

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF
CURRENT CONDITIONS AND
CONSTRAINTS ON POLICY
PROPOSALS FOR THE
PROVISION OF EDUCATION
IN RURAL NATAL/KWAZULU**

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT CONDITIONS AND CONSTRAINTS ON POLICY PROPOSALS FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN RURAL NATAL/KWAZULU

The educational discrimination currently experienced by black rural dwellers will not be automatically addressed through the introduction of a unified education system. Without provision for affirmative action to redress conditions in disadvantaged areas, inequalities between urban and rural areas will persist and may well be exacerbated. There may be a need to direct additional resources and support to disadvantaged areas/populations on a permanent basis. Conditions peculiar to rural areas in addition call for a flexibility of approach in educational issues other than the provision of resources.

This paper deals with access to education in rural Natal and KwaZulu. It deals with the factors peculiar to rural areas that improve or constrain access to schooling and those that affect the quality and nature of education provided. It does not discuss education as such or deal with issues such as syllabi, training etc. It is intended to inform policy development regarding the provision of education in rural areas through providing basic data and a description of the conditions and constraints which will need to be addressed if the introduction of policies to improve educational access in rural areas is to be facilitated. The first section gives information on the existing state of educational provision in rural Natal and KwaZulu. It also provides data on the levels of education of the population which illustrate the efficacy of the existing system. In the second section specific issues relating to access to schooling are raised. Reference is made to the factors which have given rise to the current situation, the constraints that prevent problem areas being addressed and possible ways forward.

Education in Natal KwaZulu is provided by two separate and independent authorities - the Department of Education and Training (RSA) and the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture. The former operates in Natal and the latter in KwaZulu. Although there is much that is similar between the rural lifestyles of Natal and KwaZulu there are also important differences. Many, indeed most, of the issues faced in rural education are common to both areas. However there are areas in which there are important differences which are based on demographics, land tenure, settlement patterns, infrastructure etc. There are also differences within the

two areas which result from the different methods utilized within the two departments to provide education. The first section of the paper deals with each area and education department separately. It describes the current system of providing education and the levels of education currently attained. The second section consists of a general discussion of educational issues in rural areas. Where one area impacts upon a particular issue differently from the other this will be pointed out. However it is generally the 'ruralness' of the situation rather than its political status, particular education department or demographic structure that most influences the issue raised, so that the approach is to discuss conditions and proposals as they refer to rural areas in general and not to deal with Natal and KwaZulu or the Department of Education and Training and the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture separately.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education in post-apartheid South Africa is currently the subject of widespread debate. Regardless however of the political, ideological or educational approach of the individuals or institutions involved, the debate seldom extends to rural education. This anti-rural bias or discrimination means that the conditions prevailing in rural areas are not taken into account when educational policies or proposals are evaluated. This has serious implications for the potential success of the policies eventually adopted for rural areas¹.

In addition to the poverty and comparatively low educational levels of rural dwellers, there are two issues which overshadow any discussion of the provision of rural education in a future South Africa. The first is the absence of any tradition of democratic local government or organisation in rural areas (whether homeland or commercial farm). The second is the unusual nature of rural settlement patterns which are the result of apartheid policies - particularly influx control, resettlement, group areas and the land acts. In the homelands settlement patterns have also been affected by differences in traditional land tenure arrangements, the adoption or non-adoption of closer settlement programs and legislation introduced to control land tenure and development.

In KwaZulu there has been very little 'closer settlement' so that in most of the homeland the population still resides in discrete homesteads. There are

few villages. Areas of dense settlement generally adjoin the metropolitan or urban areas of Natal or are the result of population resettlement from 'white' South Africa. In Natal, prior to the repeal of apartheid land legislation, only the larger towns (and then only 20 of them) had black townships attached to them. Throughout the rural areas of Natal/KwaZulu it is accordingly unusual to find blacks living in close settlement. Subsequent to the creation of the KwaZulu homeland the development of existing towns or villages or the establishment of new ones within KwaZulu was retarded by competition from non-KwaZulu citizens who were not allowed to operate businesses in KwaZulu, but effectively serviced the area from premises just across one of the numerous borders of KwaZulu. Although the rural areas of KwaZulu are home to millions of people and over all constitute one of the most densely populated areas in the RSA, in the absence of towns and villages, the population is thinly and somewhat randomly distributed making the delivery of services extremely difficult and expensive.

Only a small percentage of household income is generated in the rural areas and an even smaller percentage of rural households are solely dependent on income (chiefly agricultural) generated in the area. Indications are that as many as three-quarters of households have someone away working as a migrant in an urban area and that as much as three-quarters of rural incomes consist of migrant remittances. In the past influx control and the lack of adequate accommodation and services in the urban areas kept the dependents of these migrants in the rural areas. Despite the repeal of influx control legislation and the prospect of a democratic government it should not necessarily be presumed that such people will leave the rural areas. There is much evidence to suggest that many may never leave and that others, after some time in the urban areas, may return to their rural homes. Thus although the demographic structure of the rural areas is unnatural and will undoubtedly alter in the future (with the development of rural towns and villages and increased urbanization), the extent to which this will occur is not at all clear and will continue to cause problems for educational planners. As a percentage of the total population, the rural population is certain to decline but the actual numbers are unlikely to fall and may even reflect a slow growth rate (Simkins 1990).

The future demography of rural Natal is also unclear. Evictions and

emigration from farms along with a reduction in the number employed in agriculture have resulted in the fall of the percentage of blacks living on 'white farms' nationwide from 33% to 14% over the last 20 years. However although the Urban Foundation (1990) predicts that the percentage of persons resident on farms will fall still further (to 7% by 2010), they do not expect the actual number to fall. They predict that for the RSA it will remain unchanged at 3.4 million.

The implications of the repeal of the Land Acts and the Group Areas Acts for the rural areas of South Africa are as yet unclear. In the absence of Group Areas there might be significant growth in the population of rural towns. The repeal of the Land Acts might result in a rise in population densities on farms where there are subdivisions of land or where forms of communal or co-operative land ownership are introduced.

It is not merely with regard to population projections that the companion policies of apartheid and migrancy have created problems in the rural areas. In the homelands the absence, as migrants, of many educated, skilled and active members of the community has implications for the successful introduction of any education policy involving decentralization or action at community level. Apart from their physical absence, persons who live for so much of their lives with one foot in each of two very different societies, tend to be uncertain about their commitment to either.

