsive to the demands and challenges facing the decentralised education system in Solomon Islands. Educational decentralisation, in its wake, has made heavy demands on the very limited financial and human resources, and services of the government. The study highlighted that a reformation of education is desperately needed and ownership by, and participation and partnership with the parents and local communities must be at the core of how well the government responds to the problem areas that exist within the education sector.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to numerous people who have generously assisted me personally, professionally and morally in completing this thesis. First, thanks are due to the Ministers and colleagues at the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, and the Ministers and staff of the Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of National Planning and Development, and staff of the Prime Minister's Office for their encouragement and wholehearted support in taking time away from their busy schedules to assist me for the entire period of my Ph.D studies. I am also deeply indebted for the time and warm hospitality extended to me during fieldwork by the Premiers and staff of Isabel, Central, Western, and Guadalcanal provinces, and staff of the Catholic Education Authority in Honiara. The same warmth and support was also rendered by the principals, teachers and community leaders in the schools involved in the study. I remain grateful for their friendship, hospitality and collegiality.

Among the many others in Solomon Islands who deserve special thanks include: the Under Secretary for Education, Donald Malasa, Chief Education Officer (Primary), Roland Sikua, Director/IPU, Mylin Kuve, and her staff, not only for coordinating and sending required data, documents and information from Honiara but also for always making me feel welcomed at the Ministry during my fieldwork. I am also thankful to Toswell Kaua and Ishmael Mali Avui from the Prime Ministers Office, and Robertson Galo and Luma Darcy of the Ministry of Finance for their kind assistance and understanding rendered to me, and my family. I also must thank the late John Tebaka Kaitu and his wife Nora for the friendship and hospitality shown to my Dad and me during both rounds of fieldwork in Isabel Province. Very special thanks must also go to relatives at Siarana Village, Central Province, my in-laws at Titiana Village, Western Province, Hendrick and Ruta Pana, and Edmond and Betty Sikua in Honiara for the care and hospitality shown to my family and I. I am very grateful for the untiring efforts and navigational skills of my brother, Barnabas Sikua in successfully negotiating the rough seas, often in pitch darkness during the many canoe trips across to Tulagi, Central Province, and along the northern coast of

Guadalcanal. I am also thankful for the kind assistance and support given to me by my cousins: Gordon Nanau, Patrick Nanau, George Palua, John Sango Palua, James Samu, and David and Faith Palapu during my fieldwork and throughout my studies. To my Dad, Joseph Sikua who has willingly accompanied me during my trips to Western, Isabel and Central provinces, your strong support and keen interest in my work will always be an inspiration, indeed as has been your entire life. To Mum, Brothers, Sisters and relatives at Ngalitavethi, Tathiboko, Guadalcanal Province, your love and patience has been consistent for so long. Thank you for your encouragement to pursue my passion and hope that through this will come peace, understanding and alternative solutions to some of our concerns.

Solomon Islands students studying at the University of Waikato and other *wantoks* living in Hamilton between 1998 and 2000 also deserve my thanks for their assistance as resource persons, and for sharing with the family and ~~✓~~ a strong sense of community.

The customary formal acknowledgement is inadequate to convey my deepest gratitude for my supervisors, Dr. Martin Thrupp, Prof. David Mitchell and Prof. Noeline Alcorn. Prof. Mitchell and Dr. Thrupp provided careful and high quality supervision from gestation, and Prof. Alcorn joined the supervisory panel with Dr. Thrupp's departure in mid 2000. I am honoured and privileged to have had the sage advice, wisdom, experience, encouragement and inspiration from Prof. Mitchell and Prof. Alcorn over the years. This thesis could not have been completed without their patience, humanity, valuable advice and concern for me, and my family. Very many thanks to both of you.

Thanks are also due to other staff of the School of Education at the University of Waikato who gave me encouragement and assistance whenever required. I wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by Dr. Garth Ritchie on my quantitative data analysis. Special thanks must also go to Dr. Wendy Drewery and Bev Price from the Post Graduate Studies Office for their incessant efforts in making a post graduate student's life much more enjoyable than it otherwise would have been! By the same token, I would like to thank the both past and present staff of the International Centre of the University for their understanding and support to me, and my family

throughout, particularly Roseanne Bjerring, Vivienne Kingsbury, and Sonya Breen. I am also grateful to Jeremy Kedian from the Educational Leadership Centre for his professional guidance and friendship and to Catherine Richardson for being a pillar of support to the family and I over the years. Thank you very much indeed.

It would be remiss of me to overlook my friends and fellow PhD students: Rufina Frederick, Xiufang Wang, and Joyanne de-four-Babb who deserve special thanks for their support, interest, encouragement and assistance, and for kindly sharing their experiences, ideas and knowledge with me.

A deep debt of gratitude is recorded for the New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance (NZODA) through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), The University of Waikato - School of Education, and the Solomon Islands Government, without whose generous financial support this study would not have been possible.

Finally, I thank those I owe the most: my wife, Doris, without whose endless emotional and practical support I could not have completed this task; my sons, Roland and Pokaniu, and my daughters, Roria and Buia who have been so forgiving of my absences – physical and mental – over the past few years. I dedicate this thesis to them.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xiii
List of Appendices	xvi
List of Abbreviations	xvii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 An Overview of Study	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	2
1.2 Interest and Significance of the Research	5
1.3 The Context of the study	8
1.3.1 Solomon Islands: Background	8
1.3.2 Political Decentralisation in Solomon Islands	9
1.3.3 The Ethnic Conflict	14
1.3.4 The Present Education System	20
1.3.5 Educational Decentralisation in Solomon Islands	31
1.3.6 Assumption	39
1.4 The Design of the Study	39
1.5 Summary	44
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</b>	<b>45</b>
2.0 Introduction	45
2.1 Different Forms of Decentralisation: Definition and Typology	47
2.1.1 Definition	47
2.1.2 Typology	48
2.2 Implications for Educational Decentralisation	52

2.3 Reasons for Decentralisation	52
2.3.1 Decentralisation as a Strategy for Political Reform	53
2.3.2 Decentralisation as a Strategy for Economic Development	60
2.3.3 Decentralisation as a Strategy for Administrative Reform	61
2.3.4 Equity as a Reason for Decentralisation	63
2.3.5 Socio-Cultural Reasons for Decentralisation	64
2.3.6 The Influences of Geographical Factors for Decentralisation	64
2.3.7 Reasons for Educational Decentralisation	65
a) Globalisation and its Influence on Educational Decentralisation	66
b) The Influence of Market Forces on Educational Decentralisation	69
c) The Influence of Managerialism on Educational Decentralisation	72
d) The Role of the World Bank and Other Forms of Policy Advice in Spreading Decentralisation	74
2.4 Decentralisation of Education in Some Developed and Developing Countries	76
2.4.1 Developed Countries	76
2.4.2 Latin American Countries	78
2.4.3 South Asian Countries	85
2.4.4 African Countries	89
2.4.5 Pacific Island Countries	91
2.5 Criteria for Successful Implementation of Educational Decentralisation	101
2.6 Summary	105
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>106</b>
3.0 Introduction	106
3.1 The Nature of Qualitative Methods	106
3.2 The Appropriateness of Qualitative Methods for Research in Educational Decentralisation	111
3.3 The Case Study as a Qualitative Method	113
3.4 Ethical Procedures Adopted for the Study	115
3.5 Justification for the Use of Qualitative-oriented Approach	116



4.4 Research Question 4:	<i>Have CHSs Achieved Their Goals, How Have These Been Monitored Or Evaluated And What Additional Benefits Are To Be Had From CHSs?</i>	174
4.4.0	Introduction	174
4.4.1	Have CHSs Achieved Their Goals?	174
4.4.2	Monitoring and Evaluation of CHSs Achieving Their Goals	182
4.4.3	Other Benefits for Having CHSs	185
4.4.4	Discussion	187
4.5 Research Question 5:	<i>What Were The Financial And Other Forms Of Support For CHSs From Local And External Sources, Were These Sufficient And Sustainable, And What Was The Impact Of Parent And Community Support?</i>	189
4.5.0	Introduction	189
4.5.1	Financial and Other Kinds of Assistance to CHSs From Local Sources	189
4.5.2	Financial Assistance to CHSs from External Sources	195
4.5.3	The Sufficiency and Sustainability of Grants and Other Forms of Assistance from Local Sources	196
4.5.4	The Impact of Parent and Community Involvement And Contributions	201
4.5.5	Discussion	204
4.6 Research Question 6:	<i>How Are CHSs Currently Being Administered, And Was Relevant Training Provided For Those Responsible For Running CHSs To Prepare Them For Their New Roles?</i>	207
4.6.0	Introduction	207
4.6.1	How CHSs are Being Administered?	207
4.6.2	The Extent to Which These Moves Can be Regarded As Examples of Educational Decentralisation	213
4.6.3	Participants' Perceptions of Current Administrative Arrangements	214
4.6.4	Relevant Issues Arising from Existing Administrative Arrangements	216
4.6.5	Training for Those Responsible for Managing CHSs	220
4.6.6	Discussion	227

4.7 Research Question 7:	<i>What Plans Are In Place To Build New CHSs Or Expand Existing Ones, And To Decentralise More Functions For CHSs To Lower Levels?</i>	229
4.7.0	Introduction	229
4.7.1	Plans to Build new CHSs	229
4.7.2	Expansion of Existing CHSs	231
4.7.3	Plans to Decentralise More Functions for CHSs to the Lower Levels	233
4.7.4	Discussion	236
4.8 Research Question 8:	<i>What Are Some Of The Major Problems Or Issues Currently Being Faced By CHSs?</i>	237
4.8.0	Introduction	237
4.8.1	Teacher Shortage	237
4.8.2	Logistics	240
4.8.3	Buildings and Facilities	249
4.8.4	Finance	256
4.8.5	Land	257
4.8.6	Present Secondary Education Structure and Curriculum	260
4.8.7	Discussion	264
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION</b>		269
5.0	Introduction	269
5.1	The Conceptual Significance and Theoretical Implications of the Study	270
5.2	Practical Implications:	279
5.2.1	Practical Implication 1: Partnership and Consultation	279
5.2.2	Practical Implication 2: Financial, Physical and Manpower Resources	280
5.2.3	Practical Implication 3: Monitoring and Evaluation	285
5.2.4	Practical Implication 4: Management and Training	285
5.2.5	Practical Implication 5: Structure of Secondary Education and Curriculum	285
5.3	Further Research	286
5.4	Looking to the Future	288
<b>REFERENCES</b>		291
<b>APPENDICES</b>		310

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. Solomon Islands: Basic Statistics	9
2. Respondents' Views on "Increasing Access to Secondary Education" As a Reason for Establishing CHSs	130
3. Respondents' Views of "Increasing Secondary School Places" As a Reason for Establishing CHSs	134
4. Respondents' Views on "The Need to Improve Provincial Equity in the Provision of Secondary School Places" As a Reason for Establishing CHSs	136
5. Respondents' Views on "Reducing Overall Unit Costs in Financing Secondary Education" As a Reason for Establishing CHSs	139
6. Respondents' Views on "Encouraging Local Participation/ Partnership in Secondary Education" As a Reason for Establishing CHSs	145
7. Respondents' Views on "The Country's Geography and Scattered Population Influencing the Need to Expand Formal Education Opportunities in the Rural Areas, and Reduce Rural-Urban Drift" As Major Forces for Establishing CHSs	151
8. Respondents' Views on "Promoting Local Culture and Language, Provide Communities an Opportunity to Contribute Curriculum Inputs Suited to the Traditional and Non-formal Education and Training Needs of the Area" As a Force for Establishing CHSs	153
9. Respondents' Views on "The Involvement of Politicians" As a Force for Establishing CHSs	155
10. Respondents' Views on "Global Moves to Involve Lower Level Bodies in the Decision-Making Process in Education" As a Major Force for the Establishment of CHSs	156
11. Participants' Views on "The Influence of the World Bank, And Related Studies Conducted for the MEHRD" As Major Forces for the Establishment of CHSs	158

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
12. Respondents' Views on "The Establishment of CHSs Being Helped by the Absence of Tensions Between External and Internal Forces, and the Amicable Relationship Between All Parties Concerned"	161
13. Respondents' Views On "The Consultation Procedure Used to Establish CHSs was Inadequate and Unclear to the Parties Involved"	172
14. Secondary School Enrolments by Education Authority 1993/94 And 2000/01 in Order of Highest to Lowest Increases	176
15. Sex Ratio of Form 1 Placements: 1993/94 and 1999/00	177
16. Number of Secondary School Places Available Per Province and School Type in 2002/01	178
17. Respondents' Views on "The MEHRD, Not Having Devised or Implemented any Specific Mechanism to Monitor and Evaluate CHSs Achieving their Aims"	184
18. Respondents' Views of the "The Establishment of CHSs Being Blocked by Financial Constraints, Long Delays, Non-payment, Low and Unrealistic Levels of Central and Provincial Government Grants"	198
19. Respondents' Views on "The Establishment of CHSs Being Hindered by Lack of Financial Support From National MPs and Provincial Assembly Members"	199
20. Respondents' Views on "The Establishment and Operation of CHSs Being Helped by the Strong Financial, Physical, and Material Support Provided by Parents and Communities"	201
21. Respondents' Views on "The Establishment and Operation of CHSs Being Helped by the Feeling of Ownership by Parents and Communities for their Schools"	204
22. Respondents' Views on "The Management of CHSs Being Frustrated by Unclear Delineation of Roles and Responsibilities"	220
23. Respondents' Views on "The Management of CHSs Being Impeded by the Lack of Training, and Training Opportunities"	223
24. Respondents' Views on "The Establishment and Management of CHSs Being Helped by the Government's Inclination to Decentralise More Control to the Lower Levels"	235

<b>TABLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
25. Respondents' Views on "The Overall Shortage of Trained Teachers and Specialized Subject Teachers" As a Major Problem Currently being faced by CHSs	240
26. Respondents' Views on "The Shortage of Instructional Materials, Inadequate Distribution System, and Lack of Storage Facilities" As Major Problems Currently being faced by CHSs	246
27. Respondents' Views on "Inadequate Transport and Communication" As Major Problems Currently being faced by CHSs	249
28. Respondents' Views on "The Lack of Specialized Classrooms, School Libraries, Hall, Staff Room, Staff Houses, Dormitories" As Major Problems Confronting CHSs	255
29. Respondents' Views on "CHSs Providing a Low Quality of Education Compared to NSSs and PSSs" As a Major Issue Currently being faced by CHSs	256
30. Respondents' Views on "CHSs being Confronted by Land Disputes and Insufficient Land for Expansion" As Major Issues	260
31. Respondents' Views on "Confusions About How CHSs Fit into the Existing Secondary Education Structure and the Relevance of their Academic Oriented Curriculum" As Major Issues Confronting CHSs	264

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. Approval from the Solomon Islands Government to Undertake First Round of Fieldwork	310
2. Approval from the Solomon Islands Government to Undertake Second Round of Fieldwork	311
3. Interview Questions Administered to Participants During the First Round of Fieldwork	312
4. Questionnaire Administered to Participants During the Second Round of Fieldwork and Questionnaire Data	315
5. List of Interviewees Conducted	337

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOM	– Board of Management
CEO	– Chief Education Officer
CDC	– Curriculum Development Centre
CDF	– Constituency Development Fund
CHS	– Community High School
COM	- Church of Melanesia
DJSS	– Day Junior Secondary School (Later Known as CHSs)
DoE	- Department of Education
ERU	– Education Resources Unit
FEP	– Fourth Education Project
HCC	– Honiara City Council
IPU	- Implementation and Planning Unit
MECA	- Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs
METCA	- Ministry of Education, Training and Cultural Affairs
MEHRD	– Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MEST	- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MNPD	– Ministry of National Planning and Development
MOF	– Ministry of Finance
MOU	– Memorandum of Understanding
MPG&RD	– Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development
MTWU	– Ministry of Transport, Works and Utilities
NERP	– National Education Reform Plan
NGO	– Non-Government Organisation
NSS	– National Secondary School

PEAP	– Provincial Education Action Plan
PEP	– Primary Education Project
PGRC	– Provincial Government Review Committee
PIRU	– Planning, Implementation and Research Unit
PMO	– Prime Minister’s Office
PSS	– Provincial Secondary School
RCC	- Roman Catholic Church
RTC	– Rural Training Centres
SDA	- Seventh Day Adventist
SEP	– Secondary Education Project
SIF3	– Solomon Islands Form 3 Exams
SIG	- Solomon Islands Government
SI\$	- Solomon Island Dollar
SISC	– Solomon Islands School Certificate
SISEE	– Solomon Islands Secondary Entrance Examinations
SSEC	- South Sea Evangelical Church
SSS	– Senior Secondary School
SITUP	– Solomon Islands Teacher Upgrading Programme
TETP	– Third Education and Training Project
TPA	- Townsville Peace Agreement
TSC	– Teaching Service Commission
UC	- United Church
USP	– University of the South Pacific
USP (SI) Centre	- University of the South Pacific Solomon Islands Centre
WDF	– Ward Development Fund

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 An Overview of the Study**

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the purpose, significance and design for this study of educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands, specifically focussing on the various influences which have resulted in, and continue to impact on, Community High Schools (CHSs). The establishment of CHSs is a recent initiative by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) to further decentralise education responsibilities to the lower levels of the hierarchy since 1995 with the aim of increasing access, gender and provincial equity, encouraging community participation and partnership, and reducing unit costs in secondary education.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. Firstly, a statement is made on the problems associated with operating a highly competitive and selective secondary education system and the implications of these problems which, in turn, brought about the need to establish CHSs. Relevant research questions are then identified and justification is provided for undertaking this research study. Secondly, the antecedents of the decentralised movement in Solomon Islands are briefly discussed. This will also include current moves for more decentralisation and autonomy which have been thrown into sharp focus by the recent troubles during the Guadalcanal Conflict. This is followed by a brief description of educational decentralisation in order to demonstrate how the CHSs fit into the decentralised structure. Thirdly, an explanation is provided on how the data were to be collected and the techniques that were to be used in that process.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

With reference to 1985 comparative figures for secondary enrolment ratios from the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Gannicott and McGavin (1987) revealed that the relative position of Solomon Islands, compared to developed and other developing countries, place the country “very firmly in the category of ‘educationally poor’ countries” (p. 9). In addition, the World Bank (1993) mentioned that Solomon Islands has one of the lowest coverage and completion rates at the secondary level in the world.

Until quite recently, few Solomon Island children have progressed beyond primary school level. In 1994, for instance, only about 26% of students progressed beyond Standard 6 with the remaining 74% being ‘pushed out’ of the formal schooling system altogether because there were insufficient places in existing secondary schools (MET, 1994; World Bank, 1995b). At the same time, there was a growing concern about the low female participation in secondary education (World Bank, 1993). For example, in 1992 girls accounted for only 38% of those placed in secondary schools (MET, 1994). The problem was exacerbated by an uneven distribution of secondary school places among the provinces. Approximately 70% of students attended secondary school outside their own provinces. This created high transportation and operation costs in boarding secondary schools, which were heavily subsidized by the government (Gannicott and McGavin 1987; World Bank, 1993).

The problem of insufficient secondary school places has been a longstanding issue in the country’s formal schooling system, and in the mid 1990s the situation reached a crisis point. Faced with chronic financial problems, one of the highest birth rates in the world at 3.4% per annum, and increased pressures for a more educated population given a literacy rate of only 27%, the SIG began to look at other options of providing secondary education away from the traditional and expensive boarding secondary school system. Therefore, during the early 1990s, the SIG sought financial assistance from the World Bank and bilateral donors to alleviate the pressures caused by the lack of secondary school places. Consequently, in 1993, the World Bank funded five CHSs, formerly known as Day Junior Secondary Schools (DJSSs) as a pilot

programme. However, given the increasing pressures for secondary education and having witnessed the ardent response by concerned communities for these five schools, the then Minister for Education took a paper to Cabinet in November 1994 seeking approval to open more government and community funded and supported CHSs. Consequently, about 95 mostly community supported CHSs were established throughout the country, which brought about a dramatic increase in secondary school enrolments from 26% in 1994 to about 69% in 2001, and an increase in the secondary participation rate of girls to about 45% during the same period (MEHRD, 2001a).

Furthermore, a review of the administrative structure of the Ministry of Education of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) by Doyle (1983) identified major problems facing the MEHRD. Four of these were directly related to the decentralised nature of the education system. These were the need to:

Clarify division of responsibilities between the MEHRD and Provinces, ensure adequate control for all decentralised tasks and support functions, decentralise advisory roles in policy-making in all professional education areas, and eliminate dysfunctional aspects of bureaucratic structure: indecision, lengthy channels of communication, emphasis on positions rather than tasks and functions (p. 13).

According to Bhindi (1987), Solomon Islanders have also identified problems arising from the decentralisation of the education system. Padakana (1984) referred to “certain confusions and problems arising from lack of role clarity of the Provincial Education Officers (PEOs) which tended to hinder some of the developments and progress of education” (p. 5) in Isabel Province. Maeniuta (1984) made reference to the consequences of delays in receiving education grants from the central government to the provinces. Rigeo (1984) drew attention to the staffing system, particularly aspects dealing with promotions, transfers, replacement, training, and the need to ensure “continuity of activities and implementation of plans in the Western Province” (p. 1). Mudu (1984) commented on the need to clear the ambiguity regarding the responsibilities for the employment of teachers and their conditions of service.

Both Teliklava (1984) and Bori Sau (1984) drew attention to the vagaries of the transport and communication systems and their effects on the provincial education

system. Calls have been made for monitoring device to check on the quality of education in the provinces. Kiriau *et al.*, (1982) found that “an independent, centralised inspectorate system was essential to monitor and control the quality of primary education in the provinces” (p. 12). Oritaimae (1983) made a similar call for “a central ‘check system’ (i.e. an inspectorate) in order to know exactly where we are heading and whether monies and resources being invested in the provincial education system were justified” (p. 1). According to Habu (1983), decentralisation has imposed problems on the structure of education in Solomon Islands. He said that:

Over-extended resources have affected quality and efficiency, duplication has led to wastage of resources, the system has created too many bosses and too many policies, and some unclear defined areas of responsibility have sometimes led to lack of efficient administration and supervision of the system (p. 4).

Consultants Doyle (1983) and Thomas (1983), commissioned by MEHRD, pointed to the need for overhauling the organisation structure of the Ministry, delineating clearly the role of Provincial Education Officers (PEOs) and their relationship with the central government authorities in order to improve their skills and so enable them to implement and handle change successfully. Tekulu (1984) identified a number of “draw-backs” which need amelioration. These were “inadequate manpower in the field, trained officers leaving the MEHRD, lack of adequate technical people in the field, too many frequent change-of-hand of senior officers at the time of programme implementation” (p. 1)

There appeared to be problems associated with introducing a decentralised system of education in Solomon Islands. Research was needed to clarify the theoretical conceptualisation of the problems and to offer practical guidance to educational administrators at the central, education authority, school and community levels who were expected to solve these problems.

In view of the foregoing, the following research questions were posed as being theoretically significant and were addressed in this case study:

1. What are the goals or reasons for establishing CHSs?
2. Where do the forces or factors for establishing CHSs come from, and were there any tensions which they may have created?
3. What was the consultation procedure used by concerned parties before establishing CHSs, and was it sufficient and followed at all times?
4. Have CHSs achieved their goals, how have these been monitored or evaluated, and what additional benefits are to be had from CHSs?
5. What were the financial and other forms of support for CHSs from local and external sources, were these sufficient and sustainable, and what was the impact of parent and communities involvement?
6. How are CHSs currently being administered, and is relevant training provided for those responsible for running CHSs to prepare them for their new roles?
7. What plans are in place to build new CHSs, or expand existing ones, and to decentralise more functions for controlling CHSs to the lower levels?
8. What are some of the major problems or issues currently being faced by CHSs?

## **1.2 Interests and Significance of the Research**

The focus of the study in attempting to contribute to an understanding of the decentralising trends represented by the rapid growth of CHSs was largely influenced by the researcher's work experiences both as a secondary school teacher, and particularly, as an educational administrator in the Solomon Islands Public Service. During the course of the researcher's various official capacities in the MEHRD, and more so as Permanent Secretary, he was constantly confronted with the country's on-going problems in the education sector where access, quality, equity, efficiency and

coordination are the major issues. The researcher's underlying interest, therefore, lies in the search for ways to assist in addressing these sectoral issues so that as many Solomon Island children as possible can receive a better and more education they so rightly deserve.

The research study was considered to be important for the following reasons:

### **1.2.1 This is the first research of its kind to focus on the establishment of CHSs**

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no analysis of CHSs in the Solomon Islands has been done previously. Therefore, this will be the first comprehensive study of CHSs by a Solomon Islander, and perhaps the first by anyone since about 95 such schools have been introduced into the Solomon Island's secondary education system in 1995. In the first instance, the outcomes of this study will be useful to the SIG, provincial and church education authorities, schools and communities in understanding and implementing decentralisation as a development strategy in the education sector. More broadly, the study will throw light on education decentralisation itself, particularly the decentralisation of education in a developing world context and the various factors which might aid or hinder it. Another key concept here is that of policy 'borrowing', both the appropriateness of ideas and approaches developed in other cultural settings being taken up in a developing world context and the way in which education policy is mediated and contested as it crosses cultural boundaries.

Since no study had been undertaken in this area before in Solomon Islands, the researcher considered it timely to investigate the extent to which the decentralisation of education had been successful, to isolate any critical factors which impeded it, and, to consider the ramifications and implications of these factors for the implementation, training and preparation of those who manage education at all levels.

### **1.2.2 The research study is considered to be important by Solomon Islands policy-makers, educators and politicians**

The importance and value attached by the SIG to this study could be seen from its decision to allow the researcher to undertake research in Solomon Islands (See Appendix 1 and 2) as well as giving him the opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies in this area. Before the study commenced, many educational administrators, politicians and community leaders at all levels expressed their readiness to facilitate the work of the researcher. These interest groups strongly indicated the research to be undertaken as an important and valuable one for Solomon Islands.

### **1.2.3 The research study is likely to generate research interest amongst senior Solomon Islands educators**

This study was likely to encourage senior Solomon Islands educators to build upon the research, not only in their work situations but also their interest to pursue postgraduate studies. It was also likely to stimulate the investigation of related areas in educational policy and administration.

### **1.2.4 The research study is likely to benefit policy-makers in other countries in the South Pacific Region**

This research study is likely to benefit policy-makers and educators in other countries, particularly in the South Pacific where governments have decided to embark upon, and are perhaps facing similar difficulties in implementing educational decentralisation.

Problems do not exist in a vacuum but occur within the context in which they are found. For this reason, the next section is devoted to describing the context of decentralisation in Solomon Islands in general, and educational decentralisation in particular.

## **1.3 The Context of the Study**

### **1.3.1 Solomon Islands: Background**

Solomon Islands is an independent parliamentary democracy situated in the south west Pacific Ocean between longitudes 155° 30' and 170° East and latitudes 5° 10' and 12° 45' South of the equator. It comprises an archipelago stretching over 1,500 kilometres in a south-east direction from Papua New Guinea, and consists of about 990 islands with six main islands and numerous smaller volcanic islands, coral atolls and raised coral reefs scattered over 748,000 square kilometers of sea. Only about 350 islands are inhabited. Solomon Islands has a total land area of 29,800 square kilometres and a population of 409,042 (SIG, 2000), who speak 85 different languages. The population is made up of 84% of people who live in the rural areas, and in approximately 6,641 villages.

First “discovered” by Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana in 1568, Solomon Islands attracted waves of traders, blackbirders, missionaries and adventurers. In 1893, it was proclaimed a British Protectorate and remained so until independence was achieved on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1978. During the Second World War, Solomon Islands was the centre of some of the fiercest battles between the Japanese and the Allied forces.

Since independence, the country has been governed by an elected government based on the Westminster-style Parliamentary Democracy, with the Queen as Head of State represented by a Governor General, and a Prime Minister as head of government. The country is divided into 50 electoral constituencies with as many national parliamentarians. The administrative headquarters of the country is located in the capital, Honiara, which is also the main commercial centre.

Much administration responsibility is devolved to the government of nine provinces and the Honiara municipal authority. The nine provinces are: Choiseul, Western, Isabel, Central Islands, Guadalcanal, Rennell and Bellonal, Malaita, Makira Ulawa, and Temotu (see Table 1). Each of the nine provinces has an elected assembly headed by a Premier, with Honiara having an elected City Council headed by a

President. The provincial members/city councillors are elected from 183 wards divided over the ten entities (SIG, 2000).

Prior to the commencement of the ethnic conflict in 1998, the country's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew at 4.1% yearly. Revenue from exports amounted to SI\$656.3m (SI\$1.00 = NZ\$0.2671) led by export of fish, logs, copra, palm oil and kernels, and cocoa (ADB, 1997). During the period 1983 – 1996, tourism is an important source of revenue and is steadily growing. In 1996, imports into the country – mainly food, beverages and tobacco, fuel, and machinery and transport equipment amounted to SI\$537.9m.

**Table 1: Solomon Islands: Basic Statistics**

Provinces	Main Administrative Centre	Population		Land Area sq. kms
		1986 Census	1999 Census	
Choiseul	Taro	13,569	20,008	1,754
Western	Gizo	41,681	62,739	8,573
Isabel	Buala	14,616	20,421	4,014
Central	Tulagi	16,655	21,577	1,276
Rennell-Bellona	New Place	1,806	2,377	400
Guadalcanal	Honiara	49,831	60,275	5,302
Honiara City	Honiara	30,413	49,107	34
Malaita	Auki	80,032	122,620	4,243
Makira-Ulawa	Kira Kira	21,796	31,006	3,188
Temotu	Lata	14,781	18,912	926
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>285,176</b>	<b>409,042</b>	<b>29,800</b>

(Source: Solomon Islands Government (2000). *Report on 1999 Population and Housing Census*).

### 1.3.2 Political Decentralisation in Solomon Islands

The evolution of political and governance structures in Solomon Islands has influenced the organisation and administration of its education system. Because of its internal diversity of culture, traditional beliefs, and language Solomon Islands has adopted a highly decentralised, provincial system of governance by devolving its decision-making to the provincial levels. Since education policies and structure

develop within the context of political philosophy and governance structure espoused by the party in power, it is appropriate to consider first, the circumstances which instigated the political decision to adopt this particular model of governance.

A survey of literature on the political and administrative development shows that five main factors provided the impetus for decentralisation in Solomon Islands. Each of these factors is discussed below.

#### **a) Geographical Isolation:**

The first factor which appeared to favour decentralisation of governance was the geographical scatter of the islands. The size and isolation of the various provinces tended to reinforce cultural distinctiveness and linguistic diversity, hampered communication and travel, and made administration difficult (Ifunaoa, 1983). It was cost and time effective and administratively expedient to decentralise decision-making as much as possible under the circumstances.

#### **b) Reconciliation and Accommodation of Island/Ethnic Differences**

The second contributory factor was the need to reconcile local or island traditional practices and ethnic differences and to accommodate the aspirations of the various groups to control their own destinies and preserve their own cultural values. Examples of the influence of the 'traditional' element was evident earlier in the country's history from the serious incidents involving the colonial government and the Kwaio people in 1927 and later with the development of local movements such as the *Masina Ruru* (or the Marching Rule Movement) on the island of Malaita (Campbell, 1977; Boutilier, 1979; Keesing, 1978; Keesing and Corris, 1980; Pacific Islands Monthly, 1985; Wolfers, 1983). Such experiences with the traditional forces indicated the desire of the people concerned to mind their own affairs without interference from outsiders, be they other island groups or the central government.

There have also been inter-island rivalry and resentments arising out of advantages enjoyed by some island groups and the desire of other groups to enjoy similar

advantages and privileges. This rivalry can be evidenced from the prevalent attitude towards more successful groups such as the Western Province citizens of Solomon Islands, and reference to the “Malaita Mafia” in the government departments and the complaints about “squatters” from other provinces in Guadalcanal (Herlihy, 1982; Premdas *et al.*, 1983; Seri, 1985). Events in Solomon Islands in the last three years regarding the ethnic conflict between the people of Guadalcanal and Malaita, which will be discussed in Section 1.3.3 have thrown the realities of these rivalries and resentments into sharp focus.

The cultural distinctiveness of each group explained the desire to preserve their own cultural values from differences such as languages, social practices, ceremonies, family hierarchy (e.g. whether based on patrilineal or matrilineal principles), social order (e.g. whether or not chieftainship is recognised), religious beliefs, and the different land tenure systems. Under such circumstances, each basic difference of culture serves the needs of a particular environment that surrounds it, and is often seen by them as exclusive and essential.

### **c) Secessionist Threats**

Another significant contributory factor was the desire of the government concerned to contain or eliminate secessionist threats, which create serious political and social problems and undermine the unity and the sovereignty of the country. For example, Solomon Islands faced threats from the Western Movement before independence (Premdas *et al.*, 1983).

A survey of selected literature on this subject indicated that secessionist movements generally gained momentum when certain groups in a country felt that their interests were likely to be undermined or ignored by the government of the day or that their groups were likely to be overwhelmed or swamped by other powerful ethnic or interest groups (Beti, 1971; Herlihy, 1982; Premdas *et al.*, 1983). Decentralisation with a federal or provincial government system was usually an acceptable compromise (McDonald, 1985).

In Solomon Islands, pressure for administrative and political decentralisation was applied by Western Province in lieu of full independence for the Province (Herlihy, 1982; Wolfers, 1983). The Western Province citizens even boycotted the Solomon Islands independence celebration in their Province. The seriousness of such protests led the government to establish a special committee on provincial government under the chairmanship of David Kausimae (Kausimae *et al.*, 1979; Wolfers, 1983). It was, however, left to the Mamaloni Government to enact the appropriate legislation for a decentralised provincial government system under the Provincial Government Act of 1981 (PGA, 1981).

The Act provided the basis for the current decentralised, provincial governance structure. It can be argued therefore that the Western Province breakaway movement hastened the introduction of political decentralisation in Solomon Islands.

That decentralisation can be an effective remedy for attempted secession can be seen from the successful experience of provinces such as the North Solomon Province (Bougainville) in Papua New Guinea. According to McDonald (1985), other provinces in Papua New Guinea were either suspended by the central government for corruption and mismanagement or were characterised by their lack-lustre performance, a trend that continues to the present day (ABC, "Time to Talk" Series, 2002).

#### **d) Equitable Distribution of Development**

The fourth factor which appeared to have influenced the adoption of a decentralisation governance structure in Solomon Islands was the desire of the government and the people to spread the fruits of development: education, health, and public works more equitably, particularly to hitherto neglected rural areas where the bulk of the population reside (Ifunaoa, 1983; Larmour, 1983).

These disparities had to be addressed in a realistic, acceptable and equitable manner (Connell and Curtain, 1982; Ifunaoa, 1983; Nanau, 1995). Decentralisation appeared to be the major instrument available to achieve that aim.

### **e) Melanesian Egalitarianism**

The fifth factor to give momentum to decentralisation was the commitment to egalitarianism. Among factors which promoted devolution in Solomon Islands, Campbell (1977) noted “the egalitarian Melanesian approach to government (which) restrains autocratic ruling elites and promotes wide participation in the political process” (p. 238). Thomas (1985) also supported the egalitarian orientation of the Melanesian Solomon Islanders and their use of ‘consultative networks’ using consensus in decision-making. He said:

The most common consultative networks were also the most common forms of political organization in the Solomon Islands. They consisted of adult peer groups in extended families. The two main characteristics of political organization in the Solomon Islands were the egalitarian nature of adult peer groups and decision-making by consensus... (p. 250).

The Melanesian commitment to egalitarianism, resistance to authoritarianism, and preference for consultation and consensus were apparent from the works of local writers such as Saunana (1972; 1980). Church workers such as Whiteman (1984) have also commented on the social and political fragmentation of the Melanesian societies and their proclivity for small group dynamics based on egalitarian values. In this connection, Sister John Paul Chao (1984) observed:

The Melanesian socio-political system - - - are also distinct from the Polynesian and Micronesian systems in some rather significant ways. Among the Polynesian and Micronesian societies, one generally finds some degree of social stratification and political centralisation, whereas the majority of Melanesian societies are relatively egalitarian and politically non-centralised (p. 127).

At this juncture, it is appropriate to look at the recent ethnic conflict in Solomon Islands and its ramifications for new political decentralisation initiatives which are currently underway.

### 1.3.3 The Ethnic Conflict

The series of events that have occurred in Solomon Islands since early December 1998, which have been commonly referred to as the 'ethnic tension', have important implications for the ongoing debate on decentralisation in the country.

The ostensible cause of the insurgency was rising frustration by the Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly and people over the Government's failure to address a list of grievances, centred on land dealings, compensation for killings, and inter-island migration. Similar lists had been presented before, notably in 1988 when the present Premier of Guadalcanal Province was Prime Minister, but no concerted effort had been made then or at any other time to deal with the grievances or the disaffection that lay behind them. In October 1998, the Premier of Guadalcanal Province issued what was widely regarded as a call to the people of Guadalcanal to mobilise in protest against unfair treatment by the national Government, and the presence of large numbers of immigrants in the central-northern part of the island. By early December 1998, armed groups appeared and began a campaign of violence against persons and property around Guadalcanal.

In terms of its overt nature, the current conflict started in early December 1998. It was sparked by an announcement from the Premier of Guadalcanal Province to the national government stating that, its people demanded some immediate political, economic and social change. The premier gave fourteen days notice for the government to pay compensation for the lives of Guadalcanal individuals killed by non-Guadalcanal people during the 1970s and 1980s. This demand for compensation was only part of a series of other demands. These included the demand for political change from the existing unitary system to a federal state system of governance. This is a desire which is about greater political autonomy, and a demand for economic equity in terms of revenue sharing in monetary benefits derived from resources development on the Island. From these sets of demands and inadequate government responses, the Guadalcanal *Isatabu Freedom Movement* (IFM) started their campaign in issuing a strong message for settlers to leave the Island. The campaign soon turned violent and by June 1999, a mass exodus of about 20 000 labourers and their families

from the country's oil palm plantation in North Guadalcanal left the area. The conflict took a sinister twist when the IFM militia kidnapped and killed some people. This was the beginning of the *Malaita Eagle Force* (MEF) counter offensive. The MEF launched counter attacks, which have also resulted in some deaths. In the meantime, attempts by the government to restore law and order has proven more difficult. Several attempts to mitigate peace, initially with the IFM, have not been successful, until the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA), which ended hostilities was signed by the warring factions and the government on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2001.

The current conflict calls for a clear understanding about the major conditions contributing to the current state of violence. Views about this social conflict vary and are complex. Solomon Islanders have understood the current conflict in a number of different ways. Generally, some saw the cause of the conflict as having to do with the murder of Guadalcanal individuals throughout the history of Solomon Islands. For others, it was about revenge for being sworn at in public (Naitoro, 2000). In addition, the emphasis by the IFM (Isatabu Tavuli, 2000) on "Land is our Mother, Land is our Life, Land is our Future" (p. 1) does suggest that land is an important issue to the conflict. Furthermore, it seems that the problem of compensation for lives and properties lost since the conflict started in 1998 was also a major issue. Although this is not the primary cause of the conflict, it is a secondary problem with unintended consequences. These issues point to a much more complicated challenge for contemporary Solomon Islands. According to Naitoro (2000), these are issues and interests rooted in the history and politics of development in the Solomon Islands starting with the colonial land laws, exclusive state and marginalised landowners in development projects. In addition, Kabutaulaka (2002) believed that the causes of the current tensions could be summed up in three major factors: (i) land - which relates to issues of urbanisation and squatter settlements; (ii) the disrespect for Guadalcanal people which results in murders, displacement, etc., and (iii) unemployment and other socio-economic problems. The factors concerning land, and unemployment and other socio-economic problems will now be looked at in turn, and the complexities that exist within them will be explored.

The issue about land is important and discussion of this issue should not concentrate only on settlements on Guadalcanal and other provinces, but also on land controlled by government and the private sector. This is because land occupied by settlers from other islands is negligible if one considers land controlled by the Government and private sector which is about 6% of land in Solomon Islands. The land issue needs to be considered in the light of alienated land and those committed for private sector development. However, this is not to say that land occupied by other Solomon Islanders on Guadalcanal is not an important issue. The concern for many Guadalcanal people is not only the percentage or size of land that people occupy or settle in, but what they do with the land that they occupy on Guadalcanal. Related to the issue of land are concerns over expanding squatter settlements around Honiara, not only on land under Temporary Occupancy License (TOL), but also on customary land which may be legally acquired or not.

Social issues such as unemployment are significant and must be considered in discussions of the ethnic conflict (Kabutaulaka, 1999). A closer look at the background of most of the leaders who initiated the violence would reveal that most of them are school dropouts at various levels of the education system from the mid to late 1980s, and are currently unemployed. A closer look at their skill levels and employment background would reveal that broad socio-economic issues such as unemployment are important and must be addressed. Other national issues, such as national consciousness, the need for decentralising development and its benefits are also significant. This, however, is not as simple as saying that the current violence is caused by unemployment alone. One cannot say that the only reason causing these people to participate in and perpetuate violence is because they are unemployed, but it is true unemployment is a contributing factor. However, it is not the only factor, and to say that people take part in violence just because they are unemployed is to be too simplistic and deviate attention away from other causes or factors. Indeed, those who are directly involved are much more complex than the reasons for their unemployment would suggest. They have political views, are well aware of issues of land, feel dominated, and have relatives who have been murdered in the past. A letter from one of the IFM leaders to the Guadalcanal Peace Process Committee in May

1999, requesting the government to pay the SI\$2.5m demanded by the Guadalcanal Province and adopt a 'state system of government' signifies this.

On the whole, there are numerous factors that relate to and complement each other to become the underlying causes of the current ethnic conflict. These could be identified as a general concern amongst Guadalcanal people about issues of land, urbanisation, equitable share of development benefits, and a general lack of respect by others for the people of Guadalcanal. These factors, of course, must be seen within a historical and socio-political context.

Turning to a post-conflict outlook for the country, in terms of its economic health, the Solomon Islands is close to being bankrupt by some technical definitions (Downer 2002). A blunt assessment of the economic damage suffered is immense and the challenge ahead to rebuild the economy is enormous as the political unrest has cost the government over SI\$440.5m, 6 800 jobs and a 7 – 10 year recession. Whilst the government continues to pay compensation for the lives and property lost during the conflict, having spent more than SI\$300m so far, its major industries have suspended their operations and its trade and domestic business activities have virtually ground to a halt. The SIPL (oil palm) suspended its operations in June 1999, followed by the suspension of Gold Ridge Mining operations in mid 2000, and Solomon Taiyo's suspension of its pole and line fishing operations in 2001. More than 1,000 public officers have been asked to take unpaid leave or were made redundant, as the government is unable to pay their salaries. For public officers and teachers who remain in the public service, the government has owed them up to six pay periods in salary arrears so far.

On the question of finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict, the TPA signed between the IFM, MEF and other parties has not been observed by the main parties to the conflict (Nori, 2001). It is estimated that about 500 high-powered guns (Nori, 2002a) are still in the hands of former militants, which threatens the law and order situation, particularly in and around Honiara, Guadalcanal and Malaita (Nori, 2001; 2002b).

On the political front, four provinces have declared themselves as having their own state governments. These are Makira, Choiseul, Western and Temotu provinces with the latter two provinces threatening to secede from the rest of the Solomon Islands.

As for the future, the journey will be difficult because the violent events that started on northwest Guadalcanal on October 1998 have since escalated into a crisis, which the government seem to be losing control of (Kabutaulaka, 1999). The immediate response to the insurgency has to include competent and appropriate action on security, drastic improvements to the Government's ability to communicate with its people, negotiations between the Government and the militants to contain physical risks to an acceptable level and enable commerce to restart, and allocation of substantial amounts of money and personnel to assist in the care and resettlement of displaced persons. Actions along these lines are in hand, albeit with mixed results.

The longer-term implications depend on how far the assumptions that have so far underlain the nation-state can be maintained. There is no doubt that something fundamental has happened: there has been a realignment of some of the building blocks of the independent nation state. It is not yet certain that a sustainable national structure will emerge, but there are several possible modifications to the present (nominally) unitary state to be carefully and thoughtfully explored. Such a consultative process, among leaders who command widespread respect and authority, needs to take place in as cool and rational an atmosphere as possible. One of the aims of the short-term response must be to create such an environment.

Assuming a structure of governance survives with both a national and an island level of authority, the strategic response to the present insurgency will have to address its underlying causes, not only for the two most affected islands but nationwide. Clearly the strategy needs to address the faster development of Malaita and the rural areas of Guadalcanal, to reduce the imbalance of opportunity that has brought so many Malaitans to Guadalcanal and encouraged the Guadalcanal people to live off land sales and rents.

But the implications go well beyond Guadalcanal and Malaita. The insurgency has again highlighted the constantly overlooked fact that there are great social and economic differences within Solomon Islands. A national development strategy that fails to openly recognise and effectively respond to this is fatally flawed. Land and sea resources, population size and skills, history, location and existing level of economic activity are immensely different. Within a generalised goal of all Solomon Islanders becoming better off, an acceptable balance has to be struck in the distribution of the costs and benefits of the development process. This precept has been long known but little heeded. The Guadalcanal insurgency is a painful reminder of its importance.

Consequently, under the TPA, the government was mandated to introduce a form of government system that would give autonomous political status for the people to manage their own affairs. Following nationwide consultations during 2000- 2003, the adoption of a home grown Federal Government system was favoured whereby each respective province would become a state with its own state constitution (MPG&RD, 2001a). In view of this, it is envisaged that a Bill, which could form the basis of the Solomon Islands new federal constitution would be tabled for parliamentary approval in late 2002 or mid 2003 Session (MPG&RD, 2001b).

On the basis of the foregoing, it is a fair conclusion that Solomon Island policy-makers, when opting for a decentralised governance structure, would have considered its capacity to accommodate the egalitarian values espoused by its people.

The above description of the past and present context of decentralisation in Solomon Islands is germane to the understanding of the forces which have influenced or will influence the development of educational decision-making under a decentralised governance structure. In this case, administrative and political decentralisation preceded and therefore, influenced the introduction of educational decentralisation. The following section will look at the present education system in detail.

### 1.3.4 The Present Education System

The Solomon Islands' education system follows the conventional patterns of early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, and non-formal education.

#### a) Primary Education

Primary education commences with a Preparatory Year for 5 - 6 year old children (MEHRD, 1999) followed by six years (Standards 1-6) for 6 – 9 year old children (METCA, 1978) in about 556 primary schools. Approximately 91% of primary schools are being assisted by the government through grants, payment of salaries for about 2,228 teachers, and the supply of textbooks and materials. All primary schools are registered under 20 different education authorities consisting of ten provincial, seven Church, and three registered as private controlling authorities. While the central government, through the MEHRD, is also an education authority, it does not operate any primary schools. Nevertheless, it can be argued that all primary schools are government managed (World Bank, 1993) because, strictly speaking, the 10 provincial education authorities including the Honiara City Council (HCC) undertake their responsibilities with regards to schools under their control only as “agents” of the central government through the *Agency Agreements* stipulated in the PGA, 1981 (Section 31 Parts (1), (2) and (3) (a) and Schedule 6). Thus, under the relevant provisions of both the PGA 1981 and the Education Act 1978 (Section 17), provincial and church education authorities are being responsible for the overall operation and maintenance of primary schools under their control on behalf of the central government.

Twenty-three years after Solomon Islands' independence, universal primary schooling continues to be elusive (ADB Report, 1998). Total enrolments in primary schools, including preparatory classes, have increased from 70 078 in 1993 to an estimated 93 567 in the year 2001 (MEHRD, 2001a), a total increase of 33.5% or 4.2% annually.

However, in view of the fact that the country's population grew at an annual rate of about 3.4% during that period, much of this expansion in primary capacity has been required simply to cope with additional children in that particular age group. Furthermore, ambiguity about the formal role of the preparatory year, wide variation in the age of entry (between 5 – 9 year olds), and large numbers of students repeating classes at various points within the school system create much uncertainty about the exact gross and net enrolment rates. These factors, especially the fact that pupils may enter the school system at any time between ages 5 and 9, mean it is not possible to calculate accurately, the actual enrolment ratio for the primary school age population. According to Sikua (1995:1997), a reliable estimate in 1996 was that about 75% of children in a particular age group were enrolled in primary school. Recent reports such as the Census Report 1999 (SIG, 2000) estimated that 2% of children between the ages of 5 – 9 years old were not in primary schools. This gives a 98% primary school enrolment ratio overall, but this figure would vary depending on what age group is taken to be the eligible age group.

At the end of standard 6, all pupils sit for the Solomon Islands Secondary Entrance Examinations (SISEE) and those who pass the exams are selected to proceed on to Form 1 in secondary schools. The SISEE consist of three papers namely; English, Mathematics, and a General Knowledge Paper. Prior to sitting the Exams, all standard 6 pupils are given the opportunity to list three preferences (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> choice) for which secondary schools they would like to be enrolled in the following year. However, the school or type of secondary school they are finally placed into depends on their performance in the SISE exams.

## **b) Secondary Education**

The country's 116 secondary schools are of three types known as National Secondary Schools (NSSs), Provincial Secondary Schools (PSSs), and Community High Schools (CHSs). These three types of secondary schools are discussed, in turn below.

### **i) National Secondary Schools (NSSs)**

Firstly, there are nine NSSs, which provide five, six or seven years of academic secondary schooling. Of these, three cater for Forms 1 – 5 classes, and six offer classes up to Form 6, including one government-run NSS (KGV) which hosts the national Form 7 comprising an Arts, Technology and a Science stream. The central government, Church of Melanesia (COM), and the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) each run two NSSs while the Roman Catholic Church (RC), United Church (UC), and the South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC) have one each under their control. Except for KGV School which has 20% of its intake as day scholars, the other eight NSSs are predominantly boarding schools. Church run NSSs not only receive some grant funding and support (about one-third of the two government run NSSs) for their operation, teacher salaries, and textbooks and equipment, but they also follow the government curriculum, observe the same term dates and holidays, and are, in fact, very similar in operation to the two government NSSs. The government and church education authorities have a School Board or Council for each of their NSSs to assist the principal and staff in running the school.

The term ‘National’ meant that these type of schools offer a full academic secondary course up to Form 5. Form 6 students are generally regarded as having already been identified for possible local or overseas tertiary level scholarships, and the Form 7 year is being treated as a university level or Foundation Year. Most importantly, however, NSSs derive their name from the fact that they draw their student intakes from all over the country, and apart from the two government-run NSSs, about 80% of their intakes would comprise of adherents of the church education authority running that particular school.

In 1999, NSSs selected their intakes from approximately the top seven percent of pupils who sat for the standard 6 SISE Exam for that year. This represents only 11% of the total number of pupils who progressed to Form 1 in 1999.

## ii) Provincial Secondary Schools (PSSs)

The second type of secondary schools in Solomon Islands are known as Provincial Secondary Schools (PSSs). There are 16 PSSs, which offer three, five or six years of schooling with a rural vocational oriented secondary curriculum. The PSSs were introduced into the Solomon Islands secondary education system following a major review of the education system in 1973 (see Section 1.3.5).

As their name suggests, PSSs are under the control of the 10 Provincial Education Authorities including the Honiara City Council. At present, three of the PSSs cater for Forms 1 – 3 only whilst 12 have Forms 1 – 5 classes and one, located in Honiara, offers classes from Form 1 up to Form 6. Like their NSSs counterparts, PSSs are mainly boarding secondary schools except for Honiara PSS with nearly a 100% of its intake enrolled as day pupils. Furthermore, regardless of which Christian denomination students' belong to, approximately 80% of PSS enrolments would be drawn from within that particular province or within the city boundary in the case of Honiara. The remaining 20% would be taken up by students from other provinces whenever possible. The provision for allowing a 20% intake from other provinces or other Christian denominations, as was the case for church controlled NSSs, is a measure imposed by the MEHRD under the Grants Code (1979) in order to justify the allocation of central government grants to church and provincial education authorities.

PSSs are also recipients of central government grants for their operation, teacher salaries, and textbooks and equipment, and as with primary schools, are being managed by provincial education authorities under *Agency Agreements* provisions specified in the PGA, 1981. Each PSS has a Board of Management (BOM) to assist the principal and staff in running the school. According to the 1999 MERHD Exam Report, PSSs enrolled the next 14% from the total number of pupils who sat the standard 6 SISE Exams for that year, representing only 21% of the 1999 Form 1 placements.

### **iii) Community High Schools (CHSs)**

The third type of secondary school which have been introduced into the Solomon Islands' secondary education system since 1995, and the subject of this thesis, are known as Community High Schools (CHSs).

Before looking at what CHSs are, it should be pointed out that the prevalent situation regarding the central government's financing of education up to 1994 was such that, public expenditure for education, roughly comparable to international standards (ADB, 1998), was used to provide fully subsidized, high-cost boarding facilities such as the NSSs and PSSs. This practice restricted capacity in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and skewed public expenditure towards the upper levels of the education system at the expense of the lower levels.

Furthermore, until the advent of CHSs in 1995, only three new boarding secondary schools had been built under the country's second World Bank-funded Secondary Education Project (SEP). The three new boarding secondary schools came on stream in 1986, and so between then and 1994, the already low progression rate from primary to secondary schools was getting worse. In 1994, for instance, only about 26% of students progressed beyond primary standard 6 into Form 1 in secondary schools with the remaining 74% 'pushed out' of the formal schooling system altogether because there were insufficient secondary school places. From a historical perspective, the country's post-independence highest secondary enrolment rate, reached in 1990, was only about 31% of the total number of Standard 6 leavers. However, from then on, this began declining by about two percent per annum due to corresponding increases in the number of children entering and completing primary school, coupled with the lack of matching increases in the number of secondary school places. The Solomon Islands education system, which is pyramidal in nature, has always been a highly competitive and selective system, particularly the progression of students from primary to secondary schools, and at no time in the country's history has this primary to secondary transition been universal.

Consequently, the standard 6 `push out' problem has been a longstanding issue in the Solomon Islands formal schooling system, making the country one of those with the lowest secondary enrolment rates in the world (World Bank, 1995a). During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the situation reached a crisis point. Faced with chronic financial problems, a birth rate of 3.4%, which is amongst the highest in the world, and increased pressures for a more educated population given a literacy rate of only 27%, the need to radically change existing attempts to provide secondary school places from the expensive boarding school model was recognised. In general, a more serious issue is whether the government can afford to sustain the high cost investment required by boarding secondary schools (World Bank, 1993).

As a result, the major focus of the MEHRD's planning initiatives during the late 1980s and the early 1990s has been to emphasise on exploring the possibilities of upgrading non-boarding facilities in existing boarding secondary schools and the establishment of day junior secondary schools. For instance, the MEHRD's Education Sector Policy and Planning Statement, approved by Cabinet in April 1991 for the secondary sub-sector, stated that:

The Government will initiate a coordinated expansion and upgrading programme to effect qualitative and quantitative improvements in secondary education involving ... the review of strategies designed to further increase opportunities for access to secondary education including ... the optimal use of existing and upgraded facilities, [and] the addition, under agreed conditions, of junior secondary forms to existing primary schools (p. 4).

As an initial step towards the idea of introducing cost-effective day junior secondary schools into the education system, the MEHRD carried out a "*Facilities and Location Survey*" (Goodes and Mattiske, 1991) of all existing primary and secondary schools. The survey was done under the auspices of the SEP, and a major aim of the survey was to determine which of the existing primary schools in the country could be expanded into day junior secondary schools that would provide for lower cost secondary student places for Forms 1 – 3. According to the World Bank (1993), this cost is estimated to be about one-third the cost at a boarding school and will facilitate parental participation, contrary to existing secondary schools which have been built in

isolated sites. The survey found that a total of 30 existing primary schools were large enough to support a single or a double stream of Forms 1 – 3 classes with 35 pupils in each class.

Based on the above finding of the 1991 'Facilities and Location Survey', a pilot scheme of five junior secondary day schools was included as a major component of the World Bank's supported Third Education and Training Project (TETP). These five pilot day junior secondary schools were built on five out of the 30 existing primary schools identified in the survey and they were located at Bishop Epalle in Honiara, Nguvia in Guadalcanal Province, Gwaidingale in Malaita Province, Gizo in the Western Province, and Santa Ana in Makira Province. Construction of these five pilot schools commenced in 1994 and they all came on stream by the end of 1996. Almost simultaneously, Florence Young CHS, run by the SSEC, and St. Nicholas CHS, run by the COM, were opened in Honiara largely through very strong parental and community support and initiative.

In view of the foregoing, and more specifically given the ongoing pressures for more secondary school places coupled with the opportunity to observe and gauge the overwhelming amount of support and the enthusiastic response from parents and concerned communities for these seven new CHSs, the researcher, in his former capacity as the Permanent Secretary for the MEHRD prepared a Cabinet Paper for the then Education Minister to present to Cabinet in November 1994 for the establishment of more CHSs. The Paper not only briefed Cabinet on the declining enrolments into secondary schools and the reasons for it but it also sought approval to immediately introduce more community supported day secondary schools throughout the country in order to alleviate the growing standard 6 'push-out' problem.

Following Cabinet approval of the Paper, nine CHSs were opened at the beginning of 1995, six of which were in Honiara and three in Isabel Province. In 1996, 18 were opened throughout the country, 24 came on stream in 1997, 17 were opened in 1998, 10 in 1999, and another six in 2000. The introduction of these 84 mostly community supported CHSs has now dramatically increased the country's secondary enrolment rate from a low of only 26% in 1994 to more than 60% in 2000.

At present, there are 93 CHSs and the majority offer three years of secondary education while a number of CHSs have been expanded to offer secondary education up to Form 5 (MEHRD, 2001a). Therefore, they are mainly day junior secondary schools although some have limited boarding.

As at the beginning of 2001, 22 out of the 93 CHSs have Forms 1 - 2 classes only, 20 have Forms 1 – 3 and 51 offered Forms 1 – 5 classes. Obviously, the 22 CHSs with only Forms 1 or 2 classes in 2001 would progress to Form 3 in 2002. The question of whether or not any of the remaining 42 CHSs will be expanded to cater for Forms 4 and 5 classes in subsequent years will depend on the demand for senior secondary school places, pressure from their respective communities and parents as well as related policy development and guidelines from the MEHRD.

According to the MEHRD (2001b), approximately 80 CHSs are attached to existing primary schools leaving about 13, which are located on separate sites. They draw their intake from their host primary schools as well as from other feeder primary schools nearby.

The MEHRD's criteria for granting approval for the setting up of a CHS (World Bank, 1993; ADB, 1997; MEHRD, 2001b; R. Sikua, personal communication, July 23, 1998) are that:

- i) Physical facilities in the existing/host primary school are in good condition with easy access by land or water requiring between forty five minutes to an hours travel each way each day;
- ii) Sufficient land is available within the existing site for additional school buildings and staff houses;
- iii) Sufficient local school-age population to sustain a day school for standards 1 – 6 and Forms 1 – 3;
- iv) Sustainable economic condition and development potential within the area for the school's future growth, and
- v) CHSs are equitably distributed within each province.

In coming up with the above criteria the MEHRD assumes that;

- i) All CHS will be non-boarding and are therefore, to be day junior secondary schools, and should be able to establish one or two streams of Forms 1 -3 within three years;
- ii) It is recognised, however, that given the geographical nature and population scatter in some areas, limited boarding may be necessary for some CHSs and, in which case, the costs for any boarders are to be borne by parents and the community. Therefore, the MEHRD will not be responsible for paying boarding grants to CHSs as it does for NSSs and PSSs;
- iii) The initiative to establish CHSs must come from the parents and the community, which needs to be prepared to demonstrate in consultation with their education authority and relevant divisions of the MEHRD that a demand exists for places;
- vi) Enrolment into that CHS is to be offered predominantly to students living between 45 – 60 minutes travel to and from the school each day;
- vii) The community must be prepared to provide sufficient land for present and future expansion needs of the school, and which can be proven that it is free of land disputes;
- viii) Parents and the community must be prepared to provide free materials and labour to construct staff housing and classrooms;
- ix) The community must ensure that a water source can be accessed readily to provide for the school's water and sanitation needs;
- x) The parents and the community must be prepared to establish a BOM to oversee the schools initial and further development and operation, and
- xi) The parents and the community must be prepared, with the leadership and guidance from the school management and the BOM, to raise additional funds for the school's needs, and to manage all its finances.

In the event that approval has been granted for a community to establish a CHS, the understanding was that the central government would provide an annual financial grant of SI\$50,000 for a school with single stream of Forms 1 to 3, and SI\$80 000 per

year for a CHS with a double stream in Forms 1 to 3. This annual grant, which is often supplemented by a small financial contribution from the respective church or provincial education authority, is mainly to support the construction of buildings and sanitation systems. The central government also provides and pays teachers, and supplies textbooks and equipment.

The introduction of CHSs since 1995 has helped transform the country's education system (ADB, 1998), and their impact on secondary access has been dramatic. By the end of 2001, 93 CHSs had been established throughout the provinces, bringing the total number of secondary schools in the country from only 25 in 1994 to 118 altogether in 2001. Of the 93 CHSs, 88 have been built largely through self-help community and parent action groups and only five have been built with financial assistance from the World Bank. The astounding public response to community high schools underscores the huge demand for secondary schooling. Therefore, increased coverage and quality of junior secondary education will be a major priority for Solomon Islands over the next 10-15 years.

In theory, all three types of secondary schools should offer the same secondary school curriculum. However, PSSs are more inclined towards a rural vocational orientation and CHSs only offer those subjects for which they have teachers available. Of the 20 registered education authorities in the country, only 17 including the MEHRD operate secondary schools in 2001. The four education authorities that do not operate any type of secondary school in 2001 are the Chinese Association, Church of the Living Word, Honiara International, and Tamlan.

Following a study on "*Secondary Curriculum Development Policy Assessment*" undertaken by Treadaway (1996), MEHRD hopes to work toward an integrated secondary system in which the three types of secondary schools would evolve into a simpler pattern of three years of junior secondary school (Forms 1-3), followed by three years of senior secondary school (Forms 4-6). Within this integrated secondary system, the most favoured idea (Treadaway, 1996) is that access into secondary schools in Solomon Islands should be through CHSs, whilst the NSSs and PSSs

abolish their Forms 1 to 3 classes in order to cater for more senior Forms 4-6. In support of this idea, the World Bank (1993) stated that:

For reasons of identity and economy, particular attention will be given to gradually reducing student travel beyond their own province. In due time, when access is increased in all provinces, students entering Forms 1-3 will remain in their own provinces and student movement will only occur at Forms 4-6. Assessment procedures will be reviewed ... to accommodate the latter and develop a strategy by which higher cost boarding schools would cater primarily for Forms 4-6. A number of the existing boarding schools [NSSs and PSSs] would then become senior secondary schools (pp. 52-53).

### **c) Tertiary Education**

The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) is the major national post-secondary training institution, which provides courses necessary to meet the lower and middle level manpower needs of the country. SICHE had 5 Campuses and offers certificate, diploma and degree programmes through its seven schools namely: i) Education and Cultural Studies; ii) Finance and Administration; iii) Industrial Development; iv) General Studies; v) Marine and Fisheries; vi) Natural Resources, and vii) Nursing and Health Studies. In 1997, SICHE has 1,800 equivalent full-time students (approximately 839 full-time residential). Only 44% of students are female (primarily in Education, Home Economics, Finance and Nursing). There are 158 academic staff and about 240 administrative and support staff. Only 25% of the teaching staff are female. In 1996, SICHE offered the University of the South Pacific (USP) Arts Foundation Year to 74 students, and 14 students have enrolled in the first year of the Bachelor of Business Studies at the College's School of Finance and Administration. The SICHE's School of School of Education has also enrolled the first lot of 14 students into the first year Bachelor of Education Programme at the beginning of 1998. Overseas training is mainly for higher qualifications, and is undertaken mostly in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. There were about 711 Solomon Islanders studying overseas in 1998.

#### **d) Non Formal Education and Training**

There are 30 Rural Training Centres (RTCs). The country's main churches operate 24 RTCs that provide non-academic training mainly to primary school leavers. Six other RTCs are community based. Most RTCs offer a two to three-year course designed to develop vocational or rural-living skills, including carpentry, mechanics, home economics and agriculture. The RTCs offer varying amounts of religious instruction as well; some are predominantly religious in function. In 1996, total RTC enrolment was about 2 230 and the number of instructors serving in them was 256. Most of the instructors have no formal schooling beyond primary standard 6 and only a few have completed Form 5 of secondary school. Out of the 1996 total RTC enrolments, approximately 48% of students and 45% of instructors are females.