Preliminary figures from the 1991 Census suggest that a large number of persons are still leaving the rural areas to seek work as migrants. The percentage of KwaZulu's rural population which the economically active age group (20 - 59 year olds) constitutes is smaller (35.2%) than that of Natal/KwaZulu as a whole (44.5%), and women constitute two-thirds of those in the age group who remain in the rural areas. This implies that many, predominantly males, in this age group are leaving the rural areas to seek employment - whether in Natal, the Transvaal or elsewhere.

By contrast in the rural areas of Natal (which consist chiefly of commercial farms) 53.7% of the 20 - 59 year old age group is male. These areas accordingly do not suffer the costs of migrancy in the way that KwaZulu does. However the status of blacks in white rural areas has to date been such that they have been in no position to take action as a community either with regard to the provision of education or any other service. With

increasing recognition of labour and political rights and the repeal of apartheid land legislation this may change.

Any investigation of rural education in Natal/KwaZulu and proposals to restructure it will reveal the critical status of local government and infrastructure in rural areas. It may be true that, during the apartheid era, responsible, accountable and democratic local government was systematically denied to the majority of South Africa's population wherever they lived. However in rural areas where even the bureaucracy was almost entirely absent, where access to education and the levels to which it was available were poorer than elsewhere in the country, where traditional authorities prevailed, where formal employment opportunities were rare, where outside agencies (NGO's and others) seldom ventured, the absence of a tradition of democratic, responsible and accountable government and organization was more universal and total and accordingly will be that much more difficult to address. Accessing the formal education system effectively is dependent on certain skills and infrastructure. These are lacking in many rural areas and any attempt to restructure education without simultaneously attending to these deficiencies will be seriously flawed.

Education cannot be approached in a vacuum. Where health (particularly child nutrition), welfare and general administration are lacking it would be futile to attempt to restructure education. On a practical level where there are no roads, water, electricity, telephones, postal services or banking facilities, and where the state or bureaucracy is invisible and uncontactable, it will be exceedingly difficult to upgrade rural education regardless of whether all education departments are united, expenditure equalized etc. or not. Not only does a culture of learning need to be instilled and democratic, broadly based organizations developed to ensure the growth of universal education, but there also needs to be a concerted effort to establish the infrastructure, both human and physical, to make these developments and their sustenance possible.

2 CURRENT STATUS OF RURAL EDUCATION IN NATAL/KWAZULU

Currently 57.5% of the total population of Natal/KwaZulu is rurally based (1991 Population Census). The 5 - 19 age cohort, which in this paper² is

taken to represent persons of school-going age, represents 43.7% of KwaZulu's rural population, but only 33.2% of Natal's. Overall 64% of 5 - 19 year olds in Natal/KwaZulu are to be found in rural areas. Whatever demographic changes may occur within the rural population in the future it is clear that the current location of the school-going population requires that greater attention be directed towards the provision of education in rural areas than is at present the case.

In commenting on the state of rural education in Natal/KwaZulu specific reference will be made to two areas - one in Natal and the other in KwaZulu. The areas were chosen because they are adjoining and in a number of respects similar. They are situated on the coast north of Durban and consist chiefly, but not exclusively, of the magisterial districts of Mapumulo (KwaZulu) and Lower Tugela (Natal). Information on farm schools in Natal will also be drawn from the North Coast Farm Schools Association - a voluntary association of 27 schools on the north coast, 9 of which fall outside of the Lower Tugela magistracy.

2.1 RURAL EDUCATION IN NATAL

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for the education of blacks living in the RSA (as opposed to the independent or non-independent homelands). This it does through state and state-aided schools. There are important differences between the manner in which education is provided through these two types of school which in practice amount to differences between the way education is supplied in urban and rural areas.

The 1983 White Paper on the Provision of Education in the Republic of South Africa stated that 'equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education for every inhabitant irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex, shall be the purposeful endeavour of the State' and that 'the provision of formal education shall be the responsibility of the State'. Despite the fact that in theory the state has accepted responsibility for the formal education of all and has introduced the necessary legislation to make education compulsory to certain levels or ages, it has not been able to enforce compulsory education for blacks, even in urban areas, owing to inadequate resources in the form of teachers, schools and classrooms. In rural areas it has yet to accept responsibility for the provision of education for

blacks and simply supplies education through those state-aided schools that private individuals, churches, institutions or communities have seen fit to erect.

State schools are established on the initiative of the DET at its expense. Certain norms have been laid down according to which the Department assesses the needs of a community and then within its budget provides facilities. It appoints the staff and is fully responsible for the administration and financing of state schools. The norms relate to the size and number of housing sites in a particular area. Regulations lay down the required size of the school site and the nature of the facilities to be provided. Although there is no reason why such norms should not be applied to communities in rural areas, in practice the DET has generally established schools only in declared black townships or on South African Development Trust (SADT)³ land. Thus in rural Natal in 1985 only four percent of DET schools were state, as opposed to state-aided schools. The majority of state schools in rural areas are on SADT land. Some are ex-farm schools which were acquired when farms were purchased by the state for subsequent incorporation into KwaZulu. Others have been established by the DET on SADT land where the Department of Development Aid was required to 'develop' the land prior to its incorporation into the homeland. Such 'development' is considered to include the provision of educational facilities, and thus the erection of DET schools in these rural areas does not imply the acceptance by the DET of a responsibility for the provision of education for blacks in general in the rural areas of the RSA.

State-aided schools are established on the initiative of farmers, mines, hospitals, churches, welfare bodies, communities or interested individuals on land belonging to those bodies or individuals. Although the schools belong to such persons or bodies permission has to be obtained from the Department before they may be established. Subsidization may be requested from the department for a percentage of building and maintenance costs where the school has been built according to Departmental regulations⁴. The Department will also accept responsibility for the payment of teaching staff where it has approved the post and the person appointed by the school manager to that position. Ninety six percent of rural schools in Natal are state-aided schools, almost all of them being farm schools. This effectively places rural education in the hands of

white farmers. They alone have the power to open or close a school; to appoint or dismiss staff; to decide on the number of pupils and the level to which education is offered; to decide whether children from neighbouring farms should be allowed to attend the school and to decide whether a parent teacher/community association should exist and have some say in the running of the school. They are also responsible for supplying, or not supplying, accommodation for teachers and all the other facilities or resources of the school which are not supplied by the DET. Until 1988 the subsidy a farmer might claim was limited to 50% of the cost of a classroom (up to a maximum of R6000). There was no subsidy for teacher accommodation, electricity, piped water, libraries, offices, sports facilities etc. so that the availability of these resources depended on the wishes of the farmer and his financial ability to supply them. Although the regulations have been amended to allow the farmer to claim 75% of all capital costs incurred (including teacher accommodation) the subsidization will only be paid out if funds permit, which means that unless the budget for farm schools is significantly increased the change is unlikely to have much impact. Indeed the agreement to subsidize one farmer 75% of all his costs will, in the absence of an increased budget, make it less likely that others will obtain any subsidy at all.

Table 1 gives information on the educational levels of the rural population of Natal. Tables 2, 3 and 4 illustrate the education available for blacks in Natal as provided in terms of the legislation described above. The statistics used were taken from the 1985 DET reports and the 1985 Population Census.

Table 1 makes use of the 5-15 age group in the 1985 Census to estimate the number of potential black scholars in rural Natal in 1985. Reference to the DET enrolment figures for the same year (1985) imply that only 44.4% of potential scholars were in school. Some of these 5-15 year olds who were living in rural Natal and were not enrolled in DET schools will never have attended school. Others will have been forced to drop out sooner than they would have wished and others will have overcome the educational deficiencies of rural Natal by attending school in a neighbouring area of KwaZulu. The random nature of the provision of education in rural Natal is evident when the percentages are looked at by magistracy. They range from 0% in rural Eshowe to 85% in Inanda⁵.

Table 1: Rural Natal: Selected Educational Statistics for Blacks

Magistracy	Educational Levels in DET Schools			Educational Levels of 20-24 year olds		
	5-15 age group as % of population	% 5-15 who are scholars	% scholars in Std 2 or below	% scholars in post primary	% 20-24 no educ	% 20-24 post primary
1. MOUNT CURRIE	29,1	62,5	81,6	0	18,3	25,3
2. ALFRED	24,9	18,9	79,7	0	19,4	40,8
3. PORT SHEPSTONE	16,7	61,0	69,4	4,7	35,3	23,0
4. UMZINTO	20,1	25,9	78,7	0	41,6	19,3
5. IXOPO	29,4	20,4	75,0	8,7	25,5	27,6
6. POLELA	29,5	-	-	-	12,8	42,1
7. UNDERBERG	25,9	47,3	75,8	0	18,6	32,8
8. IMPENDLE	29,4	59,6	55,8	14,5	18,9	22,8
9. RICHMOND	22,0	48,7	73,4	3,6	37,3	22,1
10. CAMPERDOWN	21,2	33,1	68,6	1,6	29,2	29,1
11. PIETERMARITZBURG	25,4	51,3	77,7	0	21,3	33,9
12. UONSRIVER	28,9	66,4	65,6	3,1	17,7	34,6
13. NEW HANOVER	27,1	71,1	61,0	8,5	29,4	26,2
14. MOOI RIVER	33,2	59,0	74,7	1,5	31,1	23,5
15. ESTCOURT	33,2	35,0	76,2	,7	35,3	25,2
16. WEENEN	33,2	13,6	83,9	0	70,2	8,9
17. BERGVILLE	34,6	14,1	71,3	4,5	18,0	42,3
18. UMVOTI	27,4	45,8	73,9	2,9	46,9	16,5
19. KRANSKOP	23,0	37,5	87,3	0	46,3	14,7
20. DURBAN	-	-	-	-	-	-
21. INANDA	16,5	84,8	59,6	18,6	33,1	25,4
22. PINETOWN	27,8	7,2	79,4	0	17,4	35,2
23. KLIPRIVER	34,2	23,4	78,4	2,1	23,0	25,5
24. GLENCOE	24,8	65,9	78,7	-	25,2	28,7
25. DUNDEE	32,7	56,5	73,4	1,4	30,1	22,4
26. DANNHAUSER	17,9	59,1	74,1	4,2	22,8	36,8
27. NEWCASTLE	28,6	75,6	74,8	,7	18,3	27,1
28. UTRECHT	28,7	41,3	80,3	0	29,1	22,5
29. PAULPIETERSBURG	30,1	58,9	72,3	0	25,3	25,1
30. VRYHEID	24,9	69,7	65,3	7,0	28,2	25,5
31. NGOTSHE	29,5	48,9	73,6	1,9	47,2	15,6
32. LOWER TUGELA	22,5	15,2	71,0	0	38,9	26,9
33. MTUNZINI	13,9	47,9	75,4	0	36,4	26,6
34. ESHOWE	11,8	-	-	-	46,1	17,2
35. MTONJANENI	19,8	51,5	65,3	7,8	44,1	28,3
36. BABANANGO	36,0	47,1	72,6	0	26,0	22,6
37. LOWER UMFOLOZI	22,5	74,9	55,4	17,2	59,0	24,7
38. HLABISA	10,3	58,1	84,2	0	42,3	19,8
TOTAL	25,6	44,4	70,7	4,3	31,6	27,4

Sources: 1985 DET Reports & 1985 Population Census

A probable percentage of rural black children at school based on the 1991 Census could not be calculated as a breakdown of the DET enrolment figures on an urban/rural basis was not available, and as yet the Census figures are preliminary and have not been adjusted to allow for the probable undercount. However if an undercount of 20% is allowed for, it would appear that 87% of the 5 - 19 age group⁶ in Natal - both urban and rural - was at school in 1990. This figure will be distorted by the few large state schools in townships which are attended by significant numbers of pupils from KwaZulu. Indications are that in the rural areas a far lower percentage of potential pupils are at school. The DET Synthesis Report (DET:1986) stated that 30% of children living on farms did not attend school.

Apart from giving data on potential scholars Table 1 includes some information on the educational levels of the 20 - 24 age cohort which was chosen to represent those who would most recently have completed their schooling. This was done to obtain some idea of recent developments in the education system. If the entire population over the age of 20 is considered as one, any improvements in access to education or educational levels will be concealed amongst the data for the older members of the community. As in the case of potential schoolgoers the figures for this cohort similarly indicate an unevenness in educational provision but there does appear to be some correlation between levels of education and reasonable access to educational institutions in particular areas.

Table 2 shows that the state plays a minimal role in the provision of education in rural areas. Only 4.4% of rural schools were state schools. As the state schools in Natal are in general larger (with an average of 496 pupils) than state-aided schools which average only 112 pupils, state schools contained 19% of all pupils enrolled in DET schools in Natal in 1985.