#### **e) Funding for Education**

The central government's recurrent expenditure on education has tended to average 16% of the budget and in 2000, it was 20.4% or SI\$81.09m. In the same year, the government spent SI\$60m or 22.3% from its capital budget on education development.

Traditional sources of external funding for educational development in recent years have been from the World Bank, and the Governments of Australia (AusAid), New Zealand (NZODA), Republic of China (Taiwan), Japan, and agencies of the United Kingdom.

### **1.3.5 Educational Decentralisation in Solomon Islands**

For comparative purposes, it is necessary to briefly look at the historical reasons for the centralisation of education in Solomon Islands from the colonial period until the enactment of the PGA 1981, which according to Habu (1992), "... decentralised the education system and transferred the responsibility of schools to provinces." (p. 99).

The declaration of a British protectorate over the Solomon Islands in 1893 provided a legal basis for administrative and political centralisation of government in the country (Wolfers, 1983). However, the colonial government, seeing no independent political future for Solomon Islands, took little interest in education and, lacking funds, provided no assistance to those who did (Wasuka, *et al.*, 1989; Sikua, 1992; Kii, 1994). Thus, since the 1870s and for much of the colonial period, education in Solomon Islands was mainly undertaken by the five main churches: namely, the Melanesian Mission (Anglican), Roman Catholic, Methodist, South Sea Evangelical Mission and Seventh Day Adventists, who were themselves highly centralised (Ross, 1978, cited in Wolfers, 1983).

By the late 1930s, there were signs of possible changes to the colonial government policies towards education in the Protectorate but before these could be implemented, the Second World War intervened (Wasuka *et al.*, 1989). The history of educational development during the post-war period was marked by a steady increase in government involvement, and a diminution of church involvement. Between 1953 and 1959 the colonial government began aiding some church schools by providing grants, and contributed to educational improvement by building a secondary school and a teachers college. In all of this, the government was acting in accordance with the Colonial Office policy of training an elite.

These trends culminated in 1975 when the government took complete control of education services. Behind this process lay an evolving sense of political purpose. The aim was not just to assist Solomon Islanders to realise their abilities more fully but to prepare them for self-government, by training leaders with the skills to run a country and by assisting the people to become informed citizens of a democracy. Despite their initial wariness and own religious agendas, the churches agreed to work with the government towards these goals (Wasuka *et al.*, 1989).

However, since the early 1970s, many Solomon Islanders were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the colonial education system, which was regarded as alien and imposed, and unsuited to the needs of the majority of people. Many people felt that too great an emphasis was being placed on academic education based on

projected manpower requirements at the expense of the vast majority of people in Solomon Islands (Bugotu, 1973; Sikua, 1992). These concerns led to a review of the education policy in 1973, and subsequently, the introduction of decentralisation initiatives of the educational functions to the provinces, which will be discussed later in this section.

From movements such as the Masina Ruru in Malaita, the Moro Movement in Guadalcanal, and the Holy Mama on Western Province it can be surmised that Solomon Islanders have always been an independent-minded people who not only resisted but also resented imposition of central rule, particularly by outsiders (Saunana, 1972; Miller, 1978; Keesing, 1978; Laracy, 1983). Systematic decentralisation involving indigenous people in the decision-making process began first in the early seventies with the establishment of local government councils. When first introduced, this reform was hailed (Campbell, 1977) as “the most ambitious programme of political decentralisation so far in the South Pacific” (p. 238).

However, credit for substantial decentralisation, involving transfer of certain legislative functions to the provinces and the creation of elected provincial governments, must go to the Mamaloni Government. With the advent of the PGA 1981, the section on ‘Guide to the Act’ stated that the Mamaloni Government embarked upon “... a programme of devolution of powers, functions, and procedures upon the basis of which provinces can determine their own destinies” (p. 1).

What effect did these political developments have on the structure of education in Solomon Islands? The remainder of this chapter is devoted to answering this question and in describing educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands, beginning first with a brief account of the early education in the country.

As has been mentioned earlier, Solomon Islands owe a great debt to the efforts of the various religious bodies (Oritaimae, 1982; Habu, 1983; Bhindi, 1984; Dorauvo, 1984). The substantial contribution made by the churches in Solomon Island education has been well documented by Palmer (1977). The history of early

education in Solomon Islands, however, was characterised by fragmented efforts with the respective churches assuming responsibility for instruction in their own “areas of influence” (Palmer, 1980; Habu, 1983). Their efforts lacked co-ordination, which was made difficult by mutual suspicions and rivalries (Palmer, 1980).

Until the early 1930s, the colonial government’s education ‘policy’ was *laissez faire* in style and described by Palmer (1980) as “amorphous and unsystematised” (p. 204). Then the Second World War intervened and any plan for reform was delayed. The war severely disrupted normal life in the islands, dislocated the activities of the churches and damaged schools, and generally imposed extreme hardships on the missionaries and the younger children (Cross, 1982; Osifelo, 1985).

After the war, several factors appeared to have influenced the government gradually to assert more authority and assume more responsibility for education in partnership with the missions. The three noteworthy factors were:

- a. The inimical effect of the war on the people and the economy in general and the resulting incapacity of the impoverished churches to continue shouldering the entire financial burden (Saunders, 1977; Cross, 1982).
- b. The need to compromise and balance the sectional interests of the competing churches with the aspirations of the local people and the policy of the government (Habu, 1983).
- c. The need to develop a coordinated system capable of serving a country that would eventually become independent (Fitzgerald, 1980).

Concerns of these kinds led, in 1973, to a review being undertaken of the education system in Solomon Islands. The review resulted in a landmark report, *Education for What?* (also known to as the Bugotu Report, 1973) which formed the basis for Education Policy: 1975-1979 (MECA, 1974) containing the blue-print for modern education in Solomon Islands (Saunders, 1977; Waddell, 1978; Siapu, 1980; Treadaway, 1982; Oritaimae, 1983; Thomas, 1985).

An examination of the current structure of education indicates a substantial degree of decentralisation, with the provision for educational decision-making at three main levels: the national, the provincial and the school level. The two major factors which appear to have influenced the creation of this decentralised structure were, the Education Policy: 1975-1979 (MECA, 1974), and the PGA 1981 (Habu, 1992).

The Education Policy 1975 – 1979 (MECA, 1974), also known as the White Paper on Education (Siapu, 1980), as mentioned earlier, was formulated on the basis of the Bugotu Report (1973). Among the several objectives espoused under this policy, the following are considered to be directly relevant to the decentralisation of educational decision-making in Solomon Islands:

- a. The desirability of decentralising educational administration in line with the recently introduced local council structure.
- b. The desirability of involving the community in educational decision-making, particularly those groups such as the churches, which had made a significant contribution to education in Solomon Islands (MECA, 1974).

Siapu (1980) pointed out that during the policy period all but two churches relinquished control of their primary schools after a negotiated agreement with the government. The government then introduced the board and committee system to facilitate popular participation in educational decision-making. According to Thomas (1985), these decentralised provisions were considered to be consistent with the Melanesian egalitarianism of “participation in decision-making by those people affected by such decisions” (p.57).

Provisions were made for the establishment of a National Education Board, local boards, school committees for primary schools and management boards for secondary schools. The National Education Board was created under the Education Act, 1978. These bodies were to have as members representatives of the community, the controlling authorities of schools, and other interest groups (MECA, 1974; Siapu, 1980).

While these boards continue to function, their roles and relationships and influence *vis-à-vis* the government have undergone some modification resulting from the introduction of the decentralised provincial government system.

The PGA 1981 also affected the structure of education in Solomon Islands by necessitating further adjustments to be made to the policy of decentralisation of educational decision-making. The Act provided for elected provincial assemblies to which certain powers and functions from the central government were to be transferred on the basis of an *Agency Agreement* with each provincial government. In education, the provincial governments have assumed responsibility over the following areas:

- a. Kindergartens and primary schools (except curriculum matters),
- b. Provincial Secondary Schools,
- c. Teachers resource centre and libraries,
- d. In-service training of primary school teachers and headmasters, and multi-level teaching,
- e. Implementing of national examinations and assessment procedures,
- f. Advisory services to the primary schools, and
- g. Community education.

At the national level, MEHRD continues to exercise control over such areas as:

- a. Over-all national education policy,
- b. Curriculum development and materials,
- c. Teaching service conditions,
- d. National examinations and assessment policies,
- e. National institutions such as the NSSs and the SICHE,
- f. Secondment of education officers to the provinces,
- g. Acquisition, distribution and over-all control of aided projects,
- h. The inspectorate system, and
- i. Staff development and training.

MEHRD attempts to fulfill its functions through an organization structure, which has in the main remained unchanged for some time.

The Minister for Education has the political responsibility for the Ministry. The Minister is advised by a National Education Board (NEB) in the formulation of national education policies and priorities. The NEB also oversees the management of NSSs. The Minister is also guided and advised by the Permanent Secretary and the Under Secretary for Education on professional matters.

The Permanent Secretary, a senior career civil servant, is the administrative head of the Ministry and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Ministry and the implementation of the national education policy. The Under Secretary for Education is the professional head of the Ministry and is advised and assisted by his/her team of Chief Education Officers and their staff in execution of his/her responsibilities. Various responsibilities relating to the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) also fall within his/her ambit. However, as far as the researcher could ascertain, the precise nature of these responsibilities have not been further delineated to date.

Like their counterpart at the national level, the provincial Ministers for Education are expected to be guided and advised by their Provincial Education Boards, and their Provincial Education Secretaries in policy formulation. The Provincial Education Secretaries are assisted by their respective teams, usually comprising education officers, advisory teachers and multi-level teacher trainers, in the implementation of provincial education policies and programmes.

The organisation structures of education divisions in the provinces are identical. These divisions are located in the main administrative centres of the respective provinces and are headed by provincial education secretaries in each case. However, the structure is further decentralised in the case of Malaita and Western Province, two of the three relatively large provinces in Solomon Islands.

The headquarters of the education division in Malaita are situated at Auki, the administrative centre of the province. In addition there are three sub-bases located at Afio, Atori, and Maluu. Gizo is the headquarters of the education division in Western Province with a sub-base located in Munda. These sub-bases are managed by resident education officers, assisted by advisory teachers and multi-level teacher trainers.

At the next level of decentralisation, the primary schools are governed by committees elected by the people. It is the responsibility of the school committees “to find land for the school, to build classrooms, to build staff houses and to maintain buildings as well” (Habu, 1983). The provincial secondary schools, on the other hand, are governed by management boards operating under the guidance of the provincial education board (MECA, 1974; Habu, 1983).

It is evident from the foregoing description that the education system in Solomon Islands has recently undergone some important changes and has reached a very critical stage in its development. With the establishment of CHSs, it is also apparent that educational administrators working at the provincial level, principals and teachers at the school level, school committee members, parents and communities have a central role to play in ensuring the success of the decentralised education system.

The changes generated by the introduction of the provincial government system and the establishment of CHSs appears to have created new dynamic patterns in the administration of education at the provincial, school and the community level. These patterns pose new challenges for the implementers of the decentralisation policy. Some of these challenges, which were identified earlier in the ‘Problem Statement’ have implications for the role, quality, commitment and competence of provincial education administrators, CHS principals, teachers, members of the school committees, parents and communities as a whole. It is the purpose of this research to find ways whereby education administrators at the central, church/provincial education authority, school, and community levels in a decentralised education system can meet those challenges effectively.

### **1.3.6 Assumption**

The researcher accepted the thesis that the political and egalitarian social context provided justification for the creation of the decentralised governance system in Solomon Islands. This study was therefore confined to developing a conceptual framework to guide the practice of policy formulation and decision making by educational administrators who are concerned with introducing and improving a decentralised system of education through the establishment of CHSs.

## **1.4 The Design of the Study**

The major data gathering was planned to be carried out in the field in Solomon Islands over a period of three months beginning June 1999, and would involve conducting interviews, document analysis and observation study.

During this first round of fieldwork, six weeks was to be spent with the MEHRD headquarters and other government ministries as well as the education division of the Guadalcanal Province, and the Catholic Education Office in Honiara. Three CHSs on Guadalcanal, namely; Bishop Epalle in Honiara and Nguvia and Kulu, to the east of Honiara were also to be visited during this first month.

Two weeks were then to be spent at the Central Provincial headquarters at Tulagi and MacMahon CHS nearby. This was to be followed by another two weeks in Buala, the Isabel Provincial capital including a visit to Jejevo CHSs before spending a further two weeks in Gizo in the Western Province and to visit Gizo CHSs which is within Gizo township itself.

It is envisaged that it was necessary to undertake a second round of fieldwork beginning June 2000. This would involve administering a questionnaire to the same study participants interviewed in the first round of fieldwork as well as undertaking more document analysis and observation study. It was estimated that during this round of fieldwork, approximately a week would be spent in each of the provinces of Guadalcanal including Honiara, Central, Isabel, and Western.

The four provinces were selected by the researcher because they were representative of the country's nine provinces in terms of size and population. As for the six CHSs, they were selected for several reasons. Firstly, MacMahon, Jejevo and Kulu are mainly community supported while Nguvia, Bishop Epalle and Gizo are funded by a World Bank pilot project under the TETP. This would allow for the identification of the impact of community involvement and funding arrangements and to evaluate and explain the likely success or otherwise of CHSs, both at the level of implementation and operation. Secondly, the schools have been chosen in order to include a reasonable distribution and representation of the country's nine provinces and Honiara in the study as well as provincial size. Five CHSs are located in the four provinces of Guadalcanal (Kulu and Nguvia) Western (Gizo), Isabel (Jejevo) and Central (MacMahon), and a church education authority controlled one (Bishop Epalle) in Honiara. The selection of CHSs for the study is also representative of the country's large, medium and small provinces as well as their urban, semi urban and rural settings.

Thirdly, the selection of the three community supported CHSs in the study also reflects the timing of their establishment during the period 1995 to 1998. On the other hand, the three World Bank funded CHSs enrolled their first intakes in 1997. It is envisaged that the above criteria for selection of CHSs in the study in terms of their location, setting, and timing would help to explain the reasons and the level of community support for CHSs during the period of their inception. Furthermore, it would help identify any specific problems experienced by the government, provinces, churches and individual communities in the establishment and on-going operation of their CHSs.

Fourthly, there was the factor of time and money. The study would have greatly benefited from a wider sample of CHSs, but given time and financial constraints, it was unrealistic to choose CHSs located in provinces that were far apart. For one thing, there is the cost of travelling to and from the provinces of the study, and the accommodation expenses in the provincial headquarters. Furthermore, there is the difficulty of getting transport from Honiara to distant, outlying provinces. It would be

time consuming and expensive travelling by boat from Honiara to the other four remote and distant provinces of Temotu, Choiseul, Makira, and Rennell and Bellona. Therefore, the researcher resorted to including in the study those CHSs in four aforementioned provinces and Honiara, which were either close together or are easily accessible by land, air and sea transportation. For personal safety reasons, which directly relate to the recent ethnic conflict between the people from the island of Malaita and those from Guadalcanal, the author (who comes from Guadalcanal) was unable to include any CHS in Malaita Province in the study.

Further fieldwork within New Zealand was planned. The researcher planned to contact a number of consultants who were, or had been, involved in assignments for MEHRD and were therefore knowledgeable about the development and problems of educational administration and training in Solomon Islands. Contacts were also to be made with senior educators, lecturers from the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), and primary and secondary school teachers from Solomon Islands who were studying at the University of Waikato and other tertiary institutions in New Zealand. These educators were considered invaluable as resource persons and in the trial and discussion of techniques which the researcher planned to use during the two rounds of fieldwork in Solomon Islands.

The following techniques, consistent with qualitative methodology, were selected by the researcher for use in collecting the data to answer the eight research questions posed earlier in this chapter:

- a. Interview.
- b. Content Analysis.
- c. Observation study, and
- d. Questionnaire

The rationale for the use of each of the above techniques together with the design of the study are explained below.

The structured interview technique was selected to elicit responses from interviewees at all four levels for all the research questions. Interview as a research technique has been described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) as “A purposeful conversation, usually between two people (but sometimes involving more) that is directed by one in order to get information” (p. 135). According to Stenhouse (1979) its task is “to get the richest evidence within the units of time available” (p. 5).

Content analysis was selected by the researcher to verify and supplement data collected from questionnaires and interviews. This technique is the process of obtaining data of historical or contemporary importance through a systematic analysis of official documents such as reports, files, minutes, published statistics, biographical records of staff, newspapers, photographs, speeches, audio-tapes, and music (Best, 1977; Jones, 1978; Borg and Gall, 1983).

The researcher selected content analysis to collect major data to ascertain the appropriateness of the current organization structure of MEHRD mainly by analysing official documents and consultancy reports. Interviews were also expected to be conducted with selected MEHRD officials and knowledgeable to obtain their reactions to the present structure of MEHRD and their suggestions for how it should be reorganised.

Content analysis was also selected by the researcher to examine MEHRD staff training policy and to study the Ministry’s developmental project for the provinces. Key officials of MEHRD were interviewed to elicit their views on the skills needed by the provincial education officers, CHSs principals and teachers, and school community members to do their work effectively.

Questionnaires were also used to obtain the views of study participants and also to confirm what they said during the interviews. The questionnaire is a data gathering technique which enables respondents to indicate their reactions or express their opinion in writing. The questionnaire can be structured to elicit short, precise answers which can make data recording and aggregation easier. It is also a suitable technique to be used if time is limited. The open-ended questionnaire is a special

form of questionnaire which allows a “free flowing” response from the respondents and enables them to provide more description (Stacey, 1969; Best, 1977). Many research questionnaires, however, are semi-structured and incorporate the advantages of both these features.

The researcher also supplemented the above data by undertaking an observation study of the work performed by the staff at the four different levels, particularly provincial educational officers, CHS principals and teachers. Data collected using this technique was expected to enable the researcher to identify the task and functions which provincial education officers, CHSs Principals and teachers perform in relation to what they are: a) officially required to perform and do perform, are officially required to perform and cannot perform, are not officially required to perform but do perform, and, the reasons for any discrepancies that are identified; b) relationship between the staff at the four levels such as central level, church/provincial education officers, CHS principals and teachers, and parents, and c) training needs arising from a-b above

The observation study is an established data gathering technique with case study researchers who believe that human behaviour is better studied in its context or natural setting since pressures such as roles, norms, values and organization traditions influence human beings and affect their motivations (Wilson, 1977; Ball, 1982). Describing the efficacy of this technique, Wilson (1977) points out:

... data gathered by this technique is significantly different from that gathered by other methods. The researcher links together the information he gathers by various methods in a way that is nearly impossible with other approaches, and he has access to some unique kinds of information. For instance, he compares the following: a) what a subject says in response to a question; b) what he says to other people; c) what he says in various situations; d) what he says at various times; e) what he actually does do; f) actual non-verbal signals about the matter (for example, body postures) and, g) what those who are significant to the person feel, say, and do about the matter (p. 256).

## 1.5 Summary

By means of the techniques described in this section, the researcher expected to obtain from professionals and lay persons with experiential knowledge of the decentralised system of education and the establishment of CHSs in Solomon Islands, data to enable him to answer the eight questions posed. The case study was thus to be conducted using a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative orientation. The rationale for this approach and the philosophy behind it are explained in detail in Chapter 3.

The following chapter reviews the global phenomenon of decentralisation and educational decentralisation in particular.

## CHAPTER TWO

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### 2.0 Introduction

Having looked at the context and issues which gave rise to the need for decentralisation in Solomon Islands, particularly educational decentralisation through the establishment of CHSs, this chapter explores the global phenomenon of decentralisation.

The policy of educational decentralisation has in recent times become a key aspect of educational restructuring in the international arena (Fiske, 1996; Levin, 1998). This is evident, for example, in the major decentralisation reforms which are currently underway in both large and small, developed and developing nations around the world (Ball, 1990; Bowe *et al.*, 1992; Faustor, 1995; Fiske, 1996; Green, 1997; Govinda, 1997; Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Sayed, 1999; Lauder *et al.*, 1999). Decentralisation has been fostered by democratic governments as well as autocratic military regimes, albeit for very different political and ideological reasons (Sayed, 1999), and even has the support of rival political groupings (Fiske, 1996; Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Lauder *et al.*, 1999).

Major decentralisation projects have not only been enacted at the national level in the United Kingdom, Sweden and New Zealand, but also at the state level in the United States of America and Australia, and at the district level in Canada (Lawton 1992, Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Lauder *et al.*, 1999). There is tremendous variety among the new structures adopted with forms ranging from elected school boards in Chicago to school clusters in Cambodia and vouchers in Chile. According to Fiske (1996), decentralisation of schools is truly a global phenomenon, so much so that the manner in which it has spread amongst nations within the last decade has been referred to by Levin (1998) as 'an epidemic of education policy'. This global fascination with educational decentralisation not only has manifold roots (Fiske, 1996) but it is also

evident that these liberalising reforms are being implemented alongside others which consolidate power within central governments, at national or state level (Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Wolf, 2002).

Some writers on governance and administration distinguished between two types of structures: centralised, representing a very high degree of hierarchical control, and decentralised characterised by the dispersal of power. These ideal types were located at either end of a continuum which could be used to plot the structural evolution of an organization (Gibson *et al.*, 1977; Rondinelli, 1981, Bhindi, 1987). Other writers, however, warned that this evolution was a complicated phenomenon which could not be explained satisfactorily with a single continuum. Instead, they suggested a multi-dimensional approach to help distinguish between different types and stages of decentralisation (Chapman, 1973; Walker, 1975). Most writers on decentralisation also pointed to the rather loose and ambiguous use of the term 'decentralisation' and distinguished between various forms of decentralisation (Jennergren, 1981). These concerns and the variety in the decentralisation reforms undertaken by both developed and developing countries guided the researcher in the critical review of the literature on decentralisation in general and decentralisation of education in particular. As a result, this chapter is organised into the following themes:

- i) A review of the literature on different forms of decentralisation;
- ii) An examination of the main reasons for decentralisation and the assumptions behind decentralisation;
- iii) A description of the process of educational decentralisation undertaken in some developed and developing countries;
- iv) Determinants of success in implementation of the decentralisation of education which could be relevant to Solomon Islands.

## **2.1 Different Forms of Decentralisation: Definition and Typology**

Since the term is used in many ways (Fiske, 1996; Govinda, 1997), a review of selected literature was undertaken to identify the assumptions behind the growing interest among scholars, administrators and politicians in decentralisation and to identify from it the criteria for its successful implementation, with special reference to the education system. In undertaking this review, this researcher agreed with Jennergren (1981) and Conyers (1984) that there were problems in reviewing the vast literature on decentralisation. Therefore, the decentralisation of government and decentralisation as a tool for development and administrative reform were selected as two important considerations when addressing the scope and definition of decentralisation. The review revealed a general concern among writers about the rather loose and ambiguous usage of the term and their attempts to resolve this problem of definition by developing typologies to distinguish different models of decentralisation (Chikulo, 1981; Conyers, 1981; Rondinelli, 1981; Bryant and White, 1982; Conyers *et al.*, 1982; Rondinelli and Gheema, 1983; Wolfers, 1983; Bray, 1984b; Conyers, 1984).

### **2.1.1 Definition**

Decentralisation is defined by Bray (1984a, p. 5 cited in Fiske, 1996) as “the process in which subordinate levels of a hierarchy are authorised by a higher body to take decisions about the use of the organisation’s resources” (p. 6). Furthermore, the use of the term by Simon (1954, cited in Bacchus, 1993) is also relevant, particularly in administration where it refers to the extent to which discretion and authority to make important decisions are delegated by top management to lower levels of executive authority. The term decentralisation has also been used to mean a number of things: administrative reforms, delegation of authority, and transfer of decision-making powers. However, one of the most exhaustive definitions has been provided by Rondinelli and Cheema (1983) who define decentralisation as “the transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organizations, local governments, or non-government organizations” (p.18).

### 2.1.2 Typology

On the basis of the above definition and the literature reviewed, the four forms of decentralisation identified were: decongestion, deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Bhindi (1987) argued that decongestion and delegation, by implication, are subsumed into deconcentration and devolution. However, the concept of decentralisation can be better understood by associating it with all four administrative terms or approaches. Thus, we shall now proceed to look at all four approaches, and the degree to which they relate to decentralisation.

Firstly, **decongestion** and decentralisation are usually associated, and Bacchus (1993) drew attention to the difference between them. Decongestion often takes place when there is too much concentration of activity in one area and the organisation experiences a need to relocate physically some of these activities, usually by setting up branch offices. This can be undertaken without any decentralisation of the decision-making process.

Secondly, decongestion is somewhat similar to the **deconcentration**. However, Fiske (1996) described deconcentration as the weakest form of decentralisation, which is no more than the shifting of management responsibilities from the central to the regional or lower levels in such a way that the central ministry remains firmly in control. Essentially, deconcentration refers to the 'shifting of workload' from the central government's headquarters to its own field staff outside the capital city without reallocating power (Nanau, 1995). Therefore, deconcentration is the transfer of some administrative authority and responsibilities to subordinate agencies or officers (usually stationed outside the centre or the headquarters), who act in the interest of the superior (Premdas, 1982; Rondinelli *et al.*, 1984). Administrative action becomes the main focus of attention and deconcentration is done within the bureaucracy. It involves the retention of central control, but assigns responsibility for case decisions to subordinate personnel. However, deconcentration is viewed as one form of decentralisation which involves the spreading of government's goods and services more widely. In addition, Kasperson and Breitbart (1974) referred to deconcentration as "the dispersal of facilities or functions from the central governments to sub-units in

an effort to improve the effectiveness and/or efficiency of delivery systems. Little or no delegation of substantial decision-making or discretionary powers occurs and the relationships within the organization remain strongly hierarchical” (p. 28). Similarly, Chikulo (1981) defined deconcentration as “the delegation of sufficient authority for the discharge of specified functions to staff of a central government at the local level to make administrative decisions on behalf of the central authority. The delegation of power continues to be subject to the central authority’s supervision” (p. 56). Deconcentration is also known as administrative decentralisation (Fantini and Gittel, 1983; Bryant and White, 1982). Its main objective (Conyers *et al.*, 1982) is “to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of the administrative system by reducing delays, improving coordination... and making decisions more relevant to local needs” (p. 5).

Thirdly, **delegation** is a more extensive approach to decentralisation under which central authorities lend authority to lower levels of government, or even to semi-autonomous organisations such as churches. However, delegation is done with the understanding that the delegated authority can be withdrawn (Nanau, 1995).

Fourthly, **devolution** is the most far-reaching form of decentralisation in that the transfer of authority over financial, administrative, or pedagogical matters is permanent and cannot be revoked at the whim of central officials. Devolution has political and legal meanings attached to it, and unlike deconcentration, the recipient of authority is also given the power and responsibility on matters stipulated in the decentralisation legislation (Nanau, 1995). Thus, devolution can be interpreted as the legal conferring of power upon local units of governments to carry out certain government functions. In devolution, these local units of government are legally distinct and independent from the national government although the latter exercises indirect supervisory control over them. In its pure form, devolution means local autonomy, although the central government may be superior in certain aspects.

Furthermore, devolution was a major form of decentralisation which involved not only the transfer of functions but also delegation of decision-making powers. This form of decentralisation therefore, represented an advancement on deconcentration.

Writers such as Smith (1967) and Bryant and White (1982) described devolution as political decentralisation. According to Conyers *et al.* (1982), political decentralisation “involves the decentralisation of political power ... that is the power to pass laws or to make policy decisions ... from national government to existing or newly created elected bodies at the regional or local level” (p. 5). Kasperson and Breitbart (1974) also described devolution as political decentralisation and defined it “as a process which involves the transfer of powers from a central government to specialised territorial or functional units” and “entails a substantial delegation of decision-making and discretionary power” (p. 28). Maddick (1963) defined devolution as “the legal conferring of powers to discharge specified or residual functions upon formally constituted local authorities” (p. 23). Chikulo (1981) defined devolution as “the conferment of legal powers to discharge specified functions... upon formally constituted local agencies or bodies. The determination of policies and supervision of functions are transferred either to political sub-divisions or local bodies which have a substantial measure of operational autonomy” (p. 55). Rondinelli (1981) defined devolution as a “form of decentralisation in which the local government units are given responsibility for certain functions but in which the central government often retains some supervisory power and may play a large financial role” (p. 139).

Five fundamental characteristics of devolution were identified by Rondinelli *et al.* (1983). Firstly, local units of government have considerable autonomy and the central government has less or no direct control over them. Secondly, there are legally recognised geographical boundaries within which local governments function and exercise authority. Thirdly, local governments have corporate status, which means that they are in a position to mobilise resources to carry out their functions. Fourthly, devolution gives the local citizens a feeling that they have an influence over the local government which in turn provides services that satisfy their needs. Fifthly, devolution is an arrangement that should be of mutual and reciprocal benefit to both levels of government.

Returning to the concept of decentralisation, it can be seen that it encompasses a variety of approaches, especially the processes of deconcentration and the devolution

of power. Decentralisation can be defined as the transfer of powers or functions from the central government to lower levels of government. It includes the transfer of authority and responsibility within the bureaucracy to officials stationed outside the headquarters and at the same time, legally confers power to these lower levels of government to make policy decisions on specified matters.

From the foregoing, the two key features of decentralisation which can be identified are political decentralisation (the area approach) and administrative decentralisation (the sectoral approach). Political decentralisation refers to the devolution of power and authority from the central government to lower levels of government. Administrative decentralisation refers to the deconcentration of power and the delegation of appropriate authority from the national line agencies to the regional or field offices (Buendia, 1991). With decentralisation, accountability is both upwards and downwards. The central government not only guides and controls the lower levels of authority but supercedes and can dissolve them (Muttalib, 1978). Therefore, under decentralisation, lower levels of government are accountable to both the electorate and the central government.

Thus far, two major forms of decentralisation: deconcentration and devolution were identified and briefly discussed. It was suggested that deconcentration represented the delegation of functions to the local units or officials by and under supervision of a central authority. Deconcentration was usually accompanied by physical dispersal of facilities. It was also pointed out that devolution ventures beyond deconcentration in that, it involved delegation or transfer of certain decision-making powers and autonomy to local units which were usually conferred by legislation.

In summary, decentralisation involves both processes of deconcentration and devolution with the former having administrative connotations and the latter having political and legal attachments. Decentralisation can be better understood by referring to it as the transfer of authority in geographical terms. Deconcentration is characterised by a transfer of authority from the headquarters to the field stations and offices, while devolution is the transfer of authority from central governments to lower levels of government. In deconcentration, accountability is upwards whereas in

devolution it is both upwards and downwards because of the aforementioned characteristics of these two processes. These different approaches or varieties of decentralisation all reflect a desire for a reorganisation that replaces central planning, control and supervision with a deregulated, decentralised system in which the 'bottom line' counts most (Lawton, 1992).

## **2.2 Implications for Educational Decentralisation**

The foregoing review has two implications for educational decentralisation. Firstly, it indicated that decentralisation takes two basic forms; administrative decentralisation or deconcentration and political decentralisation or devolution of decision-making. Secondly, each form of decentralisation serves a variety of ends such as achieving administrative reform, bringing the 'periphery' under the control of the central government, improving grassroots contact and involving subordinates in policy implementation, improving the quality of government services in the periphery, allowing beneficiaries and implementers opportunity to participate in decision-making; and promoting social equity and economic development. According to Whitty *et al.* (1998), the central aims of these initiatives are to create devolved systems of education entailing significant degrees of institutional autonomy, a variety of forms of school-based management and administration, enhanced parental choice and increased emphasis on community involvement in schools.

At this juncture, it was deemed appropriate to consider the various reasons and assumptions for decentralisation in detail followed by an examination of the experiences of some developed and developing countries in order to ascertain what implications these had for the decentralisation of education in Solomon Islands.

## **2.3 Reasons for Decentralisation**

In this section, the main reasons for decentralisation will be examined under seven broad categories namely; political, financial, administrative, equity, socio-cultural, geographical, and educational. The discussions on educational decentralisation will include the influences of globalisation and the pressures of market forces, and the role

of the World Bank and other forms of aid and policy advice in spreading decentralisation. Although these categories are discussed separately, they are inter-related and overlap.

### **2.3.1 Decentralisation as a Strategy for Political Reform**

Some of the popular justifications for political decentralisation were to attain popular participation; as a uniting force; as a development tool; for efficient decision making; as a form of decolonisation, and liberalism (Nanau, 1995; Faustor, 1995; Fiske, 1996). However, before discussing these, it is necessary to firstly situate decentralisation under the ideological principle of democracy and development and the rationales supporting it.

#### **a) Decentralisation, Democracy and Development**

It is important to bear in mind that decentralisation is as much, and perhaps more of an ideological principle than as a means of administration. Thus, it has certain values and objectives attached to it. The political objective of decentralisation becomes clear when associated with the popular notions of self-reliance, domestic and democratic decision-making, popular participation in government, and accountability of government officials to citizens (Rondinelli *et al.*, 1984; Fiske, 1996). Decentralisation from this perspective cannot be divorced from the Western democratic principles and post-colonial notions of participation, self-reliance, and so forth. Centralisation is regarded as 'evil' by those championing decentralisation, particularly when associated with highly centralised planning structures of the Communist countries. The feeling is that the administration of a nation cannot be embraced by a single central power, no matter how skilful it is. Those championing grassroots democracy would agree with Seshadri (1978) who said that "centralisation is a threat to human spirit everywhere and its control is a concern of all who love freedom" (p. 670).

Decentralisation from this perspective is regarded as the democratically right thing to do, and is usually regarded as an end in itself rather than a means to some end. This

is sometimes referred to as the doctrinal approach to decentralisation because it idealises decentralisation as an article of faith (Battacharya, 1978). Decentralisation and Democracy are thus regarded by some as almost synonymous, particularly when individual liberty is associated with grassroots participation under decentralised systems of government. Muttalib (1978) present this perspective when he said that “With ethical roots in democracy, decentralisation has become an idealistic concept, a way of life and an end in itself. It suggests a system in which people will be given an opportunity to perform their individual goals to the maximum.” (p.702). Decentralisation is therefore closely associated in some people’s minds with democracy, which means that decentralised systems are usually identified as more democratic.

Participatory democracy is one of the terms closely associated with decentralisation. Political and social values such as democracy, liberty and equality are high in the aims of decentralisation. Decentralisation in this sense is seen to contribute to these values by taking the options of those affected by the decisions into account, and by giving more freedom, empowerment and ‘voice’ to the local authorities, institutions, teacher unions and communities in development efforts (Ocampo, 1991; Fiske, 1996). Decentralisation means an achievement of a more participatory democracy that exceeds the normal electoral methods of representation (Bhattacharya, 1978). Participatory democracy and decentralisation are related in the sense that the latter promotes the former.

Decentralisation may also be a strategy used in attempts to break away from the underdevelopment problems facing most developing countries. Decentralisation, democracy and development may be seen as going hand in hand, at least in the eyes of those advocating ‘decentralisation for development’, possibly because they have defined it at their own convenience. It is often argued that citizen participation in local government is the ‘grass roots’ of democracy which allows adjustments in society to benefit the majority of the people (Maddick, 1975). If people can participate in decentralised systems upholding values of democracy, the system will help them to adjust to the changes which come with development.

Decentralisation also has an 'efficiency value' attached to it. Some expect decentralised development programs and activities to be carried out more effectively than centralised programs, and government to be more responsive to the public and thus improve the quality of services. Decentralisation may also be an effective way of providing services and information to government officers about local conditions (Rondinelli *et al.*, 1984). From this perspective, decentralisation is viewed as a strategy to counter development problems, particularly in addressing issues such as the neglect of services in rural areas, and as a means of reaching decisions with those who will be most affected by development projects.

At the same time, decentralisation is seen to facilitate the removal of the 'deprivation trap'. That is, through decentralisation, people would be free from feeling powerless, poor, vulnerable, and isolated (Ingham and Kalam, 1992). Instead, they would feel more secure, with a sense of oneness that discourages friction and fragmentation. Decentralisation attempts, in principle at least, to include people in deciding and defining their destinies, particularly in the areas of development most likely to affect their lives.

For all these reasons decentralisation and democracy are seen by its advocates as related. Decentralisation is based on the ethics of democracy, and as such, equated with it. Accordingly, decisions and development achieved through decentralisation are regarded as preferable to those arrived at under a centralised system. It should be noted, however, that romanticising decentralisation and equating it with democracy may be misleading. Buendia (1991) points out that decentralisation does not always promote democratic ideals nor do all democratic actions emanate from decentralisation. With these thoughts in mind, it is necessary to consider why some hold that decentralisation is favourable and why decentralisation in government is regarded as one of the better ways for pursuing political and economic development.

There are several reasons for employing decentralisation in economic and political development. In countries implementing various forms of decentralisation, the size of the country (land mass and feature) and the just claims of local communities for some sort of autonomy are two basic reasons for decentralisation (Smith 1967). It should,

however, be pointed out that decentralisation in the form of deconcentration has to take place in most countries because of the nature of services provided. With schools, for example, decentralisation has to take place because there has to be people in the outer areas to carry these functions on behalf of the government.

The following discussions will examine some of the popular justifications for decentralisation namely: i) decentralisation and participation; ii) as a development tool; iii) for efficient decision making; iv) as a uniting force; v) as a form of decolonisation, and vi) Decentralisation and liberalism. The participatory and development arguments will be highlighted because of the inherent conviction that the involvement of more people in decision making and in rural development initiatives will result in development.

### **b) Decentralisation and Participation**

One of the best known defences of decentralisation is the idea of greater participation in decision making and in development efforts. This is because decentralisation is aimed at involving the populace in decision making by getting the government structure close to the people. For example, in the case of Solomon Islands, it was hoped that by devolving certain powers under the provincial government system, the majority of its citizens would participate in the decision-making processes related to political and economic development (Totorea, 1981; Wolfers, 1983; Premdas and Steeve, 1984; Alasia, 1989; Devesi, 1992).

Grassroots participation in development is considered an advantage of decentralisation. This is particularly important since most countries embarking on decentralisation policies usually have a large agricultural rural-based population. In order for meaningful progress to be attained, the voice of those living with the natural resources of the country must be heard. Grassroots participation and endogenous development has been the common rationale supporting the idea of decentralisation for development (Fiske, 1996). Fernando (1985) justifies this rationale for decentralisation when referring to the case of Sri Lanka: "Being a land of villages, the destiny of the country depends on rural development, for rural development and

national development are but two sides of the same coin” (p. 94). Thus, through decentralisation people would be able to make development decisions in their own villages while focussing on nation-wide development policies and efforts. Decentralisation in the sense of development from below is seen as the better alternative. Ocampo (1991), argued that community members will feel closer to local bodies like the provincial governments because they are more open and responsive to their immediate environment, at least, in theory.

In the same context, Premdas (1984) pointed out that because of the need to “mobilise popular support for development initiatives and to define local priorities” (p. 121), transferring or redistribution of power to local administrative units must be recognised and given more credit. Theoretically, the argument is that local government units, like provincial governments, who operate close to the people are in a good position to have information that will lead to good development decisions. Furthermore, the decisions reached would be accepted by most people since they have been involved in reaching these decisions. Closely related is the normative idea that decentralisation increases citizen participation which in turn produces a good and healthy society. Participatory democracy wants nothing less than full citizen participation in policy making. Decentralisation is expected to produce a good society which can only be achieved through citizen consensus and not citizen conflict (Hart, 1972). Thus, by realising their potential through participation, people become good citizens and there is less tension and conflict in society.

### **c) Decentralisation as a Uniting Force**

Another claim for decentralisation is that it helps maintain unity by recognising the diverse identity of groups or regions within the country. Some countries become fragmented and unstable because of the presence of separatist movements (Premdas and Steeves, 1984; Fiske, 1996). This is especially true for societies that are heterogeneous and where a weak collective identity exists. These movements look at loosening political or legal bonds from the central government. Their aim is to assert their regional, provincial or state autonomy with little or no interference from the central government (Abedin, 1989). Decentralisation recognises and usually grants

some sort of autonomy to the different regions or provinces in the expectation that potential conflicts and tensions from these various groups are avoided or mitigated, and threats of secession are neutralised (Fiske, 1996).

Thus, decentralisation recognises and defuses opposition from separatist groups by accommodating them through legislation of Acts of Parliament. Premdas and Steeves (1984) commented on this by saying: “When diverse local sentiments and interests are recognised as a legitimate part of the nation’s collective assets, via extending to provinces maximum autonomy in conducting their own affairs, then the urge to secede would be assuaged if not eliminated” (p. 135). The devolution of power and functions to provinces in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands were attempts to help maintain unity and prevent the emergence of an authoritarian system (Samana, 1988). In this way, it was believed then, that decentralisation would maintain unity within the country and discourage fragmentation fostered by separatist elements. It should be pointed out however that political decentralisation in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Solomon Islands has not been very successful in achieving this as demonstrated by the recent Bougainville conflict in PNG and the Guadalcanal conflict in Solomon Islands.

At the other end of the spectrum is the decentralisation taking place in the newly independent countries that once made up the former Soviet Union following a political crisis. In many of these countries, the central governments, stripped of political legitimacy and lacking financial resources, simply lost control of their functions. In addition, decentralisation emerged, in some cases virtually overnight, as a way of filling a political vacuum as was the case in Hungary (Fiske, 1996). In Hungary, as is in other countries of Western Europe, Halasz (cited in Fiske, 1996) contend that decentralisation and school autonomy did not appear as a planned response to systematic problems but rather as a reward of the fight for political freedom.

#### **d) Decentralisation as a Form of Decolonisation**

Decentralisation is considered a method of decolonisation. It brings the remote and 'insensitive' government machinery to the indigenous citizens in the rural areas and transforms it into a more sensitive arrangement (Nanau, 1995). Colonisation created a centralised government that was alien and in many instances separated from the people it colonised. As a consequence, the colonised were belittled and left with the self-image of being ignorant and incapable of making modern decisions. In this context, to decolonise means to return the original decision making powers to the free citizens of the new country. A former Minister of Decentralisation in Papua New Guinea, John Momis (cited in Premdas *et al.*, 1984) declared that:

Power must be returned to the people. Government services should be accessible to them. Decisions should be made by the people to whom the issues at stake are meaningful, easily understood, and relevant. The existing system of government should therefore be restructured, and power should be decentralised so that the energies and aspirations of our people can play their full part in promoting our country's development (p. 122).

Decentralisation is seen as the best way to ensure 'real' decolonisation and the return of pride to local communities.

During the days of the colonial powers and the emergence of nationalist movements in most developing countries, government powers and authority were characterised by centralisation. When decentralisation strategies are implemented, the notion of centralisation that is closely associated with colonialism withers. This process is seen as a foreign government being replaced by a responsible indigenous government that focuses on development. Nevertheless, as Seshadri (1978) points out, the situation in some countries is sometimes tense because power was shared for the first time. Since indigenous people can have power, they go to extremes in order to have control and manipulate their own people as was the case with colonial rulers or in many instances even worse. Despite this situation, decentralisation is regarded a form of colonisation because it erodes the centralised characteristics associated with colonisation.

### **e) Decentralisation and Liberalism**

There is a pluralist (liberal) conviction that decentralisation is a virtue in whatever form it takes. This is, of course, not to obscure pluralist differences over what constitutes centralisation and decentralisation. Decentralisation is regarded by pluralists as a preventive strategy against 'democratic' despotism. Moreover, it is viewed as a way of ensuring people controlling the actions of their political leaders (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987). To a pluralist, the fear of the emergence of a despotic national leader is discouraged by decentralisation of power of the people which is then expected to result in equitable development and democratic government.

The advocates of decentralisation have a concern that is much more than a call for participatory government. They want a participatory society where members participate in organising and governing themselves (Hart, 1972). A participatory society, brought about by decentralisation, prevents the emergence of despotic regimes, and at the same time, develops in the individual the necessary quality for a good society (Fagerlind and Saha, 1983).

#### **2.3.2 Decentralisation as a Strategy for Economic Development**

Decentralisation is also justified as a strategy for economic development. It is claimed that economic development goals and objectives would be better achieved in decentralised systems. Development plans and programs are more meaningful when drawn up under decentralised systems of government rather than those drawn up in the headquarters which is still too often the case in many developing countries. Rondinelli and Cheema (1983) have pointed out that decentralising power and functions to regional or local levels allows planners to identify the different groups and conditions in these areas and accommodate these differences in their plans and programs. In this sense, proper planning done through decentralised structures and carried out effectively is expected to boost economic development in the rural areas. Nevertheless, this should not obscure the fact that proper economic and development planning for rural development also depends on how well the centre directs and coordinates regional and local level planning (Nanau, 1995).

In most developing countries, the majority of the people living in the rural areas remain poor despite the fact that they mostly live with the nation's richest natural resource, the land. Furthermore, their contribution to development is often limited because they do not possess productive assets; they have very little or no control over the natural resources, and limited access to basic economic and social services. To facilitate their involvement in development efforts and to help improve their living standards, writers like Buendia (1991) claim that the role of bureaucracies has to change from that of domination to that of supporting decentralised operations. Others have gone further to suggest that the political and administrative relations of the central and provincial governments may remain but the provincial governments should run their development. This means that provincial governments should be free to find ways of raising their financial capabilities. This would enable them to overcome some of their own development and financial constraints related to establishing and maintaining 'social infrastructure' such as schools which they cannot afford. Mamaloni (1981), when referring to these problems in the Solomon Islands said that: "The only way for provincial governments to solve some of these problems is for them to divorce themselves from the central government's economic empire" (p. 82). Decentralisation in the sense of more autonomy is thus regarded as a better alternative in development. It is also believed (Fiske, 1996) that this will result in more efficiency, cost effectiveness, reduce operating costs, target resources better, reduce travelling expenses and time, raise new resources or additional revenue, and in some cases could result in increased total spending on social services such as education. In some cases however, decentralisation has resulted in governments downloading their fiscal problems to the lower levels (Fiske, 1996; Gaynor, 1998).

### **2.3.3 Decentralisation as a Strategy for Administrative Reform**

The objectives for deconcentration or administrative decentralisation in the industrialised countries appeared to be different from those found in developing countries. Deconcentration in the former had generally been aimed at improving services and overcoming problems associated with unwieldy bureaucracy. In the latter, deconcentration had largely been used as administrative reform after

independence (Bhindi, 1987). Nonetheless, decentralisation is also praised for its role in facilitating efficient decision making (Nanau, 1995). For a decision to be made regarding a particular issue on a particular area, it would be more favourable and accurate if information given to the decision maker also comes from that area. In this context, decentralisation may be a better way to achieve this requirement.

It is said when efficiency is the main consideration in decision making, decentralisation is preferable to centralisation (Battacharya, 1978). By decentralising decision making power, information from below may be obtained more easily by those working in concerned geographical areas. However, it should be pointed out that another view holds that centralised authority structures may be more decisive and are better able to make decisions. Nevertheless, decision making on day-to-day matters may be expected in decentralised systems.

Information obtained for decision making may also be more reliable and cost effective because it is gathered by those directly involved in the situation or those affected by the issue at stake. For instance, if the central government wants to assess cyclone damage in a certain province for rehabilitation purposes, it would be expensive and time consuming to send officers from the central government to go and assess it. Decentralisation, would allow officers already in the provinces to carry this task quickly and at less cost.

Closely related is the argument that through decentralisation, decisions are located at the scene of action where situations and conditions may change. As Occampo (1991) points out, “[d]ecentralisation takes advantage of more precise, case-wise, and current knowledge, adaptive skills, and the smaller, human scale of local institutions and communities in dealing with their problems” (p. 195). In times of crisis, decentralisation can be very appropriate unless decisions have wider ramifications or need outside cooperation. In fact, some people feel that for crisis management, there is no substitute for decentralisation (Jambunathan, 1978). For instance, if a natural disaster hits a certain province, those people working at the headquarters are not in a good position to determine what to do or how it should be done because they are not at the scene or directly affected by the disaster, although they may coordinate disaster

relief and obtain outside aid. Decentralisation province provides efficient and quick decisions in such circumstances.

In big countries, size and distance make administration and decision making from the centre to all parts of the country almost impossible. For efficient and proper decisions, the country must be divided into viable units and appropriate personnel deconcentrated and specified power devolved. Even in relatively small countries like Solomon Islands, administration from the centre is found to be a difficult task because of the distances between the islands and the poor internal communication networks (Bhindi, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1993), which means that information needed to make decisions directly from the centre is often incomplete or inaccurate.

Even with better communication, the problem of relating decisions to each other area concerned and how decisions are to be implemented effectively still remains. In these circumstances, decentralisation is more favourable and may be a better alternative to enhance efficient decision-making. Consequently, decentralisation was undertaken in some countries to enhance institutional autonomy, site based management and administration, structural reform, efficiency and responsiveness within the system, activation of the administration, dismantling bureaucracy, elimination of overlays in bureaucratic procedures, streamlining, conflict management, productivity, motivation, incentives, and accountability, emphasis on community involvement, and the overall redistribution of powers (Lawton, 1992; Fiske, 1996; Gaynor, 1998).

#### **2.3.4 Equity as a Reason for Decentralisation**

As has been discussed earlier, participatory democracy is one of the terms closely associated with decentralisation whereby, political and social values such as democracy, liberty and equality are high in the aims of decentralisation (Holmes, 1985; Turner, 1983). This has often meant the implementation of decentralisation initiatives in order to narrow the gaps between rural and urban areas, rich and poor, and gender imbalances in the provision of services such as education (The World Bank, 1995). As such, these initiatives are usually accompanied by increased

demands for previously underserved groups in relation to political, economic and social provisions (Lauglo and McLean, 1985).

### **2.3.5 Socio-cultural Reasons for Decentralisation**

A related idea is that a decentralised system of government is not only democratic but it is also consistent with the traditional forms of government such as those in Melanesia (Wolfers, 1985). In traditional Melanesian societies, political organisation was based on families, clans, villages and districts. Each political unit had its own trading and other external relationships but it was literally autonomous and separate from the other groups. Through colonialism, these different groups were amalgamated into nations which cut through clans and other traditional political units. Thus, through decentralisation, these distinct cultures and political units may be re-asserted, making them more acceptable and less alien with a modern national framework. Decentralisation therefore, at least in theory, assists in the maintenance of unity and continuity in a country as it fits in well with long traditions of community self governance. Furthermore, it is believed that decentralised system are geared towards meeting local needs and best suited to local conditions as well as addressing the issues of cultural, linguistic, and regional identity. Decentralisation also caters for the nature of fragmented inter-personal relationships and distinct sub-groups which characterise these societies, especially in Melanesian countries, and encourages endogenous development which will forge a sense of local or community 'ownership' of schools (Fiske, 1996).

### **2.3.6 The Influences of Geographical Factors for Decentralisation**

One of the important factors which appeared to favour decentralisation of governance, particularly in Melanesian countries such as PNG, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands was the geographical scatter of the islands (Molisa *et al.* 1982; Pokawin, 1982; Ifunaoa, 1983; Bhindi, 1987; Lewawa, 2001). The geographical distribution of the population which are scattered over a large expanse of land or is unevenly distributed in archipelagos, and the remoteness of some areas with small clusters of people living relatively far outside the main population centres necessitated

decentralisation (Luteru, 1993). Furthermore, the size and isolation of the various provinces in countries comprising of many islands such as Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea tended to reinforce cultural distinctiveness and linguistic diversity, hampered communication and travel, and made administration difficult (Bhindi, 1987). Under these circumstances, it was cost and time effective and administratively expedient to decentralise decision making and other functions (Nanau, 1995).

### **2.3.7 Reasons Educational Decentralisation**

The reasons for undertaking educational decentralisation as well as the forms that it takes, vary widely from country to country, so that no two countries have adopted exactly the same model of school decentralisation. Fiske (1996) observed that case studies of decentralisation efforts around the world demonstrate that decentralisation has been undertaken for a multiplicity of stated and unstated reasons – political, educational, and administrative. Furthermore, a review of the literature has shown that the reasons for school decentralisation in developed and developing countries are indeed quite different. For example, prior to embarking upon school decentralisation, most developing countries have centralised systems of education, often a legacy of colonial rule. In many of these systems, control was typically of more concern than legitimacy. However, in the last decade or so, many developing countries have turned to school reform as the foundation on which to base their economic development, and some have chosen decentralisation as the strategy of doing so (Fiske, 1996). Despite these differences, there appears to be a number of similar themes, for example the desire to have institutional or school autonomy and empowerment or increased emphasis on community involvement in schools. Furthermore, it is hoped that decentralisation would improve the quality of teaching and learning, efficiency and effectiveness of the system, locating decisions at the point at which they must be carried out, energising teachers and administrators to do a better job, pedagogical innovation, relevance, and freedom of education (ibid).

### **a) Globalisation and its Influence on Educational Decentralisation**

According to Green (1997), it is true that central governments, in many nation states, have reduced their direct control over certain areas of education due to labour market policies and the realities of globalisation. In addition, Waters (1995) stated that “globalisation appears to have become a key idea with which many social theorists are now attempting to understand the transition of human society into the third millennium” (p. 54). Taylor *et al.*, (1997) described globalisation as “a set of processes which in various ways – economic, cultural, and political – make supranational connections” (p. 55). Furthermore, Giddens (1994) stated that globalisation is really about the transformation of time and space and defines globalisation as 'action at a distance'. He suggests that its intensification over recent years owes much to the emergence of means of instantaneous global communication and mass transportation. Giddens (1994) further explained that 'action at a distance' refers to “the 'interconnectedness' of economic, political and cultural activities across the globe and noted that this results not only in 'the creation of large-scale systems', but also in “the transformation of local and even personal contexts of social experience” (pp. 4-5). In line with this understanding, Waters (1995) defined globalisation as “a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding” (p.3). Under globalisation territoriality remains significant, but is no longer the most fundamental organising principle for social and cultural life it once was. To some extent 'deterritorialisation' has occurred and augmented by the existence of a non-territorially bounded cyberspace (e.g. the internet, CD-ROMS, and Satellite Television). People in distant geographic locations are able today to form relationships almost as easily as those living in the same locality.

Thus, Taylor *et al.*, (1997) noted the two aspects of globalisation as: first, the facts concerning transnational processes and communication; second, an increasing awareness of this reality. The result, Giddens (1994 cited in Taylor *et al.*, 1997) suggests, is that many individuals now have been disembedded from local contexts and the constraints contingent upon time and space, enhancing a conception of the

world as an integrated whole. Thus, the Commission on Global Governance (1995 cited in Taylor *et al.*, 1997) has observed that the “shortening of distance, the multiplying of links, the deepening of interdependence: all these factors, and their interplay, have been transforming the world into a neighbourhood” (pp. 55-6). Consequently, Taylor *et al.*, (1997) stated that “it is these changes and awareness of them to which the concept of globalisation refers” (p. 56).

There are three interrelated dimensions of globalisation (Taylor *et al.*, 1997; Jones, 1998). The first one is economic globalisation, relating to social arrangements for the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services. The second is political globalisation which has to do with the social arrangements for the distribution of power, of centres of policy development and of institutional practices of authority and control. The third dimension, and one which we are most concerned here, is cultural globalisation which relates to (Taylor *et al.*, 1997) “social arrangements for the production, exchange and expression of signs and symbols – meanings, beliefs and preferences, tastes and values” (p. 56). Much of the globalisation literature suggests that these dimensions are structurally independent. While analytically the distinctions are useful, in practice the categories do not always work discretely (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). It is becoming clear that the globalisation processes are affecting the cultural field within which education operates. Taylor *et al.*, (1997) stated that:

The cultural field is changing markedly and quite rapidly, a process facilitated by the boundary-eroding imperatives of the new technologies as well as the imperatives of economic globalisation. For policy makers and analysts, the issues here have to do with the effects of these technologies – the compression of time and space – on the way education is thought about, practiced and managed. Matters of pedagogy and curriculum, certification, decision-making and governance, the student body itself as well as, of course, policy making arenas are all implicated here' (p. 72).

No nation state has escaped these pressures to change. Collectively, these changes are often referred as the 'restructuring of the state' (Taylor *et al.*, 1997), which have been driven by the need for less interventionist and leaner government and for freer forms of economic competition between nations. The demand for smaller

government is based on the assumption that the older bureaucratic structures and practices of the state were inefficient and expensive, that they inhibited market competition and were incapable of responding quickly to rapid change which had become endemic. For example, an OECD (1995; 7 cited in Taylor *et al.*, 1997) study of public sector reforms observed that old style bureaucratic structures which were 'highly centralised, rule-bound, and inflexible' emphasised 'process rather than results', inhibited efficiency and effectiveness, and were not able to respond rapidly enough to the demands of change. Such pressures resulted in the reform of public administration and organisational features of the public sector. These new practices and structures, borrowed from private sector, are usually referred to under the generic name of 'corporate managerialism'. According to Taylor *et al.*, (1997), there is an element of truth in the OECD's assessment of older style bureaucracies: they were indeed inflexible and rule-bound, and significantly, also somewhat undemocratic.

The form restructuring takes is not the same in all nations, but varies according to the specific strategies, structure, cultures and histories of particular nations. Yet everywhere the objective of restructuring has been the delivery of more efficient and effective services across the board. Not only have government policies been aimed at workplace reforms throughout all sectors of the economy to ensure greater productivity and international competitiveness, but the agencies and practices of the state have themselves been the focus of 'micro-economic' reforms, that is, they have been asked to become more productive at lower costs, mimicking practices in the private sector. As part of this reform, central administrations have been devolved to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness of policy delivery. However, and perhaps paradoxically, while local sites have been made responsible for policy implementation, and have been given some freedom to manage devolved resources, policy generation has become more centralised and politicised (Green, 1997; Taylor *et al.*, 1997). That is, political leadership has taken a greater role in the making of policy than has probably been the case in the past, resulting in a reconstituted relationship between ministers and their public service bureaucracies. Whereas economic outcomes were once considered to be only one aspect of educational policy, they have now become central. Furthermore, the manner in which educational policy is now produced has become implicated in general public sector reforms. Educational

bureaucracies have now been restructured by corporate managerialism, a concept used to describe the ways in which the state and its agencies are now expected to manage change and deliver policy outcomes more cheaply (Taylor *et al.*, 1997).

### **b) The influence of Market Forces on Educational Decentralisation**

Much of the momentum for reform has come from the organised coalition of market liberals and conservatives known as the 'New Right' (Ball, 1990; Ball, 1994; Marginson 1993; Marginson, 1997; Halsey *et al.*, 1997; Olssen and Matthews, 1997; Ball, 1998; Levin, 2001). The new right has had a great impact on public policy throughout the developed world, particularly in the Anglo-American countries. Its direct influence peaked under the Reagan governments in the United States (1980-88) and the Thatcher governments in Britain (1979-91), but the influence of new right free market thinking has outlasted those governments (Marginson, 1992c in Marginson, 1993). The New Right ideology is equally influential in New Zealand and parts of Australia and Canada (Halsey *et al.*, 1997). New Right or Neo-Conservative ideology couples a neo-liberal view of the virtues of individual freedom with a traditional conservative view that a strong state is necessary to keep moral and political order (Gamble 1994 cited in Halsey *et al.*, 1997). According to Ball (1998), neoliberalism or what might be called the ideologies of the market tie together individual, consumer choice in education markets with rhetorics and policies aimed at furthering national economic interests. Carter & O'Neill (1995 cited in Ball, 1998) observed a shift taking place in the relationship between politics, government and education in at least, complex Westernised post-industrialised countries. They cited the following five main elements to this new orthodoxy. Firstly, improving national economics by tightening the connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade. Secondly, enhancing student outcomes in employment-related skills and competencies. Thirdly, attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment. Fourthly, reducing the cost to government of education, and fifthly, increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision making and pressure of market choice. Therefore, the principle of equal access to education for all has been replaced with the principle of differentiation

in the market place. The elements of this market are parental choice, competition, diversity, funding and organisation (Ball, 1990).

The first element of parental choice has been one of the fundamentals of the UK Conservative education policy since 1979. Where feasible, Conservative ministers have argued that parents should be able to send their children to the school they wish, the school they think best. According to the neo-liberals, it is the consumer/parent who shall define and control the meaning of school and of education ((Hillgate p.1 cited in Ball, 1990) “by granting to all parents the power, at present enjoyed by only the wealthy, to choose the best available education for their children” (p. 44).

The second principle is competition. The 1980 Education Act required schools to publish their examination results and to hold compulsory Open Evenings. Many schools have begun to attend to the development and protection of their public image and reputation as a result. Glossy brochures have been produced; some schools have called in public relations consultants; care is taken to ensure that the local press are invited to cover school activities and schools will now be competing to raise their numbers. In other words, schools will be attempting to attract pupils away from other schools in their locality (Ball, 1990). In Hayekian terms competition between schools would best serve not only the consumers, parents, but also the nation, by ensuring an orientation to ‘continuous adaptation’. Behind this is also the effect of competition in weakening the power of the producers, teachers.

But the principle of a Hayekian market rests upon the third principle of diversity. Choice in this sense is only real if there are diverse products to choose from. The argument would be that if all schools are comprehensive, all giving the same service, then there is no choice. Any attempt to make the provision of schooling equal for all, the same for all, would confound the market. The control and determination of school provision must thus be taken out of the hands of government and left to the market. For example, in the UK, Keith Joseph a former education secretary believed that the fundamental problem with the education system, the source of all other difficulties, lies in the very fact that it is a state system and a compulsory system (Ball, 1990). The Education Reform Act (ERA) (1988) introduced a greater variety of

schools into the education system and to break the Local Education Authority (LEA) monopoly of state schooling.

Fourthly, the ERA introduced more variety or diversity into the market and the advocacy of funding through vouchers. The idea here is that all parents are given vouchers for each of their children with a certain fixed value according to age and that these can be exchanged anywhere in the education system for educational services. This includes the choice of exchanging the vouchers in the private sector schools if the parents are able to top up their vouchers to meet the private fees. The vouchers would restore the market link giving the parent purchasing power. The government would redeem the vouchers in terms of cash payments to the schools. There was no provision for vouchers in the ERA, but there is a cash exchange for services being introduced by the mechanism of per-capita funding. Funding was based on the number and type of pupils they can attract and 75% of the LEA block grant will be distributed on this basis. Each pupil who comes through the school gate will carry with him or her a cash bounty, and the staffing, materials, facilities and equipment the school wants or requires will have to be paid for out of the monies accumulated in this way. This means that competition between schools is now very real. The ability to attract pupils will affect staffing levels and the overall level of service which any school can deliver, and schools which have relatively more pupils will gain a cash bonus. A part of the process is linked to an ideology of freedom of choice. The market is thus being used as a disciplinary mechanism. By seeking out inefficiency, by responding to large-scale movements of fashion and taste, and by rewarding successful schools, the market will eliminate the poor schools.

The fifth aspect of the education market displayed above is that of organisation, for alongside the introduction of pupil numbers-related budgets were the introduction of devolved budgets. That is to say, more and more schools will be given control of their own budgets directly. They will get and they will spend the money; they will employ, hire and fire teachers and other school workers; they will buy equipment, pay for maintenance, for heating and lighting, and they will have to balance their own budgets. The budget will be the ultimate responsibility of the school governors, with the headteacher managing (Local Management of Schools, Hounslow cited in Ball,

1990) “the school in accordance with the governing body's management policy. He or she will have a key role in assisting the governors in formulating the management plan and ensuring the involvement of staff” (p. 67). The model of organisation which the ERA implies is clear: it is that of governors as Board of Directors and headteacher as Chief Executive. Headteachers emerge as key figures in the ERA reforms. The parent is now the customer, the pupils in effect the product (Ball, 1990). While the curriculum may be national, accountability is now firmly local. The onus is on individual schools to achieve successful implementation. According to Ball (1990), “this is an act where not only national but local politicians can shift the blame down to school level...” (p. 68).

The decentralisation of educational resourcing involves the attempt to encourage market behaviour, and in doing so seeks to weaken the power of teacher unions, as national or state-wide employment conditions (on which union solidarity is based) are replaced by schools determining their own policies. The catchphrase of New Right decentralisation policies has been that of greater parental and community choice and control. Therefore, neo-liberal solutions in education are based on the minimal state and individual choice, competition, diversity, funding and organisation based on business principles as well as the ideologies of the market.

### **c) The Influence of Managerialism on Educational Decentralisation**

The insertion of the commodity form into education is not limited to the experience of parents and pupils: teachers too are being subject to new relations of production (Ball, 1990). The nature of the school as an organisation, as a workplace, is being steadily transformed. In view of this, Whitty *et al.*, (1998) said that in education, it is possible to identify the promotion of a new institutional culture which has been termed variously ‘new public management’, ‘new managerialism’, ‘entrepreneurial governance’, and ‘corporate managerialism’. The scrutiny and reorganisation of the management of public education is not a new phenomenon, but most reforms until now have typically involved shifting responsibilities horizontally across government offices or vertically between layers of administration. The more thoroughgoing reformulation of relationships between the centre and the periphery currently

underway has focussed and individualised management responsibility in new and different ways. Where devolution has gone furthest, head teachers and principals increasingly stand at the interface between governments and local stakeholders, especially consumers. Such a position requires that they engage both with the demands of the evaluative state in terms of meeting centrally determined objectives and with the day-to-day 'business' of running their school and ensuring its survival within the education market.

In Britain for example, the Department of Education and Science (DES) clearly see forms of industrial management as the necessary and appropriate method for school organisation (Ball, 1990). The attempt is being made to model headship on the Chief Executive role in industry. Management techniques, based on a separation of policy from execution, have the effect of delimiting the professional role of the teacher and have tended to encourage the development of 'them and us' attitudes similar to those in industry. These changes amount to a significant change in the labour process, ethos and conditions of work of teaching (Ball, 1990). Local Financial Management is also seen as requiring new management skills from heads and their senior teachers. Management is clearly and unproblematically presented as the one best way for schools to organise and compete.

It is important to recognise that the shift in principals' and headteachers' practices, and the redistribution of authority within the school, is not simply the result of personal preferences for particular modes of management. It is a product of the reformulation of relations between the centre and the periphery. As Ball (1993: 65 cited in Whitty *et al.*, 1998) argued:

Schools are inserted into a new paradox; they are to be given greater autonomy within the constraints and pressures of market forces; they are to be able to exercise flexibility in order to be more responsive. The relative certainties of local democracy and bureaucracy are to be replaced by the relative uncertainties of enrolment-based funding. The point about both management and the market is that there are a 'no hands' form of control as far as the relationship between education and the state is concerned (p. 63).

Thus, on this understanding, the devolution of ever increasing decision-making capacity to site-based managers in schools is the means whereby the central state is able simultaneously to exercise a degree of control over what they do and shift responsibility when things go wrong. Heads and principals are increasingly forced into a position in which they have to demonstrate performance along centrally prescribed criteria in a context over which they often have diminishing control (Ball, 1990).

#### **d) The Role of the World Bank and Other Forms of Aid and Policy Advice in Spreading Educational Decentralisation**

The last decade or so has been an exceptional period of international traffic in educational ideas (Keep, 1991 cited in Green, 1997). Green (1997) said that this is partly the work of international agencies such as the OECD, the EU and the World Bank, “and also the proliferation of educational exchanges among staff and policy-makers” (p.173). The development of human capital theory, devolution, the role of markets in education and managerialism, then, are some of the key elements of the restructuring of education encouraged by these international bodies. The globalisation of the economy has, to some extent, reduced the capacity of individual states to consider their own distinctive policy options. All nation states are today encouraged to 'internationalise' their economies, with profound implications for the restructuring of the state. Market activities are now considered the core building blocks of the very formation of the state itself. The state is thus no longer expected to mediate the excesses of the market but rather provide conditions that support its operations. In recent years this mode of thinking has become the dominant way of conceptualising the state. In this sense, globalisation has become an ideology, proselytised by international organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank in assertions of the need for less interventionist and leaner government and for freer forms of economic competition between nations (Taylor *et al.*, 1997).

Furthermore, according to Ball (1998), the dissemination of decentralisation influences associated with neoliberalism, new institutional economics, performativity, public choice theory and managerialism can be understood in at least two ways. He

noted that the first and most straight forward one is the "flow of ideas through social and political networks; the `inter-national circulation of ideas' (Popkewitz, 1996 cited in Ball 1998). For example, by process of policy borrowing (Halpin & Troyna, 1995 cited in Ball, 1998) – both the UK and New Zealand have served as `political laboratories' for reform. The movement of graduates, in particular from US universities, is also important (Venas & Ball, 1996 cited in Ball, 1998). In some contexts, this movement `carries' ideas and creates a kind of cultural and political dependency which works to devalue or deny the feasibility of `local' solutions. Ball (1998) also mentioned that:

The activity of various `policy entrepreneurs', groups and individuals who `sell' their solutions in the academic and political market place – the `self-managing school' and `school effectiveness' and `choice' are all current examples of such entrepreneurship which takes place through academic channels – journals, books, etc. – and via the performances of charismatic, travelling academics (p. 124).

An example here is that of Chile's case during the 1970s when the military government was influenced by neoliberal economists and social planners, mainly from the University of Chicago. They argued that the quality of social services in Chile would be improved through decentralisation and privatisation that would foster competition.

Furthermore, Ball (1998) noted that there is the sponsorship and, in some respects, enforcement of some particular policy `solutions' by multilateral agencies. The World Bank is particularly important here, as Jones (1998) puts it: "The Bank's precondition for education can only be understood as an ideological stance, in promoting an integrated world system along market lines" (p. 152). An example of the World Bank's position in this regard is displayed by its imposition on Bangladesh to establish School Management Committees and Parent/Teacher Associations in all the schools as a condition for funding the country's General Education Project, designed to provide substantial increase in the financing of the primary education development (Ball, 1998). Further examples of the role of the World Bank and other international agencies in spreading decentralisation in other developing countries will be highlighted in the following section.

## **2.4 Decentralisation of Education in Some Developed and Developing Countries**

Following the foregoing definitions and reasons for undertaking decentralisation in general and educational decentralisation in particular, this section provides a description of educational decentralisation in some developed and developing countries.

### **2.4.1 Developed Countries**

Educational decentralisation in some developed countries is undertaken in order to achieve institutional or school autonomy, school based management and administration, enhanced parental choice and increased community involvement in schools. Decentralisation has also been influenced by market forces of choice, quality by competition, diversity, funding, organisation and efficiency (Ball, 1990; Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Taylor *et al.*, 1997).

A common characteristic is the promotion of parental rights to choose schools, sometimes articulating with changes in funding formulae, where the money follows the pupils, resulting in a move towards quasi-markets in education. One aspect of this is the introduction of policies that allocate public funds to be spent on private education. Such policies, especially when combined with formula funding for pupil schools, help to create a 'virtual voucher' system of the sort advocated by New Right politicians, such as Sexton (1987 in Whitty *et al.*, 1998). The concept of diversity of provision, whether within the private or public sector, is also a key aspect of current policy discourse. However, it is evident that these liberalising reforms are being implemented alongside others which consolidate power within central governments, at national or state level. In particular, centrally defined goals concerning what schools should teach, and how their performance should be assessed, are becoming commonplace.

Another common theme among the developed countries that have been looked at is the devolution of financial and managerial control to more local or school levels

(Whitty *et al.*, 1998). In England and Wales, the devolution of financial and managerial control shifts away from regional and district levels to individual schools. This is similar Australia's decentralisation initiatives where financial and managerial control is being devolved from state to more local levels. In New Zealand, managerial and financial control is being devolved directly to schools through direct resourcing or bulk funding. The charter schools initiative in the USA seeks to devolve financial and managerial control to the school level, while Sweden's educational decentralisation involves the devolution financial and managerial control either to municipalities and schools.

In Spain, the educational system was reorganised in such a way that increased access for children in rural areas, taking note of the country's inherent diversity by devolving central functions to seventeen regional governments (Fiske, 1996). These new units, called autonomous communities, were popularly elected, and each received all government portfolios, including education. Funds were transferred from central to regional coffers through block grants that could be used for education and other purposes. During the 1980s, the Ministry of Education organised a national debate on a series of proposals for reorganising the new regional education systems (*ibid*). Based on the resulting consensus, a school-based management system was set up under which local schools, including government- subsidised private schools would be run by school councils made up of elected parents, teachers, and students. Their authority includes the right to elect school directors from among candidates in the teaching ranks. The central ministry retained control over the hiring of teachers and the authority to grant degrees. From a political point of view, decentralisation of education in Spain was a huge success. School decentralisation in Hungary which occurred within the parameters of the 1985 Education Act authorised local authorities to define their own educational tasks and education system (Fiske, 1996). Teachers were given considerable power in selecting principals, and the old centralised inspection system was scrapped in favour of a more consultative one. Most schools are now owned and run by local authorities with constitutionally guaranteed autonomy with relation to the central government, whose main obligation is to transfer funds to the schools in the form of block grants.

### 2.4.2 Latin American Countries.

According to Faustor (1995), education decentralisation is a major issue facing Latin America. However, the goals and reasons behind education decentralisation in Latin America have mostly been stated in relation to very general and widely varying terms, aims, problems, and themes. In each country concerned, it is announced and implemented as a series of changes which are affected by extremely varied ideological, economic, administrative, and pedagogical factors. Such change generally forms part of much broader national decentralisation projects: it is part of a wider process involving the reform of the national government apparatus and public administration. Examples of these are demonstrated by Faustor (1995) and Fiske (1996) in the case of six countries in Latin America namely: Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. These are described in turn below.

In 1980, the military regime in **Chile** transferred authority for running schools from the central government to the country's 385 municipalities and private organisations and enacted a system of subventions under which the government paid the municipalities a form of voucher based on monthly attendance (Winkler and Rounds, 1993 cited in Fiske, 1996). Schools and municipalities gained control over hiring and firing, setting of wages, and school construction and developed a stake in attracting as many students as they could. They had little autonomy, however, on matters such as curriculum, and few provisions were made for greater participation by parents, teachers, or others in school policy making. Fiske (1996) mentioned that:

The decentralisation effort did not go according to plan. When difficult economic times set in, the transfer of schools to municipalities was suspended, and schools were ordered not to contribute to unemployment by laying off teachers. Old authoritarian habits continued to subvert the principles of municipal and private school autonomy and community involvement. It became clear that municipalities lacked the capacity to carry out their new responsibilities, and the model did not embrace any plan to modify school practices' (p. 21).

When a new democratic government came into power in 1990, seventeen years of authoritarian rule was put to an end. One of its first major policy changes was to

begin a second round of decentralisation. The democratic government, embracing a strategy of 'continuity and change' introduced some important and urgently needed corrective measures (Faustor, 1995). After evaluating the decentralisation process, the government embarked upon a series of changes (Law and Constitutional Reform of 1991) on teachers, subsidies, the creation of development funds, and regional and local government). This was designed to decentralise the system so as to remove responsibility from the government for the direct management of schools, a break from the past. It was now to have a new, more active and responsible role to secure better quality of education, greater equity, and to heighten social promotion and participation in education. Fiske (1996) stated that:

This time the focus was on democratic reforms, including the popular election of mayors, and on improved teaching and learning. The goal was to have pedagogical decentralisation at the school level while strengthening governance at the central, regional, and municipal levels (p. 21).

Local schools were given more autonomy in curricular and other educational decision, and teachers were given a voice in decision-making.

In **Brazil** (Faustor, 1995), there were no particular objectives or any general rules governing the transfer of power and resources commenced in the 1980s. Rather, it was a general, evolutionary, adjustment process in response to changes in the situation and demands arising from political, social and economic shifts. The general model was maintained wherein responsibility for education is shared by the Union, the states, and the municipalities and there are two networks of public schools – state and municipal. Brazil's is the experience of a large federal and multifarious country in which according to Faustor (1995), "there is a multitude of situations, made more intricate by substantial regional inequalities" (p. 87). The transfer of powers has been an opened-ended and multi-faceted process in which there is strong control by the federal government which keeps several aid channels to the states and municipalities, and retains executive responsibility for major national programmes and projects. As well, the states exercise much control over the municipalities. Here, there is not so much transfer of decision-making power but of certain management, service-provision, and financial responsibilities such as enrolment offering, the performance

of tasks such as supervision, or the purchase of school lunches, and finance. However, Faustor (1995) mentioned that “in a context of increasing local autonomy, important innovations and experimentation have taken place in recent years in Brazil, especially in the management of education by municipalities and at the school level” (p. 28). Such moves to promote local autonomy at the state level can be seen from the decentralisation efforts of the Brazilian northeastern state of Minas Gerais (Fiske, 1996). A series of measures were enacted to grant financial, administrative, and pedagogical autonomy to elected boards in each school composed of teachers, parents, and students over the age of sixteen. Each school receives a grant based on enrolment and special needs, and it is up to the board to decide in a democratic fashion how to spend these funds as well as other monies raised locally. The boards also set short and long-term goals for their schools and make the decisions on curriculum, pedagogy, the school calendar, and other matters necessary to meet these goals. Other important functions were maintained at the central level, including centralised bargaining between the teachers union and the government. To overcome the long-standing tradition of patronage in appointments, the new system calls for new principals to be elected for three-year terms by the entire school community. The response to the new system has been positive. Eighty-five percent of primary schools now have elected principals. The performance of the boards, however, has varied widely as little attention was given to training boards in conflict resolution, and in many cases principals continue to dominate the process. Some boards, however, have shown considerable independence. The twofold programme of school autonomy and greater transparency in decision making has led to increased operational efficiency.

In 1975, **Argentina's** military government assigned financial responsibility for primary schools to the provinces under a co-financing arrangement. The model chosen was to make use of existing governmental machinery so that authority of educational policy, including curriculum frameworks, would remain a centralised activity but decisions would be carried out regionally. In 1993, Argentina took the subsequent step of devolving financial responsibility for secondary schools from the central to the regional level. Faustor (1995) analysed this process in relation to the electoral platform of the Justicialista Party. When the party came into power, it had

to complete the 'federalisation of education' by transferring those education services in secondary and technical schools and higher education still under central authority to the provinces. The process which aimed at removing all schools from the direct management of the Ministry of Education began in December 1989 with a proposal from the national executive and took shape in the 'Federal Education Pact' endorsed by the state education ministers in the Federal Culture and Education Council. It was suspended in 1990 due to economic difficulties (hyper-inflation) but was finally passed into law in December 1991. Implementation took place in 1992-1993 beginning with a series of agreements signed between the central government and the provinces. The transfer of schools, which were to be gradual and occur only after the appropriate institutional, financial, technical conditions were in place. In this case, both sides agreed, and the strength of provincial governments offers hope that this step will be more successful than the earlier decentralisation of primary schools.

Decentralisation of education in **Mexico** was carried out in three stages. During the first stage, from 1978 to 1982, management of the education system was deconcentrated from the Ministry of Education to thirty-one state delegations, one for each of the states of the Republic of Mexico. The delegations were given responsibilities ranging from budgeting and managing schools to the writing of curriculum and textbooks. Revenue generation, the drafting of the national core curriculum, and labour policy remained in Mexico City. These initial reforms were carried out, in Prawda's (1993b, p. 5 cited in Fiske, 1996) words, 'a la blitzkrieg' through a concerted effort by senior leaders, and they had immediate and positive effects. Preschool enrolment increased, especially in rural areas, as did primary and secondary school enrolment rates.

During the second phase, from 1983 to 1988, the government sought to take the additional step of transferring the delegations from central control to the authority of states. It failed, largely because of opposition from the teachers union, which did not relish the thought of negotiating working conditions and other matters with thirty-one separate governmental entities. Resistance also came from staff members of the central ministry who had their own vested interests in the centralised system and had long-standing cooperative arrangements with the teachers. The government,

preoccupied with economic restructuring and other issues proved to be too weak to carry through on its objectives.

In 1988, a new government came to power and negotiated an agreement with the nation's governors and the national teachers union that permitted the transfer to the state authorities to proceed. Actually, Faustor (1995) said that decentralisation did not really begin until May 1992, when the process called 'education federalism' was activated. This process had risen out of the National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education. The Agreement spells out the re-organisation of the education system, reformulation of subject matter and contents, and enhancement of teachers' status. It was signed by the federal and state government and by the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE). On the one hand, the Agreement reasserts the normative and evaluation powers of the government; while on the other, it stipulates the states' responsibility to deliver education. The Agreement provides the basis, firstly for the gradual transfer of responsibility in education. Secondly, it provided for wage alignment between federal and state personnel. Thirdly, the Agreement provided for the transfer of ownership and finances from the federal, which still provide the main source of funds, to the states governments and fourthly, for agreements between state governments and the SNTE concerning federal civil servants transferred to the states. The SNTE was recognised as the federal civil servants bona fide representative by the state governments (Faustor 1995). The General Education Act voted in June 1993, confirmed the main advances of the process and formalised the creation of mechanism for community involvement in the management of education at local level. The state governments pledged to transfer the responsibility for the maintenance and supply of basic school equipment to the municipalities. Thus, it was only in May 1992, fourteen years after the decentralisation process was initiated that the full extent of the plan could be carried out (Faustor, 1995; Fiske, 1996).

In **Colombia**, the first step in the decentralisation process was to restore credibility to the government itself by undertaking a major shift of power from the central government to political, economic, and other institutions on the periphery. By giving ordinary citizens a greater role in managing public institutions, the reasoning went, it

would be possible to re-establish the legitimacy of those institutions. The first step towards decentralisation came in 1985 with the decision to allow popular election of the mayors of Colombia's 1,024 municipalities and, shortly afterwards, of the thirty-three governors of states. In 1989, the Congress approved legislation giving municipalities a greater role in basic services, such as education and health. The decentralisation of education was an important element of the strategy for pulling Colombia back from the brink of chaos. Like all other major social institutions, education was tightly controlled from the centre. The Ministry of education in Bogota held the purse strings for education and made all important decisions regarding curricula, textbooks, and other matters of educational policy. Teachers were employees of the central government, and salaries were negotiated at a national level.

Ironically, this tight strung system was only twenty years old and was itself created to correct the abuses of an earlier decentralised system. Under the earlier system, put in place following World War II, local municipalities exercised considerable control over education but lacked the financial, administrative, and political wherewithal to generate revenues, manage schools, and deal with teacher strikes. The centralised system, established in the early 1970s by the ruling National Front, succeeded in improving educational efficiency and putting an end to turbulent teacher strikes. It also ensured that teachers were paid regularly. But over two decades the centralised system, too, succumbed to hardening of the bureaucratic arteries and found itself out of touch with growing demands for increased local autonomy. It was clear also that Colombia needed better schools than it was getting. Primary school enrolment was a respectable 86% but only about 50% of eligible students were enrolled in secondary school. Moreover, the spending rate on education of gross GDP was low. Thus was the stage set for another swing from a centralised to a decentralised education system.

The government's strategy for decentralisation was a twofold effort to "municipalise" basic education and to increase the autonomy of local schools. The first objective was to be reached by transferring financial resources to municipalities and departments; the second, by giving schools responsibility for managing personnel, designing aspects of the curriculum, and controlling aspects of finance. Parents,

teachers, and students were to gain greater voice in running schools. Inspectors from Bogota were eliminated, and educational planning was to become a bottom-up rather than a top-down affair. A voucher system for poor students at the secondary level was set up, and regulations on private schools were removed.

Faustor (1995) stated that Colombia's is a case of gradual decentralisation of the management of national education services and the corresponding public resources. The process was legitimised with the promulgation of the 1991 Constitution which stipulated that no responsibilities can be decentralised unless the attending budget funds have been made available. Politically, decentralisation is considered as part of the democratisation process of Colombia. Socially, it is seen as part of a redistribution process. As to its economics, it is based on the acknowledgment that the central government lacks the necessary resources to fund all the services for which it is responsible. Consequently, education is becoming a system for which federal, department, and municipal government will have concurrent responsibilities; although funding has mainly come from the centre. In short, the decentralisation effort in Colombia was successful in providing legitimacy to the government and improving education. However, its impact was severely limited by the failure to obtain consensus and the support of important players, including teachers who deliver education in the classroom.

In 1969, the **Venezuelan** government divided the country into nine regional administrative territories and gave each of them responsibility for each of the central government's major portfolios, including education. The theory was to give these regional entities, which shared common social, economic, and cultural characteristics, considerable authority for planning, budgeting, and managing, with the aim of turning them into the engines of social and economic development. The system entirely bypassed the existing government structures. While conceptually sophisticated, the regionalisation plan ran into operational and political difficulties, including a lack of continuity in leadership. With each new election throughout the 1970s and 1980s, victorious political parties made repeated changes in personnel and policies, all in the name of showing their commitment to, and claiming credit for, decentralisation. Party loyalists would be promoted directly from the classroom to senior ministry

posts. Programmes developed at the great expense of time and money were abruptly terminated before their effectiveness could be evaluated. Hanson (1995b, p. 10 cited in Fiske, 1996) describes Venezuela's 1969 decentralisation initiatives as "the most elegant in design, comprehensive in coverage, noble of purpose and complete in its failure." (p. 23). In 1991, Venezuela made another attempt at educational decentralisation, this time to address problems of inefficiency and corruption by shifting responsibility for schools to the state governors. The latter, however, have refused to accept responsibility for all the national schools in their areas. They have demanded the right to accept only schools that are in good physical condition, educational programs that meet minimum quality standards, and teachers who meet minimum standards. They have also sought guarantees of financial transfers, including those for teacher pensions. As a result, the decentralisation plan is deadlocked.

### 2.4.3 South Asian Countries

This section provides a brief description of the educational decentralisation initiatives undertaken in five South Asian countries – for five different reasons. The countries are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

The strategy preferred by the planners in **India** was to adopt fundamental reforms in the sphere of public administration through the creation of democratically elected local bodies which would eventually usher in decentralised management in education. This, in a way, was implicit in the reform package of the *panchayat raj* system, better known (Myrdal 1968, cited in Govinda, 1997) under the label 'democratic decentralisation or democratic planning' (p. 34). India operates under a federal system of government in which the twenty-five states exercise considerable responsibility, including for education.

The debate and the ensuing adoption of the *panchayati raj* bill by the Indian Parliament in 1992 represents the renewed commitment of the national leadership to revive and operationalise the concept of self-governance by local communities through the *panchayati raj* mechanism. This, in turn, is seen as a move to

decentralise educational management, as the legislation passed by parliament provides for control and governance of primary education by the local *panchayat* bodies. This was the culmination of a long struggle, constituted, in Hannaway's (1995, p. 3 cited in Fiske, 1996) words, "a dramatic effort to establish the primacy of locally elected bodies in the affairs of the state by giving them constitutional authority" (p. 22). The change also sought to redress historical inequities, she noted, by "explicitly identifying the representation of traditionally underserved groups, women, scheduled tribes, scheduled castes" (ibid). Responsibilities were devolved to the *panchayati raj* institutions-which operate at the district, intermediate, and local levels-includes elementary and secondary education.

The story in **Pakistan** was similar to the decentralisation moves in India (Govinda, 1997). The new education policy of Pakistan adopted in 1992, explicitly recommends considerable delegation of powers to the district level and the creation of school managing committees. But the point that needs special attention is its specific recommendation for adopting a 'liberal and simplified policy' for promoting private-sector initiative in the field of education. As the case study on Sindh Province (Govinda, 1997) points out:

Most probably, constraints in funding Education will have urged the Government to try to drive the educational development further in the direction of privatisation. Perhaps, the concern is also to be in harmony with the intention of the World Bank. Tapping new resources in the private sector, however, implies more commercialisation, resulting in danger of increasingly disadvantaging the poor and perhaps of corruption (pp. 20-21).

One of the first steps taken by the **Bangladesh** government was to nationalise all the schools and bring all the teachers under direct control and supervision of the central government. Successive governments policies have sought to reform the situation and devolve power down the line, but essentially in conjunction with changes in the political-administrative sphere. The result has not been very encouraging, leading to increasing bureaucratic control, albeit with a certain amount of deconcentration of powers. Bangladesh has literally moved back and forth in its policies towards decentralisation. With the 'Decree of Nationalisation of 1973', the central

government assumed sole authority for the management of primary education and disbanded all the District School Boards as well as the school managing committees. The Primary Education Act of 1981 proposed to set up local Education Authorities and School Managing Committees in order to ensure participation of local communities. But these measures were never implemented due to political changes which occurred soon after. A second attempt was made to decentralise education through the *upazilla* system initiated in 1982. But, again, the system could not survive the change in government in 1990 and primary education management reverted to total central control. In its latest policy pronouncement made in 1990, the government proposed the establishment of School Management Committees and Parent/Teacher Associations in all the schools. However, Govinda (1997) noted that "...this time it is being in fulfilment of the donor conditionalities of the General Education Project, designed to provide substantial increase in the financing of the primary education development" (p. 21). Furthermore, Govinda (1997) stated that "... the authorities and powers given to these local bodies do not have any legal sanction; and teachers and education officials perceive these bodies as ineffective and sometimes interfering" (p. 21). It is therefore, questionable whether such moves, prompted by external forces such as the World Bank will survive in practice.

**Sri Lanka** also began with an explicit commitment to political decentralisation. In fact, the search for an appropriate formula for power sharing between central government and democratic units at sub-national levels continues. However, Sri Lanka adopted a pragmatic view for decentralising educational management, by at least partially, delinking the educational management sector from the ongoing efforts to decentralise the administrative system through political reform. The basic philosophy and rationale that has guided decentralisation of educational management in Sri Lanka is quite evident from the recommendation of the 1961 *Bandarawela* Conference (Govinda, 1997), which became the basis for a series of reforms that followed. The *Bandarawela* Conference (Govinda, 1997) concluded that:

Decentralisation is one of the important means of securing efficiency and speed in handling the day-to-day work of administration. Decentralisation connotes delegation of authority to Regional offices

and the lessening of concentration of power at the Head Office" (p.19).

One may observe that the proposal was to go for a measured 'deconcentration' without waiting for the democratic decentralisation policy to be implemented in the sphere of public administration. This set the tone for several rounds of decentralisation that followed. Accordingly, over a period of time, wide-ranging changes were introduced to decentralise the management of school education by creating a number of sub-national units and creating school clusters, and delegating considerable power and authority to these decentralised units. Govinda (1997) observed that Sri Lanka has pursued the policy of decentralisation with remarkable consistency, irrespective of frequent political changes. Decentralisation has been promoted systematically from 1960 onwards. In a way, whether pre-meditated or not, the country has gone in an incremental fashion from simple deconcentration to delegation of powers to sub-national units. And currently, the country is trying to establish a decentralised system of political administration and to synchronise with it the institutional arrangement for educational management.

If the content of policy statements is any indication, **Nepal** presents the most radical position of all, in terms of empowerment of sub-national units of management. Govinda (1997) mentioned that according to the Education Act and Education Regulations 1992, "... the District Education Officer (DEO) is responsible for giving permission to open primary schools, to close down a school and to appoint, transfer or even dismiss a primary school teacher" (p. 21). Substantial powers have been given to the School Management Committee and the head teacher. For instance, the Act makes the teachers fully accountable to the head teacher by authorising the head teacher to suspend or withhold increments to teachers. For a relatively small country with 75 districts, the DEO is given such overriding powers that the Regional Education Director, who is in charge of several districts, is expected to come in only when there is a dispute or when inter-district matters are involved. It appears that the powers have not remained only on paper. The field study observations by Govinda (1997) reveal that "incumbents at various levels have begun using the power and authority vested in them by the 1992 Act" (p. 22). However, there is lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, and the participation of community members in

the school management process does not clearly emerge. The case study by Govinda (1997) highlights this point:

Many a problem emerges from lack of a clear concept among the education personnel about the full range of their authority and responsibilities... Some of them do not act at all, taking recourse to the ambiguity in the rules and regulations while some others overreact when they ought to have acted with some discretion" (p. 22).

Interference by political leaders in implementing the policy directives is another disturbing feature.

#### **2.4.4 African Countries**

There were several examples of educational decentralisation, for various reasons, amongst developing countries in Africa. This section looks at the educational decentralisation initiatives undertaken in three African countries namely: Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Zambia.

Decentralisation was introduced in **Zimbabwe** at a time when socialist political ideals were sweeping through Sub-Saharan Africa. It was viewed as a means to keep with the spirit of popular participation, self-reliance, and democratic decision making (Fiske, 1996). Primary education in Zimbabwe was organised so that the central government hired and paid teachers and provided a small grant for each student. The Ministry of Education also designed the curriculum, conducted examinations, and assumed the responsibility for training teachers through regional colleges. The construction of primary schools, however, was left to local communities, and management was delegated to a responsible authority. These authorities could be missions, large farms, mines, or newly established rural and district councils, which operate three-quarters of schools. The fifty-seven councils receive a direct grant to cover salaries and general office administration from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural, and Urban Development. They also had the authority to hire and fire teachers and to disburse to schools the per capita grants and teachers' salaries paid to them by the education ministry. This system ended up with some difficulties. Teachers complained about delays in payment of their salary, including the fact that

some district councils were retaining some of the per-pupil grants for non-educational activities instead of passing them on to the individual schools. The central government also discovered that they were paying for a substantial number of phantom or ghost teachers. The term 'phantom' or 'ghost' teachers refers to those who have already left the teaching service but whose names have not been deleted from the payroll, and are therefore, still being paid.

**Tanzania** undertook a programme of decentralisation (Young, 1983) to “make the party and the government authority more receptive to local needs and initiatives” (p.19). The decentralisation programme followed serious difficulties in implementing the national development policy based on President Nyerere’s Arusha Declaration of 1967 (Nyerere, 1973). The policy was developed around the principles of *ujamaa* or villagization along the lines of socialism, self-reliance, and freedom. All existing local government structures were abolished and replaced with more and smaller structures at the regional and district levels to encourage popular participation in decision-making at the local level (Yeager, 1982) and, by implication, their commitment to the successful implementation of the national policy. Later, linkages were also made with the villages (Conyers and Ghai *et al.*, 1982).

Development councils were created at the district level and their development decision roles were widened (Conyers, 1981; Rondinelli, 1981). Nevertheless, the preponderance of government representatives on these bodies ensured that they acted within the national policy guidelines (Conyers, 1981; Yeager, 1982). As Yeager (1982) admits “Administrative efficiency and sensitivity to local needs may have been enhanced through decentralisation, but democratic participation suffered in the process” (p. 63).

While **Zambia’s** decentralisation pattern corresponded very closely to Tanzania’s, the reasons behind decentralisation in each country had been quite different (Conyers, 1981). The old colonial bureaucratic structure in Zambia was replaced under the pretext that it was too neutral and inappropriate for an independent country. It was replaced by a politicised, personalised bureaucracy to make it more compliant and subservient to the policies of the one-party state (Chikulo, 1981).

District councils were created and vested with wider responsibilities but policy directions and guidance continued to flow from the central government (Conyers, 1981). The personal appointees of President Kaunda in key senior positions in the provinces and districts, and the dominance of state functionaries and appointees in the local bodies further ensured loyalty to the central government policies in general and Kaunda's in particular (Chikulo, 1981; Conyers, 1981). Thus Kaunda's objective for administrative reform was "to decentralise in centralism" (Chikulo, 1981).

#### **2.4.5 Pacific Island Countries**

This section briefly examines recent moves for educational decentralisation in five developing countries in the South Pacific region namely: PNG, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, and Kiribati. In view of the regional differences and sensitivities which exist within the region, an attempt was made to examine examples of educational decentralisation being undertaken in countries which represent the three ethnic groupings which comprise the PICs, that is, in Melanesia (PNG, Vanuatu, and Fiji), Polynesia (Samoa), and Micronesia (Kiribati).

Several factors compelled the **Papua New Guinea** government to adopt a decentralised system of governance. Of these, the following were considered to be prominent ones: i) pacification of a separatist movement in Bougainville, now called North Solomons Province (Conyers, 1979; Ballard, 1981; Standish, 1983); ii) the process of decolonisation (Standish, 1983; Axline, 1984); and iii) the desire to involve community by devolving decision-making to the local level (Conyers and Westcott, 1979; Standish, 1983; Axline, 1984).

A constitutional amendment in 1976, followed by the Organic Law on Provincial Government in 1977, made provisions to enable provincial governments to be established (Gris, 1978(b); Tordoff, 1982; Axline, 1984). With only two at first, Papua New Guinea currently has nineteen provinces, each with separate legislatures and enjoying considerable political and administrative autonomy (Songo, 1983). According to Conyers (1981), the form of decentralisation found in Papua New

Guinea could be classified as devolution since it “involves a high degree of political decentralisation” (p. 111).

To demarcate the powers of the provincial governments and the national government, the Organic Law on Provincial Governments 1977 divided the government functions into three categories: Provincial, National and Concurrent (or shared) matters (Gris, 1978a). The responsibilities for education were apportioned between the national and provincial governments (Gris, 1978a; Rogers *et al.*, 1979; Weeks and Guthrie, 1984). The national government is responsible for curriculum (including syllabus and instruction), tertiary institutions, and teacher training. The provinces are responsible for functions concerning primary and non-formal education whilst both levels of government hold concurrent functions for high school, vocational schools and technical education.

The structure of educational decision-making in Papua New Guinea under the current decentralised governance system is such that each Province has a ministry of education headed by a minister. These ministries have powers to determine the composition and appointment of provincial education boards which perform an advisory function (Bray, 1984b). The administrative professional head of education, known as the Assistant Secretary of Education, is appointed by the provincial government (Bray, 1984b).

The provincial governments produced educational plans in accordance with priorities set by them. However, this had to be done within the limits of the powers provided under the provincial government law (Rogers *et al.*, 1979; Kunjbehari, 1982). Conyers (1981), who was closely associated with the planning and implementation of decentralisation in Papua New Guinea, pointed to other positive features. One such feature was the establishment of a provincial civil service to ensure vertical linkages with respective departments at the national level. More importantly, these linkages were also expected to facilitate closer coordination of efforts amongst different departments at the provincial level.

At the school level, community participation was encouraged through school boards, although a downward trend had been noticed since the provincialisation of education (Bray, 1984b). Apart from curriculum and teaching service matters, links between the national and the provincial ministries of education were maintained through national conferences of education ministers and their senior officers (Tulo, 1982).

However, despite these efforts by the Papua New Guinea government, there were some serious implementation problems. For example, Hunter and Bricknell (1983) pointed to the existence of the following problems at the provincial level:

1. The pre-occupation of provincial politicians with matters such as privileges and trips;
2. The shortage of talented and experienced administrators, particularly at the provincial level;
3. Parochialism affecting the quality of educational plans in some provinces;
4. Helplessness in enforcing staff discipline procedures due to the *wantok* system, and
5. Lack of cooperation between inspectors (national government staff) and provincial educational administrators.

The problem of shortage of skilled administrators was also confirmed by other writers with the first-hand experience of Papua New Guinea: Conyers and Westcott (1979); Conyers (1981); McNamara (1983); Turner (1983); Bray (1984a; 1984b); and, Weeks and Guthrie (1984).

Weeks and Guthrie (1984) pointed to other problems which undermined decentralisation efforts: i) poor administrative efficiency; ii) poor transport; iii) cumbersome administrative procedures of aided projects which resulted in bureaucratisation, and iv) lack of financial management skills.

Bray (1983) observed that a general lack of understanding of legal powers and functions of central and provincial governments sometimes also led to confusion, embarrassment and even acrimony amongst the national and provincial politicians.

Rogers *et al.*, (1979) also noticed that “provinces are varying, sometimes massively, from the national goals” (p. p. 17) and warned that this disparate development could prove to be expensive and disruptive to the government’s attempts to help level up disadvantaged provinces. Bray (1981), however, argued that “these fears have not been proved justified” (p. 18).

A study of educational decentralisation in Papua New Guinea undertaken by Voi (1983) revealed that generally most educational administrators preferred a centrally controlled education system for their country. However, his study also pointed out that most non-professionals (who did not have a thorough knowledge of the educational system) tended to support the current decentralised system.

Voi (1983) said that the reasons adduced by those who favoured centralisation of educational decision-making in Papua New Guinea, included:

... lack of suitable staff to manage provincial education matters; inadequate funds to organise provincial plans for education effectively; too many changes introduced too often confuse field staff; national unity may be at risk” (p. 147).

On the other hand, those who supported the present system and opposed centralisation of educational decision-making in Papua New Guinea (Voi, 1983) advanced the following arguments:

... curriculum development should take account of the local situations; the central educational administrators lack the training and experience to control a large system; the delivery system is poor; and participation of more people in educational decision-making at all levels is less attainable in centralised system. (p. 141).

These problems notwithstanding, there was evidence that the government had taken certain steps to make the implementation of education decentralisation as effective as possible. For example, the government had been able to train local officers as provincial education planners through a Diploma Programme sponsored by the World Bank (Bray, 1984a). However, there was a realisation that this training was emphasised at the expense of training in administration and management which were

considered to be important for successful implementation of decentralisation (Bray, 1984a).

Despite the problems described, much progress appeared to have been made (Weeks and Guthrie, 1984), and “there is a considerable degree of independence and ground to justify optimism” (p. 67) in education in Papua New Guinea.

The experience of Papua New Guinea suggested that the implementation of educational decentralisation was fraught with difficulties. The experience also suggested that two factors were crucial for this success. These were the support of politicians and the commitment and competence of educational administrators at all levels.

In light of **Vanuatu's** recent moves to decentralise the education system, the World Bank (1995b) recommended that the government should work towards equalising access to facilities and resources for underserved rural areas. Distance and isolation present a number of challenges to the provision of education, including difficulties in the distribution of materials; school-level support for both management and teachers; teacher development to outer islands, and communication between the schools and central management.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for formal education and training. In July 1994, the Ministry of Education was restructured in an ongoing program of education management reform which would eventually include decentralisation of responsibility to the provincial level. The Government intends to decentralise many functions to the regional level, including increasing the responsibility of regional educational authorities. In 1994, the country was divided into six provinces, and a Regional Education Officer (REO) has been established for each province. The six REOs are the administrative links between the central Ministry and primary schools. They are responsible for distribution of textbooks and materials, reporting on the physical state of facilities, coordinating civil works provided by the central government, and providing pedagogical support to primary school principals and teachers. Assisting the REOs with direct support to the schools were the Curriculum

Advisors (CA). Each province has a minimum of two CAs: one Anglophone and one Francophone. Both the REOs and the CAs are experienced primary teachers. Under the new system of the ten-year Basic Education Plan, it is unclear whether they will assume responsibility for Years 7 through 10 and to provide a link between the Director of Basic Education and the schools. There are no direct links between senior secondary schools and the ministry.

School level management for both primary and secondary schools is the responsibility of the principal who works with a School Council comprised of parents, and church members in the case of church-affiliated schools. The dynamics of this relationship varies considerably among schools: strong leadership on the part of the principal will often motivate community involvement just as an involved council will strongly influence the principal. In the case of weak leadership on the part of the principal at a school which is primarily comprised of boarders, a heavy reliance on the government often develops. Principals are generally former teachers with little or no management training (World Bank, 1995b).

Much has been achieved in **Fiji** through a highly decentralised education system which is operated by many public and private providers. There is a high degree of community involvement through local school committee management and cofinancing, the high primary and secondary participation rates, and the increasing efforts of Fijian educators to develop their own curricula and instructional materials. A key feature of the Fijian education system is the unique partnership between the Fijian Government and the high proportion of non-government organisations (NGOs). This high degree of NGO administration with government financing is a unique situation. The government is responsible for school accreditation, national assessments, curriculum development, recruitment, certification and deployment of teachers, as well as the major portion of the salaries of the accredited teachers in non government schools.

Schools in the districts are managed through four education divisions, each headed by a Principal Education Officer (PEO), and nine education divisions, each headed by a District Education Officer (DEO). At the district office, various Education Officers

discharge professional and administrative duties: District Education Advisers (DEAs), for example, are responsible for visiting teachers in their schools and for conducting short-term workshops for teachers in various areas of the curriculum. Most other management and operational activities are the responsibility of the NGOs. They select principals and teachers, organise timetables, evaluate children and teachers, and are responsible for the quality of schools. Communities and NGOs also contribute a significant share of the resources needed (World Bank, 1995b).

According to Coxon (1996), all state primary schools in **Samoa**, except for those on the Malifa Compound in the capital Apia, are owned by their communities and managed by a School Committee appointed by the Village Fono. The School Committee is responsible for the construction and maintenance of school buildings, the provision of equipment and furniture, and the collection and expenditure of school fees. The state pays staff salaries and provides stationery and curriculum materials. The state primary schools on the Malifa Compound – Apia Lower, Apia Middle and Leififi Intermediate – are owned and managed by the Department of Education, and funded directly by government with a proportion of school fees paid into a government levy. There are 22 educational districts and each is served by a school inspector who liaises between the Department of Education (DOE) and the schools in his/her district. The inspector's role is largely an administrative and monitoring one. Teachers are appointed to schools by the DOE with promotion and transfer dependent on the recommendation of the district inspector. The school inspectors, including four senior inspectors, operate as field administrators facilitating liaison between central management and the primary and junior secondary schools in the 22 educational districts. Their function is to monitor school management and educational programmes, supervise staff performance and offer counselling when requested, and organise the staffing of schools and transfer of teachers.

The financing of education is shared by parents and the state. School fees, supplemented by funds raised through community activities, are used to construct new facilities, maintain existing ones and provide furniture, equipment and resources. The non-state schools are administered by their own directors and management

boards and are self-funding. They receive Government grants from time to time, in money or in kind.

According to Coxon (1996), the DOE is characterised by a highly centralised system which is generally perceived to be ineffective and inefficient in its management. She mentioned that this can be largely attributed to its excessively bureaucratic structure, with multi-tiered decision-making processes and unclear lines of communication. This structural problem has given rise to a number of organisational and administrative problems including over centralisation of, and a lack of accountability for, decision-making and resource allocation. A review of Western Samoa's education system by the World Bank (1992 cited in Coxon, 1996), made recommendations for improved management capacity and procedures including the integration of planning and budgeting, clarification of the responsibilities of the DOE, schools, village councils and communities. A specific review recommendation towards decentralisation was the call for the "devolution of management responsibilities to schools" (ibid, p. 39). A Policy Planning Committee (PPC) was set up to look at the recommendations in detail. The PPC discussions on the policies needed to promote the efficient and equitable management of the education system, focused on the three components of the existing management system – the central DOE structures, the village/district school management structures and the role of the Inspectorate in facilitating the relationship between them. The PPC was also concerned, however, to develop the mechanisms whereby the existing dual management structures – between the schools owned and managed by the DOE and those owned and managed by their school communities become more consistent and, thus, more equitable. An effective and high quality education system characterised by effective management at the level of the individual schools, was seen as best achieved through a system of supervised school-based management based on a partnership between the community, the teaching staff and the DOE. An efficient and equitable education was also seen to require that management and resourcing structures were consistent across the system. The management of all schools, therefore, was to be shared between the DOE and the *Komiti Faatino Aoga* (school committee) of each school. The *Feagaiga mo Aoga* (or charter) was to be the mechanism through which

the roles and responsibilities of central and school-based management authorities were to be defined.

**Kiribati** has made significant strides in developing an education system for its widely scattered population, in the face of fiscal constraints. The Churches and the Government have mobilised private funds and parental support to build an impressive network of schools. Primary education in Kiribati is wholly government-provided and compulsory. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) is responsible for implementing the Government's policies and running the education system. This includes carrying out recruitment and appointment of teachers, coordination and recommendation for in-service training, distributing instructional materials, liaison with the schools and island councils and for advising school staff in management and administration. Furthermore, it is responsible for training, assessment, exams, and curriculum development, finances and miscellaneous bodies, including the national library. A policy committee, with input from the religious authorities, determines overall policy.

All 87 schools of the primary education system are managed by the MEST in cooperation with local island councils. Of the nine fully established secondary schools, MEST operates only two. Church denominations (Catholic, Protestant, Seventh Day Adventist, and Mormon) operate the others, and pressure from parents is encouraging them to open additional schools. Although MEST is responsible for policy formulation and overall development of the primary system, responsibility at the secondary level to a large extent is divided among the providers. Church schools use the government's Common Entrance Examination (CEE) for screening prospective students. The four largest churches in Kiribati each have at least one secondary school. Each school is managed by its principal, with guidance usually provided by an education secretary at the church headquarters. Financing of the primary school system is essentially the responsibility of the Government. Many communities contribute labour or resources for primary school upkeep, though maintenance is generally the responsibility of local government, the island councils. Parents pay no regular fees at the primary level, though they incur related costs such

as those for school uniforms, materials, and various contributions required by individual schools.

At the secondary level, parents pay school fees to cover tuition and boarding costs given that about 80 percent of students board. The Government gives some help to church-run secondary schools, including the salaries of teachers at most schools, but they rely largely on school fees to operate. The World Bank (1995b) proposed that the Government should concentrate its own efforts and finances on the formal basic education system (years 1-9). However, because its resources are limited, the World Bank added that it should not attempt to be the sole provider of education; it should instead mobilise all available resources – churches, non-government organisations, the private sector, multilateral organisations, and traditional bilateral donors. Further, local communities should be encouraged to become more involved in running their schools. According to the World Bank (1995b), the participation of private organisations in providing both formal and non-formal education is necessary and should be welcomed. Their collaboration should be sought in defining an integrated approach for the provision of education and training.

The growth of education system has been steady but relatively uncoordinated and uncharted (World Bank, 1995b). In 1992, the comprehensive Kiribati Education Sector Review financed by the British and New Zealand Governments provided a detailed portrait of the country's education system and recommended sweeping changes. That report now forms the backdrop to discussions on education development in Kiribati. Amongst the review's nine major proposals were three proposals with implications for decentralisation. The three proposals are aimed at having universal access to three years of junior secondary schooling (Forms 1-3) on each island, a restructured system of postsecondary education, including teacher training, and the establishment of island-based teacher support centres, and a revised ministry structure giving greater decentralisation of administrative functions to the island level. The Government has not accepted the review's integrated package of reforms, but it has endorsed some of its ideas, such as the establishment of a junior secondary school on each island.

The World Bank (1995b) mentioned that international experience has shown that community involvement is crucial for effective local schools. The Government of Kiribati is concerned about the decline in recent years of community support for local projects and institutions, particularly some primary schools. The British and New Zealand government funded Education Sector Review in 1992 recommended stronger local management of primary schools through training and the establishment of school Boards of Trustees. The Government, arguing that management capacities in the outer islands were too limited, did not endorse this proposal. Also unresolved is the issue of local involvement in school location planning and in school construction and renovation projects. The World Bank (1995b) also noted that although secondary schools serve the same population, there is a lack of coordination among the churches and the MEST. The mechanism set up to encourage coordination, the Education Advisory Committee, rarely meets. The resulting system is frequently characterised by mistrust, competition, and duplication, rather than cooperation.

## **2.5 Criteria for Successful Implementation of Educational Decentralisation**

The literature reviewed in this chapter suggested that there were obstacles in the implementation of decentralisation. Such insights could help educators and politicians in developing countries in Solomon Islands for example. These insights could alert the policy makers concerned to various pitfalls in the implementation of decentralisation and enable them to avoid costly mistakes in time and money.

Literature on implementation of decentralisation from the field of development administration appeared to be relevant for the implementation of educational decentralisation. From his experience in developing countries, Rondinelli (1981) suggested that at least four pre-conditions must exist for a successful implementation of decentralisation. These pre-conditions were:

**2.4.1 Favourable Political and Administrative Conditions** - These included commitment to decentralisation by politicians; active support from key bureaucrats;

administrative and technical competence; and opportunities for beneficiaries to participate in the implementation process.

**2.4.2 Organisation Factors** - These included the allocation of responsibilities in accordance with the capabilities of personnel and resources available; clear procedures, and directives; well-delineated roles and functions; multiple channels of communication; flexibility; and simple procedures to facilitate the involvement of interest-groups and citizens in the policy and process of implementation.

**2.4.3 Behavioural and Psychological Conditions** – These included strategies to improve the attitude of key officials towards decentralisation; breaking resistance towards change; encouraging more interpersonal trust and leadership at critical points in the organization.

**2.4.4 Resource Conditions** - These included delegation of authority to the implementers to acquire the needed resources such as funding, staffing, and equipment and materials. An effective support and delivery system, such as communication and transport to facilitate the provision of resources, was also considered to be important.

Other development administrators such as Armor *et al.*, (1977) supported the view that strategies from development administration could help implement decentralisation and related projects. They pointed out that strategies concerned with technical or organisational aspects could help identify and overcome obstacles relating to design, structure, and procedural matters. They argued further that technical competence needed to be complimented by organisational development strategies to address problems of a personal or interpersonal kind which impeded or undermined the implementation of decentralisation, and other types of change. Strategies advocated included proper consultations and interventions to resolve conflicts and resistance and enhance positive attitude and motivation. Public administrators such as Herbert (1973) pointed to five challenges faced by administrators or implementers of decentralisation. These challenges were firstly, serving several masters that is, at the central and decentralised level, including

politicians and administrators. Secondly, negotiating sufficient authority from the central administrators to enable administrators in the field to resolve matters arising at the local level. Thirdly, realising that a conflict-ridden environment usually accompanied decentralisation. Fourthly, cultivating communication or political skills to interact with various interest groups and publics, and fifthly, maintaining credibility and clientele support despite limited authority. Herbert then suggested that these challenges could be successfully met provided there were certain changes in managerial philosophy about decentralisation. The changes advocated included; i) realisation that effectiveness of outcomes was as important as concerns for efficiency, ii) acceptance that conflicts were not necessarily dysfunctional; if addressed creatively, they could lead to benefits for all the parties concerned, iii) recognition that decisions made at the top were not sacrosanct but were subject to challenge and modification in the light of experience of those who worked in the field, and iv) realisation that administrators, being involved in policy-making, also performed political roles and were therefore answerable to the people for their decisions. Furthermore, Fiske (1996) mentioned that researchers are almost unanimous in arguing that if school decentralisation is going to be successfully carried out and have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, it must be built on a broad consensus among the various actors involved and the various interest groups affected by such a change. Based on experience, he suggested eight steps that planners and policy makers, both inside and outside the system, can take to develop such a consensus. These are:

- 1. Identify stakeholders and their interests** - A careful analysis should be made of all the individuals and groups affected by such a change.
- 2. Build legitimate interests into the model** – As far as possible, decentralisation should be designed to take into account the major concerns of the various stakeholders.
- 3. Organise public discussion** – The most successful decentralisation programmes have been those that were accompanied by widespread public discussion, and thus widespread understanding of their goals and methods.

4. **Clarify the purpose of decentralisation** – An important thread that runs through successful decentralisation efforts is the existence of a shared vision of what is to be accomplished.
5. **Analyse the obstacles to decentralisation** – Careful analysis should be made of the problems that are likely to arise.
6. **Respect the roles of various actors** – In addition to recognising the legitimate interests of the various parties involved, it is important to respect their respective roles.
7. **Provide adequate training** – Participants in decentralisation programmes must be prepared to take on their new roles and responsibilities through adequate and proper training.
8. **Develop a monitoring system** – The development of a consensus is not a one-shot affair. Rather, it is a continuous process of actions, discussions and corrective actions based on feedback from various stakeholders. To facilitate this continuous discussion, it is important to make reliable information available to all participants on all matters relating to the decentralisation programme.

Conyers (1981) suggested the use of some monitoring criteria for a more effective implementation of decentralisation. She suggested that a simple check-list could help identify problems which occurred during the implementation process. Conyers argued that the data collected by this means would assist decision-makers and implementers to remove obstacles and enable to training officers concerned to develop suitable training programme to overcome the problems identified. The experience of countries discussed in this chapter could help in developing a check-list or criteria to guide the implementation of educational decentralisation. Such a check-list was considered to be important for the administration of education in most developing countries where education was being used as a prime instrument of social justice and economic development. To justify that faith and their investment in education, it would be important for the governments concerned to ensure that policies such as educational decentralisation were efficiently and effectively implemented. On the basis of the literature reviewed, the researcher concluded that a

checklist comprising the following six elements would be a useful aid in implementing educational decentralisation:

1. Ensure that the purpose and method of decentralisation through the establishment of CHSs are clearly understood by all the main parties concerned; administrators, politicians, teachers and community leaders;
2. Ensure that the management structure and procedures used support the overall aim behind decentralisation under the CHSs policy;
3. Develop appropriate administrative and professional skills and attitude among educational administrators, school and community leaders to enable them to function effectively and provide better services;
4. Provide adequate resources (e.g. finance, teachers and instructional materials);
5. Review the progress of educational decentralisation and CHSs from time to time;
6. Establish an effective communication system (e.g. telecommunication and mail services) to cater for geographical isolation;

## **2.6 Summary**

In this chapter, this researcher reviewed literature on decentralisation in general and decentralisation of education in particular. Assumptions behind the two major forms of decentralisation: deconcentration and devolution - - found in selected western and developing countries were examined and discussed. Their implications were considered and obstacles to the implementation of decentralisation policies identified. It was suggested that the success of a decentralised policy depended largely upon the quality of its implementation. For this reason, it was felt that a check-list for implementation of educational decentralisation could help developing countries, particularly Solomon Islands where decentralisation was official government policy. On the basis of the literature reviewed, a tentative checklist was therefore developed, so that its relevance Solomon Islands could be 'tested' during his fieldwork.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the philosophical basis of the qualitative research methodology and its appropriateness for educational research. Justification is then provided for the selection of a qualitative-oriented approach, using the case study method, to undertake this research in Solomon Islands looking at educational decentralisation in general, and in particular, the case of establishing CHSs.

### **3.1 The Nature of Qualitative Research Methods**

Before looking at the nature of the qualitative research method adopted, an examination of the distinction between qualitative and the quantitative study is made to facilitate an understanding of the two paradigms. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) defined a paradigm as “a set of overarching and interconnected assumptions about the nature of reality” (p. 4). In defining the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, Creswell (1994) stated that:

... a qualitative study is designed to be consistent with the assumptions of a qualitative paradigm. This study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Alternatively, a quantitative study, consistent with the quantitative paradigm, is an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalization of the theory hold true (pp. 1-2).

Both paradigms have roots in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophical thinking (Creswell, 1994), and Scott (1996) mentioned that the “... assumption that they represent two distinct and opposed approaches to the study of the social world is being challenged” (p. 59).

However, according to Cook (1983 cited in Bhindi, 1987) researchers in education are increasingly carrying out qualitative rather than quantitative research. The impetus for the use of qualitative methodology in educational research has come from a group of researchers in the United Kingdom and the United States. In the United Kingdom, much credit can be attributed to the efforts of MacDonald and Walker and their colleagues in the Centre for Applied Research in Education at East Anglia while in the United States, Louis Smith of Washington University and Stake and his colleagues at the University of Illinois can be considered among the leaders of this qualitative research movement (Kemmis and Bartlett, 1985). Furthermore, Creswell (1994) mentioned that the thrust towards the qualitative paradigm “began as a countermovement to the positivist tradition in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through such writers as Dilthey, Weber, and Kant” (p. 4).

The studies undertaken by these researchers have ranged from curriculum evaluation, review of innovations, and teaching styles to the work of school principals and computer-assisted learning. Other studies and methodology issues are regularly discussed in representative journals such as *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, and the *Review of Research in Education* (Bhindi, 1987).

Researchers in comparative and international education consider that this methodology has the potential of bridging the gap between theory and practice (Crossley and Burns, 1983; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). That researchers have begun to take an active interest in the use of qualitative methodology in educational research can be seen from the establishment of specific courses at the university level. For example, in New Zealand, the University of Waikato offer postgraduate courses in the use of qualitative methodology as part of a number of research papers on educational research methods, and research methods in science, mathematics, and technology education (The University of Waikato Graduate Studies Handbook, 2002). According to Bhindi (1987), the active interest by Australian researchers in the use of qualitative methodology in educational research can be seen from the establishment of specific courses on the case study methods in education, for example, at the University of Queensland and the Deakin University. Walford (1991)

mentioned that during the mid 1980s there was an outpouring of books, particularly by Robert Burgess, concerned with qualitative research. He said that the “most important of these was *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies* (Burgess, 1994)... The book has since become an Open University Set Book and is widely used in other universities and colleges” (p. 4).

Furthermore, Bhindi (1987) pointed out that in Queensland, Ogilvie (1975) incorporated the case study technique in his study of the use of organizational development as a strategy for change in high schools; Flanagan (1982) used the qualitative approach in his study of the relationship between teachers’ perceptions and organizational change in primary education, and Mason (1983) studied the collaborative leadership of the state school principal; Barrett (1983) used this methodology to study school-based decision-making in curriculum development while Mary McDonald (1984) used it in her study of the Good Samaritan Order. In Western Australia, Macpherson (1979) adopted a qualitative methodology for his study of the role of the deputy principal.

In Solomon Islands, Palmer (1977) used the qualitative methodology to study the education system; Thomas (1985) used it for his study of the secondary curriculum changes while Bhindi (1987) used the qualitative approach in his study of the decentralisation of education and the role of provincial education officers. In Papua New Guinea, Meek (1982) used a multi-technique methodology, consistent with the qualitative approach, in his case study of the University of Papua New Guinea.

Overall, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) said that “Qualitative research is a growing enterprise worldwide. It is perhaps most widely accepted in England, Australia and the Scandinavian countries. It is growing but less well accepted in the United States and Canada” (p. viii).

This approach to research is related to symbolic *interactionism* (Becker *et al.*, 1968; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984), *case study* (Weeks, 1977; Stake, 1978; Stenhouse, 1979; Walker, 1980; Bogdan and Bilken, 1982; Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984; Burgess, 1984)), *illuminative evaluation* (Parlett and Hamilton,

1972), *constructivist approach or naturalistic inquiry* (Reynolds, 1981; Owens, 1982; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993), *phenomenology* (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Wilson, 1977; Cook, 1983; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994), *ethnomethodology* (Heyman, 1979), *ethnography* (Herriott, 1977; Wilson, 1977; Sanday, 1979; Ogbu, 1981; Le Compte and Goetz, 1982), *participant observation* (Becker, 1958; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Mintzberg, 1979; Smith, 1978; Stenhouse, 1979; Bodgan and Biklen, 1982; Lofland, 1971; Cook, 1984). The qualitative paradigm is also termed the *interpretive approach* (J. Smith, 1983, cited in Creswell, 1994), or the *postpositivist or postmodern perspective* (Quantz, 1992).

The qualitative methods have roots in the traditions of anthropology, sociology and psychology (Burgess, 1984; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). Qualitative research may also include primarily noninteractive styles of inquiry, drawing from such diverse disciplines as philosophy, history and biography, literature, and curriculum criticism (Sherman and Webb, 1988 cited in McMillan and Schumacher, 1993) and have been used by medical practitioners, psychologists, lawyers, and engineers (Macdonald and Walker, 1975). The interest of researchers in qualitative methods has arisen either as a reaction against the monopoly and inadequacy of the quantitative methodology for research in social sciences or as a growing recognition that there are alternative ways of understanding and explaining social phenomena (Greenfield, 1975; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001).

In contrast, the quantitative paradigm is termed the *traditional*, the *positivist*, the *experimental*, or the *empiricist* and the thinking comes from an empiricist tradition established by such authorities as Comte, Mill, Durkheim, Newton, and Locke (J. Smith, 1983 cited in Creswell, 1994; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The main feature of the quantitative method, also known as the *scientific method* (Best, 1977; Rist, 1977; Cook, 1983) and the *classical or agricultural-botany* tradition (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) has been described by Cook (1983) as “A rigorous procedure of data collection, data analysis through quantified measurements and controlled experiments and deductive logic, a claim by its practitioners for complete objectivity and neutrality on the part of the scientist” (p. 49).

However, the extrapolation, more appropriate for the physical and natural sciences such as agriculture, chemistry or physics creates difficulties for social scientists whose subjects are human beings. Parlett and Hamilton (1977) identified at least four major shortcomings which were inherent in the quantitative methodology:

1. The imposition of “experimental” conditions on human situations is artificial, expensive in time and resources, and may even cause inconvenience to the subjects under study.
2. The “before and after” research design does not allow the researcher the flexibility to adapt or respond to new insight or changed circumstances during the study.
3. Subjective or anecdotal data and “atypical” finding which may be significant are either not recognised or not fully pursued.
4. The researcher “in quest of objective truth” and controlled by the paradigm he wants to prove, fails to take account of the “concerns and questions” of other parties: sponsors, participants, etc. and their points of view.

Other researchers such as Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) have pointed to two further deficiencies in this traditional method. They point out that the quantitative methodology is outcome-oriented, and underplays or ignores the importance of the process of innovation or social phenomena under study. Commenting on the importance of the context of any study, Wilson (1977) has pointed to the inadequacy of theories developed under experimental conditions to detect or explain the presence or influence of “extraneous forces” which are present in the setting or the environment and which influences human behaviour. These inadequacies led researchers, particularly social scientists and educators, to search for alternatives to the “agricultural-botany” and the “psychostatistical paradigms” which were the basis for quantitative methodology (Kemmis and Bartlett, 1985). These alternatives have come to be termed as the qualitative methodology (Nolan and Short, 1985).

A brief survey of literature on qualitative methods reveals four major foci:

1. The role of the researcher and his continuous contact with and “immersion” in the field of study (Walker, 1980).
2. The recognition of the importance of the context or milieu of the social phenomena in detecting, understanding and monitoring forces and influences which affect the behaviour of the individual under study (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Wilson, 1977).
3. The field-study, using flexible procedures which “illuminate” the problems under study (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Wilson, 1977).
4. The rapport of the researcher with his subjects and informants and others in the field and his ability to discern, understand, describe and explain social phenomena through their eyes and words (Wilson, 1977; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Cook, 1983).

### **3.2 The Appropriateness of Qualitative Methods for Research in Educational Decentralisation**

Hoyle (1973), McMillan and Schumacher (1993) and Creswell (1994) suggested that before a researcher embarks upon his study, he must declare his position regarding the role theory would play in his investigations. The researcher should decide whether the research will verify an existing theory, using hypotheses, or whether a grounded theory will be generated from the data. The answer to these questions, according to Hoyle (1973), would help determine the choice of methodology or approach to be adopted for the research study.

In order to answer these questions satisfactorily, this researcher first considered the scope of the proposed study. It was proposed to identify the criteria for successful educational decentralisation, to study the extent to which the decentralisation of education through the establishment of CHSs in Solomon Islands has been successful according to these criteria, to isolate any critical issues which impede it, factors which promote it, and their ramifications for proper consultation and monitoring procedures

to be in place and the preparation and provision of adequate training for those involved in the decentralisation process.

The research was designed to develop a grounded theory appropriate for the administration and development of education in small, island societies with decentralised governance structures. Strauss and Corbin (1990 cited in Creswell, 1994) explained that in grounded theory:

... the researcher attempts to derive a theory by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information. Two primary characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories, the theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information (p. 12).

For this purpose a qualitative orientation, using the case study approach, was deemed to be a suitable one to take. Citing Merriam (1988) and Yin (1989), Creswell (1994) referred to the case study frequently found in human and social science research as a design:

... in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon ("the case") bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (p. 12).

The Solomon Islands education system, with particular reference to the establishment of CHSs since 1995 was to be examined as one particular case, illustrative of decentralised education systems in Melanesian countries which attempt to address major issues such as how to improve access and equity, reduce costs and encourage community participation in secondary education. A variety of qualitative techniques using the case study approach was therefore selected for use.

### 3.3 The Case Study as a Qualitative Research Method

Burns (2000) mentioned that the case study as a qualitative research method is not new and “typically involves the observation of an individual unit, e.g. a student, a delinquent clique, a family group, a class, a school, a community, an event, or even an entire culture” (p. 459). Furthermore, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2001) stated that a case study “provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (p. 181). Qualitative research uses a case study design, meaning that the data analysis focuses on one phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth regardless of the number of sites, participants, or documents for study. Case study design, because of its flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts, processes, people, and foci, provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993) one of the purposes of case studies is to identify policy issues. They explained that:

Case studies in policy research frequently focus on the informal processes of policy formulation or implementation in different settings with diverse cultural values to explain public policy outcomes. Case studies can analyze the economic and political structure of a community on an issue, attitude of school board members towards a proposed policy, and policy implementation. These studies frequently identify issues that suggest the need to modify statutes or regulations (pp. 377-8).