Table 2: Natal: DET Schools by Type

Type	Rural		Urban		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
State	29	4,4	76	80,0	105	13,8
State Aided	635	95,8	19	20,0	654	86,2
Farm		(609)		(10)		(619)
Scheduled		(4)		(4)		(8)
Private		(9)		(2)		(11)
Factory		(1)		-		(1)
Hospital		(4)		(2)		(6)
Mine		(8)		(1)		(9)
Total	664	87,5	95	12,5	759	100,0

Sources: 1985 DET Reports and 1985 Population Census.

From Table 3 it can be seen that almost a third of rural schools only offer education to Standard 2 level.

Table 3: Natal: Levels of DET Schools

Level	Urban		Rural		State		State Aided		Total	
	N	Cum %	N	Cum %	N	Cum %	N	Cum %	N	Cum %
Up to Std 2	24	25,3	204	30,7	20	19,0	208	31,8	228	30,0
Up to Stds 4 or 5	42	39,5	432	95,8	50	88,6	424	96,8	474	92,4
Up to Stds 6 or 7	5	74,8	22	99,1	9	75,2	18	99,4	27	96,0
Stds 6 - 8	5	30,0	1	99,2	5	80,0	1	99,5	6	96,8
Up to Std 10	19	100,0	5	100,0	21	100,0	3	100,0	24	100,0
TOTAL N	95		664		105		654		759	
% of Total		(12,5)		(87,5)		(13,8)		(86,2)		(100,0)

Sources: 1985 DET Reports and 1985 Population Census.

Table 4 indicates that 70.7% of rural pupils are in Standard 2 or below. It is clear that many pupils do not continue their education beyond Standard 2 which makes it unlikely that they will retain functional literacy. By comparison figures for 1990 indicate that 50.6% of KDEC pupils and 34.2% of white pupils in Natal were in Standard 2 or below (Table 7). Lubbe (1986) states that in 1982 the dropout rate in farm schools in Sub-standard A was 28,1% as compared with a rate of 13,3% in urban schools. He states further that half the pupils in farm schools left before they had completed Standard 2 and were therefore not literate.

Table 4: Natal: Level of Education of Pupils in DET Schools

Level	Urban		Rural		State		State Aided		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to Std 2	21325	43,3	58203	70,7	25279	44,6	54249	72,5	79528	60,5
Up to Std 5	13447	27,3	20612	25,0	15666	27,6	18393	24,6	34069	25,9
Up to Std 8	10869	22,1	3110	3,8	12117	21,4	1862	2,5	13979	10,6
Up to Std 10	3586	7,3	410	,5	3719	6,4	277	,4	3996	3,0
TOTAL N	49227		82335		56781		74781		131562	
% Total		37,4		62,6		43,2		56,8		100,0

Sources: 1985 DET Reports and 1985 Population Census.

A mere 4.2% of rural schools offered secondary education in 1985 and 4% of pupils were in secondary school. In the urban areas 29% of pupils were in secondary school. The percentages for KwaZulu and whites in the RSA were 19% and 42% respectively. Where farm schools offered secondary education 18 out of 21 did so only in the form of standards 6 and 7 being attached to a primary school. Three quarters of secondary schools were state schools.

It is not only with regard to provision of classrooms that rural schools experience discrimination. As the 1986 Synthesis Report stated, pupil/teacher ratios are worse in farms schools and teachers are less qualified. There are no subsidized posts for non-teaching academic staff or administrative staff at farm schools. There is no provision for running costs. The costs of everything from telephone and electricity accounts to stationery and toilet paper have to be met by the school. They have to bear the cost of producing their own examination papers and reports. There is no provision for the travelling expenses of either staff or pupils. The inability of rural schools to meet these costs is indicated by the fact that very few have piped water or electricity and that libraries - or even books - are rare.

2.1.1 Rural Education on the North Coast of Natal

Table 5 below gives the statistics for DET schools in the Lower Tugela magistracy. It reflects a position very similar to that portrayed above for Natal as a whole. There are 17 farm schools, 1 community school and 3 state schools. The state schools are all in Shakaville, the township adjoining the town of Stanger. There are no state schools in rural Lower

Tugela. Two of the farm schools have recently added Standards 6 and 7 to the education that they offer. In theory no farm children at present have access to an education beyond Standard 7. Those farm children who qualified for secondary school until recently attended the DET state schools in Stanger or Tongaat. They have however been turned away over the last few years on the grounds that the schools did not have the capacity to admit even the children from the townships in which they are situated. They may be able to do so again from 1993 as a large number of classrooms have recently been added to both those schools.

Reference to the spatial location of the schools and the distribution of the population indicates how unsatisfactory access is, particularly to the higher standards. There are inadequate places to offer an education to every child in the area and many who have managed to obtain a place are travelling unacceptable distances. In the urban area of Shakaville there were more (1991) pupils at school in 1992 than the number (1182) of children recorded by the 1991 Census in the 5 - 19 age group as being resident in the township - even if the Census figures are adjusted to allow for a presumed 20% undercount (1418). In the rural parts of the Lower Tugela Magisterial district there were 22690 (adjusted figure) persons between the ages of 5 and 19 but the DET schools contained only 4556 pupils - a mere 20%.

The position in Lower Tugela is complicated by the fact that, although Lower Tugela is part of the RSA and accordingly an area in which the DET is responsible for education, there is a significant number (19) of KDEC schools in the area which together have more than twice as many pupils (11675) as the DET schools. Accordingly in the magistracy 18222 or 75.6% of 5 - 19 year olds were apparently at school. The KDEC schools tend to be concentrated in the area of Groutville and along the Western boundary of the magistracy. Much of Groutville is freehold land purchased by blacks before the passing of the 1913 Land Act and to the West there has been some resettlement on land which adjoins the KwaZulu magistracy of Mapumulo. Although the population is denser in these areas they are better supplied with schools than is the case on the surrounding white farms. On the farms themselves provision is very uneven. To the north along the coast schools are well supplied, and supplied to a high level. Both of the schools offering post-primary education are situated there, within 15kms of one another. However to the South and West there are

Table 5 DET schools: Pupil numbers: Lower Tugela 1992

	A	B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Teachers	Class-rooms
Farm Schools															
Sans Souci	55	30	44	28	31	22	24						234	5	5
Newark	46	12	23	18	34	18	22						172	3	5
Sikwazi	28	32	13	13									86	2	2
Nyakana	64	29	28	20	19			46					160	2	4
Husug	45	41	29	29	31	18	28						300	5	7
Wandalely	55	50	45	49	30	40	39						308	5	7
Bongimutundo	40	23	27	21	13	11	16						151	3	7
Ntwashini	60	62	50	40	46	32	30						320	7	7
Lubseana	31	25	21	24	17	14							132	3	3
Nsonono	100	98	62	48	61	51	50		87				470	11	13
New Glenelderland	90	55	40	35	31	34	41						483	13	12
Glenvale	63	32	15	15									125	3	3
Enkekeni	80	40	20	30	10	11	18						209	4	4
Shekakhazi	58	49	51	60	53	52	48						366	8	5
Oszwezi	61	33	29	18	15	19	25						171	3	4
Krulsionlain	50	30	21	15	20	19	35						180	4	4
Sizani	127	104	78	68	48	54							514	12	13
Ejeje	80	31	15	20	19	10							175	4	5
Total	1176	822	635	577	510	416	371	133	103				4743		
% in Standard	24.8	17.3	13.4	12.2	10.7	8.8	7.8	2.8	2.2				100.0		
Cumulative %	24.8	42.1	55.5	67.7	78.4	87.2	95.0	97.8	100.0						
State schools															
Matwane	218	148	141	110	186	173	185	279	183	195	150	42	617	12	6
Mbozamo													524	10	20
Tshelenkosi	10.9	7.4	7.1	5.5	8.3	8.7	9.3	14.0	8.2	9.8	7.5	2.4	850	22	45
Total	1384	970	776	687	676	589	556	412	286	196	150	42	6734		
% in Standard	20.7	14.4	11.5	10.2	10.0	8.8	8.3	8.1	4.3	2.9	2.2	.8			
Cumulative %	20.7	35.1	46.6	56.8	66.8	75.6	83.9	90.0	94.3	97.2	99.4	100.0			

areas where children would be considerable distances from any school if they did not have the option of attending a school in KwaZulu.

The area illustrates well some of the anomalies in current farm school education. Although these schools are referred to as farm schools and generally considered to be under the control of the farmer, this is often not the case. Of the 27 farm schools on the north coast only three had farmers as their managers. In five cases the farmer's wife was the manager; in seven it was a company employee; churches had appointed three managers; two schools had no manager at all and seven were managed by third parties who had no direct relationship of land ownership or management with the property on which the school was situated. Farm school managers are not educationalists or professionals; they are not members of the school community; they are not well equipped to do the job required of them and often assumed the role reluctantly.

Although farm schools were initially intended to provide a basic education for the children on the farm on which they were situated, the farm schools on the North Coast today provide education for children the majority of whom do not come from 'their farm'. These children do not come solely from other farms. One school on the north coast has five children from the farm on which it is situated while all the other children come from a nearby informal settlement. Apart from the children living in the large number of informal settlements on the north coast, there are also increasing numbers of children living in the towns and villages where their parents work. There are no educational facilities in the informal settlements; there are no schools in any of the coastal towns; and with the exception of those in Tongaat, Stanger and Melmoth there are no schools between the Umdhloti River and the Mocambique border in any of the inland towns where there are growing numbers of persons involved in commerce and industry who are increasingly being joined by their families. Of the pupils at a school near Umhlali only just over 50% come from the surrounding farms. The balance live in the nearby towns of Ballito and Umhlali and other smaller towns.

Because of the random distribution/establishment of farm schools, school size ranges enormously (from 63 to 562 on the north coast); and whereas some schools turn children away, others are 'short' of pupils despite the inadequacy of school places in the area. In South Africa the average farm

school has less than 100 pupils and 2 teachers. This means that poorly qualified or unqualified teachers⁷ have to teach an average of 50 pupils in multi-standard classes. In Lower Tugela in 1992 the pupil/teacher ratios ranged from below 1 to 40 to above 1 to 80.

2.2 RURAL EDUCATION IN KWAZULU

Education in KwaZulu is controlled by the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture. Although the homeland government through the KDEC approves the establishment of schools, subsidizes teachers, provides textbooks etc., it has only been responsible for the establishment of something less than 3% of the 3412 schools in KwaZulu (1992). The balance of the schools are community schools. State or public schools (which are known as territorial schools) tend to be in urban areas or areas of concentrated population. There are a few state schools in rural areas. Where there are, there is in most cases a 'particular' explanation for the status of the school - usually political or personal.

Schools within the KDEC have been grouped into 25 circuits. In the Mapumulo circuit, which is used as a case study here, there are 176 schools. One is a state school. There are two private schools, established by the Roman Catholic Church. All other schools on the circuit are community schools.

Community schools are erected by the community at their own expense. Once the building has been completed, provided it complies with the requirements of the KDEC, a subsidy may be claimed from the KDEC up to a maximum of R7500 per classroom or half the cost of the classroom whichever is the lesser. There are no subsidies for offices, storerooms, toilets, fencing etc. though these facilities have to be provided if permission to establish the school is to be obtained. A subsidy may be claimed for laboratories and libraries. All the subsidies are granted subject to the necessary funds being available.

Before erecting a school, permission has to be obtained from the local induna, chief, circuit inspector, regional authority, Department of Works, Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, and the KDEC Head office.

Every circuit inspector is meant to draw up a five year development plan - dealing both with the upgrading of schools and with the establishment of new schools in his area. Regulations instruct him to take into account the desirable ratio of primary schools to secondary schools (in urban areas this is three primary schools to one secondary school but in rural areas distances and dispersed populations may lead to a different ratio being adopted). The regulations further state that before a school is approved matters such as access to transport, water and electricity should be taken into account and that schools which will not have an adequate enrolment should not be established. However, as the establishment of schools is dependent on local initiative and the approval of the chief, where the initiator or chief holds sufficient sway, schools are often established to comply with the wishes of these individuals rather than in accordance with any advice from the various state departments or other bodies or persons consulted.

This method of providing education has resulted in the position where the KDEC estimates that in 1992 some 800 000 children of school-going age in KwaZulu are not in school. Figures derived from the 1985 Census and from the 1985 KDEC school enrolment indicated that 77.9% of the possible school population (5 - 15 year olds) was in school. Calculations based on the preliminary figures from the 1991 Census and the 1990 KDEC school enrolment indicate that 88% of potential pupils (5 - 19 year olds) in KwaZulu are in school. This is likely to be an overestimate, firstly because there are children resident in Natal who attend school in KwaZulu, and secondly because the preliminary Census figures have not been adjusted to allow for the suspected undercount. If an undercount of 20% were allowed for, then the school enrolment would indicate that 73.5% of 5-19 year olds are in school. Even this would appear to be an overestimate because, as indicated in Table 7, less than a quarter of KDEC pupils are in secondary school and half are in Standard 2 or below. This makes it unlikely that three quarters of the age group of potential pupils (which spans 15 years) would be in school. The implication is that this age group is larger than even a 20% undercount suggests. Although there are pupils over the age of 19 there are very few under the age of 5 (and in fact relatively few of 5 or 6 years old) so that this would account for little of the discrepancy. There were 1540871 pupils in KDEC schools in 1990. The KDEC estimates that 800000 are not in school. This suggests that there are 2340871 persons in the 5-19 age group which in turn implies a 33% undercount in the 1991 Census⁸.