In addition, Adelman *et al.*, (1976) describe case study as an umbrella term for “a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus an enquiry around an instance” (p. 2) and declare that the methodology of this approach is “eclectic”. It has been also defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) as “a detailed examination of one setting or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event” (p. 58) with the purpose of understanding (Best, 1977) the “life-cycle of an individual unit which might be a person, a family, a group,

a social institution, or an entire community” (p. 127). Walker (1980 cited in Bhindi, 1987) defined the case study as:

... the examination of an instance in action. The study of particular incidents, and the selective of information on biography, personality, intentions and values allows the case study worker to capture and portray those elements of a situation that give it meaning (p. 41).

According to Walker (1980), the case study approach has been used to portray “idiosyncratic and particular” instances or to conduct studies where a theoretical base was not available, as for example, in applied social science research. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2001) and Adelman *et al.*, (1976) adduce the following reasons for the attractiveness of the case study approach for educational researchers and evaluators:

- a. Case study data is strong in reality.
- b. Case studies allow generalisations about an instance, or from an instance to a class, to be made.
- c. Case studies portray a variety of view points held by participants and make varieties of interpretation possible.
- d. Case study data can be reinterpreted at a subsequent date if the need arises.
- e. Case studies are action-oriented.
- f. Case study reports are relatively free from jargon and are capable of serving multiple audiences.

Writers such as Bassey (1999) advocate the use of case study as a prime strategy for developing educational theory which illuminates policy and enhances practice.

### **3.3.1 Some Limitations of the Case Study Approach**

Surveys of literature by MacDonald and Walker (1975), Adelman *et al.*, (1976) and by Nisbet and Watt (1984 cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001) point to the following shortcomings in the case study approach:

- a. The small or single case study raised the question of reliability and validity of data interpretations.
- b. Since the case study approach relied heavily on “human instruments”, there were dangers of bias and prejudice in the data obtained.
- c. Limitations of time and resources posed problems in field work, particularly with techniques such as observation study, which required a long period of continuous presence in the field.
- d. The likelihood of participants being identified by readers of case study reports being high, there were implications for access to data and procedures for their clearance and usage.

Towards meeting the above-mentioned concerns, this researcher decided to incorporate a number of suggestions made by the users of the case study approach.

### **3.3.2 Procedures Used to Overcome Limitations of Reliability and Validity**

A detailed description of the techniques used for the collection of data is provided in Section 3.6. Data collected were to be cross-checked as the study progressed and verbatim descriptions provided by the participants were to be used as extensively as possible. These steps were designed to enable readers to make their own judgements about the credibility of the case study, verify the data cited or examine the efficacy of any technique used if they so wished. The cross-checks were used to minimize any interference of bias or prejudice.

### **3.4. Ethical Procedures Adopted for the Study**

The following steps were taken to meet concerns regarding access to data, and procedures for the conduct of the case of study.

The government of Solomon Islands was informed of the purpose of the study and the necessary research permits were obtained to conduct such a study during two rounds of fieldwork (see Appendices 1 and 2). To conduct the study in the four provinces and church controlled CHSs, permission was obtained by MEHRD from the relevant

heads of the provincial governments. To protect respondents from any adverse reactions arising from the study, reports were to be anonymised without compromising the veracity of the data obtained. The use of techniques such as questionnaires was expected to further ensure appropriate anonymity, fill gaps, and verify the data obtained from the interviews.

In interviews, the researcher recognised the importance of offering each respondent complete anonymity and resolved to refer to the source of data only with reference to their official positions. It was recognised that frank and open discussions with participants at all levels would depend largely on the researcher's rapport with the respondents. Such a rapport had been built over twenty years with almost all of the respondents as fellow students, secondary teacher colleagues or in educational administration when the researcher was a MEHRD official for over ten years. The researcher's rapport with the respondents is expected to be enhanced by being a Solomon Islander himself, his knowledge of local systems, official procedures, cultures, and by his facility in Pijin, the language used extensively by most Solomon Islanders in their daily transactions.

### **3.5 Justification for the Use of a Qualitative-Oriented Approach**

The researcher adopted a qualitative-oriented methodology to conduct this study due to the following reasons:

1. For a study involving policy implementation, it was considered appropriate by the researcher to obtain perspectives from multiple sources. Such data are not readily quantifiable.
2. Most provinces in Solomon Islands are characterised by a small population scattered among a number of islands. The geographical scatter of the schools and the target groups, in addition to the vagaries of transport, communication and distance suggested that the undertaking of an extensive field was not only unrealistic but was likely to be expensive in time and money, and physically taxing. Given the circumstances, it was considered reasonable by the researcher to undertake a

“condensed” but intensive field study using the case study approach. Condensed fieldwork was adopted to obviate the need for a long period of contact or immersion in the field. Qualitative researchers (Walker, 1980) consider this method to be appropriate where there are serious limitations of time and resources.

3. Because of the linguistic diversity and the oral tradition in Melanesia, the researcher was advised by knowledgeable that reliance could not be placed entirely upon any one particular language or the printed word (i.e. questionnaire) to collect data in Solomon Islands. The variable facility of English among target groups in rural Solomon Islands pointed to the need for using a combination of languages to elicit data. Also the prevalence of oral tradition pointed to the desirability of using a variety of techniques to stimulate descriptive responses from the target groups. These steps were consistent with the qualitative approach. For this reason also, the use of certain key Pijin terms in the text was considered desirable by the researcher in order to preserve and convey their Melanesian quintessence.

4. It was an aim of this researcher that this study cater not only for the development of scholarly theory but would also benefit the government, educators and the people of Solomon Islands in policy-making and its practical implementation. The qualitative-oriented methodology was deemed to be the appropriate one to take in order to enhance the cooperation between the researcher and the target groups during the field study. It was also considered desirable by this researcher that the procedures be used and the thesis be written and presented in a style which would be more easily understood, immediately intelligible, and meaningful to policy-makers and educators in Solomon Islands.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

The remaining sections of this chapter describes the two rounds of fieldwork carried out to collect the data needed to answer the eight research questions posed in Chapter One.

The major portion of the data for this study was collected during the first round of

fieldwork carried out in Solomon Islands for 12 weeks from December 1999 to March 2000. This first round of fieldwork was organised around attachments to the MEHRD to study files, documents and reports relevant to the study. In addition, interviews were conducted in the MEHRD, including four other government ministries, the Catholic education office, and Bishop Epalle CHS in Honiara as well as Kulu CHS in Guadalcanal Province. The fieldwork also involved visits to each of other three study provinces of Western, Isabel, and Central and their four CHSs included in the study namely; Gizo, Jejevo, Guguha, and MacMahon purposely to conduct interviews and undertake content analysis and observation study.

These attachment and visits also provided the researcher with effective points of contact and bases from which to operate during the period of his fieldwork. The visits and attachments with the four provinces enabled the researcher to collect data from interviews at the provincial education authority, school, and community levels, including informal discussions with some knowledgeable. They also enabled him to undertake observation studies of the work of provincial education officers, CHS and primary school teachers, and school committee members. During these visits, the researcher was also able to observe and gauge the level of support given by parents and communities for their respective CHSs as well as to visit a number of nearby CHS and primary schools.

During the attachment with MEHRD, the researcher was able to study files, documents and reports relevant to this study, and interview key officials of the MEHRD on various aspects of the administration of education in Solomon Islands and the establishment of CHSs. At the end of this attachment, it was also possible to test the reactions of senior MEHRD officials to some tentative findings identified by the researcher from the data collected.

Numerous respondents said, and the researcher agreed, that the data collection was considerably assisted by the researcher's knowledge of the country, its education system and the issues it is confronted with, his role in initiating the establishment of CHSs, and as a Solomon Islander. As such, many respondents have also mentioned that the researcher's understanding of the culture of his target groups and the network

of friendship and respect built with politicians, civil servants, education administrators, teachers and community leaders as a former MEHRD official also helped facilitate the fieldwork.

The fact that nearly all members of the target groups were acquainted with the researcher as friends, colleagues or relatives did not appear to disadvantage or interfere with data collection in any way. On the contrary, this background, and the mutual understanding it generated, facilitated free and honest exchange of views. Moreover, a genuine concern on the part of senior officials in the MEHRD and the other government ministries, national and provincial politicians, education administrators, teachers and parents about problems of decentralisation, and the important role played by CHSs also facilitated data collection. This was apparent from the ready access to materials and facilities provided by officials, and the time afforded by all interviewees to the researcher during his study.

On the other hand, the researcher was constantly being aware of any biases he may have previously held as a former senior official of the MEHRD on the issues being discussed. However, the knowledge that he is now a full time postgraduate student has always been paramount and he has tried to maintain neutrality during his contact with participants throughout the fieldwork. According to some respondents, the researcher's obvious display of such neutrality has not only helped facilitate an honest and free flowing dialogue but the hope that his research and indeed, the researcher himself would, in the future contribute towards alleviating some of the issues being discussed.

The second round of fieldwork was conducted in November to December 2000 by using a follow-up questionnaire (see Appendix 4) with the view to administer it to the same 51 participants interviewed in the first round of fieldwork. The details of this will be looked at in Section 3.6.2. The data collection procedures used in the first round of fieldwork are being described in the following section. Following the descriptions of the data collection procedures applied in both rounds of fieldwork, the problems and issues encountered in both rounds of fieldwork will be highlighted.

### **3.6.1 Data Collection Procedures: Interviews**

In accordance with the design of the study, the bulk of the data to answer the eight research questions stated in Chapter 1 were collected through interviews conducted in the first round of fieldwork.

The 18 interview questions developed (see Appendix 3) were first pre-tested with four Solomon Island educators studying at the University of Waikato in May 2000. The final interview questions were then developed after minor modifications suggested by the respondents. Before being administered to the target group in Solomon Islands, the interview questions were discussed and checked for clarity and comprehension with the Supervisors of the study.

Plans were then made to travel to Solomon Islands in late June, 2000 to conduct interviews with an anticipated total of 85 participants: 24 from the Central Level; 25 from the Church and Provincial Education Authority Level; 18 from the School Level, and a further 18 from the community Level (see Appendix 5).

The researcher used the following criteria in his selection of the four levels and the 85 participants to be interviewed:

- a) The researcher's own knowledge of the processes of political and educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands;
- b) The researcher's own knowledge and experiences in dealing with issues confronted by the education sector in Solomon Islands and the peculiar circumstances adopted by each province to address some of these issues given their size, geography, population, and cultures;
- c) The researcher's determination of the four study provinces as being fairly representative of the nine provinces of Solomon Islands;
- d) The researcher's knowledge of each participant's involvement in the political and educational decentralisation process;

- e) The researcher's knowledge of each participants involvement in the establishment of CHSs over a specific period, and whether the CHS was World Bank funded or mainly community supported;
- f) Recommendations of knowledgeable in MEHRD, the other government ministries, and the four study provinces;
- g) Recommendations of schools and community leaders interviewed.
- h) Logistical factors such as time, and money.
- i) In view of the social unrest in the country during that period, the safety of the researcher himself as seeing that he comes from Guadalcanal.

Overall all the 85 planned interviewees were recognised as national and provincial leaders and elders in their community, were knowledgeable about contemporary issues in political decentralisation and education and development in Solomon Islands, and retained formal or informal authority.

In view of the escalation of violence following the ethnic conflict in Solomon Islands in June 2000 however, this first round of fieldwork was delayed until mid December 2000 upon which time the tensions had eased to some extent. Be that as it may, as a consequence of ethnic conflict, the researcher was unable to locate the initially planned 85 participants of the study, particularly in the Guadalcanal Province. This, combined with other reasons, which will be looked at later in Section 3.6.4 resulted in only a total of 51 participants being interviewed.

It should also be noted that a number of individuals interviewed at the provincial education authority level occupy more than position earmarked for interviews. For example, in Isabel Province one of the interviewees holds three positions; that of provincial premier, member for the Ward where the CHSs is located and the chairperson of the school committee. This also occurs at the community level in Central Province where an interviewee is the school committee chairman, school treasurer and as well as a prominent community leader. Similarly, this is also true for some provincial and community level interviewees in Guadalcanal and Western provinces.

During the interviews, the following procedures were used:

- a) Prior to every interview, the researcher introduced himself and explained to each interviewee the overall objectives of his study, the purpose of the interview and how long it should take. Interviewees were then consulted for their agreement to record the interview on tape, and with their concurrence, proceed to record all interviews on tape. Assurances were also given regarding the confidentiality of the sources of information provided;
- b) The interviewees were then given a copy of the interview questions and asked to comment on each of the questions as put to them by the researcher;
- c) From time to time, the researcher used relevant probes to assist in the interviewee's understanding of any question;
- d) At the end of each interview, participants were then thanked and duly informed of the next steps to be taken by the researchers in dealing with the data provided.

Interviewees were informed that only the researcher would transcribe the interviews, and that they will be given the opportunity to examine and respond to the transcript prior to its use. In some cases, participants told the researcher that this is not necessary saying that they have placed their full trust in him to interpret and provide an accurate account of the proceedings without their having to view it prior to its use. Nevertheless, after having transcribed all the interviews, the researcher returned all transcripts to each interviewee. Furthermore, although the researcher assured all the interviewees that their responses would remain anonymous, many respondents said that they would prefer to have their names identified with their comments. However, in keeping with the design and agreed ethics of the study, the researcher decided not to do this. This explains why the following chapter does not identify any of the informants and knowledgeable. Six interviews were conducted using both the Solomon Islands Pijin and English languages while the rest were conducted in the English language. Thus, none of the interviews were solely conducted using Solomon Islands Pijin or any other Solomon Islands languages. All the interviews were tape recorded to help the researcher in transcribing them accurately before returning them to the interviewees to examine and respond to prior to their use.

### **3.6.2 Data Collection Procedures: Questionnaires**

Having completed the task of transcribing all the 51 interviews, an initial analysis of the data was made following which, it was decided that a second round of fieldwork would be undertaken. It was also decided that this would involve administering a questionnaire to be administered to the same 51 study participants interviewed in June 2000 (see Appendix 5). The questionnaire was designed to fill in the gaps as well as to confirm what the initial 51 study participants were saying in the interviews during the first round of fieldwork. Another reason that necessitated this second visit to the Solomon Islands was for the researcher to personally return the interview transcripts to the 51 interviewees in order for them to examine and make comments on prior to their use. A note to participants to this effect accompanied the information letter to the participants about the questionnaire as shown in Appendix 4.

The second round of fieldwork lasted for four weeks. This involved hand delivering interview transcripts and administering the questionnaires to the initial 51 study participants in Honiara, and Guadalcanal, Western, Isabel and Central provinces.

When analysing the interview transcripts, the researcher identified 96 items (44 “helping” and 52 “blocking” or hindering factors), which participants considered to be important in the implementation of political and educational decentralization, and the establishment of CHSs in Solomon Islands. The researcher determined that all these items deserved priority attention. These 96 items became the bases for a questionnaire comprising three parts (See Appendix 4).

The questionnaire developed was first pre-tested with fifteen Solomon Island educators, primary and secondary school teachers studying at the University of Waikato in 2000 as well as some parents (non students) who accompanied their student spouses. The final questionnaire was then developed after minor modifications suggested by the respondents. Before being administered to the study participants in Solomon Islands, the questionnaire was discussed and checked for clarity and comprehension with the Chief Supervisor of the study in June 2000.

The questionnaire was then administered personally by the researcher between November and December 2000 to participants in Honiara, and the Guadalcanal, Western, Isabel and Central Provinces. Out of the initial 51 participants, only 31 participants could be reached. Of these, nine were from the central level, seven from the church and provincial education authority level, nine from the school level and six from the community level.

The participants were invited to rate the importance of the 96 items listed on the questionnaire as “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Undecided”, “Disagree”, “Strongly Disagree”. A column marked “undecided” was provided to enable participants to record their uncertainty on any item. Provision was also made in the questionnaire for the respondents to add any other item not listed but which they considered to be important. However, the data so collected did not result in any significant additional items being mentioned apart from those already being identified in the questionnaire. The data collected from these questionnaires are summarised and discussed in the following chapter. Before being administered to participants, the researcher felt that there was no need for the questionnaire to be translated into the Solomon Islands *Pijin* language on the basis that the 51 participants already identified in the first round of Fieldwork had sufficient knowledge of the English language to understand it. Furthermore, the researcher would, in most cases, be present to explain any questions to the participants.

### **3.6.3 Data Collection Procedures: Content Analysis and Observation Study**

Firstly, when undertaking content analysis, the researcher was able to:

- a) Analyse official files and consultancy reports on the organisation structure of MEHRD, current education development plans and initiatives, and the establishment of CHSs;
- b) Analyse documents such as minutes of meetings and records of agreements having a bearing on functions performed by MEHRD and those devolved to the provinces as well as the management of CHSs at the school and community level;

- c) Have informal discussions with other key officials of MEHRD, selected knowledgeable in Solomon Islands and New Zealand, provincial educational administrators, teachers and community leaders.

The foregoing procedures were used to investigate the efficacy of the present organisation structure of MEHRD, and to identify the objectives necessary to develop an effective alternative structure appropriate for a decentralised education system. Data collected were cross-checked at every available opportunity.

Secondly, observation studies were conducted to supplement and cross check data collected through interviews, questionnaires and content analysis. Observation studies of the work of provincial education officers were conducted by the researcher during his visits to the Western, Isabel, and Central province education offices. The procedure involved was observing and recording the main daily transactions of these officers and analysing from these data the main roles they played, problems faced, and skills needed for effective performance of their work.

During these studies, the researcher enjoyed access to, and close contacts with, provincial education officers, church education secretaries, and visited and attended a number of in-service courses and conferences where it was possible to observe other officers in action conducting such courses and to informally talk to them about their work. Numerous opportunities were taken to talk to headmasters and school committee members when they visited the provincial education offices or the MEHRD on official business. This allowed impressions gained from observations to be cross-checked.

#### **3.6.4 Problems and Issues Encountered During Both Rounds of Fieldwork**

With the outbreak of violence in Honiara from mid to late 1999, the researcher was unable to undertake the first round of fieldwork until December 1999. Although the initial plan was to interview a total of 85 participants in this round of fieldwork, only 51 participants were interviewed owing to the effects of the social unrest.

Once again, the ethnic unrest escalated during the second half of 2000 culminating in a coup on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2000. However, despite a five months delay the researcher was able to undertake the second round of fieldwork in November 2000. Whilst this was possible, locating the initial 24 Honiara-based interviewees proved difficult as nearly a half have either gone on unpaid leave or simply fled to their islands or villages following the coup. The timing of the visit itself was also a problem. As a result of the ethnic conflict coupled with the ensuing financial problems experienced by the government, some of the project schools have had to close early and teachers involved in the study have already left for their respective villages or islands. Nonetheless, every attempt was made to administer questionnaires to as many study participants as possible. By the final deadline of April 2001, 31 of the expected 51 questionnaires were received and utilized for the study.

### **3.7 Summary**

The qualitative research method was adopted for this study. This was considered appropriate as it would enable the researcher to obtain perspectives and data from multiple sources which were not readily available. Furthermore, given the geographical and population characteristics as well as the cultural and linguistic diversity in Solomon Islands this method would enable the researcher to undertake condensed but intensive fieldwork using the case study approach and a variety of data gathering techniques to stimulate relevant responses from participants. Overall, the qualitative approach was consistent with the researchers desire to write and present the findings in a manner which stakeholders in education in Solomon Islands can easily relate to and understand. The task of gathering data has been delayed and made difficult by the recent ethnic crisis in the country. Despite the problems however, because of the whole-hearted support of central and provincial government officials, schools and community leaders, the researcher was able to carry out two rounds of fieldwork, and collect the required data from a broad representative sample of Solomon Island national and provincial politicians, public servants, educational administrators, teachers and community leaders. The results from the data collected during both rounds of fieldwork are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This Chapter will discuss each of the eight research questions posed in Chapter One. The qualitative data derived from the interviews would be supported by the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires.

#### ***4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE GOALS OR REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING CHSs?***

##### **4.1.0 Introduction**

Relevant official documents, as well as interviews and questionnaires revealed five reasons for establishing CHSs in Solomon Islands. Firstly, participants felt they represented an effort to address the issue of access in the education sector through increasing secondary school places. Secondly, they felt that CHSs were established to address gender equity issues in the education sector by increasing the participation rate of females in secondary education. Thirdly, they saw CHSs as contributing to reducing provincial imbalances in the provision of secondary school places. Fourthly, CHSs would reduce the overall unit costs in secondary education, and fifthly, participants mentioned that CHSs were established in order to encourage greater parent and community participation in secondary schools. These five reasons for establishing CHSs are looked at in turn in the following sections. Discussions will be supported by both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from study participants during the first and second round of fieldwork in Solomon Islands.

#### 4.1.1 Increasing Access to Secondary Education

In examining the issue of access to secondary education as a reason for establishing CHSs, participants were asked relevant questions, both in the interviews and questionnaire. During the interviews, the researcher asked participants to mention what they, "... *understand to be the goals or reasons for establishing CHSs...*?" (see Question No. 5 in Appendix 3).

Given the lack of sufficient spaces in existing secondary schools, it is not surprising that 86% of interviewees mentioned the need to increase access to secondary education as a major reason for establishing CHSs. Participants also pointed to the growing standard six 'push-out' problem as a source of parental anguish and animosity towards teachers when their children 'failed' to gain a secondary school place. Nonetheless, all concerned parties ultimately recognised that the government alone cannot remedy this depressing situation, which amplified the need for collaboration in order to increase access to secondary education through the establishment of CHSs.

To illustrate the above point, a MEHRD official who was once a senior administrator in Isabel Province, recounted during the interviews that when disgruntled parents complained about their children not being placed into any secondary school, he told them that despite their children performing well in the exams, the fact was that there were simply not enough places in existing secondary schools. He informed parents and the provincial executive that due to financial constraints, the central government was unable to adequately address the issue of lack of secondary school places by itself. In view of this, and as it was already government policy for education authorities to establish CHSs, he then proposed to the Isabel Provincial Executive that the only way to create more secondary school places was for the province, as the education authority responsible, to create the required spaces by establishing CHSs. Following this, Isabel Province identified three existing primary schools for upgrading to CHS status in 1995. By the beginning of 1996, other education authorities began establishing CHSs in some of their existing primary schools in order to create more secondary school opportunities. For example, an education officer in

the Central Province mentioned that the main aim of establishing CHSs in the province was to increase the number of Form 1 places and reduce the number of standard 6 push-outs. Participants from the Western and Guadalcanal provinces and the Catholic education authority made similar comments.

Understandably, a concomitant consequence of the parental distress and frustrations arising from the increasing number of standard six push-outs each year were calls by parents to the government and education authorities to take urgent steps to alleviate the problem. Respondents from the central, provincial and school level informed the researcher that following the official release of the SISE exam results in November each year enraged parents would congregate in large numbers at the MEHRD, provincial education offices or in schools to inquire about their children's exam marks or to demand an explanation why their children were unplaced. A former school board member for a CHS in Honiara, recalled during our interview that:

One of the things we have found in 1991/92 was that there is a great hunger for learning because at that time, there were only 26 secondary schools and there was a 74 percent push-out rate at the end of primary, so three out of four kids never got to secondary schools and parents were starting to get upset by it.

The extent to which such parental anguish transpired in some instances, was highlighted by a CHS teacher from Guadalcanal Province. He mentioned that when the headmaster announces the results of the SISC exams at the end of each year, parents would cry upon hearing that their children had not been selected to any secondary school. Some frustrated parents even tried to assault teachers because, they believed these teachers were responsible for their children's failure, rather than apportioning blame on the weaknesses of the education system. However, respondents stated that the prevalence of such incidents also simultaneously created a positive environment in which all parties ultimately saw the need to work together in order to increase access to secondary education by establishing CHSs.

Almost all of the interview participants mentioned that the advent of CHSs presented the greatest opportunity to rapidly increase the number of secondary school places.

For example, a MEHRD official felt that the CHSs had greatly contributed to the development of education by expanding the number of secondary schools places. Respondents from the education authority, school and community levels agreed that CHSs offered more children an opportunity to receive secondary education.

In order to quantitatively substantiate how generally held this view was, a specific statement in the questionnaire that deals with the issue of access into secondary schools as a reason for establishing CHSs was used. This statement can be found in Part IIIA: Item No. 12 (see Appendix 4) which reads; *“The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the need to increase the number of secondary school places and reduce the number of Std 6 push-outs.”* As can be seen in Table 2, of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions on this statement, 97% considered that the need to increase access into secondary education was a major reason for establishing CHSs. Of these, 74% ‘strongly agreed’, and 23% ‘agreed’.

**Table 2: Respondents’ Views on “Increasing Access to Secondary Education” As a Reason for Establishing CHSs.**

Levels	N	“The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the need to increase the number of secondary school places and reduce the number of std 6 push-outs.”					
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	5	56	3	33	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	5	71	2	29	-	-
School	9	8	89	1	11	-	-
Community	6	5	83	1	17	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

In order to determine whether there is any significant difference between the responses from the four levels in Table 2 above, a Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance test was used. The obtained chi-square was not significant at the 0.05 level ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 3.13, ns$ ). The quantitative data, therefore, complements the qualitative data to corroborate the idea that increasing access to secondary education was almost uniformly seen as a major reason for establishing CHSs.

#### 4.1.2 Improve Gender Equity

The goal of gender equity was also seen as a reason for establishing CHSs. Analysis of responses to interview question No.5 (see Appendix 3) revealed that more than 80% of interviewees pointed out that an important reason for introducing CHSs was to increase the participation rate of females in secondary education. Participants mentioned four factors as placing CHSs in a much better position to achieve this goal than boarding secondary schools.

Firstly, as predominantly day schools, CHSs are not restricted by the number of dormitory/bed spaces for girls and hence, enrolments. For example, the principal of a CHS in Isabel Province, stated that:

I have been principal of a boarding secondary school in the past and I see that in boarding schools, girls are disadvantaged because space for them are restricted by the number of dormitory beds available. Now, I find that there are approximately an equal number of boys and girls in most CHSs. In the case of my CHS, we have 113 boys and 122 girls altogether so there are actually more girls than boys.

The above point about dormitory spaces in boarding secondary schools being a constraint to increasing female enrolments was supported by an education official from the Central Province. As a former secondary school teacher, he said that most boarding secondary schools would have a new intake of 1:3 female/male ratio per annum, and any increases for female intakes would be restricted by the number of beds in dormitories. However, he observed that since the introduction of CHSs, this problem has been overcome with more female students in the province's CHSs. During the interviews, the CHS principals from the Central, Guadalcanal and Western provinces and Honiara also reported that females have outnumbered their male counterparts at their schools.

The second factor mentioned by participants as to how CHSs contributed to improvements in the participation rate of girls in secondary education was that of their proximity to the villages, which enabled girls to attend on a day basis. This has contributed to the alleviation of parental anxiety, particularly among those from the

rural areas who were reluctant to send their daughters to distant boarding schools because of a strong affiliation to their traditional and cultural beliefs. As boarding secondary schools are usually located on another island or province, parents were apprehensive about the negative social effects that the separation and contact with outside influences in boarding schools would have on their daughters. They felt that these would alienate them from their cultures, traditions, and value for village life and obligations. An education officer from the Central Province, elaborated on this as follows:

Seeing that CHSs are located close to the villages, parents are not reluctant to allow their daughters to continue their formal education in secondary schools because they know that they are going to stay with them at home all the time. Traditionally, that is one disadvantage for boarding secondary schools, as parents do not allow their daughters to attend them because they might break some custom taboos.

Similarly, a participant from Isabel Province reiterated that parents were hesitant to send their daughters to boarding schools far away from home. Given such situations, he said that most parents in his province would simply tell their daughters to remain at home even if they were selected.

Thirdly, the reluctance of parents to send their daughters to boarding schools could be attributed to their perceptions of poor standards of discipline in boarding secondary schools. Five interviewees believed that the negative perception by some parents in allowing their daughters to attend boarding secondary schools could be attributed to a generic view amongst parents of the deteriorating standard of discipline in boarding secondary schools. Amongst them was a senior MEHRD official who stated that:

Other people might think that it is better to attend a boarding school because children learn to obey the school rules but at the moment it does not work. It worked when I was a schoolboy but not these days where discipline is very bad in those schools. So it is better to encourage CHSs to be located close to or in the villages where parents can continue to be involved in disciplining their own children, especially girls.

Fourthly, participants mentioned that an important administrative factor that has contributed to the increase in female participation in secondary education was what has been described as the propensity by those involved in the selection process to give favourable treatment to females in the Form 1 selection process, compared to male pupils since the establishment of CHSs. A participant from the Western Province pointed out that in the current selection process, girls have been given more opportunities to be enrolled in secondary schools than boys. For example, a boy with an aggregate score of 140 [out of a possible 300 marks] in the SISEE would still be unplaced but a girl with an aggregate score of 120 or lower would be placed in a CHS. So for boys, even if they score higher marks in the exams they can still be unplaced. He felt that CHSs gave more chances for secondary education to females.

The above observation was in contrast with the situation prior to the establishment of CHSs where even if girls had higher aggregate scores in the SISE Exams and no cultural bias on the part of their parents, they would still be unplaced in any of the 26 boarding secondary schools due the lack of places. On the other hand, boys with lower scores would still be placed as there were more dormitory spaces for them in boarding secondary schools. With the flexibility provided by CHSs, the selection process now appears to favour girls although it remains doubtful whether the number of boys needing a place in secondary schools has actually decreased.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*CHSs' establishment has been helped by the need to increase secondary school places for girls*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item 13). Table 3 show that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions on the statement, 87% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant differences of views on the statement among respondents at different levels of the education system ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 1.62, ns$ ).

**Table 3: Respondents’ Views on “Increasing Secondary School Places for Girls” As a Reason for Establishing CHSs.**

Levels	N	“CHSs establishment has been helped by the need to increase secondary school places for girls.”									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	4	44	5	56	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	2	29	1	14	1	14	-	-
School	9	4	44	5	56	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	6	2	33	2	33	-	-	1	17	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

#### 4.1.3 Improve Provincial Equity

The third reason for establishing CHSs mentioned by 65% of interviewees was the need to improve existing imbalances in the provision of secondary school places amongst the provinces, which was also highlighted in responding to interview question No.5 (see Appendix 3). They believed that the advent of CHSs enhanced opportunities for provincial education authorities to create more secondary school places within their jurisdictions, whereas previously they had to await central government initiatives, albeit infrequent and often having to await facilitation by externally funded projects. Furthermore, participants from the smaller provinces said that these central government initiatives tended to focus on the big provinces such as Malaita, Western and Guadalcanal, which were viewed as being disadvantaged due to their larger school age populations. Although children from other provinces could attend any secondary schools in other provinces, the reality was that about 80% of students would come from the host province. Since the introduction of CHSs, participants observed that the smaller provinces made significant progress in providing secondary school places for the majority of their standard 6 leavers. For instance, during our interview a senior MEHRD official, explained that:

Smaller provinces were always at an advantage over the bigger provinces because of their smaller populations. So, most of their children get placed into their own schools or in other secondary schools outside the province. For example, prior to the establishment

of CHSs, Isabel already had a secondary access rate of about 70 percent while Guadalcanal only had 40 percent. With the establishment of CHSs, Isabel Province has now achieved access rate of almost 100 percent while Guadalcanal increased its secondary access rates to about 50 percent only.

Since the policy to establish CHSs has given education authorities, parents and communities the opportunity to be more actively involved in secondary education, an Isabel provincial politician said that he felt more empowered and motivated than ever before to proceed with the education expansion programmes for his province. Commenting on his personal support for the establishment of CHSs, as well as his overall plans for education development within the province said that he is now working towards the goal of providing up to nine years of basic education for all children in Isabel province. Similar sized provinces, like the Central Province, also seized the opportunity to increase their secondary school places from 70 to 280 students per annum with the establishment of six CHSs, and, according to a provincial politician, plans are underway to establish four more CHS. If this trend continues, smaller provinces like Central and Isabel could achieve a 100% secondary access rate for their children, whilst it will take longer for the larger provinces to achieve this ideal because of their larger school-age populations.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the statement that “*CHSs’ establishment has been helped by the need to reduce the inequitable distribution of secondary school places amongst the provinces?*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item No. 14). Table 4 below shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 94% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found no significant differences between the responses from each level ( $\chi^2(3, N=31)= 1.85, ns$ ).

**Table 4: Respondents' Views on the "Need to Improve Provincial Equity in the Provision of Secondary School Places" As a Reason for Establishing CHSs.**

Levels	N	"CHSs establishment has been helped by the need to reduce the inequitable distribution of secondary school places amongst the provinces."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	3	33	5	56	1	11	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	4	57	-	-	-	-
School	9	4	44	4	44	-	-	1	11
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

#### 4.1.4 Reducing Overall Unit Costs in Secondary Education

The fourth reason mentioned by participants was that establishing CHSs would reduce the overall unit costs in secondary education. The qualitative data (Question No. 5 in Appendix 3) indicate that 73% of participants took this position. Many participants felt that high capital and recurrent costs in boarding secondary education needed to be reduced. Furthermore, they highlighted the contributions made by parents in decreasing outlays on capital development of schools, and expenses incurred by parents and guardians, compared to sending children to boarding secondary schools.

According to a senior MEHRD official, the country's scattered nature presented a paradoxical situation whereby, whilst it necessitated boarding schools, it also gave rise to the idea of having day CHSs to reduce boarding and related operating costs. Her views were supported by another MEHRD official, who reiterated that alternative means of providing secondary education have to be found in order to, not only combat escalating costs of boarding schools but also due to a decline on real spending per student on school operations by the government over the years. Another colleague concurred by saying that:

Establishing and operating a CHS is cheaper because it is a day school, and as such there are no boarding and transport costs involved which makes it much cheaper to run than the boarding PSSs and NSSs.

Comments from interviewees at the education Authority level also reinforced this view. For example, a former PSS and CHS principal, reflected on how he liked being a CHS principal because he did not have to worry about making sure students are fed everyday. A senior Western Provincial administrator agreed that overall, establishing CHS is a very good idea because they are less costly to establish and operate. There was also support from interviewees at the school level regarding the need to reduce the overall unit costs in the financing of secondary education. Taking his school as an example, a Western Province CHS principal, reiterated that:

Because our CHS is a day school, we do not have to worry about accommodating or feeding the students so it is cheaper to operate a CHS compared to a boarding school. The CHS system can help solve the financial problem that the government is now facing. As Principal of a day CHS, I do not have to worry about looking for money to buy students ration and the multitude of other worries that my colleagues in boarding schools get bogged down with.

During the interviews, a senior MEHRD official revealed that the government 1998 Public Recurrent Expenditure estimated that the teacher costs per student in a CHS was SI\$360 and the operating costs per student was SI\$222, giving a total SI\$582 (SI\$1.00 = NZD0.2671 on 27/11/02). In contrast, he said that the teacher and operating costs per student in a PSS is double the total for CHSs, and nearly three times higher for NSSs. In view of this, he said that the unit costs in CHSs were substantially lower.

Secondly, participants also highlighted that CHSs have helped to reduce physical development costs because parents and communities offer free labour and materials to build classrooms and staff houses. For instance, a MEHRD official, cited the case of a CHS in Malaita where the community has recently completed a classroom block. He said that it would have cost about SI\$300 000 if a contractor had been engaged to build it but it only cost the community about SI\$100 000 because they use their labour and provide materials such as timber free of charge. On the other hand, more

than five respondents pointed out that during the World Bank-funded SEP, about SI\$6m was spent on civil works and a further SI\$5m on equipment and furniture for each of the three boarding schools built under the project. For this reason, a CHS teacher from Guadalcanal Province insisted on establishing more CHSs to counteract such exorbitant capital costs. He believed that the money used to build one such school could cater for about four CHSs and lamented why the CHS idea had not been thought of earlier. The teacher also pointed out that the annual intake in boarding schools is not that much greater than the CHS, and yet the costs for establishing and running boarding schools were enormous.

Thirdly, participants highlighted the role played by CHSs in reducing the expenses borne by parents and guardians, such as schools fees and travel. For instance, an education officer from the Central Province estimated that it would cost about SI\$2 000 on school fees, travel, clothing and other expenses for a child from Central province to attend a boarding secondary school in another province. In comparison, he said that the same child attending a CHS nearby would only cost the parent about SI\$500 on school fees.

The advantage provided by CHSs in reducing expenses to parents and guardians was hailed as a step in the right direction by other provincial interviewees. For example, a MEHRD official said that one of the reasons for making a firm decision to establish CHSs in Isabel Province was because poorer families were increasingly finding it difficult to send their children to attend secondary schools in other provinces due to the extra expenses involved. His comments were supported by a participant from the Western Province who added that that the majority of children in his province now have easy access to a secondary school and parents spend less money to send their children to boarding schools. At the community level, a participant from Guadalcanal Province, also supported such views. He stated that:

In the past, we have to go to schools outside for our secondary education. Nowadays, with the introduction of CHS, secondary education is right at our doorstep so it is not expensive for me as a parent. To have a child attend a boarding secondary school, parents have to consider the huge expenses involved in sending the child there. This includes travel expenses to and from the school during the

holidays and of course you must pay the school fees which is too much. So as far as the parents and children are concerned, I think the introduction of the CHS here has a lot of advantages.

In order to obtain quantitative data to triangulate the above qualitative finding, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*CHSs were established to reduce unit costs in the provision of secondary education, and personal expenses to parents*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item No. 1). Table 5 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 77% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 3.27, ns$ ).

**Table 5: Respondents Views on “Reducing Overall Unit Costs in Financing Secondary Education” As a Reason for Establishing CHSs.**

Levels	N	“CHSs were established to reduce unit costs in the provision of secondary education, and expenses to parents.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	2	22	4	45	2	22	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	3	43	-	-	1	14
School	9	4	45	2	22	-	-	3	33
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>

#### 4.1.5 Encourage Local Participation and Partnership in Secondary Education

The fifth main reason for establishing CHSs mentioned by participants was to encourage local participation and partnership in secondary education. The qualitative data (Question No. 5 in Appendix 3) indicate that 70% of participants held this view. At the same time though, they highlighted several pertinent areas that needed to be addressed to strengthen the process such as the need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the lacklustre performance of education authorities, and training for those in the lower levels of the hierarchy.

Participants felt that, from the onset, the CHS concept was not only based on the notion of building robust partnerships and encouraging participation but also to foster a feeling of ownership within communities for their schools. To illustrate this point, a senior MEHRD official expressed that:

The CHSs concept is based on partnership between the central government, education authorities, schools and communities. This in my view is a form of educational decentralisation as parents and communities themselves are carrying out a lot of the control and running of CHSs. They build the schools, look after their operation and feel they own and are part of it.

However, this highlighted the issue raised by many participants of the need for an MOU. They felt that the roles in such a partnership were not being accompanied by a clear delineation of responsibilities, and prompted calls for an MOU to be formulated quickly. Notwithstanding the fact that communities have demonstrated a strong willingness to support and work in partnership with the government and education authorities, nobody seemed entirely sure who was responsible for what task. Thus far, another senior MEHRD official revealed that nothing had been established to clearly explicate the responsibilities of each group, so the current arrangements are very much undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis. Consequently, a participant from the Western Province called on the government to spearhead the formulation of an MOU that would clearly state the role of each party. He said that:

We need to sit down together and make a clear statement on what role each party should play in order to iron out the present confusing state of affairs. The government has to make it very clear in a MOU what exactly is expected of each party. At the moment we take things for granted, assuming that parents and communities will continue to carry out these tasks. Perhaps, the time will come when they may simply refuse to do all these things.

Nonetheless, community level participants mentioned that they were content and take immense pride in continuing to carry out their responsibilities. For example, a CHS board chairman, was optimistic that the commitment from parents and communities, so far, indicate that they will continue to render support for their CHSs. Speaking for his community, he said that they were happy to continue carrying out their

responsibilities as evidenced by the fact that, when their grants were delayed, they embark on their own fundraising rather than sitting around doing nothing. He was convinced that CHSs became a success story because of strong community support, which he believes will continue. These sentiments were also echoed by education authority, school and community level participants in Isabel, Central, and Guadalcanal provinces, including Honiara.

Insofar as taking over total control of CHSs is concerned, none of the respondents mentioned any cases of a community clearly wanting to assume overall control of its CHSs from the existing education authority. They said that this was not a contributing factor to the success of CHSs at the level of implementation. A CHS board member in the Central Province, expressed his views about it thus:

We are not concerned about who the education authority is, and would rather let the MEHRD decide on that. Our parents and community do not wish to takeover control of the school because we know our own limitations regarding the professional and technical matters in running schools. We cannot train or provide our own teachers, materials or develop curriculum. All we need is to be assured of some power and the understanding that the school belongs to us because it is located in our community. Not to take total control over it.

Despite this, the question of what each party's responsibilities should be in the participation and partnership process remains. In this regard, some respondents have, in the main, expressed the desire to maintain existing arrangements. In support of this, an education secretary, suggested that the government should continue to be responsible for paying school grants; curriculum development; production and supply of school equipment and textbooks; national examinations and standards; selection; school inspection; provide teachers and pay their salaries; teacher training; teacher appointment, registration, promotion, and discipline; and overall policy development in education. He felt that education authorities should continue assisting the government in these areas, particularly in providing additional grants; facilitate teacher recruitment, appointments, promotions, postings, transfers and discipline; and selection of pupils into their schools. As for the schools, parents and communities, the education secretary said that, through their school boards they should continue to be responsible for the day to day running of the school, provide land, labour and

materials to build or maintain school buildings and facilities, collect school fees, undertake fundraising, and manage the school finances.

As a point of difference, ten central and school level respondents clearly expressed the need for more decentralisation of educational responsibilities to the lower levels. For example, a high-ranking MEHRD official suggested that payment of teachers' salaries, recruitment, and appointment should be decentralised to the education authorities. He revealed that coordination of these matters from his division has caused long delays and frustration for teachers and the MEHRD. Furthermore, he added that education authorities often recommend recruitment of new teachers without considering the budget resulting in the MEHRD overspending on teachers' salaries. He maintained that if education authorities handle teacher's salaries themselves, they would feel more accountable for budget overruns.

In addition, a CHS principal, felt that education authorities should also be responsible for teacher discipline because when this is handled by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), long delays are experienced before a response is forthcoming. He said that this often led to teachers' disciplinary cases rarely being report to the TSC or dealt with at the school level only even if they are major cases. In some instances, he revealed that due to teacher shortage, they continue to teach whilst awaiting a decision. When this happens, an education officer stated that:

The teacher often displays a 'no care' attitude to us because of their view that we do not have 'teeth to bite'. They may even transfer to another education authority or simply take off at the end of the school year when they know that they are going to be disciplined. This happens because disciplinary decisions on teachers take a long time to get to the provinces, resulting in teachers having a 'no care' attitude to education authorities, although legally, we are their employers.

Other functions which some participants felt should be fully decentralised to the education authorities are teachers training, school inspection, and selection of pupils into schools.

However, given what was felt to be the lukewarm performance of some education authorities, there were suggestions from other central and school level participants to withdraw the education authority status of provincial governments and encourage communities to take over this role. Many respondents felt that, instead of taking a leading role in the management of CHSs, provincial education authorities were depending too much on the central government and communities. According to his observations on the poor performance of education authorities, particularly during the establishment of CHSs, an officer from the MEHRD, suggested that the education authority status of provincial education authorities should be withdrawn. He felt that:

There are advantages to the idea of withdrawing the education authority status of provinces and for the MEHRD to deal directly with school committees or boards. I feel that should remove some of the obstacles we have been trying to overcome, especially in getting materials to schools. It will be easier for us to deal directly with school committees or boards on such matters. At the moment, we have to go through the provincial education authorities, and things take time to get to schools, especially when you have to deal with the bureaucracy in the provinces.

Such views reflect the feelings of the majority of participants that the government should reinforce and complement the cooperation demonstrated by schools and communities by devolving more responsibilities to them such as exam marking, selection, inspection, grants, curriculum development, as well as the power to decide what subjects should be taught in schools. In relation to exam marking, a CHS principal, felt that doing this at the school level will not only save the government money but also helps speed up the process. Furthermore, views expressed by a MEHRD participant illustrated the opinion of most respondents regarding selection of pupils into secondary schools, especially CHSs. She said that:

Selection, especially for CHSs should be done by the school and their boards seeing that they are day schools. This is to ensure that we do not have children traveling very long distances to get to school, and to encourage ongoing support from the surrounding community.

The participant also thought that inspection of teachers should be done by the principal, provided that there are clear guidelines from the MEHRD for this to be

done effectively. This was supported by another senior MEHRD official who believed that a principal's feedback on teacher performance and appraisal will be more realistic. He said that when school inspectors visit schools, some teachers often are on their best behaviour for the few hours the inspector is at the school. In addition, participants also wanted to see the disbursement of central government grants paid directly to CHSs' bank accounts. This view is represented in the following comment from a MERHD official who said that:

Central government grants for CHSs should be paid directly into their bank accounts for the school management and boards to control, and to be accountable for these funds. This process will be more efficient compared to the present system, which takes a very long time for grants to get to the schools or they might not receive them at all.

There have also been calls for more parent and community input in curriculum development. A participant in Isabel Province, felt that they should have more input into areas such as culture and language. According to a former CHS board chairman, this should also include the opportunity for parents and communities to choose what subjects they want their children to learn in schools. He said that:

Apart from English and Maths, communities ought to be given the opportunity to choose what subjects should be taught in their schools. The ability to do that is here now, which was not there before. Now, with CHSs, this is possible. If the communities can begin to realise that they do own the school, then all that will come in time given the opportunity.

However, participants also recognised that principals and members of school boards need to be trained for their new roles and responsibilities. They also realise that the apparent unavailability of necessary skills at the local level will hinder the devolution of most of the above aspects of education. In hindsight, a senior MEHRD official, explained that even if the government wanted to devolve more functions, the availability of necessary skills at the school and community levels are non-existent at the moment. He believed that until such time when people are trained to effectively handle such responsibilities, any moves in this regard would be premature. Therefore, participants agreed that any moves to decentralise more responsibilities to communities must take into account the availability of necessary resources and skills

to enable them to effectively carry out their duties. In view of this, participants called for relevant training to these lower level bodies as a matter of urgency.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “CHSs establishment has been helped by the government’s desire to encourage local partnership and partnership in secondary education with education authorities, schools parents and communities” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item No. 16). Table 6 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions in this item, 81% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference between the responses from different levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 7.94, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests indicated significant differences between the central level and school level ( $U = 20.5, p < 0.05$ ), and the education authority level and the school level ( $U = 12.5, p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 6: Respondents’ Views on “Encouraging Local Participation/ Partnership in Secondary Education” As a Reason for Establishing CHSs**

Levels	N	“CHSs establishment has been helped by the government’s desire to encourage local partnership and partnership in secondary education with education authorities, schools parents and communities.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	2	22	6	67	1	11		
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	5	71	-	-	-	-
School	9	-	-	5	56	1	11	3	33
Community	6	-	-	5	83	-	-	1	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>

#### 4.1.6 Discussion

In response to Research Question 1: “What are the goals or reasons for establishing CHSs?” the data gathered from the fieldwork pointed to five main reasons: to increase access to secondary education; to increase the participation rate of females in

secondary education; to reduce provincial imbalances in the provision of secondary school places; to reduce overall unit costs in secondary education; and to encourage greater parent and community participation in secondary education.

The struggle to provide sufficient secondary education places for all children has been a longstanding issue for the education system in Solomon Islands. During the last two decades, a number of government initiatives have been implemented but failed to significantly address the issues of access, equity, and cost-effectiveness or encourage local participation in secondary education. Indeed, the education system was lagging behind against a background of an ever-increasing school-age population and dwindling government financial resources and investments in the education sector.

The introduction of CHSs since 1995 provided the greatest opportunity to make significant gains towards alleviating the issues being discussed. Undoubtedly, the success of CHSs rests on strong community support but it took a dramatic shift in the way the government was managing secondary education to realise this. For many years, successive governments were under the illusion that they could, on their own, provide for the secondary educational needs of the majority of children. This belief was found wanting as the transition rate from primary Standard Six to Form 1 of secondary education was falling at an average rate of 2% per annum per annum from a peak of 42% in 1984 because of the significant increase in primary enrolments which commenced in 1980 (Hind, 1988).

The CHSs have clearly demonstrated that much can be gained, particularly towards alleviating the issues discussed by working in partnership with other stakeholders in education, particularly parents and communities (World Bank, 1993). There is strong support for the devolution of more responsibilities to the lower levels once the necessary training was undertaken. This has important implications for educational decentralisation, and a reformation of existing functions and responsibilities must be undertaken to clearly demarcate each party's role in the process and to ensure of its success (Bhindi, 1987; Fiske, 1996; Rondinelli, 1981).

At a time when educational decentralisation has become a global key aspect of educational restructuring (Fiske, 1996), the underlying trends which have been demonstrated by the establishment of CHSs embody similar sentiments. The CHS policy was a central government initiative, and strictly speaking, the schools are owned by the provincial or church education authorities but heavily rely on communities to provide materials, buildings, labour and management. This is hardly surprising given that, when the government is increasingly finding it difficult to finance the education system, coupled with increased demand for secondary education, encouraging the participation and increasing the resources provided by communities in secondary education was given much attention (Bray, 1987a). Although this has been known for some time (Gannicot and McGavin, 1987), the Asian Development Bank Solomon Islands 1997 Economic Report (ADB, 1998) pointed out that government was slow to institute necessary measures to change the old-styled centralised bureaucratic structures left over from the colonial past. The report also hailed CHSs as "... the most promising development in Solomon Islands education since independence..." (p. xxiv), and one that should be encouraged. More recently, the Solomon Islands Human Development Report 2002 (SIG, 2002) called for "... community high schools to be increased" (p. 76).

In view of the foregoing, the establishment of CHSs signified a break from previous practices in allowing increased resources provided to education by communities. In addition, the CHS policy enhanced grassroots contact and the provision of education services in the rural areas, involved subordinates in policy implementation, allowed beneficiaries and implementors opportunity to participate in decision-making and promoted social equity and economic development. The central aim is to create a system which entails a significant degree of autonomy for community involvement in education (Whitty, *et al.*, 1998). These are clearly associated with the objectives of decentralisation such as the popular notions of self-reliance, domestic and democratic decision-making, and popular participation by previously underserved groups in social provision (Fiske, 1996; Lauglo and McLean, 1985; Rondinelli *et al.*, 1984). The next Research Question will explore the question of where the forces for establishing CHSs are coming from and whether or not there were any tensions these forces may have created.

## **4.2: RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHERE DO THE FORCES OR FACTORS FOR ESTABLISHING CHSs COME FROM, AND WERE THERE ANY TENSIONS WHICH THEY MAY HAVE CREATED?**

### **4.2.0 Introduction**

The data indicate that the forces for establishing CHSs originate both internally and externally. Internally, besides the educational and economical reasons discussed in Research Question 1, participants mentioned that demographic, geographic, cultural and political forces also influenced the establishment of CHSs. The external forces mentioned were: global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision-making process, and influences from the World Bank. The following results will look at the nature of these forces, and qualitative and quantitative data will be used, wherever possible, to demonstrate participants' perception of the extent to which a particular factor influenced the establishment of CHSs. This will be followed by an examination of the question of whether or not these forces have created any tensions between concerned parties.

### **4.2.1 The Local Forces for Establishing CHSs**

In response to Interview Question No. 6 (see Appendix 4), more than 60% of interviewees felt that the local forces to establish CHSs originate mainly from four factors namely; demography, geography, culture, and politics.

Firstly, about ten participants from all levels mentioned that the effects of the country's rapidly expanding population, coupled with the increasing standard 6 push-out rate, was an important local factor for establishing CHSs. For example, a MEHRD official stated that:

CHSs were established from forces within our communities particularly, the growing population at 3.5 percent per annum, and the

need to increase the number of secondary school places so that the number of Standard 6 dropouts each year is reduced.

In addition, another senior MEHRD official highlighted that whilst the school age population was increasing, the number of secondary school places remained stagnant. In supporting these sentiments, a participant from the education authority level, commented that the CHSs concept was home-grown to deal with the population pressures and to give a fair chance for more children to get a secondary education. Similarly, the CHS principal mentioned that for his school, the idea originated from parents who then proceeded to raise funds and build the school before the government and the World Bank assisted them. He believed that the establishment of most CHSs was the result of such a strong force from parents due to the growing population and the high rate of Standard 6 dropouts. All the participants from the community level, as represented by the following quote from a CHS chairman in Guadalcanal Province, supported these comments. He stated that:

The community's population is increasing rapidly while at the same time more and more standard 6 pupils are being pushed out, so we decided to have a CHS of our own. The fact that we have established a CHS here indicates the need for it, and the force to do it comes from within ourselves, knowing that our population is growing all the time.

Although there was no specific questionnaire item that dealt with this issue, the researcher felt that the quantitative data presented in Table 2 would be applicable here to substantiate participants' views that the country's rapidly expanding population was a major local force for establishing CHSs. That is, the need to drastically increase access to secondary education became a pressing issue primarily as an upshot of the country's rapidly expanding population, a high standard six push-out rate, and an increasing number of school age children, against the backdrop of an existing, unresponsive secondary education system.

Secondly, participants unanimously agreed that the country's geography and scattered population also influenced the establishment of CHSs. As explained by a community level participant, Solomon Islands is a country of more than 6,000 villages where about 84% of the people live. For this reason, a participant from the MEHRD

acknowledged that these factors necessitated both political and educational decentralisation moves being undertaken for over two decades prior to the establishment of CHSs.

Despite these factors being considered important forces in wielding a major influence on political and educational decentralisation, participants also mentioned that people in the rural areas felt deprived in not receiving any tangible benefits from decentralisation policies. They said that people were also dissatisfied with the inequitable distribution of development initiatives, especially secondary schools, which were mostly located in urban areas or far away from them. In the light of these, participants pointed out that a favourable springboard was set for the establishment of CHSs, as they would not only achieve provincial equity in the provision of secondary school places (see Section 4.1.3) but moreover, reduce the rural – urban migration of students looking for more and better educational opportunities which were mainly available in urban centres. Hence, an underlying consideration for the CHS policy was to provide more secondary school opportunities in the rural areas. A senior policy advisor stated that:

We are increasing in number and therefore, education should be extended to give opportunities for our people in rural areas. When we fail to do this, they would send their children to the best schools, which are located in the main centres like Honiara, Auki, and Gizo. We cannot keep all education opportunities in these urban centres but must equitably extend them to rural areas.

A member of the 2000 Provincial Government Review Committee (PGRC) also agreed that sufficient levels of provision for basic services such as education were not reaching the people at the grassroots level. He revealed that during the PGRC's recent tour of all the provinces, the majority of people called for more secondary education opportunities to be made available in the rural areas.

With the advent of CHSs, a Western Provincial politician said that he was pleased to see many rural children getting a secondary education. A high-ranking MEHRD official was equally elated because CHSs are now scattered throughout the country and have achieved the purpose for which they were being established. As for a

school level participant, he saw the advantage of establishing CHSs in the rural areas as a great blessing because secondary education, which they have long desired for their children, has been brought close to the village. Similarly, a participant from the community level said that:

I think establishing CHSs is one of the best things the government has done because in the past, we have to go outside our area or Honiara to attend secondary schools. Nowadays, with the introduction of CHSs, secondary schooling is right at our doorstep.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the country’s geography and scattered population making the need to expand formal education opportunities in the rural areas, and reduce rural-urban drift.*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIA, Item No. 1). Table 7 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, all of them (100%) either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2$  (3, N=31) = 1.44, *ns*).

**Table 7: Respondents Views on “The Country’s Geography and Scattered Population Influencing the Need to Expand Formal Education Opportunities in the Rural Areas, and Reduce Rural-Urban Drift” As Major Forces for Establishing CHSs**

Levels	N	The country’s geography and scattered population, which necessitated the need to expand formal education opportunities in the rural areas, and reduce rural-urban drift were major forces for establishing CHSs.			
		Strongly Agree		Agree	
		N	%	N	%
Central	9	6	67	3	33
Ed.Auth.	7	5	71	2	29
School	9	8	89	1	11
Community	6	4	67	2	33
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>

Thirdly, participants' felt that the teaching and learning of the local cultures, languages, and other non-formal education activities within communities need to be enhanced. Given the proximity of CHSs to villages, participants felt that they are well placed to promote the teaching and learning of local cultures and languages through the utilisation of staff and infrastructure available in CHSs. Furthermore, they said that this would provide an opportunity for communities to make inputs, particularly those skills they see as important into the curriculum of their CHSs. The following quote from a central level participant illustrates such views. He said that:

An advantage of CHSs is that people think children who go to boarding schools at an early age were alienated from their own culture. So the basis of having CHSs established within the communities is to give an opportunity for students to know more about their culture. We can also involve the local people to teach the language, and the kinds of traditional knowledge and skills required because it is a very important area.

Similarly, Western Province participant echoed similar sentiments. He believed that the parents and communities saw the importance of having their own CHS in order to keep their children close to them rather than sending them to a boarding secondary school on another island or province where they would feel alienated. He felt that by having CHSs promoting culture and language, children would learn to value and respect them. Thus, once they leave their communities at an older age, they would have a good grounding and understanding of their cultures.

Such strong support was also evident from the school and community levels. For example, a CHSs teacher in Guadalcanal Province felt that it is a good idea to teach children the local cultures and the languages in CHSs, as this would foster a feeling of belonging and identity. He also supported the idea of utilising local people to assist in imparting their traditional knowledge in schools as long as incentives to reward them are formalised by the MEHRD. On the other hand, he pointed out that this is greatly enhanced by teachers from the local area serving in CHSs, as they would also be familiar with the local culture and language.

Furthermore, participants mentioned that CHSs would provide communities with the necessary facilities such as classrooms to conduct literacy classes, population education, family planning classes and other non-formal education and training programmes, particularly for women. Inherent in this view was the notion that the schools should be local, and be part and parcel of the local scene. Therefore, CHSs would then serve not only as schools, but also as meeting places, libraries, and resource centres for the whole community. Participants from the central, education authority, school and community levels supported this idea.

In order to obtain the quantitative data to triangulate this finding that “*The desire to promote local cultures and languages, and provide an opportunity for parents to contribute relevant curriculum inputs suited to the traditional and non formal education needs of the area is a major force for establishing CHSs*”, questionnaire item No. 17 was used (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA). Table 8 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion to this statement, 62% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 0.28, ns$ ).

**Table 8: Respondents Views on “Promoting Local Cultures and Languages, and Provide Communities an Opportunity to Contribute Curriculum Inputs Suited to the Traditional and Non-formal Education and Training Needs of the Area” As a Force for Establishing CHSs**

Levels	N	“The desire to promote local culture and language, and provide communities an opportunity to contribute relevant curriculum inputs suited to the traditional and non-formal education and needs of the area is a major force for establishing CHSs.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	No	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	5	56	1	11	2	22
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	2	29	1	14	2	29
School	9	1	11	4	45	1	11	3	33
Community	6	1	17	3	50	-	-	2	33
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>

Fourthly, participants generally agreed that the influence of politics was a major force for establishing CHSs. Given the widely accepted view that the existing system failed to cater to the educational needs of the people, a Central Province participant, highlighted that, as people demanded more and better education opportunities for their children in the rural areas, the establishment of CHSs became a major campaign issue for one political party during the 1993 National Elections. He recalled that:

During their campaign for the 1993 General Elections, candidates of a particular political party told the people to vote for them if they want more secondary school places for their children. The majority in that party actually won the elections and formed the government, and approved the policy to establish CHSs the following year.

Similarly, a senior MEHRD official who believed that the rapid rise of CHSs was due to political factors supported this. He said that, after having had so much pressure from their own people, politicians felt that they must do something to alleviate the problem. He added that, apparently, establishing CHSs was the best option open to them. Likewise, a school level participant from the Western Province agreed that politics was very much involved in this initiative, judging from the fact that the national MPs for various constituencies and provincial members for a number of wards spearheaded the establishment of most CHSs in his province.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*The active involvement of politicians was a major local force for the establishment of CHSs.*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, item No. 10). Table 9 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 78% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2 (3, N=31) = 4.99, ns$ ).

**Table 9: Respondents Views on “The Active Involvement of Politicians.” As a Force or Factor for Establishing CHSs**

Levels	N	“The active involvement of politicians was a major local force for the establishment of CHSs.”									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	No	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	3	33	3	33	2	22	1	11	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	5	71	2	29	-	-	-	-	-	-
School	9	3	33	4	44	1	11	-	-	1	11
Community	6	1	17	3	50	1	17	1	17	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

#### 4.2.2 External Forces for Establishing CHSs

In examining the external forces for establishing CHSs, participants were asked Interview Question No.6 (See Appendix 3). In response, almost 40% of interviewees mentioned that the external forces to establish CHSs mainly come from two factors, namely: global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process, and influence from the World Bank.

With regard to worldwide moves during the last decade to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process, a MEHRD official, believed that has helped educational decentralisation and the establishment of CHSs. He stated that:

This is a recent phenomenon in our country where people were given, and were indeed, willing to take on more responsibilities in education decision-making at the local level. That was something that has not always been there.

Furthermore, he observed that this as being helped by the government’s ratification of various international conventions, and some prominent international NGO groups calling for the recognition of children’s rights to basic education. During the interviews, another MEHRD official pointed out that the influence of international financial institutions and donors involved in the country’s public sector reforms and good governance programmes for many years cannot be ruled out. He referred to the

government's *Policy and Structural Reform Programme* (PSRP) which involved multilateral, bilateral donors and other interested international organisations.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the statement that “*Global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process in education was a major force in the establishment of CHSs*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIA, Item No. 10). Table 10 shows that of the 31 questionnaire respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 84% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 0.06, ns$ ).

**Table 10: Respondents Views on “Global Moves to Involve Lower Level Bodies in the Decision-Making Process in Education” As a Major Force for the Establishment of CHSs**

Levels	N	Global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process in education was a major force for the establishment of CHSs.							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	3	33	5	56	1	11	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	3	43	-	-	1	14
School	9	4	44	3	33	2	22	-	-
Community	6	2	33	3	50	1	17	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

Secondly, participants’ believed that the establishment of CHSs has been helped by the impetus provided by the five World Bank-funded pilot CHSs, and related education sector studies conducted for the MEHRD through World Bank or donor funding. For example, a MEHRD participant pointed out that:

The idea of establishing such schools never came into the minds of the people until the World Bank started the pilot project for five CHSs. That was when people saw it as the best means of providing more secondary education opportunities for their children.

Similarly, another MEHRD official supported the above observations by referring to the World Bank's TETP Staff Appraisal Report (1993), and said that the document recommended the introduction of village Day Junior Secondary Schools (DJSSs - later called CHSs). He believed that CHSs originated from this World Bank report and viewed this as the Bank's influence on the government for a cost-effective approach to providing secondary education. Furthermore, another participant from the MEHRD also believed that the CHS concept was a World Bank idea but as it was still being piloted in five schools under the TETP, it was overtaken by an overwhelming interest from other communities to build more CHSs.

In addition to the impetus provided by the five World Bank funded pilot CHSs, participants also mentioned the influence of particular recommendations from related education sector studies conducted for the MEHRD by external consultants with World Bank funding. A central level participant specifically mentioned the '*Financing of Education Study*' conducted by Gannicott and McGavin (1987) at the request of the government acting in consultation with the World Bank. He felt that this report is one example of external influences because it recommended a change in educational management, that is, a two-way movement in managerial control towards the central and the school levels, and omitting the education authority level altogether. A participant from provincial education authority level also pointed to the influence from education sector studies commissioned by the MEHRD, and conducted on its behalf with external funding and consultants. He stated that:

Some studies have been done in the education sector, and I think from that they came up with this idea. For many years, the MEHRD has tried to address the problem of standard six dropouts. I think the idea to establish CHSs was based on these consultancy reports.

In order to obtain qualitative data to triangulate the above qualitative finding, participants were asked to comment on the statement that "*The influence from the World Bank, and related studies conducted for the MEHRD were major factors for the establishment of CHSs.*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item No. 18). Table 11 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 81% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance

showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 0.58, ns$ ).