Approximately 76% of KDEC schools are primary schools. Although this is only 7% more than the 69% of white schools in the Natal/ KwaZulu area which are primary schools, the difference in provision of primary and secondary facilities is in fact much more marked. Many of the KDEC primary schools only go as far as Standard 2 and there is a very heavy concentration of pupils in the lower standards, particularly Substandard A.

This concentration of pupils in the lower standards in KDEC primary schools in 1990 is illustrated in Table 6 below. A comparison is made with the distribution of Indian primary school pupils in the area.

	KDEC	Indian
Substandard A	22.8	15
Substandard B	16.6	15
Standard 1	14.7	14
Standard 2	12.6	14
Standard 3	12.6	14
Standard 4	11.0	14
Standard 5	9.7	14

Table 7 shows the distribution of pupils throughout primary and secondary schools and compares the KDEC figures with those for the Mapumulo circuit and whites in the area.

	KDEC %	KDEC Cum %	White %	White Cum %	Mpmulo %	Mpmulo Cum %
Substdrd A	17.3	17.3	8.9	8.9	18.7	18.7
Substdrd B	12.6	29.9	8.8	17.7	12.6	31.3
Standard 1	11.1	41.0	8.5	26.2	11.2	42.6
Standard 2	9.8	50.8	8.0	34.2	10.2	52.7
Standard 3	9.5	60.1	7.9	42.1	9.7	62.5
Standard 4	8.3	68.4	7.7	49.8	8.3	70.7
Standard 5	7.3	75.7	7.8	57.6	7.5	78.3
Standard 6	7.2	82.9	8.1	65.7	7.0	85.2
Standard 7	5.7	88.6	8.4	74.1	5.0	90.2
Standard 8	4.7	93.3	9.0	83.1	4.1	94.4
Standard 9	3.8	97.1	8.5	91.6	3.2	97.6
Standard 10	2.8	100.0	8.3	100.0	2.4	100.0

Table 8 KDEC schools: Pupil numbers: Lower Tugela 1992

Lower Tugela	SSA	SSB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Valambrosa	93	96	31	51	47	48	40						406
Maguyana	150	69	66	86	57	67	59						554
Shekumbula								161	161	103	124	60	609
Tselabantu	257	143	132	128	200	167	163						1190
Mgwabagqweba	79	42	48	55									224
St Christophers	71	43	33	33	31	24	23						258
Prospect Farm	98	76	62	43	57	60	30						426
Inyanganye	81	48	41	46	31	31	23						299
Petezi	129	105	69	70	50	32	34						489
Mshwathi	73	33	34	42	46	30	46						304
Siphwe								92	49	23			164
Enkukwini	143	83	90	93	107	64	47						627
Lloyd	372	215	175	141	182	131	78						1292
Thembeni	220	224	99	127									670
Mbekamuzi					121	95	92						308
Nonhlevu								385	253	251			889
Grootville									57	52	341	170	620
Aidinville	484	293	101	187	136	111							1537
Silungisile	185	182	91	100	85	90	78						809
Total	2435	1650	1162	1202	1150	974	820	638	520	429	465	230	11 675
% in Standard	20.8	14.1	9.9	10.3	9.9	8.3	7.0	5.5	4.5	3.7	4.0	2.0	100.0
Border													
Ikusana	136	25	67	38	48	72	76						462
Phakade	63	50	43	47									203
Bhidakhona	135	107	102	71	61	73	55						604
Waterfall	61	46	36	26	28	26	27						250
Total	395	228	248	182	137	171	158						1519
Total	2830	1878	1410	1384	1287	1145	978	638	520	429	465	230	13 194
% in Standard	21.4	14.3	10.7	10.5	9.8	8.7	7.4	4.8	4.0	3.2	3.5	1.7	100
Cumulative %	21.4	35.7	46.4	56.9	66.7	75.4	82.8	87.6	91.6	94.8	98.3	100.0	

Table 7 indicates that just over half of KDEC pupils (50.6%) were in standard two or below whereas this was true of only 34.2% of white pupils. Less than a quarter of KDEC pupils (24.2%) were in secondary school as opposed to 42.3% of white pupils.

The position in the Mapumulo circuit reflects that of KwaZulu as a whole. Seventy seven percent of the schools were primary schools. Thirty percent of the schools offered an education only as far as Standard 2. Close to half (43%) of the 23% of schools which were secondary schools were junior secondary schools, offering only Standards 6, 7 and 8. Only marginally more than a quarter (26.5%) of pupils in Mapumulo were in secondary school.

Table 8 gives details of the KDEC schools in the Lower Tugela magistracy where the position is marginally worse than for the circuit as a whole.

The discrimination between state and community schools is not restricted to the provision of the physical infrastructure but persists with regard to staffing and the provision of books and other services. As a consequence of the lower levels of subsidized staffing at community schools, privately paid teachers are commonly found at those schools where the principal and the school committee find the number of teaching staff inadequate. In 1992 there were 2600 privately paid teachers officially recorded as working in the KDEC. The system does not allow for the subsidization of non-teaching academic or administrative staff at community schools regardless of their size.

The state accepts no responsibility for the maintenance of community schools. This is reflected in the condition of many of the buildings. The more rural and remote a classroom the more difficult its maintenance will be. Apart from the absence of skilled builders, access to the necessary materials is difficult and expensive. It is also more difficult to raise the necessary funds for maintenance than it is for new buildings.

Although the erection and maintenance of community schools and the employment of privately paid teachers of necessity implies the collection and management of large sums of money, there is little regulation of how this is done. Public schools have management councils which are responsible for their finances. These councils should in theory be dealing

with much smaller sums than the governing bodies which are responsible for building, maintenance and the payment of privately paid teachers in community schools. According to the KDEC the fees for primary pupils are fixed at 40c per annum. The money collected is intended to cover the cost of chalk, toilet paper etc.