**Table 11: Participants Views on “The Influences of the World Bank, and Related Studies Conducted for the MEHRD” As Major Factors for establishing CHSs**

Levels	N	“The influence from the World Bank, and related studies conducted for the MEHRD were major factors for the establishment of CHSs.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	2	22	6	67	1	11	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	4	57	2	29	-	-
School	9	2	22	5	56	1	11	1	11
Community	6	1	17	4	67	-	-	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>

#### 4.2.3 Tensions Between the Internal and External Forces for Establishing CHSs

An investigation of the qualitative data (see Interview Question No. 7 in Appendix 3) revealed that approximately 78% of interviewees only mentioned the influences of internal forces in the setting up of CHSs. As such, these participants would, apparently, not be in a position to indicate any tensions being created between the internal and external forces. However, on the whole, participants felt that the establishment of CHSs has been helped by minimal tensions between external and internal factors, and the amicable working relationship between all parties. For example, a participant from the education authority level said that:

The main forces for establishing CHSs were local, and therefore, I do not think that there were any outside influences in setting up CHSs. Hence, there could not have been any tensions between the internal and external forces because in my view, the dominant factors are locally driven.

Nonetheless, participants who only mentioned internal forces for establishing CHSs also raise several issues that have caused anxiety between the central, education authority, school, and community levels. These are examined in detail in Research Question 8 as issues and problems currently being faced by CHSs. At the same time, although they have not mentioned any external forces, some participants envisaged that tensions would have arisen if funding to build the community supported CHSs had come from the World Bank. For example, MEHRD official explained that, from his experience, the Bank's lending criteria were very strict on land acquisition, surveying, architectural design, and the calling and letting of tenders to construct the schools it finances. These procedures were expensive, complex, and time consuming so that, it would have taken about three years before actual construction of a school commences. In comparison, he said that the CHSs built by the parents and communities were in full operation in a matter of months.

Such claims were confirmed by participants who mentioned the influence of both internal and external forces for establishing of CHSs. For example, a central level participant said that there have clearly been some tensions and criticisms, particularly from the World Bank and aid donors. She said that they were overtly critical about the rapid pace and number of CHSs being established without considering the cost, manpower and quality implications. She stated that:

They feel that we are only interested in creating more secondary school places at the expense of quality. However, we clearly told them that they have valid concerns but they cannot dictate the needs of the people of Solomon Islands. They will just have to work with us, and help in building and running of these school.

Furthermore, a senior MEHRD official argued that he could not see the value or significance of the views expressed by World Bank and donors when they told the MEHRD that it was too ambitious and unrealistic about the establishment of CHSs. He questioned the motives of the World Bank in offering such advice, and was convinced that it was only interested in getting the government to be more dependent on the Bank's loans, which future generations have to pay and keep the country getting poorer. As a long-serving staff of MEHRD, he said that the World Bank has loaned the government millions of dollars to build only eight new secondary schools

in ten years whilst the number of standard six push outs was rapidly increasing. In contrast, he stated that:

The people have built 95 CHSs with much less money and in a shorter period. So I would not consider any comments from external bodies as significant. Nobody should listen to them because they tend to undermine our real needs. If we can build a school without having that kind of money, then I am sure there is a will by our people.

With reference to community support for the World Bank funded CHSs, a participant pointed out that there is always the danger of these schools not having the support from the communities, and largely depending upon government funding. She said that this was because the communities played very little part in building them, resulting in having no sense of ownership for them. She stated that:

Community support would not be that strong whereas, if the community started the CHS, they will feel that it is their school. So that is the danger of communities not supporting a school if it is fully project-funded.

Given that CHSs have been in operation for over eight years, a MEHRD official said that a lot of compromises have been made along the way. He said that as CHSs have now become an established part of the secondary education system, their importance was beginning to be realised. In addition, another from the MEHRD felt that, leaving quality issues aside, communities were content with something that offers some secondary education for their children rather than none at all. In the light of this, he felt that:

Whilst there are disagreements with our overseas donors who would like to see sufficient facilities and resources in place before a CHS is opened, the communities do not really care about these. All they want is to provide secondary school spaces for their children, some teachers to start with, and they can work on having all the resources later. Communities strongly feel that a start has to be made somewhere, or else they will end up with nothing at all.

In view of current plans by the government to seek further assistance from donors, particularly the World Bank to improve CHSs, a Western Province participant suggested that the funds should be channelled directly to the communities. He said that this should be backed with proper supervision from the MEHRD and the provinces, by providing qualified Clerks of Works to ensure that the building built by the communities are according to plans and specifications. He observed that the current strategy of awarding contracts to building contractors, usually overseas based, under World Bank funded projects has made many people unhappy about the way the projects are being implemented or administered. He revealed that in most case, local communities were not involved, and funds and materials were often misused by contractors so in the end, people were unhappy about some of the school buildings being incomplete or were unnecessarily delayed.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that *“The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the absence of tensions between external and internal factors, and the good relationship between all parties concerned.”* (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item No. 8). Table 12 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 67% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference on the statement among respondents at different levels of the education system ( $\chi^2 (3, N=31) = 2.65, ns$ ).

**Table 12: Participants Views on “The establishment of CHSs Being Helped by the Absence of Tensions Between External and Internal Factors, and the Amicable Relationship Between All Parties Concerned.”**

Levels	N	“The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the absence of any major tension between external and internal forces, and the good relationship between all parties concerned.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	-	-	5	56	3	33	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	4	57	2	29	-	-
School	9	1	11	4	45	2	22	2	22
Community	6	2	33	3	50	-	-	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>

#### 4.2.4 Discussion

Further to the five reasons for establishing CHSs discussed in Research Question 1, there were also other internal and external forces which come into play in facilitating the need for establishing CHSs.

The four internal factors discussed, relate to the country's rapidly expanding population, geography, culture and politics. These factors have been influential in instigating political decisions to adopt a highly decentralised model of governance under the 1981 PGA (Bhindi, 1987; Premdas and Steeves, 1984), which also influenced the organisation and administration of its education system as highlighted in Chapter 1.

During 1976 to 1986, the country's rate of annual population increase of 3.4% was amongst the highest in the world. Hence, the need to increase secondary school places for the ever-increasing school age population, and increased primary school enrolments brought about by a World Bank-funded Primary Education Project (PEP) which commenced in 1981 (World Bank, 1982; Hind, 1988). With support from the World Bank, the government was prompted since 1993 to actively adopt alternative strategies from the traditional but more expensive boarding secondary schools to help alleviate the problem of lack of secondary school places. The establishment of CHSs was seen as one such strategy to address the problem (World Bank, 1993).

The geographical nature of the country also necessitated decentralisation (Ifunaoa, 1983; Bhindi, 1987; Nanau, 1995) but at the same time, this has proved expensive hence, the downside, was that without the accompanying resources, most economic and educational development tended to be focussed at the centre. A concomitant consequence of this was the rural to urban movement of people looking for work or better educational opportunities mainly available in or around Honiara and North Guadalcanal. Needless to say, the ethnic conflict which has beleaguered the country since 1998 remains a sad reminder of this fact (Kabutaulaka, 1999). On the other hand, the establishment of CHSs in rural areas was in recognition of these realities as well as an attempt to stem the tide of urban migration (SIG, 2002). Furthermore, in a

country of diverse cultures and people speaking more than 80 languages (Premdas *et al.*, 1983), this rural basis for CHSs development was also seen as an opportunity to contribute to the enhancement of local cultures (SIG, 2002), reconcile and accommodate island and ethnic difference, and secession threats (SIG, 2002).

In appreciation of the above factors, politics also played a major role in the establishment of CHSs compelled by desire of the government and the people to spread the fruits of development more equitably, particularly in education to hitherto neglected rural areas where 84% of the population live (Ifunaoa, 1983; Lamour, 1983, Nanau, 1995). Decentralisation through the establishment of CHSs was seen as the best option available to achieve this aim. Furthermore, the momentum for decentralisation of decision-making powers to the lower levels originate from the commitment to Melanesian egalitarianism, which promotes wide participation in the political process, and the use of consultative networks through consensus in decision making (Campbell, 1977; Thomas, 1985; Saunana, 1972:1980; Whiteman; 1984a; Chao; 1984). In view of this, an active role played by some politicians has enabled most CHSs to be established, particularly in their electorates following consultation with their voters.

The influence of external factors such as global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process, and the desire to have school autonomy and the empowerment or increased emphasis on community involvement in schools were also seen as forces for establishing CHSs. From the literature reviewed, this theme reflects similar school reforms undertaken in many developed and developing countries, which are usually proselytised by the World Bank, OECD, EU, other international agencies, and donors (Fiske, 1996; Green, 1997; Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Green (1997) added that these educational ideas were also spread by the proliferation of educational exchanges among staff and policy-makers. In this sense, globalisation has become an ideology propagated by international organisations, staff, consultants, and publications in assertions of the need for less interventionist and leaner government and for freer forms of economic competition between nations (Taylor *et al.*, 1997; Jones, 1998; Whitty *et al.*, 1998). Besides, these neo-liberal decentralisation policies for greater parental and community choice and control are

based on business principles of managerialism, and the ideologies of the market (Whitty *et al.*, 1998).

The first World Bank education investment in Solomon Islands was when the PEP, commenced in 1981 (World Bank, 1982), and since then two more projects, the SEP (1986-1993) and the TETP (1993-2000) were IDA-assisted and implemented in the education sector. The data revealed that strong influence from the World Bank to establish day junior secondary schools (DJSSs) and increased parent and community participation and resources for such schools was clearly evident in the Bank's TETP Staff Appraisal Report (1993). The objectives of the TETP were to *inter alia*, introduce lower-cost day secondary school education at the village level in order to expand access and increase female participation in secondary education. To achieve this, the project supported (World Bank, 1993) the "extension of facilities and supply of equipment at five village primary schools, to pilot lower cost DJSSs" (p. i). The favourable outcome gained, particularly through increased community participation in these schools, consequently prompted the government to formulate and implement the CHS policy independently with education authorities and communities in late 1994. Although tensions were reported to have arisen between the above internal and external forces, these were not significant enough to impede the development of CHSs. This could be attributed to a number of scenarios. First, few senior MEHRD and education authority officials would have had direct exposure and contact with World Bank procedures, and visiting staff and consultants, which could explain why the majority of participants (78%) mentioned that there were no tensions between the internal and external forces. Second, the non applicability of World Bank guidelines and procedures for establishing the community supported CHSs meant that tensions between the internal and external forces were minimised or non-existent. Third, the strong influences which originate from internal forces to establish CHSs by the communities themselves meant that parties involved in the process only have to contend with tensions which originate from local circumstances. However, these were amicably attended to by concerned parties when they arise or would be resolved in due course.

### **4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT WAS THE CONSULTATION PROCEDURE USED BY CONCERNED PARTIES BEFORE ESTABLISHING CHSs, AND WAS IT SUFFICIENT AND FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES?**

#### **4.3.0 Introduction**

In response to Interview Question No. 9 (see Appendix 3), approximately, 37% of participants were unaware of the officially recommended consultation procedure whilst 43% felt that it was inadequate, unclear, and was not strictly adhered to when establishing most CHSs. The remaining 20% of participants believed that the consultation procedure was sufficient. However, they felt that it needed to be improved because, apart from following the officially prescribed procedure, three other unofficial approaches for requesting approval to establish CHSs emerged.

#### **4.3.1 The Official Consultation Procedure**

Firstly, the official consultation procedure as explained in Chapter One, Section 1.3.4 (b) (iii), required MEHRD officials to discuss and secure the agreement of education authorities, schools and communities prior to establishing a CHS. The procedure, which was drawn up and adopted by the MEHRD, following Cabinet approval in November 1994 to establish CHSs, involved MEHRD officials making several visits and meetings with the executives and administrators, teachers of primary schools being earmarked for CHS expansion and the respective communities. By mid November 1994, MEHRD officials embarked on several consultative meetings in Isabel Province and around Honiara, to explain the necessary requirements as stipulated in the criteria for approval and establishment of CHSs.

During the interviews, a participant from the MEHRD confirmed the official consultation procedure being undertaken between the MEHRD and other parties in establishing the first CHSs. She stated that:

There have been extensive consultations with the communities and the provinces because under the Education Act the provincial governments must have full submissions from communities wishing to establish CHSs. Communities have to provide sufficient information to their provincial governments, after which they submit an application to the MEHRD's Permanent Secretary for consideration and approval.

As a result of a series of successful consultative meetings and work being undertaken, Isabel Province opened three CHSs, and another six were opened by the HCC in February 1995. The opening of these CHSs within four months clearly indicated the strong support received from their education authorities, and parents and communities. Consequently, the MEHRD planned to open five CHSs per annum for the next five years, and following the officially approved consultation procedure, in the other eight provinces.

The success experienced thus far, coupled with mounting pressures to create more secondary school places resulted in a major diversion from this plan. Soon after the first nine CHSs were established, the MEHRD was inundated with requests from communities, education authorities and MPs to establish their own CHSs. This inevitably pressurised the MEHRD to approve the establishment of more CHSs than it had initially planned. For example, it approved 18 CHSs to be opened in 1996 and another 24 in 1997.

These pressures brought upon the MEHRD resulted in the emergence of the second albeit unofficial consultation process between the parties involved in establishing most of the CHSs from 1996 onwards. By and large, while the MEHRD pursued the official consultation procedure with some communities, others simply proceeded to establish their own CHSs and approach the MEHRD for approval after the facilities were completed. A MEHRD official highlighted this practice during the interviews. She stated that:

While some education authorities and their respective communities have made the right approach by discussing with us before embarking on any work, we have also received direct submissions and representation from communities who have already put up the

required facilities and then forced us to provide them with the teachers and materials to start the school.

As an illustration, the following account of what happened in Central Province from a provincial politician is relevant. He explained that having learnt of the government's policy for establishing CHSs, the communities felt encouraged and believed that they could undertake most of the tasks on their own. Hence, he revealed that the communities did not wait for the government or the provincial education authority to provide funds but rather proceeded to organise themselves to build classrooms, staff houses and furniture. Having demonstrated their seriousness in putting the necessary facilities in place, they then forwarded their application for approval to the MEHRD through their education authority. An education officer from the province confirmed that three of the six CHSs in the Central Province were established in this manner. He mentioned that, despite being familiar with the officially approved consultation procedure, he could not stop the establishment of the three CHSs as there was a strong desire from the respective communities to create secondary school places for their children. As a result of not adhering to correct procedures, he revealed that the three CHSs were initially operating without the approval of the MEHRD for some time. In view of this, he said that:

I have to go back and forth to Honiara and MEHRD officials were unhappy with me for allowing these schools to be established outside of approved procedures. But I persisted in my belief that I am only working in the interest of the people. I insisted that I know the correct procedures are there, but emphasized to them that these were CHSs started by the people because of their genuine needs.

Furthermore, he stressed that the people should not be penalized for not knowing the correct procedures. He suggested that the MEHRD should inform the public about the correct procedures and criteria to be followed in order to avoid such confusion. As far as he could recall, this has not been done in his province resulting in one of the CHSs having only a total 6 students; 3 each in Form 1 and 2. Although the school itself had a large primary school population, he said that most of the students who performed well in the exams were placed in PSSs and NSSs. He also pointed out that

there are many students wanting secondary school places around the province who could not be enrolled at the school for geographical reasons. Thus, he felt that only way for the school to have more students was to allow for boarding but admitted that meeting the boarding costs would be a problem. However, given his experiences, he felt that the consultation process was not sufficient and needed improvement, and was adamant about the need for the central provincial government authorities to work together in determining the precise requirements and responsibilities of everyone involved. In hindsight however, he lamented the seemingly common occurrence that:

MEHRD officials only come out to the province during the official opening ceremony of the CHS. That is the only time they come to see us but we do most of the work during the establishment stages. They just come to enjoy the festivities in the end.

The researcher noted during his second round of fieldwork that the three CHSs have finally been officially approved by the MEHRD, and the school with only six students initially on its role had increased its role by enrolling boarders.

The foregoing was closely linked to the third type of consultation procedure for establishing CHSs. This was characterised by the MEHRD granting approval for a CHS to be established after being approached by MPs and school committee members who have initially bypassed the relevant provincial education authority.

This consultative approach was highlighted by a CHS teacher in Guadalcanal Province. He reported that in establishing their CHS, the provincial education authority was bypassed in the initial stages of the process and was only informed later. He explained that after the school committee had consulted and agreed with the parents and the surrounding communities to establish a CHS, they sent a formal letter directly to the MEHRD requesting relevant officials to visit the school. He said that the MEHRD agreed and invited representatives from the provincial education authority for a meeting with the community. He stated that:

The education authority was like a bystander or spectator throughout the process. In fact, the school committee only had one meeting with the provincial education officials simply to inform them of what is happening. They knew little as the initiative came from the people and conveyed directly to the MEHRD. This process of consultation is satisfactory because things get done much faster. Had we gone through our education authority, I think our progress will be delayed.

As this procedure was often made with the support of the MP from a constituency who might also be a senior Cabinet Minister, the MEHRD was forced to grant approval for the establishment of the CHS to commence operation.

The fourth category involved direct consultations between the MEHRD and the church or provincial education authority responsible without having initial consultations with the parents and communities. For example, a participant in the Western Province explained that the MEHRD allocated the number of CHSs each province was allowed to establish per annum. Upon receiving their quota, the provinces then decide on the locations before consulting relevant communities. A participant who was headmaster of a primary school when the CHS was being established there, said that this usually caused confusion amongst the community, especially when the idea was seen to be imposed on them. He stated that:

The parents and the community knew nothing about any plans to establish a CHS and they did not even know what CHSs were. It originated from the MEHRD and provincial education division here in Gizo. So when this information reached the community, they got very confused. They eventually agreed to proceed with the idea but it appeared to be forced upon them.

During the interviews, a senior MEHRD official, mentioned that the Ministry changed its initial emphasis on having communities initiate the idea to establish a CHS since 1999. She believed that the MEHRD needed to restrict the number of CHSs to be established per year to ensure that enough teachers were trained and the availability of educational materials. This was supported by another senior MEHRD official who mentioned that between 1998 and 1999, there was very little control by

the MEHRD, so communities simply proceeded to build their schools and then asked the ministry to supply them with textbooks and teachers. She realized that this may have been mistake on the part of the MEHRD, and some control had to be exercised. She stated that:

The MEHRD must now take control instead of the communities controlling us by allowing only a certain number of schools to be opened each year. We do have that in the past but we still have communities who built their schools before approaching the ministry. So this year, we approved 10 CHSs to be opened; six in Malaita Province, three in Western Province, and one in Temotu Province.

As far as the researcher is aware, the effects of the ethnic unrest, particularly during 1999 and 2000, when nearly all the seven boarding secondary schools on Guadalcanal were closed, resulted in more CHSs established in the other provinces to cater for displaced students. Others were enrolled in existing PSSs and CHSs, which meant that, these schools had very big classes or put on additional classes.

#### **4.3.2 Sufficiency and Adherence to the Consultation Procedure**

A senior official from the MEHRD was among those who felt that the consultation procedure was sufficient but needed to be improved and controlled. He suggested that the MEHRD should only approve grants after the required CHS facilities have been completed, and not on mere recommendations as is often the case. One of his colleagues agreed but argued that, from experience, even if the criteria and procedures were adequate and clearly understood by all parties, approvals outside agreed procedures would still be granted due to political pressures. Another colleague of theirs added that the influence of politicians insisting on locating a CHS in their electorate normally result in schools being sited on unsuitable locations. Other participants who felt that the consultation procedure was sufficient commended it for giving communities the opportunity to fully participate in educational development and decision-making. For example, a central level participant was happy with the 'bottom up' approach adopted as it involves parties from all levels to

discuss issues and arrive at a consensus. He was particularly pleased with the opportunity given to parents and communities to raise issues concerning the education of their children to central and provincial politicians and administrators. He mentioned that this was a rare change for the rural populace, bearing in mind that most government policies were being decided at the central level, with communities seen as mere recipients with little input.

On the other hand, a MEHRD participant, mentioned that the consultation procedure was insufficient and felt that it was rushed. He insisted that a lot of preparation needed to be done, and referred to the fact that some schools were opened only after four months following approval without the necessary facilities, when clearly, at least, a year's lead-time was required. He also pointed out that when approval was given prematurely, communities would normally resort to temporary measures such as using the primary school facilities. For example, a CHS principal from the Central Province explained that his school enrolled its first intake in January 1997, only to be closed again six months later because they had to use classrooms belonging to the primary school, which they later needed. He stated that:

This resulted in the Central Province requesting the MEHRD for approval to suspend classes for two months during the second semester of 1997. The provincial education authority and the community built two new classrooms within that time. However, when the students were recalled, only 21 students returned while 19 students found places in other schools.

Therefore, he believed that the school should have started in 1998 because when it opened in 1997, there were virtually no classrooms and staff houses. In view of his experiences, he reiterated that the consultation process for establishing CHSs should not be rushed. He suggested that the MEHRD should impose strict policies stating that before a CHS is opened, the education authority, parents and communities must ensure that the classrooms, staff houses, teachers, and text books and equipment were in place. Furthermore, a central level interviewee repeated the call for the MEHRD to provide copies of its relevant policies and guidelines to all parties, and added that it should work with the MTWU to provide independent site inspection reports, and issue completion certificates of school building and facilities before approval is

granted. However, a MEHRD official cautioned that any new policies and procedures should be made as simple as possible to ensure that the momentum gained in harnessing the enthusiastic community support for CHSs was not dampened or lost.

On the whole, given that 80% of participants were either unaware of the officially recommended consultation procedure or felt that it was inadequate, unclear, and was not strictly adhered to when establishing most CHSs, it can be said that it was insufficient. In addition, as evidenced from the qualitative data presented above, the various parties concerned had not adhered to the initial consultation process officially approved by the government. In reality, the MEHRD's attempts to follow the officially approved procedure had almost been sabotaged from the beginning due to the great demand for secondary school places.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that *"The consultation procedure used to establish CHSs was inadequate and unclear to the parties involved in the process."* (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 17). Table 13 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 75% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 4.16, ns$ ).

**Table 13: Respondents Views on "The Consultation Procedure Used to Establish CHSs Being Inadequate and Unclear to the Parties Involved."**

Levels	N	"The consultation procedure used to establish CHSs was inadequate and unclear to the parties involved in the process."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	Count	%
Central	9	1	11	5	56	1	11	2	22
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	2	29	2	29	2	29
School	9	3	33	5	56	-	-	1	11
Community	6	-	-	6	100	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>

### 4.3.3 Discussion

An important consideration in the implementation of educational decentralisation policies is the need for all parties concerned to consult each other along clearly understood procedures (Armor *et al.* 1977; Herbert; 1973; Rondinelli, 1981; Fiske, 1996). The data revealed that officially approved procedures for establishing CHSs were not sufficiently understood by all parties involved which resulted in a variety of unofficial procedures being applied or followed. Consequently, the approval of some CHSs was being granted by the MEHRD without the basic facilities being put in place. However, in most cases, the MEHRD was being put under a lot of pressure from communities by the huge demand for secondary school places. According to Herbert (1973), this is to be expected as decentralisation is usually accompanied by a conflict-ridden environment. Nevertheless, an important lesson to be learnt from this is the need for the consultation procedure to be clearly understood and agreed to by those who were to be affected by centrally approved policies before embarking on the implementation process (Rondinelli, 1981; Fiske, 1996). Such policies and criteria should be flexible enough to cater for differing situations and genuine needs of the communities involved, to avoid stifling local initiatives (Bray, 1987a; Rondinelli, 1981), and their willingness to actively participate and make an important contribution to educational development.

#### ***4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: HAVE CHSs ACHIEVED THEIR GOALS, HOW HAVE THESE BEEN MONITORED OR EVALUATED AND WHAT ADDITIONAL BENEFITS ARE TO BE HAD FROM CHSs.***

##### **4.4.0 Introduction**

This research question examines whether or not the five goals for establishing CHSs as discussed in Research Question 1 have been achieved. For purposes of convenience, these are re-stated here as: the need to increase access to secondary education; improve gender equity; reduce provincial imbalances in the provision of secondary school places; reduce unit costs in secondary education, and encourage greater community participation. Of interest also is to find out how the MEHRD monitored and evaluated these aims, and in addition, to identify any additional benefits which may have arisen in having CHSs besides the abovementioned reasons. In examining these questions, the qualitative data required was derived from interviewees' responses to Interview Question No. 9 (See Appendix 3).

##### **4.4.1 Have CHSs Achieved Their Goals?**

Firstly, approximately 96% of participants agreed that CHSs have achieved the aim of increasing access to secondary education. They believed that CHSs have made a very significant contribution towards increasing the secondary enrolment rate from 26% in 1994 to about 69% by 2001 (see Table 14). In this regard, most of the participants applauded the establishment of CHSs as a great success and considered them to be the best option for increasing secondary school places as well as providing more children with nine years of basic education. For example, a MEHRD official stated that:

This is the direction we should be heading if we want to increase access into secondary education and achieve basic education of up to nine years for all our children. As a ministry, we have been trying to do this for a long time but failed. With CHSs, the opportunity to do that is here so we have to keep working hard in this direction.

Undoubtedly, participants realised that there is still some way to go in achieving a 100 percent progression rate from primary to secondary. Nonetheless, 90% of the participants shared the sentiments echoed by the MEHRD participant, and were convinced that the establishment of more CHSs would eventually result in the natural progression of all pupils from primary to at least lower secondary education in the foreseeable future.

In the mean time however, by February 2002, all 95 CHSs would have had their full compliment of Forms 1 – 3 classes. In addition, as an effort to provide spaces for more children at the Form 4 and 5 levels, 22 CHSs have been expanded beyond Form 3. The chairperson of one such CHS in the Western Province mentioned that this has to be done because community support would be adversely affected when parents see that the majority of their children are leaving the system at Form 3 with no further prospects for continuing their formal education.

Secondly, more than 50% of interview participants mentioned that the CHSs helped to increase the number of secondary school places for girls. Participants acknowledged that prior to the establishment of CHSs, there were more males than female students enrolled in NSSs and PSSs. For example, a senior official from the MEHRD stated that:

There were a lot of complaints about the unequal number of males and females in our existing secondary schools. The CHSs have helped to increase the participation of girls in secondary education so the situation has now improved.

Table 14 shows the increases in secondary school places gained by each education between 1993/94 and 2000/01 in preceding order.

**Table 14: Secondary School Enrolments by Education Authority – 1993/94 and 2000/01 in order of Highest to Lowest Increases**

<b>Education Authority</b>	<b>Total Enrolments 1993/94</b>	<b>Total Enrolments 2000/01</b>	<b>Total Increase %</b>
1. Rennell/Bellona	-	155	<b>100</b>
2. CFC	-	244	<b>100</b>
3. Choiseul	211	1608	<b>87</b>
4. Honiara	324	2543	<b>87</b>
5. Makira	281	1411	<b>80</b>
6. Malaita	812	3951	<b>79</b>
7. Isabel	414	1470	<b>72</b>
8. SSEC	344	1205	<b>71</b>
9. SDA	659	1880	<b>65</b>
10. Central	345	925	<b>63</b>
11. RCC	325	769	<b>58</b>
12. Temotu	363	800	<b>55</b>
13. Western	684	1923	<b>54</b>
14. COM	527	1480	<b>54</b>
15. UC	297	644	<b>54</b>
16. Guadalcanal	831	1757	<b>53</b>
17. MEHRD	934	1170	<b>20</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7351</b>	<b>23935</b>	<b>69</b>

*Source: MEHRD Statistics: Implementation and Planning Unit, 2002.*

Four CHS principals from Isabel, Central, and Guadalcanal, and the Western Province reported increased intake of girls into their schools. They mentioned that because CHSs are predominantly day schools, they do not limit the intake of girls to the number of beds available in the dormitories compared to boarding NSSs and PSSs. For instance, a CHS principal from Central Province, stated that:

CHSs provide increased opportunities for girls in secondary education. As a former PSS principal I noticed that in boarding schools, the number of dormitory spaces restricts places for girls. So it is true that CHSs are giving an advantage to the girls.

On the whole, participants felt that this would eventually result in a larger pool of girls entering senior secondary schools and eventually into tertiary education compared to the present situation where female participation at these higher levels is still very low. They also believed that this would contribute towards the overall

development of the country in the future when more females equally participate in activities currently dominated by males. In order to demonstrate the increase in secondary school enrolments for girls before and after CHSs were established in 1995, Table 15 shows the ratio of male and female intake into secondary schools during 1994 and 2000. As can be gleaned from the data, female enrolments into secondary schools increased from 37% in 1994 to 45% in 2000.

**Table 15: Sex Ratio of Form 1 Placements: 1993/94 and 1999/00**

Year	Total SISE Candidature	Form 1 Placements			
		Male	Female	Total Placed	% Female
1993/94	7351	1278	757	2035	38%
1999/00	8662	4749	3913	5611	45%
Total Increase	1311	3471	3156	3576	8%
% Increase	17	272	417	176	22
% Increase Per Annum	2.8	45	70	29	4

*Source: MEHRD Statistics: Implementation and Planning Unit, 2002.*

Thirdly, approximately 65% agreed that CHSs have achieved the aim to improve disparities in the distribution of secondary school places between the provinces. A participant from the MEHRD stated that:

Over the years, there has been a great imbalance in the number of secondary schools places amongst the provinces. With the advent of CHSs, those provinces with less secondary places before are having sufficient secondary school places for the children within that province. The introduction of CHSs has narrowed the gaps.

As shown in Table 16, the smaller and less populated provinces such as Choiseul, Isabel, Central and Makira, including the HCC have made significant increases of 60% to 87% in their secondary enrolments when CHSs were established. Of the three larger provinces, Malaita Province experienced a 79% increase in secondary school enrolments compared to Guadalcanal Province and the Western Province each recording increases of just over 50 percent.

**Table 16: Number of Secondary School Places Available Per Province and School Type in 2000/01**

Province	NSSs		PSSs		Total NSSs & PSSs	CHSs		Total All	% of CHSs Intake
	No.	Intake	No.	Intake		No.	Intake		
Central	-	-	1	284	284	6	641	925	69%
Choiseul	-	-	1	359	359	6	1397	1756	80%
Guadalcanal	3	1057	3	961	2018	12	1654	3672	45%
Honiara	1	407	1	649	1101	10	2726	3827	71%
Isabel	-	-	2	717	717	3	653	1370	48%
Makira	2	1313	1	308	1621	6	1103	2724	41%
Malaita	1	398	3	1289	1687	33	3549	5236	68%
Ren/Bell	-	-	1	155	155	-	-	155	-
Temotu	-	-	1	358	358	3	442	800	55%
Western	2	736	2	905	1641	16	1774	3415	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3911</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5985</b>	<b>9896</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>13939</b>	<b>23835</b>	<b>59%</b>

*Source: MEHRD Statistics: Implementation and Planning Unit, 2002.*

In discussing the above data during the interviews, another MEHRD participant supported his colleague's claim that the advent of CHSs has resulted in a more equitable provision in the number of secondary school places per province. He observed that small provinces such as Rennell and Bellona could almost admit all of their Standard 6 pupils into their only secondary school. Enrolments in Choiseul, Guadalcanal, Western, and Malaita provinces, and the HCC include pupils from 20 CHSs controlled by six different Church education authorities. The data shows that 59% of secondary school places exist in CHSs. The slightly low percentage of CHSs intake in Guadalcanal, Makira and Isabel provinces were due to the existence of large NSSs and PSSs within these three provinces, and smaller populations in the case of the latter two provinces. Apart from these three provinces, it can be said that more than 50% of secondary school places in Choiseul, Central, Malaita, Temotu, Western, and Honiara can be found in CHSs.

Due to the unavailability of relevant data, it is not possible to determine how many secondary school places should be available in each province for every child who needed it. Suffice to say however, that CHSs have given the opportunity for each province to increase the number of secondary school places than would have otherwise been the case.

Fourthly, 73% of participants mentioned that the CHSs have reduced unit costs in secondary education. A senior MEHRD official argued that CHSs have reduced unit costs because the government's education budgetary allocations have not increased in the last five years but at the same time, access to secondary education has been dramatically increased. Hence, he felt that, while government expenditures for education have become constant or declined in real terms more children were being educated with the same amount of money or less.

Furthermore, A central level interviewee highlighted that the operating costs of CHSs compared to boarding secondary schools was cheaper because as day schools, there are no boarding and transport costs involved. He revealed that the government estimates for the 1998 Recurrent Expenditure for teacher costs per student in a CHS was SI\$360 and the operating costs per student was SI\$222, giving a total unit cost per child at SI\$582. In contrast, he said that the teacher and operating costs per student in a PSS totalled SI\$1 114, and nearly three times higher for NSSs at SI\$1 652. In view of this, he said that the unit costs in CHSs were substantially lower. His comment that CHSs were able to utilize their funds on their development programmes was supported by education authority, school, and community level participants. For example, the chairperson of a CHS in the Western Province, said that:

Funds we receive from school fees, grants or fundraising were used to develop the school to meet the learning needs of the children. We do not have to worry about food and other things that were normally of major concern to boarding schools but focus on creating a good environment for children to learn.

The majority of participants mentioned that parents and communities were also happy with CHSs because they do not charge very high school fees like the NSSs or the PSSs. They mentioned that CHSs charge approximately less than half the fees for PSSs and NSSs, which are usually between the SI\$800 – SI\$1 200 range. For example, the principal of a CHS in Central Province, mentioned that his school charges SI\$400 per child per annum for fees, which he felt was reasonable and quite

affordable for parents. In comparison, he revealed that the current school fees charged at the only PSS in the province was SI\$800 per child per year, which doubles the level of school fees at his CHS. Participants believed that the proximity of CHSs to villages resulted in parents not having to spend a lot of money on travelling expenses and pocket allowances to send their children to secondary schools. This also meant that rural parents with little or no regular income can afford to send their children to school than would be the case had their children been selected to a PSS or NSS.

Fifthly, more than 60% of participants clearly indicated that CHSs have succeeded in encouraging greater parent and community participation in secondary schools. A senior official from the MEHRD felt that establishing CHSs was the right approach to adopt if this goal was to be encouraged. Furthermore, he pointed out that the feeling of 'ownership' for CHSs was clearly manifested when people participated and played a greater role in building CHSs without relying on the central government or the provincial and Church education authorities. He also contended that financial contributions from the central government and education authorities were minimal as most of the labour and resources was provided by the communities who also took better care of the schools because they felt they own them.

In contrast, another senior MEHRD official mentioned that the three boarding PSSs built in Guadalcanal, Malaita and Western provinces under the SEP in the mid 1980s without much community involvement were currently dilapidating because the communities did not have the same feeling of 'ownership' for them. He said that the task of maintaining these three PSSs was largely left to the controlling provincial education authorities, and communities expect financial reward before undertaking any maintenance work. He added that parents were only interested in sending their children to these schools with little interest in their affairs. On the other hand, he believed that establishing CHSs provided a sense of ownership for communities and in so doing, felt an enormous satisfaction in knowing that they are contributing towards the education of their children. Another colleague of his observed that, on the whole, parents and communities were greatly involved in fundraising activities, school administration, and controlling school funds. She stated that:

The education authorities are now playing a weaker role and contributed less in terms of money and looking after CHSs. In fact it is the communities who are playing an active role in looking after and running schools. So that feeling of ownership is there, and they wanted to give their best to assist CHSs.

She also commented that the enthusiasm of communities in looking after their schools was evidenced by the fact that they do not have to wait for provincial education officers or school inspectors to do something. They get on with the required tasks regardless of whether or not education authority or MEHRD officials visit the schools. She reiterated that establishing CHSs is the right approach for the government towards encouraging parent and community participation in running secondary schools.

In addition, a central level participant agreed that encouraging the involvement of communities in education is crucial, and conveyed that as far as the government is concerned, CHSs were seen as an example of communities participating and having more say in education. He stated that:

It is a good idea which should be encouraged in a sense that the communities themselves have a sense of belonging, of knowing that they are part and parcel, not only of our efforts towards the education of all children but also their crucial role in the whole reform and development process.

Similarly, a senior provincial administrator observed that the challenge of providing sufficient secondary school spaces for their children was fully accepted by the parents and communities in his province, and accredited this as being the overriding reason for their overwhelming support for CHSs. A principal and a school treasurer from a Western Province CHS also mentioned that the enthusiasm and excitement from the communities has resulted in positive outcomes for their school. The school treasurer attributed this to the understanding amongst parents that the school belongs to them as the reason for working hard to raise money and build assist in school facilities. He said that because the school was located close to the community, it became part and parcel of community life. He highlighted that whenever parents were required to help

at the school, they would willingly turn up because they know that the school is theirs. In addition, he stated that:

When we rely too much on the government, things move slowly for example, in boarding schools, which are located far away from communities. For CHSs, when we put the responsibilities on the parents, they really work hard and you can see the difference now.

During the interviews, a CHS principal agreed that CHSs are the best type of schools to have because parents feel part of their schools, and in turn, he also felt that teachers would also feel part of the community. He revealed that the strong community support for his school has had a very positive influence on the attitude and commitment of his teachers to their work. He observed that teachers were more vigilant and showed more accountability for their actions than what he had previously experienced as a PSS principal. Furthermore, a primary school headmaster mentioned that community participation and support for the CHS also resulted in more support for his primary school. He pointed out that prior to the establishment of the CHS, the primary school classrooms and staff houses had not been maintained for many years. He reported that since the CHS was established, parents were encouraged to carry out maintenance and fundraising activities for both sections of the schools. His colleague from a primary school in another province also made the same observations. He said that for his school, parents give equal support for the CHS and the primary school, and their turn out for work and fundraising activities was very good. He felt that when communities work together in supporting the school, they tend to see more value for their efforts. He supported the call for people to be more involved in secondary education, and said that establishing CHSs was a good starting point.

#### **4.4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation of CHSs Achieving Their Goals**

The way responsible authorities, particularly the MEHRD monitored or evaluated the CHSs achieving their goals, was examined here using participants responses to the second part of Interview Question No.9 (see Appendix 3). The data indicate 53% of

participants mentioned that the MEHRD had not set up any specific system to monitor or evaluate whether or not the CHSs have achieved the goals for which they have been established. For example, a senior MEHRD mentioned that, her unit was responsible for such a task but had not actually devised any mechanism for monitoring or evaluating CHSs achieving their goals. Other participants agreed with her that such an instrument should be formulated and implemented soon to avoid relying on hearsay or anecdotal evidence.

On the other hand, eight participants pointed out that some monitoring and evaluation was undertaken whenever MEHRD and provincial education officers visit schools. Among them was a MEHRD participant, who recognized that although such visits were not specifically aimed at monitoring and evaluating CHSs achieving their goals, they do provide relevant information on enrolments, teachers, curriculum, materials, and the general condition of school facilities. He said that the information is forwarded to the MEHRD's secondary education division and the planning unit to process but admitted that staffing shortages and time to analyse and compile the data hindered the timely availability of such information for use. He added that regular school visits were also impeded by the same factors including transport and finance. Furthermore, another MEHRD participant mentioned that Annual Statistical Return (ASR) Forms were sent to all school principals to collect much the same data. These are processed to determine access rate, gender and provincial equity but not on how school grants have been utilised or the level of community support for schools. However, he pointed out that the processing these data was usually delayed or not done at all because he was the only person in the division as well as the failure of some principals to return the forms. He said that although the MEHRD has instituted procedures to penalize schools that fail to lodge their returns, these have rarely been imposed. In this regard, a CHS principal highlighted the need to revise the ASR forms. He stated that:

The MEHRD should simplify those data gathering instruments because they are too cumbersome. Principals will not respond to them correctly or not even bother responding to them at all seeing that they are also very busy people.

Overall, the majority of participants from all levels confirmed that they have not encountered any specific official monitoring or review of whether or not CHSs have achieved their aims since they have been established. In view of this, a central level participant reiterated the need for an officer in the MEHRD to be specifically responsible for this task with the view to clearly identify and address their needs. He felt that CHSs deserve such special attention because they are an important and relatively new concept, and they need as much help and assistance as they can get to bring them in line with NSSs and PSSs.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that *“The MEHRD has not yet devised or implemented any specific mechanism to monitor and evaluate whether or not CHSs are achieving their aims”* (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 10). Table 17 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions on this statement, 73% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference between the responses from different levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 9.11, p < .05$ ), which suggests that a significant difference may exist between two or more of the four levels. The Mann-Whitney *U* tests indicated significant differences between the central level and school level ( $U = 10.5, p < 0.05$ ), and the education authority level and the school level ( $U = 14.0, p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 17: Respondents Views on “The MEHRD, Not Having Devised or Implemented Any Specific Mechanism to Monitor and Evaluate Whether or not CHSs are Achieving Their Aims.”**

Levels	N	“The MEHRD has not yet devised or implemented any specific mechanism to monitor and evaluate whether or not CHSs are achieving their aims.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	5	56	1	11	2	22
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	3	43	-	-	2	29
School	9	7	78	2	22	-	-	-	-
Community	6	3	50	2	33	1	17	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>

#### **4.4.3 Other Benefits for Having CHSs**

Besides the five main reasons for establishing CHSs discussed in Research Question 1, participants mentioned four additional benefits that have ensued in having CHSs.

Firstly, as was alluded to in Section 4.2.1 under Research Question 2, the third internal force which expedited the establishment of CHSs was the feeling that they were better placed to enhance the teaching and learning of the local culture, languages, and other non-formal activities for their communities by utilising the staff and infrastructure available. Participants mentioned that this was already being undertaken in some CHSs. For example, an agriculture teacher from a CHS in the Western Province reported that he conducted a vegetable gardening course for a group of women from the local community in 1999. In addition, a teacher from a Guadalcanal Province CHS said that his school, the board and the surrounding communities have agreed to use school facilities to conduct vocational training courses for the local community. He felt that with their existing staff, the school could undertake such a favour to the community who have supported the school. He believed that they could offer practical courses in mechanics, woodwork, agriculture, fishing techniques, simple bookkeeping, home economics, and literacy. However, the researcher could not find any evidence of local knowledge being used in schools during the fieldwork, if these were taken to mean using knowledgeable people from the community to teach the local cultures and languages. Participants who spoke on this issue felt that the MEHRD needed to formulate clear policies on this issue before it could be implemented.

Secondly, participants mentioned that having both the secondary and the primary school together provided the opportunity for teachers and both sections of the school to collaborate, and share skills and resources wherever possible. A primary school headmaster applauded the opportunity given to his teachers to help out at the secondary level after undergoing an upgrading course (SITUP). He said that it helped familiarize them with the secondary curriculum, which they previously had no idea

about, and added that it would also help them in their understanding of the interface between the senior primary and junior secondary syllabus.

Thirdly, the opportunities provided by CHSs to students for further education was acclaimed by participants bearing in mind that they would have been pushed out of the system at standard six. For example, a CHS board chairman from the Western Province, commented that, if there had been no CHS these students would have already been pushed out of the formal education system and left to roam around the villages and towns. In addition, a primary school headmaster mentioned that some CHS students who have progressed to Form 4 in a PSS or NSS have fared well with their counterparts, and added that their abilities would not have been realised if CHSs were not introduced. Furthermore, a participant from the Central Province, mentioned that the increased numbers of students leaving at Form 5, brought about by more CHSs expanding to this level has resulted in the SICHE raising the education level of entrants into Certificate Programmes from Form 3 to Form 5. In the same vein, a participant from Isabel Province pointed out that RTCs now tend to enrol Form 3 rather than Standard 6 leavers. On the whole, participants felt that CHSs have contributed to improving the quality and the level of entrants into the country's only tertiary institution and RTCs.

Fourthly, provincial level participant highlighted that CHSs tend to successfully end the academic year compared to boarding secondary schools that often had to close early because of lack of funds to purchase food supplies to feed students. Similarly, a CHS board chairman from Guadalcanal Province reported that, at the height of the ethnic conflict in 1999 and 2000, his CHSs remained open. In comparison, a nearby PSS and a CHS both being built under World Bank funding have had to close because of their heterogeneous student population and location away from communities, and so lack support from the surrounding communities. In the case of the World Bank-funded CHS, he said that it remain closed as it was damaged and looted by militants.

#### 4.4.4 Discussion

The data not only indicate the CHSs have achieved their goals but participants also highlighted that there were four associated benefits which have ensued in having CHSs.

With regard to achieving the goals of establishing CHSs discussed in Chapter1, the data revealed that the access rate into secondary schools increased from a mere 26% in 1994 to 69% in 2000. The data also indicate an increase in the secondary access rate of females from 37% to 45% for the same period, while the number of secondary school places within each province has also been increased (MEHRD Statistics, 2002). A noteworthy aspect was also the fact that, these were achieved without any significant increases to government spending in education, largely because of the overwhelming support from parents and communities for CHSs. The data revealed that the unit cost of educating a child in a CHS could be two to three times cheaper in some cases. The data also indicate that the justification for establishing CHSs in order to encourage parents and community participation in secondary education was achieved. In addition, communities value and have a sense of ownership for their schools. This is in line with Peter R. C. Williams' (in Bray, 1987a) point "... that people value services more highly and take a stronger interest in the nature of the services when they directly contribute finance or labour, however small in amount" (p.7).

In terms of other benefits from having CHSs, firstly, they showed that they were indeed better placed to enhance the cultural and non-formal education and training needs of communities by making available their facilities and resources for such use. The desire to give something back to the community in return for their strong support should be commended and encouraged as a matter of policy because this will auger well for the ongoing success of CHSs. Moreover, the opportunities bought about by CHSs to teachers and students alike in furthering their skills and education is laudable. Similarly, the transformation brought about by CHSs in enabling the rationalisation of scarce resources between the primary and secondary sections could prove more cost-effective for the schooling system as a whole. The ability of CHSs

to successfully complete the school year without relying too much on government financial assistance or close down due to a crisis such as the recent ethnic conflict is a positive aspect for the long-term management and financing of education and children's learning.

Regrettably though, after nearly eight years of operation, the MEHRD had not made any specific attempts to monitor and evaluate the achievements of CHSs. Without this, the accomplishments of an education system, which has long been associated with crisis, failures, and frustrations, will go unnoticed. This would be unfortunate because although CHSs cannot be the panacea for all the ills of the secondary schooling system, it seemed an exciting, bold and innovative experiment since independence, which can contribute to realising some of its ideals (ADB, 1998; SIG, 2000). The MEHRD therefore, needs to undertake continuous monitoring, and carry out a review of the CHSs with the view to highlight achievements and identify key issues and weaknesses, and from which further planning for consolidation and expansion could proceed (Bhindi, 1987; Conyers, 1981; Fiske, 1996).

**4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION 5: WHAT WERE THE FINANCIAL AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT FOR CHSs FROM LOCAL AND EXTERNAL SOURCES, WERE THESE SUFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE, AND WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT?**

**4.5.0 Introduction**

This Research Question examines local and external sources of funding and other kinds of support for CHSs, particularly the six schools involved in the study. It also considers the question of whether such forms of financial support were sufficient and sustainable as well as investigating the impact of parent and community involvement. The local financial sources and other forms of support were those coming from the central government, education authorities, elected representatives, schools fees and levies, and contributions in cash or kind from parents and communities. The external forms of assistance were those from the World Bank and aid donors. To obtain the necessary qualitative data, interviewees were asked Interview Question No. 10 during the interviews (see Appendix 3). Pertinent data gathered from participants' responses to Interview Questions 11, 12, 13 and 14 (see Appendix 3) also expounded the different sources and levels of financial support and other contributions, and concerns over funding adequacy and sustainability. Overall, the data reveal that, the main financial support and contributions for the four community supported CHSs in the study came from the central government, education authorities, school fees and levies, and parents and communities contributions.

**4.5.1 Financial and Other Kinds of Assistance to CHSs from Local Sources**

Firstly, 73% of interviewees mentioned that, since 1995, central government grants to the community supported CHSs was SI\$50 000 per annum for a single stream school of 35 students per class or SI\$80 000 per annum for a double stream CHS with 70 students per class. Participants could not recall how these levels of government

grants were determined. However, these were paid directly by the MEHRD into the schools' bank accounts on a quarterly basis to assist with the smooth progress of work on building classrooms and staff houses. As for the two study CHSs established through World Bank assistance, principals of both schools pointed out that they were not entitled for these grants because all their physical infrastructure, furniture, equipment, materials, and textbooks were already supplied under the project. In addition, they said that, following the commissioning of all the facilities the central government handed over the new schools to their respective education authorities, who should then be allocating operation grants to them in the usual manner. Apart from providing grants, the government is also responsible for providing teachers and their salaries, as well as educational materials and textbooks. With reference to the seemingly arbitrary determination of the level of government grants, a high-ranking MEHRD official, stated that:

Presently, there is no formula to determine the correct level of grants paid to CHSs. I think what has been done in the past was to pay each CHS a lump sum of \$50 000 for a single stream or \$80 000 for a double stream school. We have to move out of this and pay according to unit costs on the number of pupils and teachers in a CHS.

One of her colleagues confirmed that a new formula was developed with the proposed *Education Strategic Plan 2000 – 2004* which took into account the recommendations of a World Bank (2000) report on '*A Community Standard for School Financing*' (primary and secondary schools) scheduled for implementation in 2003. He remarked that the report provided the MEHRD with a realistic picture of secondary education unit costs. He added that the report also recommended that the two main parties to finance education would be the government, contributing 70% toward costs and 30% by the parents and communities. He also reported that the provincial education authorities have not been mentioned as a party in this funding formula because they barely generate much additional income, and mainly rely on grants from the central government.

Secondly, the MPG&RD, which pays each provincial education authority annual grants for their primary schools and PSSs does not pay annual grants to CHSs as these were paid directly to each school's bank account by the MEHRD. The implication of these arrangements were that any pecuniary support from an education authority to their CHSs would either be derived from their own revenues or as is often the case, reallocated from the central government grants earmarked for their primary and PSSs. Therefore, the majority of participants believed that whatever grants being paid to CHSs by church or provincial education authorities were not bona fide financial assistance from them. For example, a provincial assembly member from the Western Province, stated that:

The annual grant from the province was in fact part of the service grants paid to it by the central government. When the grants get to the province, it re-allocates the grants to CHS so it is not actually a grant from the province. It is central government funds and there was no special funds raised by the province for CHS.

However, participants mentioned that despite their limited financial resources, some education authorities made an effort to assist their CHSs. One such example is Isabel Province, which allocated approximately SI\$156 000 during the 2000 financial year for its three CHSs. A senior provincial administrator mentioned that these grants have been reallocated from their budget, and included central government grants and locally generated funds. For the 2000 financial year, a provincial interviewee revealed that one of the CHSs was allocated SI\$5 000 per month while the other two smaller CHSs each receive SI\$4 000 per month. She also pointed out that this budget line is an annual allocation in the province's budget.

In comparison, the Western Province only allocates a total of SI\$50 000 or SI\$5 000 per annum for each of its 10 CHSs. During the interviews, a provincial politician felt that this allocation was too small and needs to be reviewed. Furthermore, he mentioned that because of cash flow problems, CHSs may not receive any grants at all. A CHS principal recalled that only one payment of SI\$5 000 was made to his school since it started in 1996.

As was the case in the Western Province, a Central Province participant mentioned that his province also pays SI\$5 000 each to its six CHSs per year. Besides, he mentioned that there is a SI\$10 000 allocation for those CHSs, which were still undergoing construction, but upon completion this budget line is abolished, and the school resorts to the SI\$5 000 annual allocation. He added that as with other provinces, payment of the grants to CHSs depends on the province's cash flow situation. During the interviews, a CHS principal mentioned that the province still owes two years worth of grants for his school.

The situation for Guadalcanal Province was such that both the principal and the school committee chairperson told the researcher that the province has not paid any grants to their school since it was established in 1998. A school committee member quoted the sum of SI\$50 000 being promised by the province for the school since 1998 but yet to be received. However, both of them felt that the failure by the province to pay its grants to schools could be due to the ethnic conflict, which was at its height during the time, resulting in the closure of nearly all schools within the province. Nonetheless, JES believed that, even at the best of times, the figure of SI\$50 000 per annum in grants would be somewhat benevolent considering the province has a total of 7 CHSs.

With regard to the church education authority responsible for one of the CHSs under the study, a participant revealed that as an education authority, the church does not provide annual grants to its CHSs. However, he mentioned that the education authority's main contribution is in the form of land where the school is located. He also said that in 1999, they assisted the school, as a one-off case, with SI\$30 000 to meet the shortfalls from school fees when many students withdrew due to the escalation of the ethnic crisis in Honiara. At the same time, he said that there was an influx of students who enrolled at the school due to the closure of many schools outside Honiara but the majority of these students were unable to pay their school fees. Another participant confirmed receipt of the money and reiterated that the education authority does not have an annual allocation of grants for his school. On

the whole, he stated that, as an education authority, the church has very little financial input to the school but could assist whenever required.

The third local funding source received by some CHSs was through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from the national MP or the Ward Development Fund (WDF), for which the provincial member is responsible. As these are basically discretionary funds for the respective elected representatives to utilise as they see fit, there is no guarantee that CHSs would get any of these funds. However, some CHS principals reported having received financial support through the CDF funds from their MPs. For example, a former CHS principal in the Western Province reported that his CHS had benefited a lot from the MP's CDF grants. In addition, a national MP also mentioned having allocated some of his CDF towards the building of classrooms, staff houses, and the general upgrading of facilities for two CHSs in his electorate during the past two years. Another colleague of his told the researcher that he would allocate about SI\$20 000 from his CDF for the only CHS in his electorate to purchase building material for classrooms or staff houses.

Fourthly, all of the six CHSs in the study charge schools fees within the SI\$400 – SI\$600 range including varying amounts of other levies for work fines, building fund, caution fee and uniforms. In this regard Bishop Epalle CHS charges SI\$600 per child per annum for school fees and imposes a SI\$20 fine on parents who fail to turn up for compulsory work scheduled on the first Saturday of each month. In addition, the school charges new parents a fee of SI\$240 to compensate for the contributions made by past and present parents in putting up the existing facilities at the school. Bishop Epalle has a total roll of 280 students, and so school fees would provide an annual revenue of about SI\$168 000. Gizo, its sister CHSs in the Western Province comprised the same number of classes in Forms 1 to 5 but charges SI\$550 for school fees which would generate SI\$154 000 in revenue for the school. However, unlike Bishop Epalle, Gizo CHSs does not levy any additional fines or other charges.

The community-supported schools at Guguha, Jejevo/Visena and McMahon are double stream CHSs up to Form 3 and assuming that there were 35 students per class,

their total enrolment would be about 210 children each. Given that all three charge the sum of SI\$400 per annum for school fees, this would provide a total of SI\$84 000 per annum. However, Guguha and Jejevo/Visena would earn an additional SI\$21 000 each from a building fund charge of SI\$100 per child. On the other hand, Kulu CHSs on Guadalcanal is a single stream school up to the Form 3 level and charges SI\$500 per child per annum for school fees as well as SI\$80 compulsory charge for school uniforms. Given that it has 105 students, SI\$52 500 would be earned from school fees and a further SI\$8 400 from school uniforms.

Fifthly, the majority of participants mentioned that the financial support from parents and communities through fundraising activities and other contributions in terms of availing their labour, time, and building materials such as timber, sand and gravel free of charge have proved most invaluable to the development of CHSs. Commensurate with the spirit of establishing these kinds of schools, a MEHRD official, highlighted that the Ministry had expected a high level of input from the community from the start but was quite uncertain as to how well this would be received. As it turned out, in most cases, he stated that:

It is amazing that the communities were able to start a CHS almost totally on their own. The government's grant assistance to CHSs was only to subsidize the tremendous and overwhelming effort given by communities.

Another MEHRD official agreed that in comparison to the grants from the central government and education authorities the value of the contribution from the parents and the communities was enormous but is yet to be quantified. His colleague commented that if a monetary value were to be placed on what the communities have contributed, it would amount to more than what the central government provided by way of grants. Another MEHRD colleague of theirs contended that the parents and the communities were the main financial contributors to CHSs through school fees, fundraising, and by giving freely of their own time and labour to build the schools.

However, a provincial level participant pointed out that just as there were disparities between the levels of education authority grants to CHSs, the same can also be said for the level of support rendered to CHSs by parents and communities. He attributed this to such factors as location, the availability of physical resources and economic opportunities within the different communities, and most importantly the quality of leadership shown by the principal regardless of where the school is located. He explained that firstly, a particular community may be well endowed with resources such as timber, gravel and sand suitable for building while communities living on atoll islands with an abundance of coconuts might produce copra in order to earn money to purchase all their building materials. He said that they lack the natural or forest resources that are readily available to communities living in the larger volcanic islands. Secondly, the ability of communities to raise sufficient funds will inevitably vary due to the economic potential of different areas of the country. People in some areas have the opportunity to earn more cash than others, for example, most areas in the northern part of rural Guadalcanal can raise more funds during their fundraising given their proximity to Honiara compared to those living in Isabel Province.

#### **4.5.2 Financial Assistance to CHSs from External Sources**

The two study CHSs being built through World Bank assistance under the TETP were Bishop Epalle and Gizo. A MEHRD official estimated their total costs at about SI\$1.8m and SI\$2m respectively for their physical infrastructure and a further SI\$1m each for classroom furniture and staff houses, textbooks, educational materials and equipment. As for the other four study CHSs, which were established predominantly through parent and community support, participants have not mentioned any additional financial assistance to them from other external sources. However, other informants told the researcher that some CHSs in other parts of the country have been able to secure aid funds from donors such as Japan and New Zealand. For example, an MP revealed that he receives some external funding from the Japanese Government for a new classroom in one of his CHSs. New Zealand assistance to some CHSs, and for similar purposes, was made available through its small grants scheme, administered directly by the High Commission in Honiara.

#### **4.5.3 The Sufficiency and Sustainability of Grants and Other Forms of Assistance from Local Sources**

Approximately 98% of participants mentioned that central government grants were insufficient and unsustainable. For example, a senior MEHRD official, felt that the grants were too small and need to be increased. However, he revealed that, even at current levels, schools were not even getting their full allocation, if at all. He stated that:

In 1999, all the 74 CHSs shared about SI\$2m allocated in the budget between them. So, in reality, they were all being allocated about SI\$27,000 but end up receiving only SI\$15,000.00 to SI\$20,000.00 per school. This makes the government grants even more insignificant.

In addition, another official from the MEHRD confirmed that the government had been struggling to pay the grants due to its ongoing cash flow problem. He said that the situation has got worse so it could only manage to pay less than half of the total allocations each year, and after long delays. He further mentioned that the initial allocations were affordable when the first 50 CHSs were established between 1995 and 1997. Currently, he observed that there were more than 90 CHSs but the annual allocation in the budget remained at \$2m, despite the MEHRDs incessant requests to increase it. Therefore, he believed that the current budget to assist the CHSs was no longer sufficient and sustainable. This was supported by participants from all levels including principals of the four community supported CHS. The principals reported that given the government's chronic cash flow problems they have unable to collect their grants in full for the last three years. This was confirmed by HV an official in the MOF. She stated that:

In terms of grants to CHSs for 1998 to 2000 the overall provision in the recurrent budget remained at SI\$2m. In my experience of processing payments to CHSs, the highest payment would be SI\$25 000 or less. Also since 1999, the Minister of Finance imposed a 10% reservation on all 'other charges' including the education grants. That means the government held back 10 percent of that provision for 1999 and 2000.

Suffice to say that, owing to the government's financial constraints the reality was that most CHSs have only been getting half or less of the grants allocated to them. This situation seemed destined to deteriorate due to the effects of the ethnic crisis.

Secondly, the majority of participants felt that grants from education authorities were not only inconsistent but were also insufficient and unsustainable. The view expressed by an official from the MEHRD that, education authorities have limited sources of income to supplement the grants provided by the central government was widely held by participants. Therefore, they were unable to provide sufficient grants or even to sustain the meagre amounts they were supposed to pay their CHSs. Given this situation, calls from many participants for education authorities to provide more funds to assist their communities were unlikely to be realised soon.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*CHSs establishment has been blocked by financial constraints, long delays, non-payment, low and unrealistic levels of central and provincial government grants*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 3). Table 18 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 94% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 10.53, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests indicated significant differences between the central and the school level ( $U = 11.5, p < .05$ ), and the school and community level ( $U = 10.5, p < .05$ ).

**Table 18: Respondents' Views on "The Establishment of CHSs Being Blocked by Financial Constraints, Long Delays, Non-payment, Low and Unrealistic Levels of Central and Provincial Government Grants."**

Levels	N	"CHSs establishment has been blocked by financial constraints, long delays, non-payment, low and unrealistic levels of central and provincial government grants."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	6	67	1	11	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	4	57	-	-	-	-
School	9	7	78	2	22	-	-	-	-
Community	6	1	17	5	83	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

Thirdly, other forms of local financial assistance to CHSs derived from the electorate's MP were sporadic and unpredictable. These are not only reliant upon the central government paying the MPs but it is also their discretion to decide on whether or not to allocate some of it to CHSs in their constituency. In practice, not all MPs allocate a portion of their CDF entitlements to CHSs, and none of the schools involved in the study have reportedly benefited from this source or from the provincial members WDF.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*The establishment of CHSs has been hindered by the lack of financial support from national MPs and Provincial Assembly Members*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 4). Table 19 shows that, of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions on the statement, 68% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference between the responses from the different levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 13.26, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney *U* tests indicated significant differences between the central and the school level ( $U = 7.0, p < .05$ ), and the central and community level ( $U = 2.0, p < .05$ ).

**Table 19: Respondents' Views on "The Establishment of CHSs Being Hindered by Lack of Financial Support From National MPs and Provincial Assembly Members."**

Levels	N	"The establishment of CHSs has been hindered by the lack of financial support from national MPs and Provincial Assembly Members."									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	-	-	2	22	2	22	5	56	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	3	43	-	-	1	14	1	14
School	9	4	44	4	44	1	11	-	-	-	-
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

Fourthly, funds derived from school fees and other charges appeared to be the main source of funds that have greatly assisted CHSs in meeting their development and operating costs. However, as has been discussed above, the varying amounts of school fees charged by CHSs reflected the levels deemed by school boards to be an acceptable and affordable level for that particular locality. A central level participant pointed out that, communities in rural or remote parts of the country cannot afford to pay high levels of school fees as those in urban areas or those with access to some kind of income generating activities. Nonetheless, seeing that the school fees for each school are determined according to the level thought to be affordable for parents in the area, all six CHSs involved in the study do not appear to have any problems in collecting their school fees. Therefore, it can be said that the current level of school fees and other charges paid by parents were sufficient and sustainable.

Fifthly, as has been discussed above, the majority of interview participants believed that the contributions to CHSs from parents and communities through fundraising activities, and providing their labour and building materials free of charge has been the major source of assistance which has greatly contributed to the ongoing development and success of CHSs.

To assist in determining the adequacy and sustainability of the support from parents and communities, Interview Question No. 13 (see Appendix 3) was put to participants during the interviews. Overall, 82% of participants mentioned that parents and communities have contributed more than the government and education authorities to their CHSs. Furthermore, a central level interviewee stated that this support from parents will continue mainly because they know that the school belongs to them. Respondents from the six CHSs involved in the study also reported sufficient and very strong support from their parents and communities. For example, a principal of a CHS was certain "... that this will be forthcoming for a long time to come."

On the whole, the questions of sufficiency and long term sustainability regarding the financial and other forms of support to CHSs from the five local sources identified above could also be deduced from participants' responses to Interview Question No. 14 (see Appendix 3). In response, approximately 63% of participants agreed that financial assistance to CHSs should be increased, particularly from the government and education authorities. However, they were also quick to point out that they could not see how the education authorities can increase their grants unless the central government increases its education grants to them as they hardly raise any additional revenue themselves. On the central government's part, a senior MEHRD official, urged the introduction of the new funding formulas and for grants to be provided on a unit cost basis. He believed that this would be an appropriate way of ensuring that each student's education has been subsidised fairly by the government. In the end, participants confirmed that the only viable and reliable partners with the government regarding the financial and other assistance to CHSs were the schools themselves with parents and communities.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*CHSs establishment and operation of CHSs has been helped by the strong financial, physical, and material support provided by parents and communities*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA, Item No. 15). Table 20 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 81% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis

of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 3.24, ns$ ).

**Table 20: Respondents' Views on "The Establishment and Operation of CHSs Being Helped by the Strong Financial, Physical, and Material Support Provided by Parents and Communities."**

Levels	N	"CHSs establishment and operation of CHSs has been helped by the strong financial, physical, and material support provided by parents and communities."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	3	33	5	56	1	11	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	5	71	2	29	-	-	-	-
School	9	4	44	2	22	2	22	1	11
Community	6	2	33	2	33	2	33	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

With regards to both multilateral and bilateral donor funding to CHSs, participants mentioned that these were either part of one-off national education projects or assistance that could be sourced by individual and enterprising schools with the help of their leaders at higher levels of the hierarchy.

#### **4.5.4 The Impact of Parent and Community Involvement and Contributions**

The foregoing data indicate that participants were convinced of the positive impact of the involvement and contributions from parents and communities for CHSs. They felt that they have been the most dependable basis for the success of CHSs, not only during the establishment phase, but also for their ongoing operation. However, in order to ascertain the impact of the involvement and contributions from parents and communities for CHSs, particularly during the period they were being built, Interview Question No. 11 (see Appendix 3) was put to participants during the interviews, and the final part of the question was most pertinent in this instance. In response, 96% of the interview participants spoke in favour of the overwhelming cooperation,

contributions and support from parents and the communities for their CHSs. On the other hand, they lamented the non-payment or delays experienced in receiving the grants from both the central government and education authorities. They also expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of regular visits from MEHRD and provincial education officers to schools to offer appropriate advice, despite the proximity of the latter group to CHSs. In this regard, the following comment from a central level participant characterises comments from the majority of participants. He stated that:

The grants from government and education authorities were not sufficient and were rarely paid on time. Sadly, although the provincial education officers are closer to the CHSs, most of them do not visit the schools regularly. I believe that the success of CHSs was because of the cooperation, hard work, and involvement of the parents and communities. They contributed their labour and materials to build the classrooms, staff houses and other buildings for their respective CHSs.

Furthermore, a MEHRD official emphasised that in the process of assisting their CHSs, parents and communities also experienced financial and other difficulties just as the central government and education authorities do. Nonetheless, she highlighted that the difference was that they were committed to continue assisting their schools. A principal of a CHS was adamant that the responsible education authority had nothing to do with her school. She stated that:

It had nothing to do with the school. I am not saying it could not be bothered but there was just nothing it could do. This was the parents' initiative and a parents' school. From the beginning, when this school started up to now it was marvellous. Money came from overseas but it was the manpower from parents that put these buildings up, clean the place, and all that sort of thing. They were really tremendous.

It would seem that, one of the factors, which may have influenced such strong support from parents and the communities, would be their wish for local control of their CHSs.

In order to find out whether this factor played a role in their strong involvement and contribution to CHSs, Interview Question No. 12 (see Appendix 3) was put to participants. More than 60% of participants mentioned that the desire for local control of the school was not a factor in determining the success in establishing CHSs or the level of support rendered by parents and communities. For instance, a participant from the central level explained that:

I don't think that the success of CHSs so far depends on the wish for local control by communities. The success was really something that came about as a result of the demand for secondary education. It is that demand that forces them to participate, and it is that which creates the success of CHSs in my view. That kind of overwhelming support comes in naturally.

Overall, a senior MEHRD official was convinced that community support was at the core of the ongoing survival of any CHS. He reiterated that the parents and communities have a strong sense of ownership for their schools and also derive great pride in knowing that they are contributing to the education of their children. He believed that these were the important ingredients for CHSs to succeed. Otherwise, it has no future and will fail. Participants from all levels supported his comments.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*The establishment and operation of CHSs has been helped by the feeling of ownership by parents and communities for their schools.*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA: Item No. 11). Table 21 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions on this statement, 97% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant differences of views on the statement among respondents at different levels of the education system ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 1.83, ns$ ).

**Table 21: Respondents' Views on "The Establishment and Operation of CHSs Being Helped by the Feeling of Ownership by Parents and Communities Towards Their Schools."**

Levels	N	"The establishment and operation of CHSs has been helped by the feeling of ownership by parents and communities towards their schools."					
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	4	44	5	56	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	5	71	2	29	-	-
School	9	7	78	1	11	1	11
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

#### 4.5.5 Discussion

The data reveal that education, and educational decentralisation in particular is an expensive undertaking and requires provisions of adequate financial resources for its successful implementation (Bhindi 1987; Rondinelli, 1981, Gannicott & McGavin, 1987). This fact needs to be taken into account in establishing CHSs. CHSs experienced difficulties in getting sufficient funds from the government and education authorities not only during the establishment process, but also for operating costs and instructional materials, which will weaken the quality of education they offer (World Bank, 2000).

Overall, the data reveal that the establishment and operation of CHSs has been impeded by financial constraints manifested in long delays, non-payment, or low and unrealistic levels of central and provincial government grants. In the case of education authorities, their perceived lacklustre support was a cause for concern because, as the education authorities responsible, they should be at the forefront in the task of establishing CHSs. On the central government's part, the need to introduce the new community standard for school financing would be a more realistic and fairer manner upon which subsidising education costs should be based (World Bank, 2000). For all parties however, chronic financial constraints calls for more careful forward

planning to ensure that decentralisation and the establishment of CHSs proceeds systematically and in accordance with prioritised needs. Scarce financial resources call for more efficient management of their use, and as previously discussed, points to the need for monitoring the progress and performance of initiatives such as CHSs directly related to educational decentralisation (Bhindi, 1987).

Although it might be correct to assume that the benevolence of external donors could be relied upon, these were usually few and far between as they are largely reliant upon the capacity and skill of educational administrators in preparing and submitting project proposals for external funding. In most cases, it is reasonable to accept the proposition from some participants that donors tend to support one-off mini projects which are potentially visible, and for which proposals were clearly and attractively presented and in timely submissions. However, the availability of finance or the lack of it could not form the sole basis of educational decentralisation as manifested in CHSs, without distorting its direction. This inherent danger calls for negotiation of external funding support predicated on clear policies and programmes of the government and not those advocated by donors.

The overwhelming impact of the involvement and contributions from parents and communities in the establishment of CHSs revealed a potential source which has not been previously realised by the MEHRD in financing secondary education. It would seem fair to suggest that the government should now focus on harnessing and enhance this partnership by developing clear policies and programmes for CHS development with communities (World Bank, 2000). This is because government spending on education is unlikely to increase in real terms in the near future, so the students and their families and the wider community may have to be asked to bear a greater share of the costs of education. It is true that the equity impact on poorer families has to be considered carefully, and there are sound economic arguments (derived from the notion of external or social benefits from schooling) why basic education should be substantially financed from the public purse. But public funding is limited and many parents, not all affluent, have been willing to pay fees to obtain decent schooling for their children. The income and expenditure survey carried out in 1999 as part of a

study to introduce *A Community Standard for School Financing* (World Bank, 2000) provides strong evidence that communities will help their local schools. The explosive growth of CHSs is further evidence. Thus, increased reliance on non-government funding does not simply mean raising fees paid by parents. It means finding ways to tap into community support. With help from all parties, Solomon Islands can move toward a challenging Community Standard for education.

#### **4.6 RESEARCH QUESTION 6: HOW ARE CHSs CURRENTLY BEING ADMINISTERED, AND WAS RELEVANT TRAINING PROVIDED FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING CHSs TO PREPARE THEM FOR THEIR NEW ROLES?**

##### **4.6.0 Introduction**

This research question has two main parts. Firstly, it will examine the functions carried out by the central, provincial, school and community levels towards CHSs compared to existing arrangements for control of secondary schools as explained in Chapter 1. The aim is to establish whether the manner in which CHS operations have evolved represented ostensible moves towards a more direct devolution of educational functions to the school and community levels by the central government in contrast to going through the education authorities as the second tier in the existing decentralisation structure. Of interest here is the question of the extent to which such moves can be regarded as examples of educational decentralisation. In addition, participants' perceptions of such arrangements and the issues that may have arisen in the process will be highlighted.

Secondly, this research question will determine if relevant training was provided to those responsible for managing CHSs such as provincial or church education officers, principals and school board or committee members in order to adequately prepare them for any additional responsibilities they may not have to previously contend with. Consequently, the kinds of training being provided and any other areas mentioned by these groups as important to adequately prepare them to manage their schools effectively will be identified. Discussions will be supported, wherever possible, by both qualitative and quantitative data.

##### **4.6.1 How are CHSs Being Administered?**

In exploring this question, participants were asked Interview Question No. 15 (see Appendix 3) during the interviews.

Responses from participants revealed some initial confusion at the lower levels as to who was actually responsible for CHSs. This was partly due the fact that, not only have people viewed the procedures for establishing CHSs departing from the existing norms, but they also perceived that some education authorities played a rather inadequate role throughout the establishment and operational stages amidst mounting support from parents and communities. Whilst some participants wanted to see increased parent and community involvement, 50% of interviewees who spoke on the issue also supported the need to maintain the *status quo* until the lower levels are equipped to assume more responsibilities for their schools through proper training. Overall, the data revealed that, apart from the overwhelming community support, and having more control over school funds and selection, there were no major differences in the management of CHSs compared to other secondary schools. With the advent of CHSs however, it appeared that the difference lies in the degree to which communities were presented with, and accepted the opportunity to play a more active role than they had previously undertaken at the secondary level.

#### **a) The Role of the Central Government for CHSs**

During the interviews, 50% of the interviewees mentioned that the central government continued to carry out its traditional roles for all schools, including CHSs. These include: granting final approval for establishing a CHS; providing grants; teachers; training; salaries; discipline; conditions of service; supplying educational materials and equipment; conducting school inspection; examinations, selection and monitoring; developing curriculum, and formulating overall policy and planning for the education sector. However, ten senior MEHRD officials and education authority officials stated that they would like to see the central government, through the MEHRD, play a facilitating role rather than imposing strict guidelines for the development of CHSs. They believed that this would dampen community enthusiasm and support, which would be detrimental to the development of CHSs in the long term. For example, a senior MEHRD official, stated that:

The government should not control CHSs nor should policies in relation to them be too rigid. Policies should act as general guidelines

and I think the people and CHSs have placed us in a situation where we have allowed this happen without us having to legislate. Without any legislation that role was quickly and quietly being played more effectively by the people.

Considering that more than 80 CHSs were built within five years, MB was referring to what many participants observed as the unrestrained manner in which CHSs have been established. However, another participant also from the MEHRD argued that this would not have been achieved if the criteria and guidelines for establishing CHSs were strictly imposed, as was the case in the World Bank's rigid requirements for establishing the five CHSs under the TETP. He also pointed out that such a community reaction advocates an important lesson for policy makers that the practice of applying the same criteria for all settings may not necessarily be the most suitable approach to implementing the development process in Solomon Islands. He reiterated that such policies and guidelines ought to consider the unique situations that exist in different communities throughout the country.

#### **b) The Role of Education Authorities for CHSs**

Participants' at the lower levels held mixed views of the role played by their provincial or church education authorities towards the establishment and operation of CHSs. Whilst participants from Isabel province were content that their education authority has adequately assisted them, participants from the school and community levels in the Western, Central and Guadalcanal provinces, including a Church run CHS in Honiara felt that their education authorities could do more to assist them. Some central level interviewees also shared their views. The two areas of contention by participants at the central, school and community levels concern the education authority's inability to provide additional grants and visits to schools to offer advice to teachers. For example, teacher from one of the CHS said that:

Some education authorities are playing their part well and others are not. There are some education authorities that are not actually playing an active role and simply depend on the central government grants and communities. So in a way, they are just there as controlling authorities but not actually involved in providing the actual finances, advice and assistance in running CHSs.

Despite the fact that the provincial education office is only a few hundred metres from the school, he added that the education officers would only turn up at the school when things go wrong. Besides, a CHS board chairperson in, complained about the provincial education officer's absences from board meetings. He stressed that his advice as an ex-officio member would have greatly assisted the board in their deliberations. In Guadalcanal Province, respondents from the school and community levels lamented the education authority officials' failure to visit the school since it was established in 1998 but felt that this was partly due to the ethnic crisis in the province. In the case of a church controlled CHS in Honiara, participants said that the education authority basically had very little input towards running the school.

In view of the foregoing, participants' felt that as the legally instituted bodies to oversee the establishment and operations of CHSs, education authorities must play a decisive and strong support role. These should include facilitating approvals for establishing CHSs; providing additional grants and advisory services; assisting in teacher recruitment, short-term training, and discipline and welfare. Participants felt that they should also ensure that CHSs are equipped with textbooks and educational materials and functioning well, assist in major maintenance work, and to develop a clear vision, policies, plans and guidelines pertaining to CHSs.

### **c) The Role of CHS Principals**

All the principals in the six study CHSs were experienced teachers who have held principal positions in a PSS or another CHS before being appointed to their current positions. Four were with their schools from the start, and two joined after their CHSs had been in operation for two years. The four pioneer principals recounted that following approval for the establishment of their CHS and their appointments, they had to firstly, liaise closely with the MEHRD, and their respective education authorities, primary school headmaster, school committee and communities. This was to determine the requirements for setting up the new CHS, taking into consideration the suitability of the proposed host primary school in terms of location, sufficient land for expansion, existing infrastructure and enrolments trends. Their

role included ensuring that the desire to establish CHSs in the area is a collective decision and that the parents and communities fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Once sufficient funds have been raised and the grants received, principals also oversee the construction of the staff houses and school facilities by parents and the community. During this period, the principals worked closely with their school committee or board members to prepare the school budget. This includes opening and operating a new school bank account with co-signatories from the school board, receive and account for grants and all school funds, and obtain approval for disbursements. Other tasks involved providing regular financial and progress reports to the MEHRD, education authority, school committee and parents, and liaise with the school committee and communities to plan and carry out fundraising activities. The principals highlighted that during the implementation stage, it is crucial that parents and communities are encouraged to maintain their level of support in terms of availing their labour and materials. It was further revealed that, depending on the availability of funds and the vivacity of parent and community support, this period could take between six months to three years before the first intake is enrolled.

Furthermore, the principals also mentioned that prior to enrolling their first intake, they also assisted provincial education officers in the recruitment of teachers. In addition, they had to order, purchase and collect the required textbooks and material, and carry out selection of pupils. With the help of his teachers and the primary school headmaster, it is also their responsibility to formulate new school policies, guidelines and procedures such as the school rules, student discipline, timetabling and resource use. Once pupils are enrolled, principals are then responsible for collecting school fees and include them in the budget as part of the school funds. At the time of our interviews, the six principals reported that after almost five years of operation, their schools are now beginning to settle down which allows them to focus on general school administration and procedural matters. However, much of their time was still being taken up by planning for further infrastructure development but more so for the four community-supported study CHSs than the two being built under the TETP.

From the interview data, it became apparent that the CHSs principals have also assumed the role of being the overall administrator for both the primary and

secondary, and even the kindergarten section of the school, in cases where these three levels exist on the same compound. Incidentally, the six principals in the study CHSs are sufficiently experienced to handle such situations well, but participants also pointed out that there were some CHSs with newly graduated and inexperienced principals who could not cope and had some difficulties.

#### **d) The Role of Parents and Communities**

Eighty percent of participants reiterated that from the outset, an imperative decision for parents and communities to make is that, in consultation with their school boards, they must agree with the idea of establishing the CHS in their area. Participants stressed that the initiative must come from them and once this consensus was reached, participants reiterated that parents and communities would be more forthcoming in performing their responsibilities.

In contrast to the first three levels, the list of responsibilities for parents and communities in running CHSs does not appear as exhaustive. Nonetheless, a senior MEHRD official, highlighted that this is the level at which the success of CHSs lie and where the bulk of the work was done. He stated that:

The responsibility for CHSs is in the hands of the parents and the communities. The province as the education authority responsible is simply to facilitate the approval of a CHS and the MEHRD simply gives the approval and a bit of assistance by way of grants. But most of the work is done by the communities by building the schools, and provide their land, labour and building materials freely. All this is community effort because they put in about 75 percent contribution whereas only about 25 percent comes from the MEHRD and the education authorities.

He was supported by an education officer from a church education authority. In relating his experiences, the education officer mentioned that the parents and communities through their school committees were responsible for nearly all areas of CHSs operation under his authority. In this way, he believed that CHSs receive more community support and are better run than the PSSs and NSSs because people have a sense of 'ownership' for their CHSs. Furthermore, he observed that this feeling of

ownership makes people have more concern for their CHS when something needs to be done unlike PSSs or NSSs where parents simply send their children, and the responsibility to look after them is left to the teachers and the controlling authorities. In view of such strong ownership feelings for CHSs by parents and communities, he is convinced that they need very little encouragement to carry out their responsibilities.

#### **4.6.2 The Extend to Which These Moves Can be Regarded as Examples of Education Decentralisation**

Insofar as the extent to which this can be regarded as an example of educational decentralisation, ten participants believed that the process that has evolved, and as described in the foregoing constitutes procedures in that regard. For instance, the school and the community levels have been relied upon by the MEHRD and education authorities to make decisions about when, where and how the schools were being built, who runs and can attend them and to some extent who teaches in them, and how the grants, fees and other funds are being spent.

Additionally, an official from the MEHRD reiterated that building, running and ownership of CHSs rests with parents and communities through their school committees and not the government. Evidently, parents and communities have taken on the challenge of doing something for themselves without much central control which resulted in their increased involvement in school administration, raising and controlling funds as the role of relevant education authorities became weaker or non-existent. In the process, a keen sense of ownership and attachment is embedded in their minds towards their CHSs. Inevitably, this has fostered genuine feelings of concern for their school and the desire to give their best and do all they can to develop it. It was revealed also that schools, parents and communities have worked hard and taken on board responsibilities they have not had to do before without having to wait for officials from the MEHRD or education authorities to visit or advise them on what to do. Another official from the MEHRD, describes this as follows:

The decentralisation process is shown particularly in the involvement of parents and the community. It is no longer the initiative of the education authorities or the government. The initiative is at full force down at the local level so, the energy and enthusiasm to contribute was generated locally. Decentralisation is not something that is actually forced to the lower levels in this particular case from the central level. The initiative comes from the people themselves who with their own energy are driving decentralisation through this particular case of establishing CHSs.

The sense of ownership by communities for their CHSs will naturally be accompanied by the feeling of power and control which led them to feel that they have the right to decide who attends the school as well as who gets recruited to teach in the school. The data revealed that the MEHRD and education authorities have allowed this to happen in recognition of the contributions from the community, and realizing also that any moves to do otherwise would adversely affect community support.

In spite of the foregoing, another participant also from the MEHRD, felt that much remains to be done in order for real decentralisation to occur. As has been discussed under Research Question 1, Section 4.1.5, the process has to be formalised under an MOU to officially recognise the efforts by schools and communities. Given the indications from the central government to hand over more power to the lower levels in the management of CHSs, it seems appropriate that the time is right for all parties to further the decentralisation process by formulating an MOU to realise this ideal.

#### **4.6.3 Participants' Perceptions of Current Administrative Arrangements**

In terms of their perceptions on how CHSs were being administered, 50% of participants agreed that the current arrangements were satisfactory. Whilst acknowledging that it is unrealistic to expect things to run smoothly in the initial stages, six participants were adamant that a start must be made now to increasingly involve the lower levels in the management of CHSs. A senior official from the MEHRD, summed up their views as follows:

There is nothing better than what is happening now. We cannot expect to get everything a 100 percent right in getting these schools operational but we have to start involving parents and communities to run CHSs.

Besides, participants argued that, given that the central government would not be in a position to have the financial, physical and human resources to provide secondary education for all its citizens in the foreseeable future, they believed that the best option for expanding secondary education opportunities is through the increased participation of parents and communities. Therefore, they were resolute in their belief that the time has now come to encourage communities to be actively involved in all facets of CHS development and decision-making and in particular, in their establishment, operation and maintenance.

The rest of the participants who have expressed reservations about the existing arrangements for managing CHSs did not disagree with the roles being played by the central government or parents and communities *per se* but rather, they were dismayed at the lack of commitment shown by some the education authorities towards their CHSs. Ten of the participants insisted that if existing education authorities cannot improve in performing their expected roles for CHSs, then their legal status as controlling authorities for CHSs should be withdrawn, and the responsibility be transferred to individual communities. In this way, they believed that there would be less confusion and bureaucratic red-tape involved in managing CHSs as the roles and responsibilities would be clearly divided between the central government and community levels. In this context, an official from the MEHRD, stated that:

There is a need for improvement, especially with regard to provincial education authorities. They rely too much on the central government and a lot more on the parents and communities. They should take a leading role in the actual running and coordinating the activities of CHSs. In fact, there are some advantages to the idea of withdrawing the education authority status of provinces and for the MEHRD to deal directly with the school committees or boards.

He added that this should clear some of the obstacles that have been experienced in going through provincial education authorities to purchase and deliver textbooks and materials to schools. He believed that dealing directly with the principals or school

committees would be more convenient because materials can be sent directly and quickly to schools. At the moment, he said that they have to go through the provincial education authorities and curriculum materials take longer to get to the schools, especially when dealing with money and the provincial bureaucracy.

#### **4.6.4 Relevant Issues Arising from the Existing Administration Arrangements**

Overall, participants wanted to see communities playing an increased role in managing their CHSs. At the same time however, 26% of participants were of the view that there are six related and important issues that needed be resolved to pave the way for a smoother transition towards attaining this goal.

Firstly, given the lack of adequate support by some education authorities and confusion at the lower levels regarding who was actually responsible for CHSs, a major issue raised by participants was the need to clarify the role of each party. However, some participants felt that this confusion may have little to do with acknowledging who the legally instituted education authorities were. They revealed that this signals a deliberate mark of rejection by communities against their provincial education authorities for failing to adequately fulfil their responsibilities towards the host primary schools for many years. They said that this view was reinforced by the way many communities bypassed their education authorities and dealt directly with the MEHRD during the consultation process for establishing CHSs as discussed in Research Question 3. In addition, the confusion was exacerbated by moves from the MEHRD in dealing directly with the schools and communities in the payment of school grants.

In view of this, participants from the education authority, school and community levels firmly believed that the best way to overcome all these confusion would be for all parties to formulate, as a matter of urgency, an MOU that would clearly delineate the role of each party in the administration of CHSs. A MEHRD official who supported this call added that a review of the role of provincial education authorities should also be undertaken. He felt that, in a case where communities are in a strong

position to become education authorities in their own right, amicable arrangements should be made with the existing provincial education authority to facilitate this.

The second issue was to do with interference from the board members and the community in what two participants believed should rightly be the responsibility of the CHS principal. The upshot of greater community participation and confusion has resulted in what a CHS principal described as board members and in particular, the chairman overstepping their mark. He reported that:

In some schools I have been to the chairman even went as far as going into the classroom to check what teachers are actually doing. I do not blame them because no one tells them where their line of responsibility ends. We urgently need some sort of guidelines in this area concerning the management and operation of CHSs which we can refer to so that we do not step on each others toes.

Such interferences on the responsibilities of the school management also come from parents and communities. Whilst supporting greater control of CHSs by communities, a participant from the education authority level, pointed out that parents' feeling of ownership of their CHSs could often be counterproductive. For instance, he reported that even if their children perform poorly in the SISC exams, parents feel they have the right to force the principal to enrol them at the school.

Thirdly, one of the most important issues mentioned by participants relates to the quality of leadership in some CHSs. Although this is not so much an issue for the six study CHSs, participants were concerned about the quality of leadership in some of the CHSs. Due to the shortage of teachers, the practice of appointing newly graduated secondary trained teachers or appointing the headmaster of the host primary school as principal of a CHS is quite common. A CHS principal highlighted the inadequacy of skills presently possessed by some of his colleagues to manage CHSs as being a major issue. A participant from the MEHRD agreed and felt that it was brought about by the fact that quite a number of the CHSs were under the leadership of comparatively very young and inexperienced graduates with no training in educational leadership and administration. The most common areas of weakness

by some CHSs principals identified by participants are in financial management, staff and school resource management, conflict resolution, and public relations and communications skill particularly in liaising with the education authority and the school committee and maintaining community support.

Fourthly, concern was being raised about the fact that most of the provincial education officers are former primary school teachers with limited knowledge about secondary school operations. Participants felt that, this could explain their reservations in offering advice to principals and teachers and the community about how CHSs should be managed. The researcher noted that except for the Central Province, the CEOs for Western, Guadalcanal, and Isabel provinces, including the education secretary for the church education authority in Honiara were former primary school teachers.

Fifthly, participants at the school and community level raised the issue of having one school committee for the primary and CHS, which appears to place more emphasis on developing the CHS rather than the primary school. All the CHSs in the study have the same school committee or board for the primary and secondary sections. However, the chairperson for a CHS mentioned that his committee initially considered the possibility of having two separate committees. He explained that:

The reason is that as far as I know, my committee only concentrate on the CHS, so we are sort of neglecting the primary part of the school. That is a disadvantage I see, especially during the first few years.

In view of the above, three primary school headmasters reported having gone through the same experience during the first three years of having a CHS established at their school. In the end however, they succumbed to the view that, on the long run, having one school committee was a better option. They considered that if they had two separate committees, they envisage conflicts and arguments to occur regarding the use of school resources and property. Therefore, they concluded that in order to maximise the utilisation of their physical and manpower resources and minimise the chances of conflict, it is more convenient to have one school committee. In spite of the fact that concerns about this issue may have diminished as CHSs become more

established, it is not to suggest that it will not recur. Hence, CHS principals, primary school headmasters and school committee members ought to be mindful of the potential disharmony it can cause.

The above issue is related to the sixth concern raised by participants where the alleged neglect or conflict with the primary school section could be intensified by the tendency of the CHSs principal to assume responsibility over the whole school. During the fieldwork, the researcher observed that this phenomenon existed for all the schools involved in the study. Interviews with the CHS principals and primary school headmasters in the six schools did not reveal any major problems in their current working relationships. However, a primary school headmaster pointed out that, as a new concept, some tensions were evident at the beginning but were sorted out as the two heads come to know each other. The headmaster of a primary school in another province also stated that since his primary school hosted a CHS, he has observed that the greater demands of the CHS in terms of equipment was likely to cause some discord. He felt that, this could be a problem, especially if CHS was seen to have a larger portion of the budget and resources when the same amount of effort is put into fundraising activities. An education officer felt that this is a valid concern because it raises the question of how the internal organization of CHSs and their host primary schools should be structured, which the MEHRD and responsible authorities have not yet seriously considered.

To order to obtain quantitative data to triangulate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*The management of CHSs has been frustrated by the lack of a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved.*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB: Item No. 8). Table 22 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 77% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 13.08, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney *U* tests indicated significant differences between the central and the community level ( $U = 16.0, p < .05$ ), education authority and school level ( $U = 6.0, p < .05$ ), education authority and

community level ( $U = 10.0, p < .05$ ) and school and community level ( $U = 4.0, p < .05$ ).

**Table 22: Respondents' Views on "The Management of CHSs Being Frustrated by the Unclear Delineation of Roles and Responsibilities."**

Levels	N	"The management of CHSs has been frustrated by the lack of a clear understanding by of the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Central	9	-	-	6	67	2	22	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	-	-	4	57	1	14	2	29
School	9	5	56	3	33	1	11	-	-
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

#### 4.6.5 Training for Those Responsible for Managing CHSs

The data used to respond to the issues of training for those responsible for managing CHSs, the kinds of training provided, and training needs identified as important was derived from participants' responses to Interview Question No. 16 (see Appendix 3). Relevant probes were also used get a description of the kinds of training being provided or required, and whether or not such training will be provided in future.

The data revealed 63% of participants mentioned that relevant training was not provided for those responsible for managing CHSs. They felt that many were inadequately prepared for their new roles, which impeded the effective management of CHSs. Nonetheless, three MEHRD participants mentioned that a short term training workshop and several long-term courses previously involved some CHS principals. However, no training was being offered to cater to the specific needs of provincial education officers, CHS principals and school committee members to assist them effectively manage CHSs. In view of this, 40% of interviewees suggested that training for these groups is required in such areas as developing effective pathways for the development of CHSs and self-development for educational managers, basic

principles of educational leadership and management, personnel management, effective financial management, managing the curriculum and resources, development and monitoring for school effectiveness, and the governance of schools.

**a) Previous and Planned Training Provided for CHSs Managers**

In 1996, shortly after the first nine CHSs were being established, a participant from the MEHRD mentioned a basic training course on school management was provided for CHS principals but as the number of CHSs grew, and funding became scarce, this was discontinued. However, another MEHRD official revealed that her division is in the process of providing some training workshops on financial management for CHS principals. For this purpose, a “*Finance Manual for Schools*” has been developed. She added that funding is being sought to include school committee chairpersons but did not mention the inclusion of provincial education officers. Furthermore, another MEHRD official mentioned that a review is currently underway for two other key documents namely; the *Teaching Service Handbook* and the *Educational Policy and Administration Handbook*. He stated that copies of these documents would be made given to all provincial education offices and schools to assist them in understanding their different roles in the management of CHSs and schools as a whole.

As for long-term training courses, he said that a number of initiatives have been discussed with the University of the South Pacific’s Extension Centre (USPSI Centre) in Honiara to enrol more CHS principals in the Diploma in Educational Administration programme. This follows the recent successful completion of the course by a number of education administrators, including some CHS principals. He also said that the MEHRD is working closely with the USP to launch a B.Ed in Educational Administration programme through extension. He revealed that enrolment into the programme would include CHSs principals and teachers who will not only to be trained as effective school managers but also to enable them to teach up to Form 5 level.

However, a provincial education officer pointed out that educational administrators and teachers experienced four basic difficulties in undertaking long-term courses through the extension mode. Firstly, he informed the researcher that the design and objectives of the programme might not be entirely relevant to the training needs of CHS principals. Secondly, he claimed that the timing of compulsory workshops for the course often coincided with periods of intense activity in the provincial education offices and schools. Therefore, course assignments and readings had to be completed under a lot of pressure. Some officers and principals who could not cope dropped out or performed poorly. Thirdly, he argued that the very brief period of tutor contact with course participants limited the opportunity for acquisition and application of new skills. Fourthly, the emphasis was usually placed on completing the course requirements within the time allocated.

In order to obtain quantitative data to triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*The management of CHSs has been impeded by the lack of training opportunities provided for those managing them to prepare them for their new roles*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 7). Table 23 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 80% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 10.95, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests indicated significant differences between the central and the community level ( $U = 11.5, p < .05$ ), education authority and the school level ( $U = 9.0, p < .05$ ), and education authority and the community level ( $U = 13.0, p < .05$ ).

**Table 23: Respondents' Views on "The Management of CHSs Being Impeded by the Lack of Training, and Training Opportunities."**

Levels	N	"The management of CHSs has been impeded by the lack of training, and training opportunities provided for those managing them to prepare them for their new roles."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Central	9	-	-	6	67	2	22	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	4	57	1	14	1	14
School	9	7	78	1	11	-	-	1	11
Community	6	3	50	3	50	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

**b) Training Needs Mentioned by Participants as Important for Those Managing CHSs**

In view of the foregoing, 20 participants insisted that in order for training to achieve the maximum desired impact for those responsible for managing CHSs, short-term training programmes should be provided. Furthermore, they highlighted that the design or selection of any training programme should be based on a systematic survey of the training needs of these three groups. During the interviews, some of the immediate needs that have been mentioned and for which urgent training was required are outlined below. These are put under seven categories with paraphrased comments from the interviews to give some indications as to why the participants considered these skills to be important.

**i) Developing Effective Pathways for CHSs and Self-Development for Educational Managers**

In recognition of the confusion and lack of vision and direction in the establishment and operation of CHSs, seven participants considered that training should be provided to assist in developing effective pathways for CHSs and well as for the managers themselves. The areas to be covered in such training should include: developing

school mission, values and objectives; styles of management; needs identification; job analysis, and time management.

## **ii) Basic Principles of Educational Management**

Ten participants from all four levels felt that sufficient training on the basic principles of educational management should be provided for provincial education officers, principals and school committee members to equip them with the necessary skills to manage CHSs properly. Furthermore, participants saw that education was developing at a fast pace in Solomon Islands through aid funded projects and the establishment of CHSs. Thus, these skills are needed to equip CHS managers to be able to identify achievements and constraints of their projects. Training should cover areas such as: an introduction to educational management; government organizations and functions; the education system, structure, policies and procedures; the functions of school management; the roles of school committees and boards; human and public relations; delegation in a school; communication and negotiation; decision-making; problem-solving; project management, and the management of change.

## **iii) Financial Management**

Thirty percent of participants considered the training of all three groups in financial management as very important because of recent moves by the MEHRD to pay grants directly to school bank accounts for which representatives from these groups are signatories. Furthermore, they are handling increased amounts of funds than ever before from school grants, fees, donations and fundraising as well as being responsible for budgeting and accounting for these funds. Participants suggested that training in this area should cover: identifying sources of school funds; school budgeting; mobilising school resources; basic framework and mechanism of financial management; expending and accounting for school funds, and auditing school accounts.

**iv) Personnel Management**

Eight central level participants saw this as an important area for training to be provided because teaching and non teaching staff needs to be encouraged, controlled and disciplined to achieve good and happy relationships. One of them felt strongly that members of the school committee needed to be aware of the procedure in this area to avoid them overstepping their mark, whilst playing a strong support role. Participants felt that training in this area should, *inter alia*, address issues such as: staff selection; staff development and training; staff motivation; staff appraisal; staff supervision and discipline; keeping staff records; conducting meetings and writing minutes, and conflict resolution.

**v) Managing the Curriculum and Resources**

Eleven participants from the four levels mentioned that all three groups were involved in the process of ordering and delivering textbooks and educational materials. In addition, principals mentioned that they have used the school committee chairman or members to place and follow-up their textbooks and equipment orders in Honiara or provincial centers during their busy periods. Another important consideration was the interest being expressed to include the teaching of local languages and culture in the formal curriculum. In order to assist provincial education officers, principals, and school committee members to appreciate the issues involved in the whole process, participants felt that training for them in this area should include: establishing the curriculum; curriculum development, trialling and implementation; timetabling; organizing resources to support the curriculum; selecting, ordering, delivering and managing textbooks and equipment; libraries, media, and low cost teaching aids; examinations, testing and record-keeping; resource maintenance; textbook replenishment policies, and finding financial resources.

**vi) Monitoring School Effectiveness**

In view of the concern expressed by participants regarding the inability of most provincial education officers to visit and advise CHS principals and staff due to their primary education background only as well as the appointment of some primary headmasters to become principals of CHSs, it was felt that the need for training in this area is important. Concern has also been raised about the school committee's lack of understanding in this area, especially when their initial roles were only for the host primary school but have now assumed responsibilities for CHSs as well. In order to equip provincial education officers, CHS principals and school committee members with the necessary skills to monitor school effectiveness, participants were of the view that training in this area should address a variety of topics. These include: indicators and characteristics of school effectiveness; the rationale for evaluation; evaluation techniques; research and investigation skills; planning a programme for evaluation; data collection and interpretation skills; report writing, and using evaluation findings. Participants stressed that these topics would enable these groups to evaluate and see achievements and weaknesses and make the necessary improvements in their CHSs.

**vii) The Governance of Schools**

Five central and eight education authority participants are convinced that this is an important area for training to be provided which will address some of the issues that are currently confusing people in the governance of CHSs. They also believed that cultures have a great influence on learning and working conditions in CHSs as provincial education officers, principals and teachers work schools where the communities are in close proximity and are actively involved unlike in boarding PSSs and NSSs. Training needs in this area should therefore cover topics on: cross cultural relationships; defining the parameters of school governance; legal basis for school governance; school managers and governing bodies; consultation, networking and relationships between schools, communities and other agencies; partners in school

management, and developing “Support Your School” campaign programmes to maintain community support for CHSs and education as a whole.

During the interviews, participants have mentioned some specific training needs to be offered to individual groups. However, the researcher decided to classify the training needs under the seven categories above for four main reasons. Firstly, most participants felt that training should be offered to the three parties as one group and not individual groups. Secondly, when training was offered to a specific group only, say principals, some provincial education officers mentioned that their advice to them is usually challenged as it may be contradictory to what MEHRD officials told principals at the workshops. Thirdly, it was felt that by attending training courses together, participating provincial education officers, principals and school committee members would be able to work together as a team. Fourthly, in organizing the training needs under these seven categories, it will be easier for the MEHRD or other training providers to develop them into modules and units so that course participants can choose to attend those modules and units which they feel are of value to them.

#### **4.6.6 Discussion**

The data suggest that management and training are key factors for the successful implementation of the CHS policy and educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands (Bhindi, 1987). Firstly, the data indicate the need for clear-cut policies and procedures as crucial in removing the confusions which exist about the responsibilities of each party (Coxon, 1996; Fiske, 1996), Govinda, 1997; Rondinelli, 1981). These were either non-existent or were ignored as in the case of education authorities. This not only highlighted the desirability of an MOU as discussed previously but the need to disseminate information about policies, procedures, and roles of and responsibilities to various parties who are either involved in or affected by educational decentralisation initiatives (Fiske, 1996). Since most MEHRD policies and procedures are dated, currently being reviewed or in a state of flux, a lack of knowledge about them is therefore not surprising. However, the lack of awareness

of roles and functions is a more serious issue since it has reportedly contributed to managerial inefficiency, confusion, and unnecessary tension (Bhindi, 1987).

The second issue is the need for far better coordination within the MEHRD and the exercising of more decisive leadership. Its absence has had a debilitating effect on the managerial capacity and efficiency within the MEHRD itself and schools. It has also contributed to inefficiency at the education authority levels as manifested in the variable quality of education officers, lack of adequate resources, and a dearth of professional skills. These issues reflect adversely on the competency of key players at all levels and have implications for their training (Bhindi, 1987).

In summary, the data suggest that efficient management and training are essential for the effective implementation of the CHS policy and educational decentralisation. They also underscore the importance of sound management policies, procedures and programming, knowledge of roles and responsibilities, and competent staff and decisive leadership.

#### **4.7 RESEARCH QUESTION 7: WHAT PLANS ARE IN PLACE BUILD NEW CHSs OR EXPAND EXISTING ONES, AND TO DECENTRALISE MORE FUNCTIONS FOR CHSs TO LOWER LEVELS?**

##### **4.7.0 Introduction**

This research question is aimed firstly, at finding out whether there are plans by the central government, education authorities or communities to build new CHSs or to expand existing ones. Secondly, it would determine whether the central government had any plans to decentralise more functions for CHSs to the lower levels. In examining this research question, participants were asked Interview Question No. 18 (see Appendix 3) during the interviews. The data revealed that plans are underway to build new CHSs whilst some existing ones have already been expanded to Forms 5. In addition, 70% of participants were in favour of decentralising more functions for CHSs to the lower levels. The data revealed that, this is the direction being contemplated by the government in its National Education Reform Plan (NERP) for 2001 – 2015.

##### **4.7.1 Plans to Build New CHSs**

After the initial explosion of establishing CHSs between 1995 and 1999, when about 85 schools were opened, an official from the MEHRD, stated that by the beginning of 2000, the government had limited the number of new CHSs to ten only. Of these, 4 were to be opened in Malaita, 3 in Guadalcanal and another 3 in the Western province. This was followed by a moratorium for opening any new CHSs a year later, pending the completion of an *Education Strategic Plan* for the period up to 2004. Work on the plan began in 2000, officials from the unit responsible for coordinating its formulation informed the researcher that the immediate goal is to maintain the delivery of education services during the post-conflict rehabilitation period from 2000 to 2004. However, they added that a significant outcome of the strategic plan will be the formulation of Provincial Education Action Plans (PEAPs) and the NERP throughout 2002 – 2004, which will detail comprehensive reform

programs to be implemented at the national, provincial and community levels up to 2015. One of the officials told the researcher that:

As far as the central government is concerned, a key priority for this period is to achieve universal access to nine years of basic education from standard 1 to Form 3, which indicates that new CHSs will have to be built.

Another MEHRD official pointed out that the Ministry was also determined to pursue the idea of establishing more CHSs throughout the country so that, eventually they will become the avenue for entry to secondary education. He explained that all standard 6 pupils would enter secondary schools via the CHSs, some existing PSSs, and NSSs with Form 1 classes, while the rest would become senior secondary schools with Forms 4 – 6 pupils only.

The data also revealed that there has been a strong desire from politicians, administrators, and education officials at the provincial and church education authority levels, and respective communities to establish new CHSs. A provincial politician from Isabel Province, said that he wanted to build three more new CHSs in his province while his colleague from the Central Province, planned to build four more. A participant from Guadalcanal Province, mentioned that the provincial authorities proposed to build six more CHSs before the ethnic conflict escalated in 2000, and politician from the Western Province, mentioned that when he was in the provincial executive, they wanted to establish six more CHSs throughout the province. The secretary of a church education authority informed the researcher that negotiations were underway with communities in Makira and Guadalcanal to establish one new CHS in each of these two provinces. Both the provincial politicians from Isabel and the Central provinces were anxious to establish their additional CHSs to achieve a 100% transition into lower secondary education for children within their provinces. However, they have expressed great disappointment at the delays caused by the MEHRD's move to freeze establishment of any new CHSs. The politician from the Central Province, said that:

In the Central Province, we plan to establish four more CHSs in the Wards that do not have one. We were going to open two this year but the MEHRD did not give us approval because of their new policy of no more CHSs. I do not know how long this suspension is going to be in place but it is causing a lot of frustration and disappointment to the province and the communities concerned.

Nonetheless, two senior MEHRD officials mentioned that provincial and church education authorities had been made aware of the government's plans through their involvement in formulating the strategic plan during 2000 - 2001. Furthermore, they said that all education authorities, schools and communities are going to be actively involved in the formulation of their PEAPs and the NERP which will keep them abreast of what is happening. MK told the researcher that the bulk of the consultative process with education authorities, schools and communities to further develop the PEAPs and the NERP will occur in 2003 – 2004.

#### **4.7.2 Expansion of Existing CHSs**

The data revealed that expansion of existing CHSs did occur but mostly by adding Form 4 - 5, rather than putting in additional streams of Forms 1 - 3. An official from the MEHRD revealed that this expansion gained momentum when the suspension on establishing new CHSs came into effect, which resulted in the expansion of about 22 existing CHSs to Form 5. He said that whilst the MEHRD's preferred option was for communities to build additional lower streams of Forms 1 – 3 classes to further increase access, parents and communities opted instead to expand their CHSs upwards. He explained that this is understandable because, children from the surrounding communities who strongly support the school would already have sufficient Forms 1 – 3 places. Hence, their parents would naturally want to focus their efforts in creating opportunities to gain upward mobility through the educational ladder for their children. He added that any further expansion at this level would entail constructing boarding facilities for children from other places which would not only contradict the 'day schools' policy for CHSs but in the long term, parents from

the immediate communities were strongly opposed to this because it would result in more work and worry for them. He believed that in time, parents and communities will not only want their CHSs going up to Form 5 but on to Form 6 or even Form 7 level. He gave an example of a CHS in Honiara that already wanted to have classes right up to Form 6 and said that this is “because it is every parent and community’s dream to have such educational opportunities for their children at their doorstep.” A CHS principal elaborated on this as follows:

Parents and the communities were desperate to provide more opportunities right here and now for their children, which perhaps they themselves have also been deprived of in the past. In their despair, the parents have pressurized us to introduce Form 4 this year because they know that the majority of their children, particularly the 3<sup>rd</sup> Formers now will be pushed out of the system at the end of the year (2000). Parents have worked very hard last year to build all the required facilities and raised enough money to buy all the textbooks and equipment to enable us to proceed.

Of the six CHSs in the study, three schools located in Honiara, Western, Isabel have already been expanded up to Form 5. Besides, a CHS principal in the Central Province reported that he has already been under increasing pressure from parents to introduce Forms 4 – 5 classes since 1999. The principals of the other two CHSs reported having been asked by parents about the possibilities of introducing Forms 4 – 5 classes in their schools. They mentioned that they have managed to subdue such pressures by having the majority of their third formers placed in either a PSS or NSS.

Incidentally, none of the participants from all the study schools have mentioned any immediate plans to build additional Forms 1 – 3 streams. Nonetheless, an officer from the MEHRD told the researcher that, the existence of a large number of isolated communities, for whom current approaches to providing educational services are proving costly and inefficient would necessitate the nearest CHSs to seriously consider this option, even if it means boarding. Given increased government support, she was optimistic they would cooperate and added that the opportunity to discuss

such matters with concerned CHSs would be taken up during the upcoming PEAP and NERP consultative meetings.

#### **4.7.3 Plans to Decentralise More Functions for CHSs to the Lower Levels**

From the foregoing, it appears that education authorities, schools and communities were at liberty to make important decisions about how their CHSs developed. A high ranking MEHRD official, confided in the researcher that the Ministry has inadvertently allowed education authorities, schools and communities to make such decisions because he viewed the present system as being highly centralised and increasingly alienated from its clients, which resulted in a failure to lead towards establishing and achieving priorities. Thus, he envisioned an education system that is more responsive to its stakeholders, and which is efficiently managed by them. Furthermore, he stressed that the role of the MEHRD during the next 15 year period of implementing the NERP is to promote, coordinate and facilitate changes that will result in the equitable delivery of quality education services by building new partnerships with stakeholders such as the provincial governments, churches, non-governmental organizations, communities, and parents in designing, implementing, managing and monitoring the equitable and sustained delivery of education services. In support of the above sentiments, his colleague stated that:

There are no plans whatsoever to recentralise the control of CHSs or operating and managing those schools. I think the government would rather see its role as helping to facilitate. The government does not have enough resources to be able to put people specifically to run those schools so if people are available in the communities and if the government can provide significant inputs by way of providing teachers, materials and grants then let the communities run the schools. But the check has to be done by the ministry to ensure that the national education standards are met.

The data revealed that the majority of interviewees supported moves to decentralise more CHS functions to the lower levels. For example, an MP believed that it is better to decentralise control of CHSs because this would coincide with current political

moves to decentralise more powers to the provinces and local communities. A senior MEHRD official also stated that he was attracted to the current review of the provincial government system because he envisaged the proposed Constituency Governing Councils (CGCs) to be responsible for CHSs as they will be closer to the schools. He firmly believed that:

You will kill these CHSs if we have to control them centrally. That will be a wrong move, not that I am aware of any but I cannot imagine the MEHRD having direct control or recentralising control of CHSs.

Seven of his colleagues would prefer to keep the same arrangements in managing CHSs until an evaluation has been carried out to gauge the feelings of all concerned parties. However, they were all mindful of the fact that if the MEHRD had to recentralise control of CHSs, the communities will withdraw their support and will result in the collapse of the whole system.

At the provincial level, a senior administrator from the Western Province, stated that: “if there is any such plan to recentralise the control of CHSs, I think it will meet a lot of opposition from the schools, parents and the communities.” Indeed, participants from the school and community levels were taken aback at the researcher’s question and some have reacted very strongly against any notion of recentralising control of CHSs. For example, the chairperson of a CHS in one of the province threatened to withdraw his community’s support if recentralisation of CHS control were to happen, whilst his colleague in another province, said that:

As long as I am around, I want our CHS to be run by the parents and community because it is already been successful since it started so it should be left to the people to run the school.

Overall, participants at the education authority, school and community levels felt that, the main issue should not really be focused on who is responsible for what functions for CHSs. Rather, they said that the real issues were the provision of sufficient

resources such as grants, teachers, equipment and textbooks, and school buildings to run them properly. Therefore, they called on the government to provide more assistance in these areas and expressed satisfaction thus far, of its predisposition to give them greater control in managing CHSs. They felt that giving them more control is the best way forward in improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and coordination in managing CHSs.

In order to obtain quantitative data to triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*The establishment and management of CHSs had been helped by the government’s tendency to decentralise more control to the lower levels*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIA: Item No. 6). Table 24 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 68% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 0.08, ns$ ).

**Table 24: Respondents’ Views on “The Establishment and Management of CHSs Being Helped by the Government’s Inclination to Decentralise More Control to the Lower Levels.”**

Levels	N	“The establishment and management of CHSs had been helped by the government’s tendency to decentralise more control to the lower levels.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Central	9	1	11	6	67	1	11	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	2	29	1	14	2	29
School	9	2	22	4	44	1	11	2	22
Community	6	1	17	3	50	2	33	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>

#### 4.7.4 Discussion

The data reveal that, although the policy to create CHSs is relatively new and seemingly unplanned, it has now become a firmly established part of the secondary education structure (Treadaway, 1996; World Bank, 2000). However, since 2001, the MEHRD decided to suspend the establishment of more CHSs as work on an Education Strategic Plan for the period up to 2004 was embarked upon, and which would culminate in the formulation of a NERP and PEAPs. These comprehensive reform plans indicate that, more CHSs would be established with the view to have them as predominant entry points into secondary education (MEHRD, 2001b). In the meantime however, there is a strong push from all sectors of society to continue with the establishment of more CHSs.

With regard to the expansion of existing CHSs, this has occurred and it is envisaged that more schools will be expanded beyond Form 3, as parents and communities want to see their children continue into senior secondary schools. This has serious resource implications which the MEHRD has to consider and plan for now. Failure to do so will result in a repeat of the confusions and difficulties currently being experienced (SIG, 2002). In terms of giving more control of CHSs to the lower levels, the data indicate a strong inclination by the government to decentralise more responsibilities to schools, and parents and communities. This is strongly supported by participants from all levels, with the view to have the government focus more attention on the provision of adequate resources. On the other hand, there was strong opposition towards recentralising control of CHSs, as participants believe that this would lead to a collapse of the system, as the feeling of ownership within communities for their schools is removed.

In summary, more decentralisation of responsibilities for CHSs to the lower levels was favoured as the best way forward in ensuring the effective and efficient coordination in managing CHSs and financing the education system as a whole (World Bank, 2000).

## **4.8 RESEARCH QUESTION 8: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OR ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING FACED BY CHSs?**

### **4.8.0 Introduction**

This research question examines some of the major issues and problems currently being faced by CHSs. Participants highlighted six major problems and issues being confronted by CHSs relating to: teacher shortage; logistics; buildings and facilities; finance; land; and the secondary education structure and curriculum. Qualitatively, these major issues and problems were highlighted by participants in their responses to Interview Question No. 18 (See Appendix 3). The issues are looked at, in turn, below and discussions will be supported, wherever possible, with relevant quantitative data.

### **4.8.1 Teacher Shortage**

More than 60% of interviewees mentioned that the shortage of teachers is one of the biggest problems currently being faced by CHSs. They pointed out that, although teacher shortage is a system-wide phenomenon, the problem is more apparent in CHSs, where there is not only a general shortage of teachers but also a lack of teachers for specialised subjects like Science, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, and Agriculture. This problem resulted in teachers taking subjects they were not trained for, recruitment of untrained teachers or getting host primary school teachers to help out. Furthermore, it also contributed to very high teaching loads, as well as large class sizes. The teacher training output of SICHE was incapable of matching CHS teacher demands, so participants reiterated the need to revamp existing pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes to alleviate the problem.

During the interviews, the majority of participants from all four levels pointed out that the lack of teachers is a major issue, and felt that this must be addressed if CHSs were to provide the quality of education expected by parents. A senior official from the MEHRD, reiterated that:

CHSs don't have enough teachers and that is a system wide problem so it is not a CHS issue only. We have built over 90 CHSs over the last six years but the output of trained teachers from both local and overseas sources has not matched the teacher demand for schools resulting in the recruitment of untrained teachers.

He defined untrained teachers as those who have taken up teaching after having dropped out of overseas universities without obtaining a formal qualification or those with certain qualifications other than teaching such as carpenters and accountants. Furthermore, in terms of staffing CHSs with the right combination of qualified teachers to teach the nine subjects offered in the Forms 1 - 3 Curriculum, a provincial education officer stated that this is also another problem area. As there is an acute shortage of specialised teachers, he explained that, a school's staff register would appear to have the right number of teachers but in reality, they do not necessarily reflect the required teacher/subject mix. He elaborated on this by saying that:

We would end up with a CHS having four Maths/Business Studies teachers with no Science, Home Economics or Industrial Arts teachers. So there is that disparity in subject specialisation amongst staff.

This problem was also evident in Guadalcanal Province as revealed by a teacher in the case of his single stream CHS where, of the three on staff, one was a Maths/Business Studies teacher, and the principal and himself were agriculture teachers. He explained that they opted to teach all nine subjects which meant that each of them had to take two or more subjects as well as engaging a primary school teacher to take home economics classes, and the village Priest for Bible Knowledge. In his case, the teacher said that he taught English, Social Science and Agriculture in Forms 1 – 3, with a teaching load of seven periods a day or 35 periods a week besides lesson preparations, assessment and being the deputy principal. A former CHS principal in the Western Province revealed that he had similar experiences when he started the school. He said that:

Most of the CHSs are understaffed so the teachers are overloaded. When I was at my former CHS, there were only two of us teaching Forms 1 and 2 classes so I decided to take only seven subjects by

dropping Home Economics and Industrial Arts because there was no way we could cope as we both teach up to eight periods per day.

He was of the opinion that the appropriate staffing level for single stream CHSs should be, at least four teachers, and with the right combination of subject specialisation. It should also be highlighted that what he did in leaving out two practical subjects to cope with the lack of specialised subject teachers was a common practice in other CHSs. On the other hand, in order to avoid dropping any subjects, some double stream schools have decided to amalgamate and have larger classes. For example, a teacher from another CHS in the Western Province, stated that his double stream school opted to have larger classes in Forms 1 – 3 of up to 50 pupils per class instead of the officially recommended 35 pupils per class.

In view of the foregoing, two high-ranking officials from the MEHRD were convinced that the SICHE needed to drastically increase the intake into its teacher training programmes. They suggested that more spaces should be offered in the College's one year Advanced Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) programme to provide an opportunity for those with qualifications in other areas but are already teaching to gain a teaching qualification. They also said that this should be accompanied by an aggressive campaign by the MEHRD to attract more people into the teaching profession. Furthermore, another participant from the MEHRD, informed the researcher that in 1999, a total of 65 primary school teachers were qualified to teach up to Form 3 level after undergoing the Solomon Islands Teacher Upgrading Programme (SITUP). He said that the majority of those selected for the programme were aspiring teachers from the host primary schools. He added that another intake of 65 would be trained in 2000, and felt that a continuation of the programme should contribute to alleviating the CHS teacher shortage.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that "*The overall shortage of trained teachers and specialized subject teachers is a major problem currently being faced by CHSs*" (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 6). Table 25 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 84% either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference

between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 10.2, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests indicated significant differences between the central and the school level ( $U = 23.0, p < .05$ ), and the central and community level ( $U = 11.0, p < .05$ ).

**Table 25: Respondents' Views on "The Overall Shortage of Trained Teachers and Specialized Subject Teachers" As a Major Problem Currently Being Faced by CHSS**

Levels	N	"The overall shortage of trained teachers and specialized subject teachers is a major problem currently being faced by CHSSs."							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	-	-	7	78	-	-	2	22
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	2	29	-	-	2	29
School	9	7	78	1	11	1	11	-	-
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>

#### 4.8.2 Logistics

The issue of logistics examines three main areas of concern for CHSS, which have also been long-standing sources of frustration and complaints in the education system: the adequacy of instructional material, distribution and storage, and transport and communication.

##### i) Adequacy of Instructional Materials

During the interviews, 53% of participants from all the four levels identified the shortage of textbooks and equipment as one of the major issues faced by CHSSs as well as a system-wide one. For example, a teacher from Guadalcanal Province commented that the "teacher shortage problem tops the list but is closely followed by the terrible lack of teaching material."

Efforts to improve the shortage of instructional materials in schools have proved illusive for the MEHRD for a variety of reasons. Generally, participants mentioned

that the country's archipelagic nature and scattered population created problems of transport, communication and accessibility, which in turn, adversely affected the distribution of materials to schools. More specifically, however, they said that these problems were compounded when the number of secondary schools increased from 26 in 1994 to 120 in 2000. In the light of this, a central level participant felt that the government was caught unprepared by the rapid development of CHSs so it could not organize sufficient textbooks and materials.

According to a senior MEHRD official, another contributing factor was that his division, which is responsible for curriculum development, materials production and distribution, was severely understaffed. He mentioned that the CDC's printing unit was only partially staffed and equipped, so it could not adequately respond to the needs of schools. Furthermore, he revealed that constraints on curriculum development and production lie in three main areas. He expressed these as the on-going debate on curriculum content and relevance and what topics should be covered in each unit, insufficient experienced curriculum writers to write materials, and the lack of funds to reprint locally produced materials or purchase overseas textbooks.

Due to the prevailing textbooks shortage in CHSs, a high-ranking MEHRD official, mentioned that students have to share materials and in some cases four or five pupils have to share one textbook. She agreed, however, that because of the growing number of pupils now entering CHSs the government has to increase its budgetary allocation for educational materials to avoid more students sharing one textbook and further jeopardise their learning.

In a sense, the cost of materials was minimised by the fact that, except for a number of recommended overseas textbooks for English, Maths and Science, most of the required curriculum texts used in Forms 1 – 3, are produced locally by the CDC. Nonetheless, although these are relatively cheaper to reproduce, the government's chronic financial problems often prohibit reprinting of these materials unless one-off bilateral donor assistance or support from the local MP are available. A participant from the MEHRD pointed out that recent funding from the Republic of China and AusAid have helped in meeting the cost of reprinting locally produced materials. In

addition, he said that some of the CHSs use CDF funds provided by their MP's to purchase materials but not all schools have this kind of support. However, even if schools have their own funds to purchase materials, a teacher from a CHS in Guadalcanal Province, complained that it is often difficult for the CDC to reprint materials for individual school requests once the reprinted stock has run out.

On the other hand, participants from the urban CHSs and those built under the TETP mentioned that the shortage of textbooks and equipment was not a major problem for them. They pointed out that the main issue they were faced with was the replacement of their existing stock of textbooks. A CHS principal stated that:

We have enough textbooks but they are now in very poor condition as students have been using them for more than five years. They are supposed to be replaced by the government by now but this has not happened despite our numerous requests to the CDC. This is our sixth year as a CHS and we have not had our Form 1-3 textbooks renewed which means that the books are now tattered and torn.

An interesting development in some provinces however, was that there were instances where urban CHSs shared textbooks with their rural counterparts. For example, the principal of a double stream urban CHS in one of the provinces, which had two sets of textbooks per subject mentioned that they were well stocked with textbooks. Hence, they often assist nearby rural CHSs by allowing them borrow one set of textbooks with the understanding that these are returned before borrowing another set. Nonetheless, for most rural CHSs, the shortage of textbooks and materials remains a major problem as revealed by the principal of a rural CHS in Guadalcanal Province. He said that the shortage of textbooks for his school often resulted in teachers spending a lot of valuable instruction time writing student's work on the chalkboard as only one copy of the text was available for most subjects.

## **ii) Distribution and Storage of Materials**

With regard to the distribution of instructional materials to schools, a MEHRD official blamed the current difficulties on four main impediments. These were: the lack of warehouse facilities in Honiara, the lack of personnel to coordinate orders and

verify the quantity of materials needed between schools and suppliers, the occasional late arrival of materials from overseas, and the lack of funds to engage casual workers to package/repackage and dispatch materials to schools.

He mentioned that, due to the lack of warehousing facilities, materials awaiting shipment to schools were either kept in office corridors or in conference rooms for months because of a heavy reliance on irregular shipping schedules to most parts of the country. This often led to teachers travelling to Honiara to follow up their school orders but a provincial education officer was dissatisfied with this practice as it contributed to teacher absenteeism. He stated that:

At the moment, teachers spend days or weeks following up their curriculum material orders in Honiara and waste valuable school time which is a major drawback in the children's learning.

In the event that the CDC was able to ship materials, they would normally be dispatched to the provincial education offices. Hence, unless schools pick up their own materials, they are likely to remain there for long periods. By the same token, this raises the issue of adequate storage facilities in the provincial education offices.

During his fieldwork visits to the four study provinces, the researcher was able to obtain further insights into the supply, distribution and storage of educational materials as experienced in each of the provinces. These included delays in receiving supplies from Honiara, and the lack of transport to dispatch materials to schools.

Although the Western Province has a small education store, the building is dilapidated, susceptible to flooding, and cramped as it was also being shared with other provincial divisions. The province's capital, Gizo, is well served with regular shipping and air transport services, so receiving supplies from Honiara is not a major problem. However, the education division's lack of transport such as a motorised canoe poses a major problem for the distribution of materials to schools located in the many islands within Western Province.

In contrast, Isabel is a one-island province, and although the education division does not have storage facilities, a participant mentioned that education materials from Honiara does get to them and is dispatched to schools quite quickly. He explained that the province owned shipping company runs a reliable weekly shipping service from Honiara and a fortnightly service around the island. Thus, this service as well as other shipping services and private powered canoes that go around the island can be utilised to dispatch school materials.

As discussed in the previous Chapter, the researcher discovered during the second round of fieldwork that the provincial headquarters buildings, which also housed the education offices of Guadalcanal Province in Honiara, and the Central Province in Tulagi, were completely destroyed by fire. Knowledgeable sources told the researcher that the burning of the Guadalcanal Provincial offices was linked to the ethnic conflict. This incident, and the escalating tensions and violence resulted in education officers, who are mainly from Guadalcanal themselves, fleeing to their villages. In many respects, it would be quite accurate to assume that there were no education officers at post to sufficiently discharge the functions of the Guadalcanal Province education authority by the time the researcher undertook the second round of fieldwork.

In the case of Central Province, the cause of the fire was unknown but the offices of the province's education division were moved to a temporary location in an incomplete dwelling with no telephone, toilets, and very little furniture. Although there is ample storage space, there are no proper storage shelves or security as the doors were without locks. For this reason, the researcher witnessed the intense pressure under which the two provincial education officers worked. Over two full working days, they had to leave aside their officially designated duties in order to carry a large number of very heavy cardboard boxes of curriculum materials that had just arrived from Honiara from the wharf to the office. With the help of a few volunteers, they had to repackage and dispatch the materials to schools quickly, seeing that they lack any secure storage facilities.

Overall, the researcher learnt that there was a shortage of storage space for education supplies within the four study provinces. The researcher came across situations where officers were working in extremely cramped offices, which often doubled up as storerooms. Apart from Guadalcanal Province whose education office is virtually non-existent, the researcher observed in the other three provinces visited that it was very difficult for officers to work in privacy and without being disturbed or inconvenienced.

The lack of proper storage space also exists in all the study CHSs. Textbooks were either kept in classrooms or the staff room and have to be carried to classes daily contributing to wear and tear. Furthermore, the principal of a CHS in Guadalcanal Province, revealed that in rural CHSs, when instructional materials were kept in the classroom or storerooms built with local materials, the high humidity and dampness accelerated the deteriorating condition of instructional materials.

In an effort to ensure that schools are adequately equipped with textbooks and materials, a MEHRD official told the researchers that the government decided in 2000 to transfer all educational grants from the MPG&RD to the MEHRD. This is to facilitate more economical bulk procurement necessary to ensure availability of materials within the country, which could also become self-sustaining while increasing cost-recovery. With this in mind, an Education Resources Unit (ERU), a new unit under the CDC was established, and a new purpose-built complex to accommodate its offices and warehousing facilities were completed under the TETP in 2001. According to the official from the MEHRD, it was envisaged that the ERU would undertake the central procurement of textbooks and educational materials, and delivery for all schools. The MEHRD, with technical assistance from the World Bank, has defined the ERU's operational procedures combined with a textbook replenishment policy. The centrally located ERU will stock bulk orders and schools can purchase materials through a combination of government grants, school funds and parental contributions. These funds would then be used to re-supply stock, and full cost recovery is planned to allow for a permanent stock whilst the initial stock would be purchased with World Bank funds under the TETP. The MEHRD hoped to have the ERU fully operational in 2002 but the researcher was aware that the effects of the

ethnic crisis on the economy and recruitment of staff has delayed further progress. As such, in spite of these positive arrangements being put in place to alleviate the problems of inadequate instructional materials, delivery and storage, particularly at the central level, the situation remains much the same.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*The shortage of instructional materials, an inadequate distribution system and lack of storage facilities are major problems currently being faced by CHSs*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 14). Table 26 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 93% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 15.5, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests indicated significant differences between the central and the community level ( $U = 4.5, p < .05$ ), education authority and community level ( $U = 9.0, p < .05$ ), and school and community level ( $U = 13.5, p < .05$ ).

**Table 26: Respondents’ Views on “The Shortage of Instructional Materials, An Inadequate Distribution System and Lack of Storage Facilities” As Some of the Major Problems Currently Being Faced by CHSs**

Levels	N	“The shortage of instructional materials, an inadequate distribution system and lack of storage facilities are some of the major problems currently being faced by CHSs.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	6	67	1	11	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	5	71	-	-	-	-
School	9	9	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	6	3	50	3	50	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

### **iii) Transport and Communication**

As has been alluded to above, two other logistical issues for CHSs concern transport and communication between Honiara and the provinces, as well as within the provinces. Most respondents agreed that the transportation of people and supplies was one of the most over-stretched services, which was seen to be adversely affecting the efficient delivery of educational supplies and the movement of staff. The researcher noted that the lack of regular and reliable shipping services was felt most acutely in remote provinces.