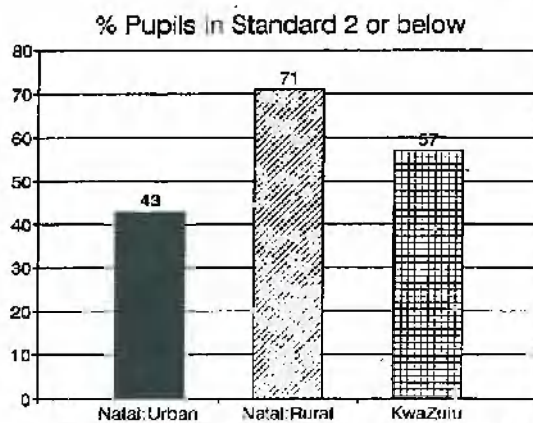
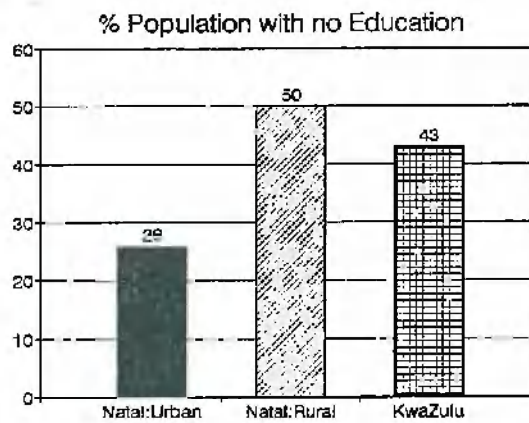
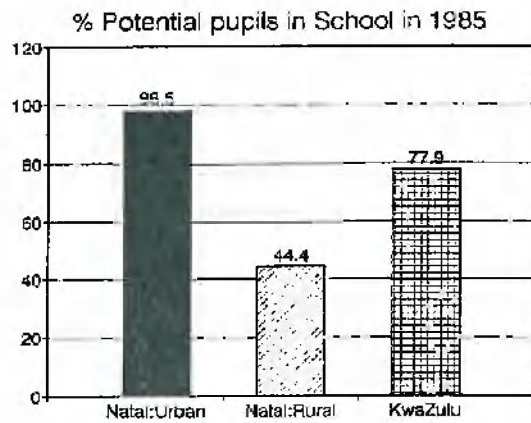
2.3 CONCLUSION

The method of providing education in rural KwaZulu is in effect very similar to that operating on commercial farms or rural areas in Natal. The two 'systems' have led to the situation where less education is provided to lower levels than is the case where the state is responsible for initiating the provision of education. This is graphically illustrated in Figure 1 (page 22).

	Pupils at DET Schools in 1992						Pupils at KDEC schools in 1992	
	Farm Schools		State Schools		Total		%	cum %
	%	cum %	%	cum %	%	cum %		
Sub A	24.8	24.8	10.9	10.9	20.7	20.7	20.8	20.8
Sub B	17.3	42.1	7.4	18.2	14.4	35.1	14.1	34.9
Std 1	13.4	55.5	7.1	25.3	11.5	46.6	9.9	44.8
Std 2	12.2	67.7	5.5	30.8	10.2	56.8	10.3	55.1
Std 3	10.7	78.4	8.3	39.1	10.0	66.8	9.9	65.0
Std 4	8.8	87.2	8.7	47.8	8.8	75.6	8.3	73.3
Std 5	7.8	95.0	9.3	57.1	8.3	83.9	7.0	80.3
Std 6	2.8	97.8	14.0	71.1	6.1	90.0	5.5	85.8
Std 7	2.2	100.0	9.2	80.3	4.3	94.3	4.5	90.3
Std 8			9.8	90.1	2.9	97.2	3.7	94.0
Std 9			7.5	97.6	2.2	99.4	4.0	98.0
Std 10			2.4	100.0	.6	100.0	2.0	100.0

Table 9 above which indicates the level of education of scholars in both DET and KDEC schools in the Lower Tugela magistracy shows a severe shortage of places at secondary and even higher primary level.

Figure 1 Selected Comparative Educational Statistics: Urban Natal, Rural Natal and KwaZulu: 1985



The table suggests an unacceptably high 'drop out' rate but gives no indication of the number of children never reached by the school system⁹. That this is generally the situation in rural Natal and KwaZulu is confirmed by the bar charts in Figure 1 (page 22) which show that the current method of providing education in the rural areas of both Natal and KwaZulu has failed to provide a substantial percentage of rural dwellers with access to any education, and has provided education of an unacceptably low level to the majority of those who have obtained access. Just over fifty percent of rural blacks in Natal had received no education at all as compared with 44.4% in rural KwaZulu and 26.4% in urban Natal. A mere ,8% of rural blacks in Natal had been educated to matric level. The percentages for whites, coloureds, Indians and KwaZulu blacks were 36%, 8.7%, 13% and 2,4% respectively.

However inadequate may be the education provided by the state through the DET and KDEC in urban areas, schooling is available to most of the population there. It is available to higher levels, and is provided by better qualified teachers in schools which are built to higher specifications, which are better equipped, and where pupil/teacher ratios are lower.

The farm school system has not only failed to establish sufficient schools and to offer education of an acceptable standard to an adequate level, but in addition has failed to position the schools where they can operate effectively or to bring them under the control of the community they serve.

The farm school has moreover outlived its definition. As envisaged by the Department of Bantu Education in the 1950's the farm school was intended to provide a very basic education for the children living on the farm on which the school was situated. Where the farmer/manager wished to admit children from other farms he had to obtain special permission from the department and from the owner of the farms from which the children came. Today a school catering for children from the 'home farm' only would be the exception rather than the rule. The average farm in Natal has less than 20 children of school-going age resident on it. The majority of children in most farm schools are what might be termed 'off-farm' children. The result is that education is being supplied and controlled by someone who is not part of the school community and who has no relationship with the majority of that community.

Increasingly the 'off-farm' children do not come from other farms but from towns, villages or informal settlements. Farm schools are clearly being used to provide education to children within a particular geographical area rather than to the children of farmworkers on a particular farm.

Although it is more common for children living in Natal to deal with the unavailability of conveniently situated schooling in Natal by attending school in KwaZulu rather than vice versa, there are cases where this occurs, particularly where there has been some form of development in KwaZulu, and the provision of social infrastructure has not kept pace with industrial or commercial development. The industrial decentralization point Isithebe provides an illustration. The enrolment at a nearby farm school reveals that only 16% of the pupils at the school come from farms. The balance of the pupils live in the surrounding areas of KwaZulu or in the informal settlements that have grown up around Isithebe to house the people working there.