However, transport problems do exist even for provinces like Guadalcanal, with a fairly good road system, where trucks were most widely used by provincial education officers for their travel. Their work was severely handicapped by a shortage of vehicles, which necessitated a transport pool system. However, this system was found to be insufficient because the education division had to share with other provincial divisions. The inefficiency resulted from three main sources. These were: the competition from other divisions such as health or agriculture for transport; careless documentation of transport bookings; and, conflicts with intransigent truck drivers. The transport problem in Guadalcanal Province affected the delivery of educational supplies and materials, and visits to schools. Shipping services to the southern and eastern most parts of the island, which were not accessible by road have been irregular and unreliable, and the situation has worsened following the ethnic conflict. However, even in favourable times these were invariably slower than road transportation.

In the Western Province, the researcher noted that the major mode of transport were motorised fibreglass canoes. The education division owned canoes and outboard motors (OBMs) in the past but they have been sold due to lack of funds for maintenance and repairs. The education officers have since resorted to a transport pool system for canoes and OBMs but like Guadalcanal Province much the same problems were being experienced.

Similarly, it was noted that a transport pool system was also applied in the Central Province, except for the agriculture and health divisions, which have their own canoes and OBMs. Therefore, they were able to undertake their duties in the rural areas according to their work programmes. As for the education division, a participant stated that:

The lack of transport to deliver materials or visit schools is a major problem for our division because they allocate only one canoe for the provincial administration and our division to use. It does not meet all our transport needs so if we were to be allocated a canoe and OBM, things will be easy for us. The present system hinders our work, and there is a need to seriously address it.

He explained that sharing a transport pool system with the provincial administration is very frustrating because regardless of how many times he puts in a request for transport, the provincial administration's transportation needs were always treated as priority as they control transport bookings.

As has been noted earlier, Isabel Provincial education officers were quite content with current transport arrangements within their province. However, respondents in all the provinces agreed that the transport problem needed alleviation. In the light of this, a Western Province participant requested the MEHRD to reconsider providing all provincial education divisions with canoes and OBMs as was done in the early 1980s under the IDA-assisted Primary Education Project (PEP). He recounted that, although these motorised canoes were meant for use by school inspectors and multi-level trainers to visit schools, the overall understanding was that they be shared with provincial education officers whenever required. However, the researcher was aware that while such cooperation did exist, there were also cases of misuse by responsible officers when trips supposedly made to visit or deliver materials to schools have ended up as fishing expeditions. In addition, rising operation and maintenance costs inhibited the government's ability to financially sustain this service.

Furthermore, participants highlighted that communications between the CHSs and Honiara or the provincial headquarters was very undependable or non-existent. Two participants reported that, principals had to travel to the provincial headquarters to

access a telephone to contact Honiara or to the nearest administrative sub-base to contact the provincial headquarters via V.H.F radio. Even communication between Honiara and the provincial headquarters was undependable due to regular power cuts or disconnected phone lines. Generally, the MEHRD broadcasts important communications to the provinces and schools over the radio but its usage was limited to urgent business only as this method was less private and more expensive.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that *“Inadequate transport and communication to and from schools are two major problems currently being faced by CHSs”* (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 12). Table 27 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinions in the above statement, 87% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found no significant differences between the responses from each level ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 7.28, ns$ ).

**Table 27: Respondents’ Views on “Inadequate Transport and Communication” As Major Problems Currently Being Faced By CHSs**

Levels	N	“Inadequate transport and communication to and from schools are two major problems currently faced by CHSs.”									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	3	33	2	22	1	11	2	22
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	4	57	-	-	2	29	-	-
School	9	4	44	5	56	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	6	1	17	4	67	-	-	1	17	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>

#### 4.8.3 Buildings and Facilities

More than 50% of interviewees remarked that the lack of proper buildings and facilities was also one of the biggest problems currently being faced by CHSs. This was characterised by the lack of Science laboratories, Industrial Arts workshops, and specially designated classrooms for Home Economics and Agriculture. In addition, participants commented that CHSs do not have proper school libraries, halls,

storerooms, and staff rooms as well as the lack of running water and proper sanitation amenities. Furthermore, some participants believed that these deficiencies coupled with the shortage of staff houses contributed to difficulties in attracting well-qualified local and overseas teachers for CHSs. The fact that some CHSs have been forced to have boarders also raised the need for sufficient and proper dormitory accommodation and dining facilities. Some participants observed that, where these were not available, some students had to live with relatives in nearby villages who were not providing those students with the necessary care and guidance as would their own parents. These CHSs problems, including those discussed in the previous two sections led participants to reiterate the issue of the quality of CHSs as a growing concern which ought to be urgently addressed in order to remove the negative perception that CHSs provide a low quality education compared to PSSs and NSSs. Given that CHSs follow the same curriculum offered in PSSs and NSSs, it was to be expected that they would also have the necessary physical resources to adequately deliver the prescribed secondary education programme. However, as has already been discussed, the shortage of teachers, and teaching and learning materials has limited the ability of CHSs to do so. Another critical limiting factor is the lack of appropriate physical facilities in place to ensure of effective delivery of teaching and learning.

During the interviews, more than half of the participants pointed to the paucity of proper infrastructure and physical facilities such as labs, workshops and specialised classrooms for Science, Industrial Arts, Home Economics, and Agriculture as a major problem confronting CHSs. For example, a participant from the MEHRD, stated that:

Most CHSs do not have laboratories, workshops or specialised classrooms, for science, industrial arts, home economics, and agriculture. This is causing difficulties for teachers to teach these subjects properly while students' learning is hindered by not being engaged in practical work or experiments.

A community leader from the Western Province, noted that this problem was more prominent in the community supported CHSs rather than those built under the TETP as such essential facilities were included as part of the project. As for community supported CHSs, a central level participant mentioned that part of the blame could be

attributed to the lack of time and proper planning when establishing CHSs. He believed that the government was caught unprepared for the rapid development of CHSs so it was not in a position to plan for them properly. A participant from the MOF mentioned that the communities were encouraged and motivated to build CHSs but blamed the MEHRD for failing to inform the communities, at the onset, of the whole range and type of academic and non-academic buildings required for a complete one or two stream CHS. Arguably however, even if this were undertaken, the researcher was doubtful that communities could build laboratories and workshops without substantial external technical and financial inputs because, by their very nature and MEHRD standards, such buildings have to meet certain specifications and safety requirements.

Nevertheless, two officials from the MEHRD mentioned that this did not prevent innovative teachers from teaching Science, Home Economics, Industrial Arts or Agriculture. For example, one of them said that some schools build their science labs using local materials or order portable science kits from the CDC to assist in practical demonstration or experiments. However, in the absence of these, most CHSs resorted to just teaching the theoretical part of specialised subjects. Furthermore, the principal of a CHS in Isabel Province, revealed that in rural CHSs where science labs were built using local materials, not only do the buildings deteriorate quickly but difficulties were also experienced in storing chemicals, equipment, and other supplies safely and properly due to high humidity, lack of proper storage, and electricity.

In view of these problems, a provincial politician suggested that, in future, the best way to establish a CHS was to construct the specialised classroom first, and the ordinary classrooms later, rather than the other way round. He argued that, even if the completion of ordinary classrooms were delayed, the effect on the students' learning would not be as significant. He felt that, in the intervening period, specialised classrooms can be used to teach Maths, English, Social Science, and Business Studies whilst the reverse is not always convenient and compromises students' learning.

In addition, participants commented that CHSs do not have proper school libraries, halls, and staff rooms as well as the lack of running water and proper sanitation amenities. Whilst the World Bank assisted CHSs would already have running water and toilets installed as part of the project, the researcher noted that they had similar issues with their rural counterparts in not having a school library, hall and staff room. The principal of a CHS built under the TETP informed the researcher that his school badly needed such facilities. Similarly, he expressed the need for a library at his school as follows:

I would say that other CHSs are in the same boat as us where they do not have a library, let alone a proper library. A library is essential in any school but we do not even have a room for a library here.

A senior official from the MEHRD revealed that from his visits to rural CHSs, he found that most CHSs do not have basic facilities like toilets, showers or a water supply system, and some schools may have running water without proper toilet and showers. For example, the principal of a CHS in Isabel Province, said that:

Our biggest problem is water and sanitation because the water supply is not working properly. The system supplies water for many big villages close to the source upstream, and we are the last ones down the line so we receive very little water. But if the water supply is working properly then we should have proper sanitation. At the moment staff and students have to walk a long way to use the river for washing.

Such inconveniences and adversities along with the shortage of staff houses led some participants to believe that they contributed to difficulties in attracting well-qualified local and overseas teachers for CHSs. For example, a central level participant commented that rural CHSs were not luring well-qualified teachers because they are not providing staff houses with basic furniture and modern conveniences such as running water and electricity and other infrastructure. To some extent however, even urban schools are experiencing staff housing shortages as expressed by the principal of a CHS in Honiara. He stated that:

Due to the fact that we do not have enough accommodation for all our staff, we are sometimes unable to attract well-qualified teachers. We could attract more qualified teachers if we have sufficient accommodation. Finding accommodation for teachers is a big problem for the school administration.

His colleague, from the Central Province also reported that one of his teachers decided to transfer to another school due to the shortage of staff housing. On the other hand, the researcher noted that for one rural CHS on Guadalcanal, the problem was eased by recruiting both primary and secondary school teachers who come from surrounding villages while availing staff accommodation at the school for teachers recruited from other places.

Accommodation in CHSs is not only a problem for teachers but for students as well. The fact that most CHSs have been forced to enrol boarders brought about the need for dormitory accommodation and dining facilities in schools. Participants from all levels expressed that the need to enrol students from schools that are far away from the CHS cannot be avoided, particularly in the rural areas because the host primary school and other feeder schools nearby may not have the numbers to make up a class of 35 students. This places communities in a dilemma where they want to keep their CHSs for their own children but do not necessarily want to be responsible for the accommodation and daily needs of children from other places. However, the fact remains that boarding is the only option if their school is going to have the required numbers and survive. Yet, most parents and communities are not keen to build the boarding facilities such as dormitories and dining halls, which resulted in some students having to be put up by relatives.

For those students who do not have relatives living close to the school and have to board, individual schools have taken on the responsibility of building accommodation and providing food for them using school funds, as no governments grants were provided for this purpose. For most CHSs, this proved to be constant financial burden for example, a participant from Isabel Province, stated that:

All our three CHSs have boarders, which is very costly. Although our CHSs receive certain financial assistance from the province, that wouldn't guarantee the ongoing operation and maintenance of the school for the whole school year.

An official from the MEHRD mentioned that it is becoming common practice for CHSs with boarders to send the students home whenever funds for school rations have run out which, he added, is depriving them of the education they so rightly deserve. However, some participants reported that, most CHSs with boarders can continue classes for the whole school year by sending students back to their respective villages every weekend to get their week's supply of food. On the other hand, for those students who live with their relatives in nearby villages, three participants observed that, their relatives or guardians were not providing students with the necessary care as would the student's own parents. A provincial member in the Central Province, stated that:

When you have students being accommodated by their relatives, the parents of those children started complaining because their children were not given enough time to study. We are now starting to realise that students living with relatives are not given proper treatment and enough time to do their studies.

As a result, he highlighted a case in one his CHS where the host parents banded together and wrote to the children's parents informing them that they no longer want to accommodate the children. Following this, he said that the school started to send concerned students out of the school, and added that the same thing is happening in other parts of the province. Similarly, a teacher from the Western Province also reported that students who live in homes with guardians are not given enough time to do their studies. He added that this includes female students having the freedom to roam around and do what they want resulting in unwanted pregnancies. These claims were supported by the principal of a rural CHS in Guadalcanal Province. He revealed that, at his school, students who lived with relatives do not have the kind of support that would have been provided by their own parents. He observed that host families tend to treat students living with them as extra helping hands in the gardens or around

the house. Thus, it was difficult for them to do their homework, and even if they could, they may not have the support or proper facilities to study.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*The lack of specialized classrooms, school libraries, hall, staff room, staff houses, and dormitories were major problems currently being faced by CHSs*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 15). Table 28 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 94% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. AKruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found a significant difference between the responses from different levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 15.2, p < .05$ ). Mann-Whitney *U* tests indicated significant differences between the central and community level ( $U = 4.5, p < .05$ ), education authority and school level ( $U = 10.0, p < .05$ ), and education authority and community level ( $U = 13.5, p < .05$ ).

**Table 28: Respondents’ Views on “The Lack of Specialized Classrooms, School Libraries, Hall, Staff Room, Staff Houses, Dormitories” As Major Problems Confronting CHSs**

Levels	N	“The lack of specialized classrooms, school libraries, hall, staff room, staff houses, and dormitories were major problems currently being faced by CHSs.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	6	67	1	11	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	3	43	4	57	-	-	-	-
School	9	9	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	6	4	67	2	33	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

On the whole, the issues and problems discussed thus far, which are currently being confronted by CHSs, have led the majority of participants to reiterate the issue of the quality of education provided in CHSs. They believed that this is a growing concern, which ought to be urgently addressed by the government in order to remove the

negative perceptions that they provide a low quality education compared to PSSs and NSSs. For example, a participant from the MEHRD, said that:

To people down there, it looks as though we now have three types of secondary school, which are NSSs and PSSs, and now we have CHSs. My observation is that, people think the learning received from NSSs is better than what is received in PSSs, and learning received in CHSs is third rate.

In order to quantitatively triangulate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the statement: *“The view that CHSs provide a low quality of education compared to NSSs and PSSs is a major issue currently being faced by CHSs”* (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No.16). Table 29 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their views on this statement, 65% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found no significant differences between the responses from each level ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 3.38, ns$ ).

**Table 29: Respondents’ Views on “CHSs Providing a Low Quality of Education Compared to NSSs and PSSs” As a Major Issue Currently Being Faced by CHSs.”**

Levels	N	“The view that CHSs provide a low quality of education compared to NSSs and PSSs is a major issue currently being faced by CHSs.”									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	-	-	5	56	1	11	3	33	-	-
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	3	43	-	-	3	43	-	-
School	9	3	33	5	56	-	-	1	11	-	-
Community	6	3	50	-	-	1	17	1	17	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

#### 4.8.4 Finance

As “Finance” forms the main thrust of Research Question 5, it was considered appropriate to present and discuss the qualitative and quantitative data relating to it, and how the problems with lack of funds pose for CHSs in the section of the thesis dealing with that question.

Suffice to mention here however, that in response to this research question, more than 50% of the interviewees mentioned that finance was a major problem that is currently adversely affecting the development and operation of CHSs. Participants agreed that the CHSs should be supported by appropriate funding provision if they were to operate effectively. Educational administrators at the central and provincial levels, and CHS principals were unanimous in their view, that funding constraints affected their professional work, since these generally restricted transport usage and hire for school visits, organisation of workshops and seminars, schools supplies, and the on-going physical development of schools. Some education officers and principals were concerned about the future maintenance and the sustainability of such aid and donor supported schools as the World Bank-funded CHSs under the TETP when the external funding dried up. As for the community supported CHSs, participants from the provincial, school and community levels highlighted that the main financial issues confronting them relate to the lack of funds to build specialised classrooms, and recurrent grants for operating and boarding costs.

#### **4.8.5 Land**

Approximately 50% of participants mentioned that land issues are becoming a major concern for some rural as well as urban CHSs. Land matters, as they relate to CHSs are manifested in two ways.

Firstly, an interviewee from the MPG&RD, explained that about 85% of land in Solomon Islands is under tribal or customary ownership, 10% is privately owned and only 5% is held by the central or provincial governments as alienated land. As such, he pointed out that, most of the rural CHSs and their host primary schools were located on customary lands, which are prone to land disputes. He also observed that, a land dispute could emerge shortly after the establishment of a CHS, in spite of the host primary school having existed on the same location for many years without experiencing such conflicts. A Central Province politician claimed that such land disputes are usually provoked by people with devious expectations of extorting money from the central or provincial governments or schools. Hence, he believed

that such land disputes rarely have to do with the issue of land ownership because they are usually accompanied by unrealistically high demands for compensation payments. Furthermore, he said that unlike primary schools, managing secondary schools has always been the domain of the government and education authorities, so when the CHSs concept was introduced people still mistakenly assume that they belong to these higher authorities. He stated that:

For some reason, people were led to believe that the school belongs to the government without realising that the school has to be built and run by the community. So in the first place, we had to educate and tell the people that the school belongs to them and that they have to provide land and labour or else there would not be any CHS for them. We had to inform them of the government's inputs and the things that are being required from the community as their contributions.

Following this, he mentioned that the Central Province has received good support from the parents and the communities and land disputes are not so much a problem now. He warned however, that this does not prevent people claiming payment for the land where CHS is located in future. In order to avoid this, he proposed that all responsible authorities should take immediate steps to register any school land held under customary ownership, especially in the rural areas. His call was strongly supported by provincial, school, and community level participants from Isabel, Western and Guadalcanal provinces. However, even if the land is being registered and the title held by the school board, some obstacles could still exist. For example, the principal of an urban CHS in the Western Province, mentioned that following the transfer of his school's land title and assets from the province, he has had problems evicting provincial employees occupying houses now owned by the school, and squatters living on school land.

Secondly, some rural and urban CHSs are experiencing insufficient land for expansion, food gardens for boarders, practical plots for agriculture, and for sports grounds and other recreational purposes. In the rural areas, participants mentioned that generally, as most school sites were originally intended for small primary schools only, careful consideration was not made when CHSs were added. In addition, a national MP, explained that the problem was exacerbated by the host primary

school's inability to make up the full complement of 35 students per class, which meant enrolling students from other places, who usually need accommodation at the school. He said that:

The CHSs were established on existing primary schools, which are mainly day schools but in rural areas, the host primary school does not usually have sufficient numbers of children to support a class of 35 students. So, you need to enrol students from other schools who may have to board which places greater demands on existing school land as expansion is usually required to build more infrastructure such as dormitories, dining hall, recreational, sanitation amenities and gardening.

For most urban CHSs, boarding is not required as students can easily commute to and from school. However, schools tend to experience land problems as a result of their popularity. For example, the principal of a CHS in Honiara, said that:

The school has become popular in the last couple of years and therefore, our student numbers have grown but we lack the space to expand to cater for the influx of applications from parents wishing to enrol their children at the school. But I hope that other CHSs in Honiara will develop to the level we are at now to minimise this problem for us.

The same situation was also faced in the Western Province, where they had a pre-school, primary and the CHS on the same location. However, a school board member mentioned that they were planning to relocate the two lower sections so that only the CHSs would remain on the present site. Conversely, Isabel Province has had to relocate the CHSs at Jejevo in the province's capital, Buala to Visena where there was sufficient land for the school to expand and become fully boarding. According to the headmaster of Jejevo primary school, the main reason which prompted this move had nothing to do with conflicts between the school management of the primary school and the CHS but it was largely due to space restrictions to expand the CHS. Furthermore, he mentioned that the move was necessitated by severe flooding from a nearby stream during wet weather, which caused a lot of damage to teacher's houses, classrooms, and dormitories. He also said that there was a shortage of land for

students to do their practical projects in agriculture or gardening as the school does have some students who are boarders.

In order to quantitatively substantiate the above qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*Land disputes and insufficient land for expansion are current problems faced by CHSs*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No. 19). Table 30 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on the statement, 81% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance found no significant difference between the responses from the four levels ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 6.72, ns$ ).

**Table 30: Respondents’ Views on “CHSs Being Confronted by Land Disputes and Insufficient Land for Expansion” As Major Issues**

Levels	N	“Land disputes and insufficient land for expansion are current issues being faced my CHSs.”							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	6	67	1	11	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	2	29	2	29	-	-	3	43
School	9	5	56	4	44	-	-	-	-
Community	6	-	-	5	83	-	-	1	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>

#### 4.8.6 Present Secondary Education Structure and Curriculum

More than 20% of participants expressed concern about how CHSs fit within the overall secondary education structure, as well as the relevance of the mainly academic oriented curriculum offered in CHSs. This concern was mainly for students whose formal education will terminate at the end of Form 3, with no prospects for paid employment or further education.

Firstly, participants pointed out that after almost two decades of having a dual system of secondary education based on PSSs and NSSs, the place of CHSs within this overall structure was not clear, as there now appears to be three types of secondary

schools. For example, JES, the chairman of a CHS in Guadalcanal Province, mentioned that parents and communities viewed the CHSs as an aberration and were confused as to where they fit into the present secondary education structure. Given that the initial understanding of CHSs was that they should be day junior secondary schools with Forms 1 – 3 classes only, he added that these uncertainties were compounded when an increasing number of CHSs have expanded to Form 5, and others have become totally boarding schools. As a result, many participants said that the MEHRD needed to clarify its policy and restructure the secondary education system to absorb CHSs. For example, a provincial education officer commented that although the policy of creating CHSs is new and largely unplanned, it seems to have become firmly established. Therefore, he suggested that the MEHRD's secondary education policy should be based on restructuring secondary education into a 4 + 2 model as recommended in the Treadaway Report (1996). In view of this, he said that there would only be two types of secondary schools called CHSs for four years (Forms 1-4), and Senior Secondary Schools (SSSs) for a further two years (Forms 5-6). He elaborated further as follows:

All entry into secondary education would be through CHSs. Selection would then be made in Form 4 for SSSs. The CHSs would consist of current CHSs expanded to Form 4 or cutting out Form 5, and the former PSSs changed to CHSs by cutting out Form 5. The SSSs would be based on the present NSSs.

The above suggestion was strongly supported by participants from Guadalcanal, Central, and Isabel provinces as well as those from Honiara and the central level. They felt that, from both an educational and political point of view, this might be more acceptable as the phasing out of Forms 1 to 3 in the NSSs would be partly offset by creating more Forms 1 to 4 places in the former PSSs and some CHSs. Furthermore, they said that it would provide a longer period of schooling to the majority of students, which is clearly what most parents want. They also reckoned that by creating a small number of extra places, this option could be carried out with no loss of places at any level.

Secondly, participants questioned the usefulness of the mainly academic oriented curriculum taught in CHSs, particularly for the majority of students whose formal

education will terminate at the end of Form 3 in a CHS. Whilst, participants hailed CHSs in providing an opportunity for some students to continue their formal education, they were equally concerned that the curriculum offered in CHSs does not provide students with a practical/vocational education for self-employment. A central level participant said that:

The secondary education system should be equally geared towards practical/vocational education for self-employment and not only academic education for paid employment and further education. Therefore, the CHS curriculum should provide an avenue for the majority of students to create their own employment as paid employment is becoming scarce.

Although eight participants have mentioned the need to include some skills for traditional living, many participants would not want this to be the emphasis. They felt that traditional living, in the sense of subsistence living, following the ways of custom and tradition, no longer exists in some areas. Moreover, most communities want to move away from traditional living towards the cash economy, and the introduction of schooling, health and transport not provided in a traditional way. Therefore, the distinction was made here between *academic education*, with a focus on paid employment and further education, and *practical/vocational education* with a focus on self-employment. The central level participant went on to say that these are both parts of the manpower mode, focussing on employment and the generation of income, but on different kinds of employment. He believed that the majority of people want students to learn not only skills for traditional living but also skills for modern living such as carpentry, plumbing, modern hygiene and health practices, mechanics and even 'urban' skills such as typing or computing. He said that it is these, as well as skills for traditional living which are needed to be emphasised in CHSs to complement academic education.

The above notion of traditional living skills should not be confused with the concern expressed by some participants on how an irrelevant curriculum in CHSs can alienate students from their communities and cultural roots. A provincial education officer pointed out that much has been done over the last two decades to review syllabuses and make them more relevant to local needs. However, he highlighted that many

people still expressed concern that the curriculum and syllabuses are too alien and unconnected to the student's lives and cultural roots in their home communities. His views were supported by a CHS committee chairman in Guadalcanal Province, who mentioned that a lot of what is learnt in CHSs is seen as 'school knowledge' with little connection to students' home lives. Conversely, he said that there is too little recognition that the home communities and cultures have knowledge and skills which may be just as important as the knowledge and skills learnt at school. Thus, he felt that schooling assists in damaging or destroying local culture rather than strengthening and building on it. He added that, schooling leads students to lose respect for their local communities, rather than increasing their desire to participate in them.

Another community level participant, felt that, if there is too little input into the curriculum from the local culture or community, education becomes a process of putting in from the outside rather than drawing out what is within. He was convinced however, that education should involve drawing out the natural talents, skills and abilities of the students, and the knowledge and skills of the local culture and communities. He went on to suggest two possible ways of alleviating these problems: to introduce more traditional skills and knowledge into the curriculum, and to use skilled people from the local community to teach some of these skills in CHSs. He noted that some syllabuses already include aspects of traditional skills, or attempt to apply the subject to the student's home lives but thought that, perhaps some subjects need to be looked at again to make them more relevant to these aims. Having mentioned the foregoing, he also cautioned that:

The curriculum is sacrosanct, so if you try to change anything in the curriculum in primary or secondary, good luck! Its vested interests, and so for the community to say we are going to change the curriculum, they are going to say no, here is the curriculum. It's been decided by the superiors, by the authorities and that is what you teach.

In relation to the role of the curriculum in instilling leadership, citizenship and cooperation, many participants talked of the failure of the present curriculum to inculcate these personal characteristics in students, which are thought to be desirable. Frequently mentioned were the qualities of good leadership, the development of good

citizenship, and encouragement of cooperation rather than competition and individualism.

In order to obtain quantitative data to triangulate the foregoing qualitative data, participants were asked to comment on the proposition that “*Confusions about how CHSs fit into the present secondary education structure and the relevance of their academic oriented curriculum is currently a major issue for CHSs*” (see Appendix 4: Part IIIB, Item No.9). Table 31 shows that of the 31 respondents who gave their opinion on this statement, 65% either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with it. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance showed no significant differences of views on the statement among respondents at different levels of the education system ( $\chi^2(3, N=31) = 2.48, ns$ ).

**Table 31: Respondents’ Views on “Confusions About How CHSs Fit into the Existing Secondary Education Structure and the Relevance of their Academic Oriented Curriculum” As Major Issues Confronting CHSs**

Levels	N	“Confusions about how CHSs fit into the present secondary education structure and the relevance of their academic oriented curriculum were currently major issues confronting CHSs.”									
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Central	9	1	11	5	56	1	11	1	11	1	11
Ed. Auth.	7	1	14	2	29	1	14	3	43	-	-
School	9	2	22	5	56	2	22	-	-	-	-
Community	6	2	33	2	33	1	17	1	17	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

#### 4.8.7 Discussion

The major problems currently being confronted by CHSs point to serious educational management, quality and curriculum issues which need immediate attention, especially as plans to establish more CHSs are undertaken. These have implications for effective educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands, six of which will be outlined below.

Firstly, the severe shortage of teachers and the lack of specialised teachers, resulting in the recruitment of untrained or ill-equipped primary school teachers could result in the lowering of educational quality, stagnation and mediocrity (SIG, 2000; Treadaway, 1996; World Bank, 2000). In addition, the existence of heavy teaching loads and large classes can sap teacher morale and affect their quality of work while compromising individual student learning. The issue of teacher shortage requires the MEHRD and the SICHE to immediately embark on a coordinated teacher training programme with the view to meeting existing teacher demands of schools as well as any projected increases commensurate with CHSs expansion plans. Because advancement is normally through academic attainment, this should also include long and short-term in-service training programmes so that existing teachers can upgrade their qualifications and skills. These are important because the absence of a coordinated in-service teacher development programme tended to make teaching a dead-end job for most teachers and deflect their motivation.

Secondly, the data pointed to the importance of logistics to the success or otherwise of CHSs and in promoting educational decentralisation. The data show that educational supplies were insufficient and the distribution system was less than satisfactory. The inadequacy of supplies point to four possibilities: financial constraints; lack of proper planning; staff shortage, or a deficient ordering system. A combination of these possibilities appears to be the most likely cause. The problem of distribution of supplies is apparently connected with the vagaries of transport, storage space, and management. However, the situation in relation to management and storage at the central level would be improved once the ERU becomes fully operational. The next challenge for the MEHRD would be to explore the possibility of building proper storage facilities for the provincial education divisions and in schools as these are either inadequate or non-existent at present.

It can be gleaned from the data that transport and communication were both acute logistical problems which impedes the establishment of CHSs and the implementation of educational decentralisation and development. Whilst communication is relatively expensive, the general lack of dependable shipping services between Honiara and the provinces affects the timely dispatch of educational supplies and the movement of

people. Insufficient transport often cause further delays in the dispatch of materials from the provincial education offices to schools, and is also one of the main causes of, and sometimes an excuse for, fewer visits to schools by education officers. However, the option to provide appropriate transportation to provincial education offices to improve the timely distribution of materials and to enable more schools visits is being curtailed by financial constraints. The data imply that unless urgent steps are taken to improve and consolidate logistical support, the quality of CHSs and educational decentralisation could be seriously handicapped.

Thirdly, many of the community supported CHSs not only lack the staff and equipment to teach the full range of subjects but they also do not have proper facilities, especially for the practical subjects. Therefore, a project should be framed to equip existing CHSs and any new ones likely to be started with equipment and resources to teach the whole curriculum. For this reason, an urgent survey of all existing CHSs is needed, with predictions of future schools, in terms of facilities, equipment and staffing for each subject, leading to figures being given to SICHE for the likely demand for teachers in each subject. This should, in turn, lead to an expansion of SICHE secondary teacher training programmes, and the necessary physical facilities to cater for this expansion. The absence of the required necessary facilities and equipment to offer practical subjects led to most CHSs resorting to teaching the academic 'textbook' subjects, which are easy to staff and equip. This being the case, coupled with the fact that the majority of their students would be 'pushed out' after Form 3, CHSs are in danger of producing a generation of students whose expectations are focussed on paid employment but who have little prospect of getting it. Unless the MEHRD moves quickly towards making sure that the CHSs are well equipped with sufficient emphasis on practical/vocational skills, the social consequences of these schools could be disastrous in a few years time. On the whole, Standard Six leavers are reasonably willing to return to the village if they fail to get to Form 1. In contrast, Form 3 leavers are likely to be far less willing to go home if offered a curriculum, which emphasises academic subjects for entry to Form 4, rather than practical skills. The consequences could be a massive increase in the drift of unemployed youth to the urban areas looking for work.

Furthermore, the MEHRD should review its policy of limited boarding in CHSs and devise appropriate mechanisms to assist those CHSs which have a genuine need for some boarding to occur, as this is causing a lot of problems for students as well as their parents, relatives and amongst communities. Consequently, proper accommodation facilities, water and sanitation should be put in place to ensure that the health and learning environment of children are not substandard or compromised. In addition, other essential academic and non-academic facilities such as suitable staff houses should be built to attract well-qualified teachers to CHSs. Overall, the lack of teachers, equipment or facilities in CHSs has raised the quality of education they are offering. At present it has been difficult to find out exactly where CHSs or the whole education system stand in this regard. Hence, as previously discussed, the survey of CHSs needs should include steps to measure school quality by determining the level of material inputs allocated to schools on a per-student basis, and the level of efficiency with which fixed amounts of material inputs are organised and managed to raise student achievement.

Fourthly, the necessary financial measures to be undertaken by the government towards CHSs have been discussed in Research Question 5. These must be put in place as a matter of urgency, particularly the need to implement a community standard for school financing.

Fifthly, issues relating to land will continue to be very sensitive issue in communities where the CHSs are located on customary land. However, moves to legally acquire sufficient land for educational purposes should be the priority first step for all parties to consider before establishing CHSs. Wherever possible, the MEHRD and education authorities should impress upon communities that the land needs to be sufficiently large to allow for the schools existing needs and for future expansions.

Finally, concerns about the present education structure and curriculum point to the existence of an education structure which has remained since the colonial era but with very little alterations made to reflect the changing needs of the Solomon Islands society. Since independence, the rapid changes in education and employment prospects necessitated a reformation of the education system, and a review of the

curriculum to cater adequately for those in both Form 3 and Form 5 who leave school without the prospect of either paid employment or further education or training. Furthermore, the importance of the curriculum in enhancing the teaching and learning of traditional skills and knowledge is crucial in a culturally and linguistically diverse country. The relevance of the curriculum is seen as vital in drawing from the local culture which is more than language, art and crafts, and dances, music and songs but encompasses the way the society does things, its attitudes, values, beliefs, and institutions and systems. Although the whole emphasis of the present education system, curriculum, and society pushes students towards expectations of further education and paid employment, the value of vocational/practical skills and traditional cultures were also being recognised. Therefore, greater emphasis on these would be appropriate, as long as the chance to move on to further education or paid employment is also retained within the system. The long-term benefits for the people and the country as a whole in embracing a well balanced 'mixed mode' curriculum should be explored and implemented as a matter of priority.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

In this study of educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands, specifically focussing on the various influences which have resulted in, and continue to impact on CHSs, several factors which originate from both internal and external forces have been identified. The five main internal forces which resulted in the need to establish CHSs were to: increase access to secondary education; increase the participation rate of females in secondary education; reduce provincial imbalances in the provision of secondary school places; reduce overall unit costs in secondary education, and encourage greater parent and community participation in secondary education. The four additional but equally internal forces identified were: demographic, geographic, cultural and political factors. On the other hand, the external forces were identified as: global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process, and influences from the World Bank, other multilateral agencies and bilateral donors. The characteristic of these factors and the kinds of influences they exert on educational decentralisation and CHSs have been covered in detail in the previous chapter. All of these need to be seriously considered by policy-makers and educational administrators at the national and education authority levels, school authorities and leaders at the community level who want to ensure that educational decentralisation under the CHS policy is successfully implemented.

By way of summarising, the following sections will look at the conceptual significance and the theoretical, and practical implications of the study. In discussing the conceptual and theoretical implications, an attempt is made to examine the findings of the study and their significance for the theories in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Given the problems and issues which arose during the

implementation process, reference is then made to a five-point checklist to ascertain the success of educational decentralisation and the establishment of CHSs, as well as their practical implications.

## 5.1 The Conceptual Significance and Theoretical Implications of the Study

As has been alluded to earlier, the study found that the establishment of CHSs has resulted in increasing access, female participation, and provincial equity, reducing unit costs, and encouraging community partnership in secondary education in Solomon Islands. On the whole, in relating the findings and their significance for the theories, themes and issues traversed in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, they support the view that decentralisation is an appropriate political, administrative and development tool, and educational reform model for Solomon Islands (Saunana, 1970: 1980; Campbell, 1977; Thomas, 1985; Bhindi, 1987; ADB, 1998). Furthermore, it can be drawn from the literature reviewed that the introduction of CHSs, and their success in achieving the goals set by the SIG and the World Bank could be best understood within the prevailing political, economical, administrative, equity, socio-cultural, geographical, and educational contexts which exist in Solomon Islands. Conversely, the study would contribute to an understanding of the policy of educational decentralisation as a key aspect of educational restructuring in recent times in the international arena. This is evident from the literature reviewed on decentralisation reforms being undertaken in some developed and developing nations around the world for different reasons (Ball, 1990; Bove *et al.*, 1992; Faustor, 1995; Fiske, 1996; Govinda, 1997; Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Levin, 1998; Sayed, 1999; Lauder *et al.*, 1999). The study also highlights the influences of globalisation, and the roles played by the World Bank and other forms of policy advice, in spreading decentralisation around the world and the establishment of CHSs.

The foregoing overlapping and interrelated themes are examined below to demonstrate their significance for the theories and findings reviewed in Chapter Two, and to show how the study adds to the literature on decentralisation in general, and educational decentralisation in particular through the establishment of CHSs.

From a political perspective, a major contributing factor to the success of CHSs in achieving the aims of increasing access, and gender and provincial equity in the provision of secondary education places was the justification for decentralisation to attain popular participation (Rondinelli, 1984; Ocampo, 1991; Nanau, 1995; Faustor, 1995; Fiske, 1996). The notion of greater grassroots participation in decision-making and development efforts as one of the main tenets of decentralisation (Nanau, 1995) has been clearly demonstrated by the strong support from parents and communities for their CHSs. The study highlighted that community participation and partnership stands at the core of the CHSs success, which further supports the claim by Fernando (1985) that in order for meaningful progress to be attained, the voice and support of those living with the resources in rural areas must be heard. Thus, through decentralisation people would be given the opportunity to actively participate and make development decisions in their own localities while focussing on nation-wide policies (Ocampo, 1991). As has been demonstrated in the case of CHS establishment, decentralisation through encouraging community participation is seen as the better alternative because when the responsibility to finance and expand secondary education remains at the central level, the system becomes stagnant because the government lacks the financial and other resources. This points to the next finding of the study whereby the establishment of CHSs has resulted in reducing unit costs in secondary education.

Economically, the findings of the study supports the claim by writers such as Mamaloni (1981), Bray (1987), Nanau, (1995), Buendia (1991), and Fiske (1996) that decentralisation in the sense of giving more autonomy to the lower levels is regarded as a better alternative because this would result in more efficiency, cost effectiveness, reduce operating costs, target resources better, reduce travelling time and expenses, and raise new resources or additional revenue. The study revealed that the unit costs in the mainly boarding PSSs and NSSs are up to three times higher than that of CHSs. The financial benefits are not only limited to the central or provincial education authorities which typically control education but the study also reveal that cost benefits were also derived by parents whose children attend day CHS.

In Solomon Islands, decentralisation has been used as administrative reform after independence (Bhindi, 1987). This is closely related to the argument (Ocampo, 1991) that through decentralisation, decisions are located at the scene of action where conditions may change and takes advantage of more precise, case-wise situations, and current knowledge and skills within communities in dealing with their needs (Lawton, 1992; Fiske, 1996; Gaynor, 1998). These points of view are in agreement with the findings of the study where parents and communities were able to make their own decisions, often without MEHRD approval and bypassing the provincial education authorities in establishing their CHSs. Such decisions were taken by communities due to the seemingly lacklustre performance, unresponsiveness, or negligence of responsible authorities such as the provincial education authorities. This resulted in repeated calls for the withdrawal of their education authority status and handing over their functions directly to schools and communities.

In view of the fact that the establishment of CHSs has resulted in increasing female participation and reducing provincial imbalances in the provision of secondary education, the findings of the study also supports the literature on the need to improve equity as a reason for decentralisation. The literature suggests (Turner, 1983; Holmes, 1985) that participatory democracy is one of the values closely associated with decentralisation whereby, political and social values such as democracy, liberty and equality are high in the aims of decentralisation. According to the World Bank (1985) and Lauglo and McLean (1985), this has often meant the implementation of decentralisation initiatives in order to narrow the gap between rural and urban areas, rich and poor, gender imbalances, and other previously underserved groups in relation to provision of social services such as education. The findings of the study has shown that the establishment of CHSs brought about an increase in female enrolments in secondary schools as well as the number of secondary places in the rural areas and within the provinces.

A related idea found in the literature reviewed is that decentralisation is not only democratic but it is also consistent with the traditional forms of governance which still exist in Solomon Islands societies where political organisation is based on families, clans, villages and districts (Wolfers, 1985). The study found that the establishment of

CHSs could help to re-assert these units, and assist in the maintenance of unity and continuity because CHSs fit in well with long traditions of community self governance. It is also believed that decentralisation through the establishment of CHSs is meeting local educational needs and has the potential to address the issues of cultural, linguistic, and regional identity in both the formal and non formal education settings. According to Fiske (1996), this would encourage endogenous development and forge a strong sense of community 'ownership' of schools.

The study supports the argument in the literature (Ifunaoa, 1983; Bhindi, 1987) that an important factor which appeared to favour decentralisation in Solomon Islands was the geographical scatter of the islands. In circumstances where geographical factors hampered communication and travel, and made administration difficult, it was cost and time effective and administratively expedient to decentralise decision-making and other functions (Nanau, 1995). The establishment of CHSs, especially as day junior secondary schools was influenced by the geographical nature and terrain of the country.

At a time when the policy of educational decentralisation has become a key aspect of educational restructuring in the international arena, the findings of this study on the establishment of CHSs highlights the theories and findings of the literature reviewed in Chapter two. In comparing the reasons for educational decentralisation undertaken in the developed and developing countries that were reviewed with decentralisation through the establishment of CHSs, it can be said that there is a variety in the structures adopted (Lawton, 1992; Fiske, 1996; Whitty *et al.*, 1998; Levin, 1998; Lauder *et al.*, 1999).

Although the study did not identify any influences of market forces influencing decentralisation initiatives in Solomon Islands, the influence of external factors such as global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process, the desire to have school autonomy and the empowerment or increased emphasis on community involvement in schools were also seen as forces for establishing CHSs. From the literature reviewed, this theme reflects similar school reforms undertaken in many developed and developing countries, which are usually proselytised by the World

Bank, OECD, EU, other international agencies, and donors (Fiske, 1996; Green, 1997; Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Green (1997) added that these educational ideas were also spread by the proliferation of educational exchanges among staff and policy-makers consultants, and publications in assertions of the need for less interventionist and leaner government and for freer forms of economic competition between nations (Taylor *et al.*, 1997; Jones, 1998; Whitty *et al.*, 1998).

This case study emphasis the importance for policy-makers, educational administrators, school and community level stakeholders to understand the rationale of educational decentralisation and the need to satisfy certain criteria for its successful implementation. Having reviewed decentralisation in general, and in particular the policy of educational decentralisation as a key aspect of educational restructuring in recent times, the researcher also highlighted at the end of Chapter Two that, in Solomon Islands, decentralisation was an official government policy. It was also pointed out that the success of a decentralised policy depends largely upon the quality of its implementation. For this reason, a checklist of preconditions, incorporating four elements, was tentatively proposed at the end of that chapter. It is believed that such a checklist could help developing countries, like Solomon Islands, implement educational decentralisation successfully. The data collected in this study lend support to the proposition that all these four criteria or preconditions are necessary for the promotion of successful educational decentralisation and CHS establishment.

In addition, so many respondents stressed the importance of encouraging the teaching of local cultures and languages in CHSs and the need for the education system and the curriculum to be geared towards this goal, that the researcher accepted a fifth criterion namely; “Ensure that the structure of secondary education and the CHS curriculum are relevant and support the aim of enhancing the teaching and learning of local languages and cultures, and vocational skills for self-employment”.

The data convinced the researcher that the successful implementation of educational decentralisation through the CHS policy can be jeopardised by losing vital community support if the education system and the curriculum raises false hopes in children by following an academic oriented curriculum.

The checklist comprising the five elements or preconditions is reproduced below for ease of reference.

1. Ensure that the purpose and method of decentralisation, roles and responsibilities, and the consultation procedures used are clearly understood by all the main parties concerned; politicians, educational administrators at the central and education authority levels, school and community leaders.
2. Provide adequate resources (e.g. finance, teachers and instructional materials) and establish an effective textbook, transport and communication system to cater for geographical isolation;
3. Review the progress of educational decentralisation from time to time;
4. Ensure that the management structure and procedures used support the overall aim behind educational decentralisation, and develop appropriate training to equip those responsible with the necessary administrative and professional skills and attitude to enable them to function effectively and provide better services;
5. Ensure that the structure of the education system and the CHS curriculum are relevant and support the aim of enhancing the teaching and learning of local languages and cultures, and vocational skills for self-employment.

It is evident that issues such as organisation structure, managerial capacities and resources are central to the success of educational decentralisation. It is also apparent that any implementers of the checklist would have to give their careful attention to the constraints of the cultural context and recognise the importance of positive human relationships. They would need to realise that while structures can be modified or replaced, skills imparted or upgraded and resources obtained or increased, the policy-makers and implementers of educational decentralisation have only limited control over the cultural milieu in which they operate. In addition, since most people respond cautiously or suspiciously to change, special efforts would be necessary by the educational leaders to nurture interpersonal relationships and engender trust in order to obtain the cooperation and support of all the parties concerned.

It is possible that certain elements of the checklist might seem banal in the eyes of the adept theoretician, the bureaucrat or the technocrat operating in developed societies and stable environments. This is understandable. However, in a developing society, such as Solomon Islands, which is characterised by a dynamic environment and limited resources, neither managerial capacities nor support delivery systems can be taken for granted. Indeed, the importance of any practical guidance, based on scholarly inquiry, cannot be over-emphasized if it can contribute to enhancing managerial efficiency and effectiveness.

The remainder of this section is devoted to applying the checklist to the Solomon Islands situation and ascertaining by this method the extent to which the five preconditions are satisfied for the successful implementation of educational decentralisation and the establishment of CHSs.

**Element 1: Ensure that the purpose and method of decentralisation, roles and responsibilities, and the consultation procedures used in the process of establishment of CHSs are clearly understood by all the main parties concerned; politicians, educational administrators at the central and education authority levels, school and community leaders.**

The data collected pointed to a paucity of understanding and information among the main actors (politicians, administrators, teachers and community leaders) about the purpose and function of educational decentralisation. The need was apparent to increase their level of awareness about interlocking roles and responsibilities in order to counteract apathy and misunderstanding and stimulate enthusiasm for educational development in the provinces. The lack of awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the various parties has contributed to managerial inefficiency, confusion and unnecessary tension. This became obvious in the lack of understanding of the official consultation procedure which resulted in a variety of unofficial procedures being followed. This has also raised the need for an MOU to be drawn up quickly.

**Element 2: Provide adequate resources (e.g. finance, teachers, buildings and instructional materials) and establish an effective textbook delivery, transport and communication system to cater for geographical isolation.**

The study demonstrated that adequate finance, staffing, buildings, and properly-managed logistical support, and personnel were crucial for the successful implementation of educational decentralisation.

It was evident from the data collected that effective decentralisation was being hampered by inadequate finance, teachers, classrooms, school materials and poor distribution and storage, and an insufficient and undependable transport system. The problem not only interfered with curriculum implementation but also impaired teacher effectiveness since lack of transport affected the frequency of visits made by education officers to schools. Moreover, the shortage of adequate staff often resulted in education officers having to undertake time-wasting clerical chores. Effective communication was seen as an important facilitator of educational decentralisation. It was evident from the data that, despite the efforts of officials and teachers, poor communication hampered the efficient delivery of education services in the provinces. Further extension of and improvement of telephone services, VHF radio network, and shipping services were seen by educators and teachers as some of the ways of overcoming the communication problem.

**ELEMENT 3: Review the progress of educational decentralisation and CHSs from time to time.**

A lack of planned implementation of educational decentralisation was apparent from the absence of any monitoring or evaluation mechanism within MEHRD. Consequently, there had been little reliable or regular feedback to policy-makers or implementers on the performance and progress of educational decentralisation. Such a mechanism is considered to be important in order to identify and remove any obstacles during implementation, adjust plans and modify targets if necessary, appraise the quality of implementers and minimize wastage of scarce resources.

**Element 4: Ensure that the management structure and procedures used support the overall aim behind educational decentralisation and the CHS policy, and develop appropriate training to equip those responsible with the necessary administrative and professional skills and attitude to enable them to function effectively and provide better services.**

The study found that there is need for far better coordination within the MEHRD and the exercising of more decisive leadership. Its absence has had a debilitating effect on the managerial capacity and efficiency within the MEHRD itself and schools. It has also contributed to inefficiency at the education authority levels as manifested in the variable quality of education officers, lack of adequate resources, and a dearth of professional skills. These issues reflect adversely on the competency of key players at all levels and have implications for their training. The data suggest that efficient management and training are essential for the effective implementation of the CHS policy and educational decentralisation. They also underscore the importance of sound management policies, procedures and programming, knowledge of roles and responsibilities, and competent staff and decisive leadership.

**Element 5: Ensure that the structure of secondary education and the CHS curriculum are relevant and support the aim of enhancing the teaching and learning of local languages and cultures, and vocational skills for self-employment.**

It is accepted that the formal education system has to cater for those who would go on to further education and paid employment. However, the structure of secondary education and the continuing curriculum emphasis on academic subjects is causing concern given an environment of stagnant paid employment opportunities. This has orchestrated calls to prepare the majority of students with the necessary skills for self-employment in the rural areas, and to inculcate in them an appreciation of, and positive attitudes towards, their cultures and traditions. The data suggest the CHSs were better placed to enhance the cultural and non-formal education and training needs of communities by making available their facilities and resources for such use. The desire to give something back to the community, in return for their strong support, ought to be commended and encouraged as a matter of policy as this would auger well for educational decentralisation, and the ongoing success of CHSs.

## **5.2 Practical Implications**

If the foregoing theoretical findings are accepted, the following are their practical implications.

### **5.2.1 Practical Implications 1: Partnership and Consultation**

In its efforts to establish partnership in education, it is essential that the government, through the MEHRD draw up a MOU which legitimately outline functions and responsibilities of each party involved in the decentralisation process: education authorities, schools, school committees/boards, communities, and those of the government in relation to the running of schools. The purpose of the MOU should be:

1. To provide a basic framework upon which each party would commit itself to specific functions and responsibilities as specified in the MOU without question or confusion;
2. To succinctly promote in real terms the principles of partnership in education;
3. To ensure that resource utilisation and management are carried out in the interest of educating the young people of Solomon Islands.

The MOU should clearly demarcate the responsibilities of each party, and the extent to which they are carried out in such areas as: finance, curriculum, management, examination, inspection, discipline of students and teachers, teachers conditions of service, and responsibilities for confirming all teacher appointments, promotions, demotions, suspensions, and termination. The researcher noted that the existing MOU is dated and not comprehensive enough to reflect the recent changes that have taken place in the education system. Hence, it is either ignored or education officials who are new to the system were not aware of its existence.

The need to widely disseminate information on the official consultation procedures to establish CHSs and other matters in education is important and the basic elements of such a procedure could be built into the MOU. However, the development and

availability of recent MEHRD documents such as the Education Policy and Administrative Handbook (1997), and the Primary Headteachers' Manual (1999) had since helped to inform education authorities and schools on these matters. For the community, however, it is recommended that the MEHRD organise community education broadcasts on a regular basis of an 'Issues in Education' series over the radio to increase public awareness about educational problems, procedural matters on establishing CHSs and to clarify misinformation or apprehension about issues such as the examination and selection system, education projects in provinces and funding grants available to schools. It is important that such programmes are also organised in Pijin in a "popular" form, avoiding jargon and technicalities.

## **5.2.2 Practical Implications 2: Financial, Physical and Manpower Resources**

### **a) Finance**

Several recommendations made in this study on educational supplies, physical facilities, and logistical support would have extensive financial implications. If educational decentralisation and CHSs were to be meaningful and successful in achieving their objectives, then it is imperative that additional resources must be found.

Since the government itself has limited funds, and with no improvements to this situation envisaged in the foreseeable future, several options must be seriously considered by the government. It is possible that the government may decide to consider implementing all or most of these options at any one time. The first is to develop clearly defined policies and plans to attract funding from external sources. The second option is to maintain the education budget and to raise education's share of the budget simply to stay in place due to inflation and economic decline. Thirdly, an aim could be to restore balance in funding among levels of education by examining the distribution of public funds among different education sub-sectors as it appears that, too little may be going to basic education and too much to the postsecondary level. Fourthly, the government could focus on enrolment growth from the bottom up by concentrating on basic education until universal access at that level is a reality.

Fifthly, public funds could be used more cost-effectively by improving the system of allocating grants to schools, and making the higher levels of education less reliant on public funds.

The sixth option is to supplement the public budget by mobilising other resources. In this option, the government can use the analysis and recommendations of the World Bank (2000) report on 'A Community Standard for School Financing' to develop a long-term strategy for financing the Community Standard and expanded access to schooling. The proposed system is called a Community Standard because it sets a quality target – a standard – that individual communities will be encouraged to aim for and monitor their progress towards. Based on 1997 expenditure and non-teacher operating costs, the proposed elements of this new Community Standard for the initial three levels of schooling were: Primary – SI\$42; Forms 1-3 – SSI469; Forms 4-7 – SI\$783. No school would be paid the full amount of the Community Standard as the government would provide schools with an operating grant that is only a set percentage of the Standard. The proposed percentages for the government to fund were: Primary – 90%; Forms 1-3 – 70%, and Forms 4-7 – 50%.

#### **b) Education Supplies Procurement, Distribution and Storage**

The MEHRD should take all necessary steps to enable the ERU to be established and carry out the functions it is initially planned for. The ERU has been specifically established to coordinate procurement and distribution of all instructional materials and school supplies. In this way, a more effective linkage can be achieved between curriculum developers, education authorities, teacher, and the schools. The economies of scale which accrue from bulk buying or printing could subsidise, to some extent, the cost of materials. Furthermore, it would be easier to monitor the contractual obligations of overseas suppliers from a single central base, than if such a task were undertaken separately by 20 church and provincial education authorities.

It was also reported in the data that the effective distribution of educational supplies to schools was handicapped by the lack of bulk storage facilities and personnel in the provinces. To improve the distribution of educational supplies at the provincial level,

it is recommended that the MEHRD and provincial authorities take steps to create or rent bulk stores for the provincial education offices. It is expected that this action would ease the shortage of office space and minimise the inconvenience suffered by education officers working in cramped conditions.

It is further recommended that the MEHRD and education authorities take necessary steps to ensure that schools have proper storage facilities for textbooks and equipment to minimise wear and tear well before replacements are provided. For safety reasons, this need is particularly urgent for the storage of chemicals for science experiments. In cases where these are non-existent, as in most CHSs, a special project proposal should be formulated for external funding to build storage facilities.

### **c) Physical Facilities**

It is essential for the efficiency and the well-being of provincial educational officers that they work in an environment which is functional, can provide reasonable privacy, and is generally compatible with the climatic conditions found in Solomon Islands. The present physical facilities in most provincial education offices are inadequate, depressing and, in some cases, urgently in need of repairs and proper maintenance.

It is recommended that the MEHRD and provinces draw up a master plan for the improvement of the physical facilities in the provincial education offices, build new offices to replace those that have been destroyed by fire in Central Province and Guadalcanal, and make provisions for their regular maintenance.

Due to the lack of proper facilities, especially for the practical subjects, it is further recommended that a project should be framed to equip existing CHSs and any new ones likely to be started with equipment and resources to teach the whole curriculum. Furthermore, the MEHRD should review its policy of limited boarding in CHSs and devise appropriate mechanisms to assist those CHSs which have a genuine need for some boarding to occur, as this is causing many of problems for students as well as for their parents, relatives and amongst communities. Consequently, proper accommodation facilities, water and sanitation should be put in place to ensure that

the health and learning environment of children are not compromised. In addition, other essential academic such as libraries, and non-academic facilities such as staff houses should be built to attract well-qualified teachers to CHSs.

#### **d) Transport**

As evident from this study, a shortage of adequate transport plagues the efficiency of the provincial education officers, restricts the movement of people, and impedes the timely dispatch and distribution of educational supplies. To remedy this situation, it is recommended that provinces owning ships allocate one for “service” runs for health, education, and agriculture. Alternatively, it is recommended that a ship be requisitioned for education during peak periods such as school reopening or school holidays when pupils, teachers and parents tend to travel frequently. However, both the options call for better management and planning than currently displayed by provincial education officers.

The second step which needs to be taken is to provide or increase the allocation of transport such as vehicles and motorised canoes to the provincial education offices. Since this is an expensive exercise, it is recommended that the central government approach aid donors in countries whose equipment and machinery are widely used in Solomon Islands.

When such transport is obtained, it should be allocated to the education offices and not to the provincial transport pool. It is important that the education officers have the exclusive use of transport and not be subject to competition from other provincial divisions. However, in view of the reported abuse of transport by some provincial education officers through negligent handling or personal use, it would be necessary for the MEHRD to provide firm guidelines for usage and for the CEO to strictly monitor transport usage in order to minimise such occurrence.

### **e) Communication**

To overcome the communication problems reported to the researcher, provincial authorities should be prevailed upon to improve their internal telephone system with modern equipment and additional lines, and for Solomon Telecom to assist on a national basis. Communication with isolated areas can be improved by providing selected remote schools with V.H.F radios. The MEHRD should investigate the possibility of obtaining funds or equipment from external sources for this project. Furthermore, in view of recent developments in rural communication, the MEHRD should explore the use of the internet and email service in schools, as this technology is now being used in three rural CHSs through a UNDP-funded project on rural communication network using V.H.F transmitters.

### **f) Land**

The issues relating to land will continue to be very sensitive in communities where the CHSs are located on customary land. However, moves to legally acquire sufficient land for educational purposes should be the priority first step for all parties to consider before establishing CHSs. Wherever possible, the MEHRD and education authorities should impress upon communities that the area of land needs to be sufficiently large to allow for the schools existing needs and for future expansions.

### **g) Teacher Shortage**

The issue of teacher shortage requires the MEHRD and the SICHE to immediately embark on a coordinated teacher training programme with the view to meeting existing teacher demands of schools as well as any projected increases commensurate with CHSs expansion plans. Because advancement is normally through academic attainment, this should also include long and short-term in-service training programmes, so that existing teachers can upgrade their existing qualifications and skills. These are important because the absence of a coordinated in-service teacher development programme tended to make teaching a dead-end job for most teachers and deflect their motivation.

### **5.2.3 Practical Implication 3: Monitoring and Evaluation**

After nearly eight years since the first CHSs were established, the MEHRD had not made any specific attempts to carry out an extensive review of CHSs. It is recommended that the MEHRD undertake to carry out an urgent review of the CHSs, with the view to highlight achievements and identify key issues and weaknesses, and from which further planning for consolidation and expansion could proceed. Such a review should be carried out on a regular basis to facilitate informed decision-making.

### **5.2.4 Practical Implication 4: Management and Training**

In close association with Practical Implication 1, the study found that there is need for far better coordination within the MEHRD and the exercising of more decisive leadership. The data suggest that efficient management and training are essential for the effective implementation of the CHS policy and educational decentralisation.

If the proposed training programmes outlined in the previous chapter were implemented, it would be possible to develop strategies to overcome the major management and resource problems identified in this study and seen as impeding educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands. An organisation, no matter how well designed, cannot function efficiently without adequate, competent and committed staff. Many participants from all levels interviewed by the researcher believed that improvement is necessary in the focus for training. There is therefore an urgent need to develop a comprehensive plan for the training of MEHRD officials, education officers from provincial and church education authorities, head teachers and principals, and members of school committees/boards. It is recommended that training plans prepared be based on a systematic survey of needs.

### **5.2.5 Practical Implications 5: Structure of Secondary Education and Curriculum**

Concerns about the present secondary education structure and curriculum point to the existence of an education structure which has remained since the colonial era but with very little alterations made to reflect the changing needs of the Solomon Islands

society. It is recommended that the MEHRD implement, as a matter of priority, a reform of the education system. It is further recommended that, urgent implementation be undertaken of the recommendations of the '*Secondary Curriculum Development Policy Assessment*' carried out by Treadaway (1996) for a 'mixed mode' secondary curriculum to cater adequately for those in Form 3 through to Form 5 who leave school without the prospect of either paid employment or further education or training.

Furthermore, the importance of the curriculum in enhancing the teaching and learning of traditional skills and knowledge is crucial in a culturally and linguistically diverse country. The relevance of the curriculum is seen as vital in drawing from the local culture. Although the whole emphasis of the present education system, curriculum, and society pushes students towards expectations of further education and paid employment, the value of vocational/practical skills and traditional cultures were also being recognised. Therefore, it would be appropriate for the MEHRD to place greater emphasis on these, as long as the chance to move on to further education or paid employment is also retained within the system.

### **5.3 Further Research**

Further research is needed in five areas which have direct bearing on increasing access to secondary education, further development of CHSs, and the efficiency and the effectiveness of educational decentralisation in Solomon Islands. These are listed below.

The first is to assess the viability of extending pupil capacity at the lower levels in existing NSSs, PSSs and CHSs. This strategy has potential cost advantages in addition to shorter lead times in construction as against a strategy of providing additional new schools. This should include carrying out a facilities and mapping survey of all CHSs, detailing aspects such as location, enrolments, buildings, amenities and general comments about community support and other services.

The second area in need of further research is a survey of CHS to measure school quality by determining the level of material inputs allocated to schools on a per-student basis, and the level of efficiency with which fixed amounts of material inputs are organised and managed to raise student achievement. The two key education priorities – putting more children in school and improving quality would appear at first glance to be in zero-sum competition with each other if the government sets unrealistic targets and rigidly pursues one priority at the expense of the other. The rush to increase quantity of secondary school places without quality of instruction would harm the nation as well as individual students and their families.

The third area for further research is to carry out a study on teacher supply and demand for all secondary schools. This will help MEHRD and the SICHE to plan teacher training programmes in accordance with the needs of schools in order to alleviate teacher shortages, particularly in specialised subjects.

The fourth area in need of further research is the survey of training needs of MEHRD staff, education officers from provincial and church education authorities, principals and school management boards/committees within the context of educational decentralisation and any structural reform that might be instituted. This investigation should include a design and detailed description of suggested programmes for building the necessary skills identified.

The fifth area identified is the need for researching and designing an appropriate monitoring system within MEHRD to review the performance of its various sections and to monitor the progress of educational decentralisation, and the development and operation of CHSs.

The research in areas identified should ideally be undertaken by Solomon Islanders themselves. However, this is an unlikely proposition in the near future since most of them lack research experience on subjects of such complexity.

The method of research most prevalently used in Solomon Islands has been to hire foreign consultants but they have been very expensive. Furthermore, the knowledge of

such consultants about realities existing in Solomon Islands has been limited, and their contacts with Solomon Islanders have been during the brief period of their consultancies. Moreover, because they are generally not proficient in Pijin they only interact with a limited section of a very diverse population. Also, given the fact that several consultancy reports have been shelved or rejected by MEHRD, it would appear that this is not the most appropriate way of undertaking research in Solomon Islands.

Under the circumstances, joint research projects involving Solomon Islanders appear to be the most appropriate basis to adopt. Senior staff from overseas institutions could be invited by MEHRD to spend their sabbatical leave as Honorary Consultants with the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and lead research projects such as the four already identified. This approach would have minimal cost implications and have the advantage of training Solomon Islanders in research work dealing with education in general and educational decentralisation in particular.

#### **5.4 Looking to the Future**

This study was undertaken to develop an understanding of educational decentralisation through the establishment of CHSs in Solomon Islands. Eight research questions were posed in order to investigate the efficacy of educational decentralisation, and the various influences which have resulted in, and continue to impact on CHSs.

1. What are the goals or reasons for establishing CHSs?
2. Where do the forces or factors for establishing CHSs come from, and were there any tensions which they may have created?
3. What was the consultation procedure used by concerned parties before establishing CHSs, and was it sufficient and followed at all times?
4. Have CHSs achieved their goals, how have these been monitored or evaluated, and what additional benefits are to be had from CHSs?
5. What were the financial and other forms of support for CHSs from local and external sources, were these sufficient and sustainable, and what was the impact of parent and communities involvement?

6. How are CHSs currently being administered, and is relevant training provided for those responsible for running CHSs to prepare them for their new roles?
7. What plans are in place to build new CHSs, or expand existing ones, and to decentralise more functions for controlling CHSs to the lower levels?
8. What are some of the major problems or issues currently being faced by CHSs?

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to collect data in order to answer these questions. The techniques used included: questionnaire, interview, content analysis and observation study. The major data gathering was carried out in Solomon Islands during two rounds of fieldwork.

It was apparent from the data that CHSs have largely achieved their aims and objectives but not without problems, confusion and tension amongst the parties involved. The study highlighted the importance of all education stakeholders understanding the rationale of educational decentralisation and the need for satisfying certain criteria for its successful implementation. Such criteria were developed from the literature reviewed in the study and refined subsequently in the light of the researcher's experience in the field. When these criteria were applied to the situation found in Solomon Islands, certain important practical implications were evident. These related to the training issues, the management of education, consultation procedures and financial and other resources. Based on the objectives identified from the data, recommendations were made on how to improve the management of education and make it more functional to meet the challenges of a decentralised education system in today's society.

Furthermore, specific recommendations included a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the decentralisation process. Training was proposed whereby the central, education authority, school and community level participants would have the opportunity to develop the skills identified in this study as

essential for the successful promotion of educational decentralisation and operation of CHSs. Areas needing further research were also identified.

In conclusion, this study indicates that decentralisation is certainly appropriate to a Melanesian country such as Solomon Islands, particularly for geographical and cultural reasons. These have also influenced the success in implementing the CHSs policy.

In Solomon Islands, this system of governance has the support and goodwill of the majority of professionals and laity who nevertheless recognise that there are certain inherent problems in implementing it and that these must be overcome. Decentralisation, in its wake, has made heavy demands upon government services, available resources and skilled manpower. In the education area, the current weaknesses are mainly in the structure of the system and the professional expertise of the administrators. These weaknesses can be overcome by a clear understanding of the theoretical issues involved, enthusiastic leadership, appropriate professional training programmes, efficient management of resources, and systematic restructuring.

The findings of this case study, and the implementation criteria suggested by the researcher, can offer a relevant theoretical framework and practical guidance to Solomon Island administrators who are concerned with or are likely to be engaged in promoting educational decentralisation. On the other hand, its conceptual significance and theoretical implications for the theories traversed in the literature reviewed could be of interest to those who are addressing relevant themes on decentralisation in general, and educational decentralisation in particular in Solomon Islands, the South Pacific Region, and beyond.

## REFERENCES

- Abedin, N. (1989). "The Politics of Separatism: Some Reflections and Questions". *The Round Table*: 330, 223 – 236.
- Adelman, C., Jenkins, D. and Kemmis, S. (1976). "Rethinking Case Study: Notes from the Second Cambridge Conference". *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 6, 3, pp. 139-150.
- Alasia, S. (1989). "Politics". In Laracy, H (Ed.). *Ples Blong Iumi: Solomon Islands, The Past Four Thousand Years*. Suva and Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific with the Solomon Islands Extension Centre, the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education and the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education.
- Armor, T. et al. (1977). "Organising and Supporting Integrated Rural Development Projects: A Twofold Approach to Administrative Development". *Journal of Administration Overseas*, 4, 276 - 286
- Asian Development Bank. (1998). *Solomon Islands 1997 Economic Report. Pacific Studies Series*. Manila: Office of Pacific Operations.
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation. (2002). Programme One: *Governance – What's In a Word? "Time to Talk" Series*. Retrieved November 1, 2002 from <http://abc.net.au/timetotalk/english/radio/default/htm>.
- Axline, A. W. (1984). "Decentralisation provincial policy-making and the law in Papua New Guinea." *Public Administration and Development*, 4, pp. 305-323.
- Bacchus, K. (1993). "Some Problems and Challenges Faced in Decentralizing Education in Small States". In K.M. Lillis (Ed.). *Policy, Planning and Management of Education in Small States*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Ball, S.J. (1990). *Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Policy Sociology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ball, S.J. (1994). *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-Structural Approach*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Ball, S.J. (1998). "Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy". *Comparative Education*, 34, 2.
- Ball, S. (1982). "Participant observation as a method of research". In L. Bartlett and S. Kemmis (Eds.), *The Conduct of Fieldwork* (Case study Methods Course Readings Vol. 5). Geelong: Deakin University.

- Ballard, J. A. (ed.) (1981). *Policy-making in a New State – Papua New Guinea 1972-1977*. St. Lucia. University of Queensland Press.
- Bartlett, L. and Kemmis, S. (eds.). (1982). *The Conduct of Fieldwork (Case Study Methods Course Readings Vol. 6)*. Geelong. Deakin University.
- Barrett, R. (1983). A Case Study of School-Based Decision-Making in Curriculum Development. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, St. Lucia.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*. Open University Press. Philadelphia.
- Becker, H. S. (1958). "Problems of Interference and Proof in Participant Observation." *American Sociological Review*, 8, pp. 652-660.
- Becker, H. S. *et al.* (1968). *Making the Grade*. New York. Wiley.
- Best, J. W. (1977). *Research in Education*. (Third Edition) Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Beti, G. O. (1977). "The Rape of the Western Province". In D. Lulei *et al.* (Eds.). *Twenty Four Poems of the Solomon Islands* (pp. 16-17). Honiara: University of the South Pacific Centre.
- Bhattacharya, M. (1978). "Decentralisation: some conceptual issues". *Indian Journal of Public Administration. Quarterly Journal of the Indian Institute of Public Administration*. XXIV, 2, 370 – 374.
- Bhindi, N. (1984). "Education in Fiji: What Kind of Partnership?" *Fiji Teachers' Journal*, 54<sup>th</sup> Conference Issue, p. 65-68.
- Bhindi, N. L. (1987). *Decentralisation of Education in Solomon Islands and the Role of Provincial Education Officers*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. The University of Queensland.
- Bhindi, N. L. (1989). *Educational Decentralisation in the Solomon Islands and the Role of Provincial Education Officers: An Executive Research Report for the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education. Unpublished Report*. Suva: Institute of Education, The University of the South Pacific.
- Bogdan, R. C., and Biklen, S. R. (1982). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bogdan, R. and Taylor, S. J. (1975). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences*. New York. John Wiley and Sons.

- Borg, W. R., and Gall, M. D. (1983). *Educational Research: An Introduction. Fourth Edition*. London: Longman.
- Bori Sau, A. (1984). *Makira Province: Education Division: Progress Report, 1983. Unpublished Report*. Education Office, Makira Province, Solomon Islands.
- Boutilier, J. (1979). "Killing the Government: Imperial Policy and the Pacification of Malaita". In M. Rodman and M. Cooper (Eds.): *The Pacification of Melanesia* (pp. 43-87). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Bowe, R., Ball, S.J., with Gold, A. (1992). *Reforming Education and Changing Schools: Case Studies in Policy Sociology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bray, M. (1981). "Decentralisation and Educational Planning in Papua New Guinea: Diversity or Conformity?" *Administration for Development*, July, pp. 18-20.
- Bray, M. (1983). "The Politics of Free Education in Papua New Guinea." *International Journal of Educational Development*, 2, 3, pp. 281-287.
- Bray, M. (1984a). "Achievements and Constraints in the Training of Educational Planners". *Papua New Guinea Journal of Education*, 20, 1, 53-63.
- Bray, M. (1984b). *Educational Planning in a Decentralised System: The Papua New Guinean Experience*. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea Press, and Sydney: University of Sydney Press.
- Bray, M., and Packer, S. (1993). *Education in Small States: Concepts, Challenges and strategies*. Pergamon Comparative & International Series, Vol. 13. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd.
- Bray, M. with Lillis, K. (eds.). (1988). *Community Financing of Education: Issues and Policy Implications in Less Developed Countries*. Pergamon Press. Oxford. England.
- Bray, M. (1992). *Educational Planning in Small Countries*. UNESCO. Paris.
- Bray, M. (1987a). *New Resources for Education: Community Management and Financing of Schools in Less Developed Countries*. The Commonwealth Secretariat. London.
- Bray, M. (1987b). *Are Small Schools the Answer? Cost-Effective Strategies for Rural School Provision*. The Commonwealth Secretariat. London.
- Bryant, C. and White, L. G. (1982). *Managing Development in the Third World*. Colorado: Boulder, Westview Press Inc.

- Buendia, R. G. (1991). "Decentralisation and Development Administration in a Unitary State: Empowerment and Development for Whom". *Philippines Journal of Public Administration*, XXXV, 2, 114-133.
- Bugotu, F. (Chairman) (1973). *Education for What? A Report of the Findings of the British Solomon Islands Education Review Committee*. Honiara: Government Printer.
- Burgess, R. G. (Ed.) (1984). *The Research Process in Educational Settings: Ten Case Studies*. Sussex: Falmer Press.
- Burns, R. B. (2000). *Introduction to Research Methods*. Longman. Melbourn. Victoria. Australia.
- Campbell, M. J. (1977). "Devolution in Solomon Islands: A Study of Major Reforms". *Journal of Administration Overseas*, XVI, 4, 229-239.
- Chao, M. J. P. (1984). "Leadership", in Whiteman, D. (ed.). *An Introduction to Melanesian Cultures: A Handbook for Church Workers*. Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, pp. 127-148.
- Chapman, R. (1973). "Decentralisation: Another Perspective". *Comparative Education*, 9, 3, 127-134.
- Chikulo, B. (1981). "The Zambian Administrative Reforms: an Alternative View". *Public Administration and Development*, 1, 56-65.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2001). *Research Methods in Education* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Connell, J. and Curtain, R. (1982). "Urbanisation and Inequality in Melanesia". In R.J. May and H. Nelson (Eds.). *Melanesia Beyond Diversity* (pp.47-63). Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- Conyers, D. (1979). "The Office of Implementation: A Case Study of Administration for Development." *Administration for Development*, 13, July, pp. 29-43.
- Conyers, D. and Westcott, A. R. (1979). "Regionalism in Papua New Guinea." *Administration for Development*, 13, July, pp. 1-23.
- Conyers, D. (1981). "Decentralisation for regional development: A comparative study of Tanzania, Zambia and Papua New Guinea". *Public Administration and Development*, 1, 2, 107-120.
- Conyers, D. et al. (1982). *Decentralisation Options and Issues – A Manual for Policy Makers*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

- Conyers, D. (1984). "Decentralisation and Development. A Review of the Literature". *Public Administration and Development*, 4, 187-197.
- Cook, N. M. (1983). "Better Research for Better Administrators: A Case for Qualitative Research". *Educational Administration Review*, 1, 2, Spring, pp. 47-63.
- Coxon, E. (1996). *The Politics of 'Modernisation' in Western Samoan Education*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Auckland University.
- Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research Design, Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. California: Sage Publications.
- Cross, G. (1982). *Aloha Solomons*. Suva. Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Crossley, M and Burns, R. (1983). "Case Study in Comparative and International Education: An Approach to Bridging the Theory – Practice Gap". In B.A. Sheehan, (Ed.). *Comparative and International Studies and the Theory and Practice of Education* (pp. 1-18). Australian Comparative and International Education Society.
- Crossley, M. and Vulliamy, G. (1984). "Case Study Research Methods and Comparative Education." *Comparative Education*, 20, 2, pp. 193-207.
- Devesi, B. (1992). "Independence or Dependence". In R. Crocombe and E. Tuza, (Eds.). *Independence, Dependence, and Interdependence: The First Ten Years of Solomon Islands Independence*. Honiara: Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, The USP Honiara Centre and the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education.
- Dorauvo, C. (1984). "History of Development of Schools". *Sunset News* (Western Province, Solomon Islands), 3, 4, 17-18.
- Doyle, K. J., (1983). *Report of the Ministry of Education, Training, and Cultural Affairs of the Solomon Islands Government on the Organisation Structure of the Ministry, Division of Responsibilities between the Ministry and the Provinces, and Training Needs of Senior Administrators*. Unpublished Report. Honiara: World Bank Solomon Islands Primary Education Project, Ministry of Education.
- Downer, A. (2002). Drawing the Line in the Solomons: Australia and New Zealand Aid. Radio Australia, *In Focus Pacific*: Melbourne. Retrieved on January, 11, 2002 from <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireort/html>.
- Dunleavy, P., and O'Leary, B. (1987). *Theories of State: The Politics of Liberal Democracy*. Houndsmill: Macmillan.
- Fagerlind, I., and Saha, L. J. (1983). *Education and National Development: A Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd.

- Fantini, M. and Gittel, M. (1973). *Decentralisation: Achieving Reform*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Farrugia, C. J. and Attard, P. A. (1989). *The Multi-Functional Administrator. Educational Development in the Small States of the Commonwealth*. The Commonwealth Secretariat. London.
- Faustor, C.N.M. (1995). *Decentralisation and Planning of Education: Recent Experiences in Five Latin American Countries*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Fernando, E. (1985). "Administrative Decentralisation and People's Participation: New Dimensions in Rural Development: The Sri Lanka Experience". In M. Ouchi and M.J. Campbell (Eds.). *Development Communication and Grassroots Participation*. Kuala Lumpur: Association of Development Research and Training.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1980). "Primary Curriculum Development in Solomon Islands". *O'O – A Journal of Solomon Islands Studies*, 1-2, March-October, pp. 93-99.
- Fiske, E.B. (1996). *Decentralisation of Education: Politics and Consensus. Directions in Development*. Washington: The World Bank.
- Flanagan, N. M. (1983). *An Investigation of the Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions and Organisational Change in a Metropolitan State Primary School*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, St. Lucia.
- Gannicott, K., and McGavin, P. A. (1987). *Solomon Islands Financing of Education Study: Resource and Management of Primary and Secondary Schooling in the Solomon Islands. A Draft Report to the Ministry of Education and Training of the Solomon Islands*. Campbell, ACT: Centre for Studies in Management and Logistics, University College, The University of New South Wales.
- Gaynor, C. (1998). *Decentralisation of Education: Teacher Management. Directions in Development*. Washington: the World Bank.
- Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. J. and Bowe, R. (1995). *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1994). *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gibson, J. L. et al. (1977). *Organisations: Structure, Processes, Behaviour*. Texas: Business Publications Inc.
- Govinda, R. (1997). *Decentralisation of Educational Management: Experiences from South Asia*. Paris: UNESCO.

- Goodes, L., and Mattiske, J. (1991). *Facilities and Location Survey of Primary and Secondary Schools*. Honiara: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.
- Green, A. (1997). *Education, Globalisation and the Nation State*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Greenfield, T. B. (1975). "Theory About Organisation: A New Perspective and its Implications for schools", in Hughes, M. (ed.) *Administering Education: International Challenge*. University of London. Athlone Press.
- Gris, G. (1978a). "Administrative Decentralisation to Provincial Governments." *Education Gazette*, February, pp. 14-17
- Gris, G. (1978b). "Education and Provincial Government." *Education Gazette*, March, pp. 58-60.
- Habu, M. (1992). Education, Which Way? Learning to be Independent, in Crocombe, R. and Tuza, E. (eds.) *Independence, Dependence, Interdependence. The First 10 Years of Solomon Islands Independence*. Published jointly by the Institute of Pacific Studies, the USP Honiara Centre, and the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education. Honiara. Government Printing Press.
- Habu, M. (1983). "The Structure of the Education in Solomon Islands". Unpublished Paper. Institute of Education. University of the South Pacific.
- Halsey, A.H., Lauder, H., Brown, P. & Wells, A.S. (1997). *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hart, D. K. (1972). "Theories of Government Related to Decentralisation and Citizen Participation". *Public Administration Review*, XXXII, 603-621.
- Herbert, A. H. (1973). "Does Decentralisation Mean a Change in Managerial Philosophy?". In Fesler, J. W. et al., *The Administration of New Federalism: Objectives and Issues. American Society for Public Administration, Special Issue*, pp. 85-90.
- Herlihy, J. (1982), "The Model that Never was". In R.J. May and H. Nelson (Eds.). *Melanesia Beyond Diversity* (pp. 570-600). Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- Herriott, R. E. (1977). Ethnographic Case Studies in Federally-Funded Multi-Disciplinary Policy Research: Some Design and Implementation Issues." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 8, 2, p. 106-114.
- Heyman, R. (1979). "Comparative Education from an Ethnomethodological Perspective." *Comparative Education*, 15, 3, pp. 241-249.

- Hind, I. (1988). *Expansion Options for Secondary Education in Solomon Islands. Report to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development*. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Holmes, B. (ed). (1985). *Equality and Freedom in Education*. London. G. Allen & Unwin.
- Hoyle, E. (1973). "The Study of Schools as Organisation," in Butcher, J. H. and Point, H. B. (eds.) *Educational Research in Britain*. University of London, Athlone Press, pp. 32-59.
- Hunter, R. and Bricknell, N. (1983). "The Politics of Educational Change in Third World Countries: The Effects of Provincial Government on Education in Papua New Guinea", in Welch, A. R. (ed.). *The Politics of Educational Change*. Armidale. C.S.S.E., University of New England.
- Ifunaoa, W. (1983). "Implementing Provincial Government". In P. Lamour and S. Tarua (Eds.), *Solomon Islands Politics* (pp196-207). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Ingham, B., and Kalam, A. K. M. (1992). "Decentralisation and Development: Theory and Evidence from Bangladesh." *Public Administration and Development*, 12, 375-385.
- Isatabu Tavuli. (2000). Unknown.
- Jambunathan, S. (1978). "A Note on Decentralisation in Administration". *Indian Journal of Public Administration: Quarterly Journal of the Indian Institute of Public Administration*. XXIV, 3, 775-78.
- Jennergren, L. P. (1981). "Decentralisation in Organisations". In P.C. Nystrom and W.H. Starbuck (Eds). *Handbook of Organisational Design Vol. 2* (pp. 39-59). London: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, P.W. (1998). "Globalisation and Internationalism: Democratic Prospects for World Education". *Comparative Education*, 34, 2, 143-155.
- Jones, L. D. (1978). *Nine Steps to Research*. Lindfield: Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education.
- Kabutaulaka, T. K. (1999). *The Guadalcanal Issue: A Frank Talk*. Department of Political and Social Change. Australian National University. Canberra.
- Kabutaulaka, T. K. (2002). *Viewpoint: The Politics of Peace in Solomon Islands*. Retrieved May, 1, 2002, from <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/report/2002/html>.
- Kasperson, R. E., and Breitbart, M. (1974). "Participation, Decentralisation and Advocacy Planning". *Association of American Geographers*, Paper No. 25.

- Kausimae, D., et al. (1979). *Report: Special Committee on Provincial Government, December 1977 – May 1979*. National Parliament Paper 14/79. Honiara: Ministry of Home affairs.
- Keesing, R. M. (1978). "Polito-religious Movements and Anti-colonialism on Malaita: Maasina Ruru in Historical Perspective". *Oceania*, 48, 4.
- Keesing, R. M., and Corris, P. (1980). *Lightening Meets the West Wind – The Malaita Massacre*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Kemmis, S. and Bartlett, V. L. (1985). *A Conversation with Stephen Kemmis and Leo Bartlett. Course Material: ED826 – Case Study in Education*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland.
- Kii, L. (1994). *Taking us to the Present. From Pre-Colonial to Post Independence: Issues and Problems Pertinent to our Education System*. Unpublished Paper Presented at an Education Summit Organised by the Ministry of Education and Training. Lelei Resort, 26<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> September. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Kiriau, W. B., et al (1982). *Education Committee Review Report. Unpublished Report*. Ministry of Education, Training and Cultural Affairs. Solomon Islands.
- Kunjbehari, L. (1982). "The Purpose of Education and Planning." *Education Gazette (PNG)*, April, pp. 68-71.
- Lamour, P. (1983). "The Mamaloni Government, 1981-83". In P. Larmour and S. Tarua (Eds.). *Solomon Islands Politics*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Laracy, H. (1983). *Pacific Protest: The Maasina Rule Movement in Solomon Islands: 1944-1952*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Lauder, H. et al. (1999). *Trading in Futures: Why Markets in Education Don't Work*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Lauglo, J. and McLean, M. (eds). (1985). *The Control of Education: International Perspectives on the Centralisation – Decentralisation Debate*. London. Heinmann Educational for the Institute of Education, University of London.
- Lawton, S.B. (1992). "Why Restructure?: An International Survey of the Roots of Reform". *Journal of Education Policy*, 7, 139-154.
- Lawton, D. (1992). *Education and Politics in the 1990s: Conflict or Consensus?* London and Washington D.C: The Falmer Press.
- Le Compte, M. D. and Goetze, J. P. (1982). "Problems of Reliability and Validity in Ethnographic Research." *Review of Educational Research*, 52, 1, Spring, pp. 31-60.

- Levin, B. (1998). "An Epidemic of Education Policy: (What) Can we Learn from Each Other?" *Comparative Education*, 34, 2, 131-142.
- Levin, B. (2001). *Reforming Education: From Origins to Outcomes*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Lewawa, S. V. (2001). *Monitoring Report*. Division of Policy and Planning Services, Education Department, Vanuatu. Hamilton: Education Leadership Centre, University of Waikato.
- Lillis, K.M. (Ed.). (1993). *Policy, Planning and Management of Education in Small States*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Lofland, J. (1971). *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. California. Belmont. Wadsworth.
- Luteru, P.H. (1993). "Aid and Education in Small Systems: A South Pacific Perspective". In K.M. Lillis (Ed.), *Policy, Planning and Management of Education in Small States*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Maddick, H. (1963). *Democracy, Decentralisation and Development*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Maddick, H. (1975). *Democracy, Decentralisation and Development*. London: Asia Publishing House.
- Maeniuta, S. (1984). *Education Report: 1983: Malaita Province, Education Division*. Unpublished Report, Education Office, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands.
- Mamaloni, S. (1981). "Rural Development Then and Now: Legacy of Colonial Miscalculation". In S. Oxenham (Ed.). *The Road Out: Rural Development in Solomon Islands* (pp. 1-4). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Marginson, S. (1993). *Education and Public Policy in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marginson, S. (1997). *Markets in Education*. St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin.
- Mason, L. B. (1983). An Attempt at Collaborative Leadership by a Principal in a Queensland State Primary School. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Queensland, St. Lucia.
- Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning Qualitative Research, A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. London, UK: Routledge Falmer.
- Meek, V. L. (1982). *The University of Papua New Guinea: A Case Study in the Sociology of Higher Education*. St. Lucia. University of Queensland Press.

- MacDonald, B. and Walker, R. (1975). "Case Study and the Social Anthropology of Educational Research." *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 5, 2, pp. 2-10.
- MacDonald, M. (1984). *Vision of the New: A Goal Refocus Within the Institute of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St. Benedict*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Queensland, St.Lucia.
- McDonald, H. (1985). "Papua New Guinea: Ten, Slow Uphill Years". *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June, pp. 36-44.
- McMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in Education: A Conceptual Introduction, Third Edition*. New York, NY, USA: HarperCollins College Publishers.
- McNamara, V. (1983). "Learning to Operationalize Policies: Factors in the Administrator Development Lag". *Administration for Development*, January, pp. 19-41.
- Mcpherson, R. J. S. (1979). *Role Conflict and the Role of Deputy Principals in Western Australian High and Senior High Schools*. Unpublished M.Ed. Admin. Thesis, University of New England, Armidale.
- Millar, D. (1978). "The Development of Solomon Islands Politics to Independence". *The Journal of the Cultural Association of the Solomon Islands*, 6, 1-17.
- Ministerial Committee Report. (1986). *A Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea*. Port Moresby: Department of Education.
- Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (MECA). (1974). *Education Policy 1975 – 1979*. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (1991). *Education Sector Policy and Planning Statement*. Approved by Cabinet, April 1991. Honiara.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. (1999). *Report on the Solomon Islands School Certificate 1999*. Honiara: National Examination and Standards Unit.
- Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development. (2001a). *Education Statistics*. Honiara: Implementation and Planning Unit.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. (2001b). *Education Strategic Plan: 2002 – 2004*. Honiara. Implementation and Planning Unit.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development. (1997). *Education Policy and Administrative Handbook*. Honiara: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

- Ministry of Education and Training (MET). (1994). *1993 Education Data*. Honiara: Implementation and Planning Unit.
- Ministry of Education, Training and Cultural Affairs (METCA). (1978). *The Education Act 1978*. Honiara. Government Printer.
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services. (1994). *Solomon Islands Population Strategy Consultancy Report Phase 1*. Honiara: ADB Population and Family Health Improvement Project.
- Ministry of Home Affairs, Solomon Islands. (1981). *The Provincial Government Act 1981*. Honiara: Government Printer.
- Ministry of Home Affairs, Solomon Islands. (1982). *Guide to the Provincial Government Act 1981*. Honiara: Government Printer.
- Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development. (2001a). *Report of the State Government Task Force, 2001*. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development. (2001b). *Constitution Amendment (Creation of the Federation) Bill 2001*. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Molisa, G. et al. (1982). "Vanuatu: Overcoming Pandemonium", in R.G. Crocombe, and A. Ali (Eds.). *Politics in Melanesia* (pp.84-115). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Mudu, U. (1984). *Honiara Town Council: Education Division: 1983 Report. Unpublished Report*. Education Office, Honiara Town Council, Solomon Islands.
- Muttalib, M. A. (1978). "Decentralisation: A New Philosophy of Corporate Life". *Indian Journal of Public Administration: Quarterly Journal of the Indian Institute of Public Administration*, XXIV, 3, 702-709.
- Nanau, G.L. (1995). *Decentralisation, Development and Popular Participation in the Solomon Islands: A Study of the Provincial Government System*. Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of the South Pacific.
- Naitoro, J. (2000). *Perspectives on the Ethnic Conflict in Solomon Islands*. Unpublished Paper. Honiara.
- Nolan, J. F. and Short E. C. (1985). "Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Modes of Inquiry to Inform Curriculum Deliberation: A Proposed Framework". *Curriculum Perspectives*, 5, 1, pp. 15-23.
- Nori, A. (2002a). Where are the 500 or so Guns? "*Horizon*". Volume: 01, Issue: 02. A Newsletter Produced by Andrew Nori as a Contribution to the Peace Process in Solomon Islands. Honiara.

- Nori, A. (2002b). Disarmament. "*Horizon*". Volume: 01, Issue: 01. A Newsletter Produced by Andrew Nori as a Contribution to the Peace Process in Solomon Islands. Honiara.
- Nori, A. (2001). *5<sup>th</sup> June 2000 in Perspective*. Retrieved, January, 3, 2002 from <http://www.sibconline.com.sb/Analysis.asp>.
- Nyerere, J. K. (1973). *Freedom and Development*. Dar-es-Salaam: Oxford University Press.
- Ocampo, R. (1991). "Decentralisation and Local Autonomy: A Framework of Assessing Progress". *Philippines Journal of Public Administration*, XXXV, 3, 191-294.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1981). "School Ethnography." A Multilevel Approach." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 12, p. 3-29.
- Ogilvie, D. (1975). *An Investigation into the Efficacy of an Organisation Development Intervention in Four Queensland State High Schools*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, St. Lucia.
- Olssen, M. & Matthews, K.M. (Eds.). (1997). *Education Policy in New Zealand: The 1990s and Beyond*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Oritaimae, M. (1982). *A Brief Account of Past Church Contribution in Development of Schools in the Solomons and their Present Day Relationship with Governments in Formal Education*. Unpublished Paper. Ministry of Education, Training and Cultural Affairs. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Osifelo, F. (1985). *Kanaka Boy: An Autobiography*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Owens, R. G. (1982). "Methodological Rigor in Naturalistic Inquiry: Some Issues and Answers." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18, 2, Spring, pp. 1-21.
- Pacific Islands Monthly*, (March, 1985). "Optimism in Solomons – Kenilorea looks ahead", pp. 51-53.
- Padakana. E. (1984). *Education Report: January – December, 1983: Education Division, Isabel Province*. Unpublished Report, Education Office, Isabel Province, Solomon Islands.
- Palmer, B. S. (1977). *Options for the Development of education in the Solomon Islands: A Critical Analysis*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of New England, Armidale.

- Palmer, B. S. (1980). "An Attempt at Educational Reform in the British Solomon Islands: W. C. Groves, 1939-1945", in S. Murray-Smith (Ed.). *Melbourne Studies in Education: 1980* (pp. 204-235). Melbourne University Press.
- Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D. (1972). "Evaluation as Illumination: a new approach to the study of innovatory programmes", Occasional Paper 9, Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, University of Edinburgh.
- Pokawin, S. P. (1982). "Papua New Guinea: Aftermath of Colonialism", in R.G. Crocombe and A. Ali (Eds.). *Politics in Melanesia* (pp. 204-235). Suva. Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Premdas, R. (1982). "The Solomon Islands: an Experiment in Decentralisation." *Public Administration and Development*. 2: 239-51.
- Premdas, R. R. et al. (1983). "The Western Breakaway Movement", in P. Lamour and S. Tarua (Eds.). *Solomon Islands Politics* (pp. 164-195). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Premdas, R. R., and Steeve, J. S. (1984). *Decentralisation and Political Change in Melanesia: Papua New Guinea, The Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu*. South Pacific Forum Working Paper No. 3. Suva: SSED, The University of the South Pacific.
- Radclyffe, A. (1998). "The Ethnic Tension'. Private View. In *Solomon Star*, Issue No. 1312, p.5. Honiara: Provincial Press Ltd.
- Reynolds, D. (1981). "The Naturalistic Method of Educational and Social Research: A Marxist Critique." *Interchange*, 11, 4, pp. 77-89.
- Rigeo, D. A. (1984). *1983 Report: Western Province, Education Division. Unpublished Report*. Education Office, Western Province, Solomon Islands.
- Rist, R. C. (1977). "Overview of the Relations Among Educational Research Paradigms: From Disdain to Détente." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 2, May, pp. 42-49.
- Rogers, C. et al. (1979). *National Education Strategy: Papua New Guinea Education Review Plan and Proposals*. Port Moresby. Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research.
- Rondinelli, D. A. (1981). "Government Decentralisation in Comparative Perspective: Theory and Practice in Developing Countries". *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 2, 133-145.

- Rondinelli, D. A. and Cheema, S. (1983). "Implementing Decentralisation Policies: An Introduction". In S. Cheema and D.A. Rondinelli (Eds.). *Decentralisation and Development: Policy Implementation in Developing Countries* (pp. 9-34). London: Sage Publications.
- Rondinelli, D. A., Nellis, J. R., and Cheema, G. S. (1984). *Decentralisation in Developing Countries*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Samana, U. (1988). "Decentralisation, Decolonisation and Development in Papua New Guinea: The Morobe Province". In Y. Ghai (Ed.). *Law, Government and Politics in the Pacific Island States* (pp. 310-334). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Sanday, P. R. (1979). "The Ethnographic Paradigm(s)." in Van Maanen, J. (ed.) *Qualitative Methodology*. California, Beverly Hills. Sage Publications, pp. 19-36.
- Saunana, J. (1972). "The Politics of Subservience". In R.J. May (Ed.). *Priorities in Melanesia* (pp. 429-436). Canberra: Australian National University.
- Saunana, J. (1980). *The Alternative*. Honiara: USP Extension Centre.
- Saunders, G. E. (1977). "Education in the Solomon Islands". In S. Murray-Smith (Ed.). *Melbourne Studies in Education: 1972* (pp. 163-189). Melbourne University Press.
- Sayed, Y. (1999). "Discourses of the Policy of Educational Decentralisation in South Africa since 1994: an Examination of the South African Schools Act [1] [2]." *Compare*, 29, 2.
- Scott, D. (1996). "Methods and Data in Educational Research". In D. Scott and R. Usher, (Eds.). *Understanding Educational Research*. London: Routledge.
- School of Education (2002). *Graduate Studies Handbook – 2002*. Hamilton: Centre for Graduate Studies, The University of Waikato.
- Seri, E. (1985). "Call to Solve some of Guadalcanal Province's Problems". *Government Monthly* (Solomon Islands). August, p.5.
- Seshadri, V. (1978). "The Unresolved Debate of Centralisation Versus Decentralisation". *Indian Journal of Public Administration: Quarterly Journal of the Indian Institute of Public Administration*. XXIV, 3, pp. 310-334.
- Siapu, G. (1980). "Major Issues in Education". *O'O – A Journal of Solomon Islands Studies*, 1-2, March-October, pp. 71-81.
- Sikua, D. (1992). *Why Provincial Secondary Schools in the Solomon Islands Fail to Achieve Their Aims and Objectives: A Critical Analysis of a Policy*. Unpublished Masters Thesis. Monash University. Melbourne.

- Sikua, D. (1997). *Education and Human Resource Development Needs for Solomon Islands: 1997 – 2006*. Unpublished Paper. Prepared for the University of the South Pacific Strategic Planning Seminar. Honiara.
- Sikua, D. (1995). "Population Growth and Educational Planning in Solomon Islands". *Pacific Health Dialog*, Volume 2, No.1, pp. 73-79. Auckland: Resource Books Ltd.
- Solomon Islands Government. (2000). *Report on 1999 Population & Housing Census. Basic Tables and Census Description*. Honiara: Statistics Office.
- Solomon Islands Government. (2002). *Solomon Islands Human Development Report: Building a Nation*. Volume 1, Main Report. Queensland. Mark Otter.
- Smith, B. C. (1967). *Field Administration: An Aspect of Decentralisation*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Solomon Islands Government. (1974). *Education Policy: 1975-1979*. Honiara. Ministry of Education.
- Solomon Islands Government. (1978). *The Education Act 1978-No. 26 of 1978*. Honiara: Government Printer.
- Solomon Islands Government. (1979). Grants Code Relating to Rates and Conditions of Government Financial Assistance to Education Authorities. *Legal Notice No. 44 of 1979*. Honiara: Government Printer.
- Solomon Islands Government. (1981). *The Provincial Government Act 1981-No. 7 of 1981*. Honiara: Government Printer.
- Solomon Islands National Literacy Committee. (1992). *A Survey of Literacy and Language, March-November, 1991*. Honiara: Solomon Aelan Literasi.
- Songo, B. P. (1983). "Managing structural change in education under a decentralised system: the Papua New Guinea experience" in Harman, G. S. (ed.). *Managing structural change in education in Asia and the Pacific: A blueprint for action*. Canberra. Australian Government Publishing Service, pp. 30-45.
- Stacey, M. (1969). *Methods of Social Research*. London: Pergamon Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1978). "The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry." *Educational Researcher*, 7, pp. 5-8.
- Standish, B. (1983). "Power to the People? Decentralisation in Papua New Guinea." *Public Administration and Development*. 3, pp. 223-238.

- Stenhouse, L. (1979). "Case Study in Comparative Education: Particularity and Generalisation". *Comparative Education*, 14, 1, 5-10.
- Taylor, S., Rizvi, F., Lingard, B. and Henry, M. (1997). *Education Policy and the Politics of Change*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Tealiklava, J. P. (1984). *Temotu Province: Education Division: Report, 1983. Unpublished Report*. Education Office, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands.
- Tekulu, G. (1984). *Country Paper: Solomon Islands – Education Development, 1984*. Unpublished Paper Presented at the Eighth Annual Advisory Seminar of the Institute of Education, The University of the South Pacific. Suva, Fiji.
- The University of Waikato. (2002). *Graduate Studies Handbook 2002*. Schools of Education. Centre for Graduate Studies. Hamilton. New Zealand
- Thomas, A. R. (1983). *A Review of the Diploma in Administration (Education), University of the South Pacific and An Analysis of the Training Needs of Education Administrators in Solomon Islands*. Armidale: University of New England, Centre for Administrative and Higher Education Studies.
- Thomas, E. D. (1985). *Changes to the Secondary School Curriculum in the Solomon Islands: 1973-1983: Perspectives from an Analysis of the Culture-Curriculum Field*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. Armidale: University of New England.
- Tordoff, W. (1982). "Provincial Government in Papua New Guinea." *Administration for Development*, July, pp. 1-10.
- Totorea, D. (1981). "Decentralisation in Solomon Islands". In P. Lamour, R. Crocombe and A. Taungenga (Eds.). *Land People and Government: Public Lands Policy in the South Pacific*. Suva: The University of the South Pacific, Institute of Pacific Studies in Association with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- Treadaway, J. (1982). *Provincial Secondary Schools in Solomon Islands*. Unpublished Paper. Honiara. Solomon Islands Teachers College.
- Treadaway, J. (1996). *Secondary Curriculum Development Policy Assessment: A Report to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development*. Honiara. Solomon Islands.
- Tulo, S. (1982). Education Budget Speech 1982 cited in *Education Gazette (PNG)*, February, pp. 9-12.
- Turner, M. (1983). "Decentralising Training For Provincial Administrators: Lessons From Papua New Guinea". *Administration for Development*, January, pp. 9-17.

- Voi, M. (1983). *Decentralisation of Educational Decision-Making in Papua New Guinea*. Unpublished M.A thesis, Macquarie University, Sydney.
- Waddell, R. (1978). "Education in the Solomon Islands: The End of a Great Experiment?" *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Volume 49, No. 7. Suva. Fiji.
- Walford, G. (1991). *Doing Educational Research*. London: Routledge.
- Walker, R. (1980). "The Conduct of Educational Case Studies: Ethics, Theory and Procedures", in Dockrell, W. B. and Hamilton, D. (eds.), *Rethinking Educational Research*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, pp. 30-63.
- Walker, W. G. (1975). "Autonomy and Control in Educational Renewal in Australia". In J.V.D. Cruz and P.J. Sheenan (Eds.). *The Renewal of Australian Schools: Essays in Educational Planning in Australia after the Karmel Report* (pp. 79-95). Primary Education Pty. Ltd.
- Wasuka, M., with Kaua. T., and Butu, S. (1989). Chapter VIII: Education, in Laracy, H. (ed.). *Ples Blong Iumi: Solomon Islands, the Past Four Thousand Years*. University of the South Pacific, Suva and Honiara.
- Waters, M. (1995). *Globalisation*. London: Routledge.
- Weeks, S. G. (1977). "The Case Study Method", in Guthrie, G. and Field, S. (eds.) *Basic Research Techniques. A Handbook for Fieldworkers in Papua New Guinea*. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, Education Research Unit, pp. 53-64.
- Weeks, S. G. and Guthrie, G. (1984). "Papua New Guinea", in Thomas, R. M. and Postlethwaite, T. M. (eds.). *Schooling in the Pacific Islands. Colonies in Transition*. Pergamon Press, pp. 29-64.
- Whiteman, D. L. (1984a). "Melanesia: Its People and Culture ". In D. Whiteman (Ed.): *An Introduction to Melanesian Cultures: A Handbook for Church Workers*. Goroka: The Melanesian Institute.
- Whiteman, D. (Ed.) (1984b). *An Introduction to Melanesian Cultures: A Handbook for Church Workers*. Goroka: The Melanesian Institute.
- Whitty, G., Power, S., and Halpin, D. (1998). *Devolution and Choice in Education: The School, the State, and the Market*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Wilson, S. (1977). "The Use of Ethnographic Techniques in Educational Research". *Review of Educational Research*. 47, 1, 245-265.
- Wolf, A. (2002). *Does Education Matter? Myths About Education and Economic Growth*. London: Penguin Books.

- Wolfers, E. (1985). "Decentralisation: Meanings, Forms, Objectives and Methods". In P. Lamour et al. (Eds.). *Decentralisation in the South Pacific: Local, Provincial and State Government in Twenty Countries*. Suva: University of the South Pacific.
- Wolfers, T. (1983). "Centralisation and Decentralisation Until Independence". In P.Lamour and S. Tarua (Eds.). *Solomon Islands Politics* (pp.146-163). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies.
- World Bank. (1982). *Staff Appraisal Report, Solomon Islands Primary Education Project*. Washington D.C. Population and Human Resources Operations Division, Country Department III, East Asia and Pacific Region.
- World Bank. (1986). *Staff Appraisal Report, Solomon Islands Secondary Education Project*. Washington D.C. Population and Human Resources Operations Division, Country Department III, East Asia and Pacific Region.
- World Bank. (1993). *Staff Appraisal Report, Solomon Islands Third Education and Training Project*. Washington D.C. Population and Human Resources Operations Division, Country Department III, East Asia and Pacific Region.
- World Bank. (1995a). *Priorities and Strategies for Education: A World Bank Review*. Washington D.C: The World Bank.
- World Bank. (1995b). *Pacific Islands Education Study: Basic Studies No. 1*. Washington D.C: The World Bank.
- World Bank. (2000). *Solomon Islands Primary and Secondary Education: A Community Standard for School Financing*. Washington, D. C. East Asia and the Pacific Region, Human Development Sector Unit.
- Yeager, R. (1982). *Tanzania: An African Experiment*. Colorado: Boulder, Westernview Press.
- Young, R. (1983). *Canadian Development Assistance to Tanzania. An Independent Study*. Ottawa: North-South Institute.

**Appendix 1**

**FORM – R.B**

**RESEARCH PERMIT**

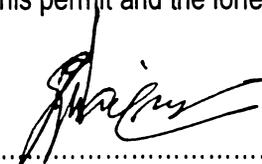
Permission is hereby given to:

1. Name: Derek Sikua
2. Country: Solomon Islands
3. To undertake research in (subjects: Community High Schools
4. Area Councils: Nationwide
5. Province(s): Nationwide – Solomon Islands

6. **Conditions**

- a. To undertake research only in the subject areas specified in 3 above.
- b. To undertake research only in the Area Council specified in 4 and the Province(s)
- c. To observe with respect at all times local customs and the way of life of people in the area in which the research work is carried out.
- d. You must not, at any time, take part in any political or missionary activities or local disputes.
- e. You must leave 4 copies of your final research report in English with the Solomon Islands Government (Ministry responsible for research) at your own expense.
- f. A research fee of \$50.00 and deposit a sum of N/A must be paid in full or the research Permit will be canceled. (See Sec. 3 Subject. 7 of the Research Act).
- g. This research is valid until 31/3/2000 provided all conditions are adhered to.
- h. A failure to observe the above conditions will result in the automatic cancellation of this permit and the forfeit of your deposit.

Signed: .....



Date: .....

28/1/2000

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION & HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT



## Appendix 2

## FORM – R.B

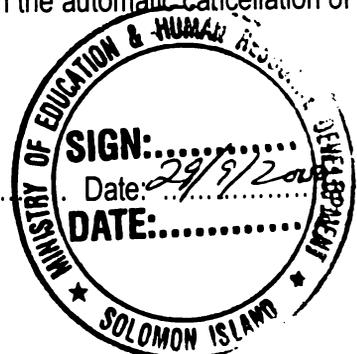
RESEARCH PERMIT

Permission is hereby given to:

1. Name: Derek Sikua
2. Country: Solomon Islands
3. To undertake research in (subjects): Community High Schools – Extension
4. Area Councils: Nationwide
5. Province(s): Nationwide – Solomon Islands
6. **Conditions**
  - a. To undertake research only in the subject areas specified in 3 above.
  - b. To undertake research only in the Area Council specified in 4 and the Province(s)
  - c. To observe with respect at all times local customs and the way of life of people in the area in which the research work is carried out.
  - d. You must not, at any time, take part in any political or missionary activities or local disputes.
  - e. You must leave 4 copies of your final research report in English with the Solomon Islands Government (Ministry responsible for research) at your own expense.
  - f. A research fee of \$ 50.00 and deposit a sum of N/A must be paid in full or the research Permit will be canceled. (See Sec. 3 Subject. 7 of the Research Act).
  - g. This permit is valid until 15/12/2000 provided all conditions are adhered to.
  - h. No live species of plants and animals may be taken out of the country without approval from relevant authorities
  - i. A failure to observe the above conditions will result in the automatic cancellation of this permit and the forfeit of your deposit.

Signed: .....

MINISTER OF EDUCATION



### Appendix 3

#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

DATE OF INTERVIEW: ...../...../..... TIME: .....

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: ..... VENUE: .....

DEPARTMENT/ORGANISATION: .....

**TOPIC: The Decentralisation of Education in a Developing Country: The Case of Community High Schools in the Solomon Islands.**

**INTRODUCTION:** My name is Derek Sikua and I am carrying out this research towards a Ph.D at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. Thank you for allowing me to ask you some questions during this interview which should not take more than one hour. My research topic is entitled '*The Decentralisation of Education in a Developing Country: The Case of Community High Schools in the Solomon Islands.*' In my thesis, the term decentralisation is defined as the process in which subordinate levels of a hierarchy are authorised by a higher body to take decisions about the use of the organisations resources. For example, here in Solomon Islands, under the existing provincial government system, some discretion and authority to make important decisions in a number areas are devolved to the provincial governments by the central government. In the case of education, provinces carry out, on behalf of the government certain functions decided by the central government under agency agreements.

- 1. What can you tell me about some of the ways in which the governance or administration of the Solomon Islands has been decentralised or is undergoing decentralisation?**

*PROBES: i) In traditional societies?  
ii) During the colonial period?  
iii) During the period after independence?*

- 2. The provincial government system has been reviewed recently. What can you tell me about this review and how the recommended changes reflect decentralisation issues?**

- 3. Where do you think the forces or factors that have influenced decentralisation in the Solomon Islands come from in recent times?**

*PROBES: i) What have been the influences of outside/international factors?  
ii) What have been the influences from internal/local factors?  
iii) What is the relative importance of these factors?*

- 4. How do you see all aspects of education in the Solomon Islands in relationship to the issue of decentralisation?**

**5. What do you understand to be the goals or reasons for establishing CHSs?**

*PROBES: i) Can you think of any advantages or disadvantages of having CHSs?*

*ii) Overall, do you think establishing CHSs is a good idea?*

**6. Where do you think the forces or factors to establish CHSs came from?**

*PROBES: I) What have been the influences of outside/international forces?*

*ii) What have been the influences from internal/local forces?*

**7. Do you see any tensions between the external and internal forces in the setting up of CHSs?**

**8. Can you describe what you know about the consultation process between the different parties concerned before establishing CHSs? Was this sufficient?**

**9. Do you think CHSs have achieved their aims? If not, why not? What system do you use to monitor and evaluate CHSs achieving their goals and the impact of these decentralisation initiatives on CHSs?**

**10. What do you know about the current levels of financial assistance or funding and contributions towards the development and operation of CHSs from the government, provincial or church education authorities, schools, and parents and communities?**

*PROBES: i) Are there any variations in this funding from CHS to CHS?*

*ii) Are they realistic and affordable and can they be sustained?*

**11. How successful were CHSs during the period they were being built?**

*PROBES: i) Were the grants from the central government sufficient and paid on time?*

*ii) Were the grants, skilled manpower, advice and assistance from the education authority forthcoming and sufficient?*

*iii) What was the cooperation, contributions and support from parents and the community like?*

**12. What factors do you think have contributed to the success of CHSs at the level of implementation?**

*PROBES: i) How important has the wish of parents and communities for local control of their school in determining this success?*

*ii) Had implementation of the CHSs idea been unsuccessful, what factors do you think would have impeded it?*

**13. Do you think that the parents and communities are happy to continue supporting CHSs?**

*PROBES: i) Through fees, fundraising activities and donations?  
 ii) By availing their land, labour and building materials?  
 iii) Through their involvement in running CHSs?  
 iv) Moral support?*

**14. In what ways would you like to see the government, education authorities, parents and communities improve or increase their level of assistance to CHSs?**

**15. How are CHSs currently being managed?**

*PROBES: i) What are the responsibilities of the central, provincial, school and parents and communities for CHSs?  
 ii) To what extent is this an example of educational decentralisation?  
 iii) Are these arrangements satisfactory?*

**16. Was sufficient training provided for those responsible for managing CHSs prior to their establishment? I am thinking in particular of provincial education officers, principals and school committee members.**

*PROBES: i) Is training currently provided to adequately prepare those taking on their new roles in managing CHSs?  
 ii) Describe the kinds of training being provided.  
 iii) Will these training continue to be provided for future personnel?*

**17. Are there any plans by the central government to recentralise or decentralise control of CHSs?**

**18. What are the major issues and problems faced by CHSs now?**

**Thank you.**

## Appendix 4

Dear .....

1. You will no doubt recall our interview at the beginning of this year when I was carrying out my initial fieldwork towards my PhD thesis entitled “*The Decentralisation of Education in a Developing Country: The Case of Community High Schools (CHSs) in Solomon Islands.*” As promised, I am forwarding you a copy of our interview transcript to check and amend as you wish. Once I have received your amendments, I shall then include them in the final version of the transcript, and which I will use for my thesis. You may keep the transcript if you have not made any changes to it. Furthermore, if you have indicated in your *Consent Form* that you would like a copy of the transcript, I shall endeavour to send you one as soon as I have finalised it.

2. Having transcribed all the interviews, I have drawn up a Questionnaire to help me confirm what my interviewees, including yourself have told me during the interviews. The attached Questionnaire therefore, contains your views as well as those of other Solomon Island politicians, administrators, teachers and community leaders at the central, provincial, school and community levels I interviewed between Dec. '99 and Mar. '00 on what were considered to be some of the important factors in **HELPING** or **BLOCKING** effective political and education decentralisation, and the establishment of CHSs.

---

**YOU ARE INVITED TO INDICATE YOUR PERSONAL OPINION ON EACH OF THE FACTORS LISTED, AND TO ADD ANY OTHER FACTOR(S) NOT MENTIONED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE BUT WHICH YOU CONSIDER TO BE IMPORTANT.**

---

3. Your answers will help me understand better the process of political and educational decentralisation, and establishment, development and operation of CHSs in Solomon Islands. It will help me understand also the role played by the central government, church and provincial education authorities, schools, and parents and communities in implementing the decentralisation policy, especially in relation to CHSs.

4. This questionnaire is not an examination. I am only requiring you to write your name in order for me to identify the central, provincial/church education authority, school, and community level responses for my case study. I can assure you that your identity will remain unknown to other people, except for my Supervisors and myself.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. May I assure you that your responses will assist me a great deal with my research studies. Tagio Tumas.

Derek Sikua.

**QUESTIONNAIRE: THE DECENTRALISATION OF EDUCATION IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: THE CASE OF COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS (CHSs) IN SOLOMON ISLANDS.**

**NAME:** .....

**PART I: A – POLITICAL DECENTRALISATION HELPING FACTORS**

**Instructions:**

The following factors have been put forward by some participants as being important in **HELPING** to promote political decentralisation in Solomon Islands. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Please indicate your response by putting a tick ( ) under any one of the five columns provided against each item.

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. The desire to adopt a form of governance that reflect the Country's past and existing traditional forms of autonomous organisations and leadership structures has helped decentralisation.					
2. The devolution of certain powers to the provinces has been helped by the government's policy to decentralise and its genuine commitment to democratic principles.					
3. Decentralisation has been helped by more democratically-minded key politicians, public officials and local consultants.					
4. The country's scattered population and geographical nature has helped the need for decentralisation.					
5. Decentralisation has been helped by the need to equitably and effectively distribute the Country's limited human, financial and other resources to the grassroots level.					

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Decentralisation has been helped by the people's desire to participate in making decisions about the use of their natural resources (e.g. land, forest marine and mineral resources).					
7. Decentralisation has been helped by the need to give power and autonomy to lower levels of government that are better placed to understand the different development issues and needs in the rural areas.					
8. The present decentralised form of government has been helped by similar political decentralisation moves being undertaken in PNG.					
9. Decentralisation has been helped by global moves to involve lower level bodies in the decision making process.					
10. Decentralisation has been helped by locals who have studied or who are now studying overseas, and externally published books, reports, journals, etc.					
11. Decentralisation has been helped by expatriates who have worked or who are currently working in relevant government ministries.					
12. Decentralisation has been helped by the desire to remove bureaucratic red-tape, reduce power/control from Honiara, and to break away from centralised systems of management, largely inherited from the colonial past.					
13. Decentralisation was helped by the government's desire to download its financial and administration problems to the lower levels of government.					

**OPTIONAL**

You are invited to add any other factor(s) **HELPING** to promote political decentralisation in Solomon Islands not mentioned in the above list but which you consider to be important, and to indicate how you felt about it by putting a tick ( ) under the appropriate column.

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree

## PART I: B – POLITICAL DECENTRALISATION BLOCKING FACTORS

### Instructions:

The following factors have been put forward by some participants as being important in **BLOCKING** political decentralisation in Solomon Islands. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Please indicate your response by putting a tick ( ) under any one of the five columns provided against each item.

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Decentralisation in Solomon Islands has been blocked by interference from politicians with the administration at all levels.					
2. Decentralisation has been impeded by the scattered population and geographical nature of the country.					
3. The present decentralised government system has been impeded by chronic financial constraints.					
4. Decentralisation has been hindered by differing levels of wealth and resources among provinces and areas.					
5. Decentralisation has been blocked because provinces were given limited financial powers to directly benefit from their own resources or to decide on distribution and utilization.					
6. Decentralisation has been blocked because government grants have often been misappropriated at the provincial level in some provinces.					
7. The decentralised system suffered from a lack of well-trained staff as well as the uncooperative attitude and conflicts between staff at all levels.					

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Decentralisation has been hindered by an unattractive condition of service and inadequate housing for provincial staff.					
9. The existing decentralised political system has been impeded by bureaucratic red-tape and unclear procedures and regulations.					
10. Decentralisation has not been accompanied by a clear knowledge of job expectations resulting in the neglect of duties by some officers.					
11. The existing decentralised system suffers from confusion arising from a duplication of roles and responsibilities at the central, provincial, and local levels.					
12. Decentralisation has been blocked by inadequate communication and transport to and from some provinces as well as within the provinces.					
13. Decentralisation has been impeded by the systems failure to recognise and fully involve traditional chiefs and leaders in its structure and implementation.					
14. Decentralisation has been blocked by cultural taboos, conflicts and by influences from the <i>wantok</i> system.					
15. The existing decentralised political system has been blocked by the view from some people that it does not promote national unity.					

**OPTIONAL**

You are invited to add any other factor(s) that you consider as being important in **BLOCKING** political decentralisation in Solomon Islands not mentioned in the above list, and to indicate how you felt about it by putting a tick ( ) under the appropriate column.

<b><i>BLOCKING FACTORS</i></b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>

## PART II: A – EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALISATION HELPING FACTORS

### Instructions:

The following factors have been put forward by some participants as being important in **HELPING** to promote the decentralisation of education in Solomon Islands. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Please indicate your response by putting a tick ( ) under any one of the five columns provided against each item.

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Education decentralisation has been helped by the need to expand formal education opportunities in the rural areas.					
2. The decentralisation of education has been helped by the desire of parents and communities to takeover the control of education from the government and education authorities.					
3. The decentralisation of education has been helped by the country's geography and scattered population.					
4. Education decentralisation has been helped by the availability of external funding from donors.					
5. Education Decentralisation has been helped by the need to have a reliable educational information gathering and dissemination system.					
6. Promotion of community participation in education policy-making through the provincial education boards has helped education decentralisation.					
7. The decentralisation of education has been helped by more democratically-minded key education officials.					

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
8. The need to encourage the participation of the community to improve their schools in partnership with the various education authorities has helped education decentralisation.					
9. Education decentralisation has been helped by the government's positive funding arrangements through the payment of school grants directly into school bank accounts.					
10. Global moves to involve schools, parents and communities in the decision making process has helped education decentralisation.					
11. Education decentralisation has been helped by the idea of sharing the responsibility and costs of running schools between the central government, education authorities, parents and communities.					

**OPTIONAL**

You are invited to add any other factor(s) **HELPING** to promote education decentralisation in Solomon Islands not mentioned in the above list but which you consider to be important, and to indicate how you felt about it by putting a tick ( ) under the appropriate column.

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>

## PART II: B – EDUCATION DECENTRALISATION BLOCKING FACTORS

### Instructions:

The following factors have been put forward by some participants as being important in **BLOCKING** education decentralisation in Solomon Islands. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Please indicate your response by putting a tick ( ) under any one of the five columns provided against each item.

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Education decentralisation has been blocked by interference from politicians, and lack of political support for education in some provinces.					
2. Education Decentralisation was blocked by the government's failure to convene the National Education Board, and weak administrative and educational leadership at all levels.					
3. The decentralisation of education has been impeded by the country's scattered population and geographical nature.					
4. Educational decentralisation has been blocked by fear of isolation and the resulting reluctance of education officers to serve in the rural areas.					
5. The decentralisation of education has been blocked by chronic financial constraints.					
6. Education decentralisation has been impeded by differing levels of wealth and resources among different provinces and areas.					
7. Education decentralisation has been blocked by a shortage of ancillary staff, trained teachers, and suitably qualified education officers.					

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
8. The decentralisation of education has been impeded by unattractive conditions of service for provincial education officers.					
9. Bureaucratic red-tape and unclear procedures at all levels has blocked education decentralisation.					
10. Education decentralisation has been blocked by a lack of knowledge of job expectations, confusions and unclear lines of accountability at the central and provincial levels.					
11. Education decentralisation has been blocked by the uncooperative attitude and poor relationship between staff at all levels.					
12. Education decentralisation has been blocked by inadequate school supplies, and an inefficient system for the supply of textbooks, equipment and educational materials.					
13. Education decentralisation has been blocked by poor communication and transport to and from the provinces as well as within the provinces.					
14. Education decentralisation has been impeded by inadequate office and storage space for provincial education offices.					
15. Education decentralisation has been blocked by irregular visits to schools by education officials from the central and provincial levels.					
16. Decentralisation has been impeded by cultural taboos and conflicts, and by influences from the <i>wantok</i> system.					

**OPTIONAL**

You are invited to add any other factor(s) that are **BLOCKING** education decentralisation in Solomon Islands not mentioned in the above list but which you consider to be important, and to indicate how you felt about it by putting a tick ( ) under the appropriate column.

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>

### PART III: A – COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS (CHSs) HELPING FACTORS

#### Instructions:

The following factors have been put forward by some participants as being important in **HELPING** to promote the establishment, development and operation of Community High Schools (CHSs) in Solomon Islands. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Please indicate your response by putting a tick ( ) under any one of the five columns provided against each item.

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. CHSs' establishment has been helped by the government's aim to reduce capital, recurrent and unit costs in the provision of secondary education, and personal expenses to parents (e.g. fees, travel, pocket allowances, etc.).					
2. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the availability of external funding (e.g. World Bank).					
3. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the annual grants from the government and some education authorities, and the government's positive funding arrangements in paying grants directly to school bank accounts.					
4. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the value and importance placed by parents and communities on the formal education of their children.					
5. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the promotion prospects they offer for some teachers and the opportunity for others to serve in their own areas or village schools.					

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
6. CHSs establishment has been helped by the government's desire to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and coordination in managing secondary education.					
7. CHSs establishment has been helped by the use or planned use of school facilities for vocational and adult education and training courses after school hours.					
8. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the absence of tensions between external and internal factors, and the good relationship between all parties concerned.					
9. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the availability of people with relevant skills within the communities (e.g. carpenters, accountants).					
10. The establishment of CHSs has been facilitated by the active and direct involvement of traditional chiefs, and other local leaders and people.					
11. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the feeling of ownership from parents and communities towards their schools.					
12. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the need to increase the number of secondary school places and reduce the number of Std 6 push-outs.					
13. CHSs establishment has been helped by the need to increase secondary school places for girls.					
14. CHSs establishment has been helped by the need to reduce the inequitable distribution of secondary school places amongst the provinces.					

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
15. The establishment and operation of CHSs has been helped by the strong financial, physical and material support from parents and communities.					
16. CHSs establishment has been helped by the government's conducive policy and criteria, and a genuine commitment to building a strong partnership in education with all stakeholders.					
17. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the desire to give parents an opportunity to contribute relevant curriculum and other inputs suited to the traditional, formal and non-formal education and training/skill needs of the area.					
18. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the impetus provided by the five pilot World Bank funded CHSs, and related Studies conducted for the Ministry of Education.					
19. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by lessons learnt from similar types of schools in other countries.					
20. The establishment of CHSs has been helped by the fact that they offer the same curriculum taught in NSSs and PSSs.					

**OPTIONAL**

You are invited to add any other factor(s) **HELPING** to promote the establishment, development and operation of CHSs in Solomon Islands not mentioned in the above list but which you consider to be important, and to indicate how you felt about it by putting a tick ( ) under the appropriate column.

<b>HELPING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**PART III: B – COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL (CHSs) BLOCKING FACTORS**

**Instructions:**

The following factors have been put forward by some participants as being important in **BLOCKING** the establishment, development and operation of CHSs in Solomon Islands. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Please indicate your response by putting a tick ( ) under any one of the five columns provided against each item.

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the view from parents and communities that some CHSs were supported by politicians for political gains.					
2. The establishment of CHSs has been impeded by geographical and natural factors forcing some to move towards more boarding.					
3. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by financial constraints, long delays, non-payment, and low and unrealistic levels of central or provincial government grants.					
4. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the lack of financial and moral support from the national MP, provincial member, or education authorities.					
5. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the varying levels of wealth and resources among different provinces and communities.					
6. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by a severe shortage of trained teachers.					
7. CHSs establishment has been blocked by the lack of training opportunities for those responsible for managing them to prepare them for their new roles.					

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
8. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the lack of a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved.					
9. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by weak management, coordination and educational leadership at all levels.					
10. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the absence of proper monitoring mechanisms to evaluate and monitor whether or not CHSs are achieving their aims and objectives.					
11. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the uncooperative attitude, conflicts, and poor relationship amongst the parties involved.					
12. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by inadequate transport and communication to and from schools.					
13. The establishment of CHSs has been impeded by the lack of a clear management, organizational and accountability structure.					
14. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by a shortage of educational materials, and an inadequate system of supplying textbooks, educational materials and equipment to schools.					
15. CHSs establishment has been blocked by a shortage of specialized teachers and classrooms for science, home economics, industrial arts, agriculture, school library, and staff housing.					

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
16. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the view from parents that they are providing low quality education and students discipline compared to NSSs and PSSs.					
17. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by the lack of parent and community support for some schools.					
18. The establishment of CHSs has been blocked by an inadequate and unclear consultation procedure between the parties concerned.					
19. The establishment of CHSs has been hindered by land disputes, unsuitable location or insufficient land for expansion.					
20. CHSs establishment has been impeded by the lack of regular visits to schools by education officers from the central and provincial levels.					
21. The establishment of CHSs has been hindered by an overall feeling from parents and communities that they are inadequately prepared to make sound decisions about education, or their children's schooling.					

**OPTIONAL**

You are invited to add any other factor(s) that are **BLOCKING** the establishment, development or operation of Community High Schools (CHSs) in Solomon Islands not mentioned in the above list but which you consider to be important, and to indicate how you felt about it by putting a tick ( ) under the appropriate column.

<b>BLOCKING FACTORS</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree



**APPENDIX 5****INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED****1. CENTRAL LEVEL*****MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT***

1. Minister.
2. Permanent Secretary.
3. Under Secretary.
4. Assistant Secretary – Planning, Implementation & Research Unit.
5. Assistant Secretary - Formal Education Unit.
6. Assistant Secretary – Curriculum Development Centre.
7. Assistant Secretary – Teaching Service Division.
8. Assistant Secretary – Inspectorate Unit.
9. Chief Education Officer – Formal Education Unit.
10. Principal Education Officer – Planning, Implementation & Research Unit
11. Chief Education Officer – Inspectorate Unit.
12. Financial Controller.

***MINISTRY OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT***

13. Permanent Secretary.
14. Chairman, Provincial Government Review Committee.

***MINISTRY OF FINANCE***

15. Minister.
16. Assistant Accountant General, Budget Unit.

***MINISTRY OF NATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT***

17. Minister.
18. Chief Planning Officer (Manpower).

***OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER***

19. Secretary to the Prime Minister & Cabinet.
20. Head of Policy Evaluation Unit.

## **2. CHURCH/PROVINCIAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY LEVEL**

### ***CATHOLIC CHURCH***

21. Education Secretary.
22. Advisor – Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), and formerly Chairman of Bishop Epalle CHS Board.

### ***WESTERN PROVINCE***

23. Provincial Minister for Education.
24. Provincial Secretary.
25. Provincial Treasurer.
26. Chief Education Officer.

### ***ISABEL PROVINCE***

27. Premier, Chairman of Jejevo/Visena CHS Board and Provincial Member for Central Maringe (Buala) Ward.
28. Provincial Secretary and Secretary for Jejevo/Visena CHS Board.
29. Provincial Treasurer.
30. Chief Education Officer.

### ***CENTRAL PROVINCE***

31. Premier and Provincial Member for Tulagi Ward.
32. Provincial Minister for Education and formerly a primary school teacher.
33. Provincial Treasurer.
34. Chief Education Officer.

## **3. SCHOOL LEVEL**

35. Principal of Bishop Epalle CHS.
36. Deputy Principal of Bishop Epalle CHS.
37. Principal of Gizo CHS.
38. Deputy Principal of Gizo CHS
39. Headmaster of Gizo Primary School.
40. Headmaster of Jejevo Primary School.
41. Principal of Guguha CHS.
42. Principal of Macmahon CHS.
43. Headmaster of Macmahon Primary School.
44. Principal Of Kulu CHS.
45. Acting Deputy Principal of Kulu CHS.
46. Headmaster of Kulu Primary School.

#### **4. COMMUNITY LEVEL**

47. Chairman of Gizo CHS Board.
48. Member for Gizo Ward and Treasurer of Gizo CHS Board.
49. Gizo Businessman and formerly Chairman of Vonunu PSS BOM.
50. Chairman for Macmahon CHS Board.
51. Chairman for Kulu CHS Board.

#### **5. OTHER**

1. Principal Education Officer, Formal Education Unit, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.
2. Provincial Minister for Lands, Guadalcanal Province and Member for East Tasiboko Ward (Kulu CHS)
3. Director, University of the South Pacific (SI) Centre and formerly Head of Distance Education Unit, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE)
4. Buala Businessman and formerly Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Solomon Islands.
5. Members of the Provincial Government Review Committee.
6. Head of Research Division, SICHE.