A closer look at those who own or manage farm schools further undermines their description as 'farm' schools. In many cases it is not the farmer but churches, other bodies or individuals who are providing education where there would otherwise be none. This they are doing for all rural people, not only for the children of farmworkers.

There are a number of explanations why farmers have not increased classroom space or provided education to higher levels in the face of the apparent demand. Recent experience may have taught them that they might struggle to obtain the capital subsidy or the necessary subsidized teaching posts let alone subsidies for teachers' housing. The additional places required are generally not for children from the farm. They may not come from a farm at all with the result that the farmer feels no responsibility for providing education and knows he will receive no contribution to costs. Where the school has no manager or is owned/managed by a church or mission its lack of access to funding often limits its ability to expand.

The solution to a demand for school places in an area may not necessarily be the extension of existing schools (or indeed the building of a new farm school) in the area. With less than an average of 20 potential pupils per farm (which means little more than half that number for primary pupils)

many farm schools are 'short' of pupils rather than swamped by children they don't have the capacity to admit. There may be too few rather than too many children who live within an acceptable distance from the school or from transport to it. If it is the case that farm school-going populations are often too small to support viable primary schools it is much more the case with secondary schools. One secondary school is normally considered necessary to serve three primary schools. There is little likelihood of a secondary school on a farm being sited such that it is able to draw pupils from three primary schools - presuming that there are three sufficiently large primary schools in the area - without the pupils having to travel unacceptable distances.

The state, accepting the inadequacy of rural education, appointed a commission to enquire into the provision of education for rural blacks. The commission reported its findings and recommendations in *The Provision of Education for Black Pupils in Rural Areas* in 1986. Although it recommended that the state should accept responsibility for the planning, initiating and provision of education in rural areas, and that in order to ensure that schools were on state-owned land existing farm schools should be purchased or leased, there has been little change in any of these areas. A few isolated schools have been purchased but there has been no alteration of policy or significant budget adjustment to make it possible to implement the recommendations. There is no evidence that the DET is taking the initiative in the provision of rural education. Similarly, although the recommendation that the subsidies paid to farmers for the provision of physical facilities should be increased and extended was accepted and provided for in regulations, the fact that the budget for subsidies has not been significantly increased has negated any impact the amendment might have had. Although individuals may have received larger subsidies there has not been an equivalent increase in the number of classrooms and the fact that subsidies for teacher accommodation are now claimable is largely irrelevant in the absence of funds to pay them. A further serious constraint on the work of the commission was the fact that it considered rural education solely in relation to the children of black farmworkers. It did not consider the position of people resident in rural towns or villages, those in informal settlements or those residing on previously 'white' rural or peri-urban land.

The data contained in Figure 1 (page 22) and Table 1 (page 9) illustrate the

status of education in rural Natal. They indicate that in rural Natal there are more illiterate people, that education is more difficult to access and is available to lower levels than is the case in KwaZulu - quite apart from the urban areas. There is little chance that the farms will absorb into their workforce all the children living on them, and yet their residence on these farms normally denies them the education that would enable them to break out of the cycle of poverty in which they are currently trapped. The white farming community has failed to provide adequate education for rural blacks. As costs and standards rise they are less likely to do so. As farm populations decline, forms of land tenure change and rural but non-farm populations increase the current system will become even less suitable. After a long period during which no new farm schools were established, four opened in Lower Tugela in 1992. None of them is what might be termed a typical farm school. Two were established in the buildings of Indian schools which had been closed; one at a sugar mill and the fourth is a 'shack' in a black resettlement area. Each of their histories underlines the question mark currently challenging the old/existing approach to the provision of education for blacks in rural areas.

Although education in rural KwaZulu may be more accessible than in rural Natal, the population there is clearly discriminated against in educational terms as compared with communities where the state accepts responsibility for the provision of education. Less education is provided to a lower level. It is provided in inferior buildings by teachers who are poorly qualified. Children from homes which are educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged struggle to redress this imbalance in schools which are under-resourced, not only with regard to teaching staff and buildings but in addition to textbooks, educational aids, support services, electricity, water etc.

In the rural areas of Natal and KwaZulu individuals (mainly white farmers in Natal) and communities (in KwaZulu) have failed to provide adequate, let alone equal, primary education. Their achievement in the area of secondary education is dismal. Whether it is the 'system' or the failure of individuals to access that system which is responsible for the current position, a thorough evaluation is required to inform current educational deliberations, particularly those relating to decentralization, community involvement and responsibility and financing.

3 ISSUES IN RURAL EDUCATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section a number of issues are raised specific to the provision of education in rural areas. They point to conditions peculiar to rural areas which need to be taken into account if the introduction of proposals to improve rural education is not to be thwarted by conditions on the ground.

The debate as to the relative merits of decentralization or centralization in educational reform is encountered repeatedly as the different issues are considered. It has a peculiar significance to rural areas which are usually marginal and never central, and yet would not necessarily benefit from decentralization despite the undeniable tendency of centralization to result in an urban bias. Crucial to the debate is the level to which it is proposed that functions should be decentralized and what those levels are. Can a region, district or local area be defined in such a way that it combines the advantages of a more accessible authority, greater autonomy and a greater community of interest with a fair access to power and resources in relation to other regions, districts or localities? The lowest tier in the decentralization structure and the functions to be delegated to it will be of especial interest to rural areas as this will be the level at which they become involved. In order to evaluate any proposal involving decentralization it is necessary to establish whether localities or communities have the resources to perform the functions expected of them or whether the poorer, less educated communities where many adults may be away as migrants, will land up perpetuating their inferiority through their inability to exercise their options.

The location of schools emerges repeatedly as a crucial factor determining the nature and extent of problems relating to rural education. The position of a school determines its accessibility to potential pupils; its ease of access to water, electricity, the telephone and postal services; its ability to attract and hold quality teachers, and its isolation from or involvement in the education system and its support services. Many of the difficulties experienced might be alleviated if the location of schools was determined by taking into account the causes of the difficulties. However the method of providing education both in rural Natal and KwaZulu is such that those factors are seldom, if ever, taken into account.

One of the reasons for the continuing random positioning of schools is the general absence of rural towns or growth points in which they might more rationally be located. However although the development of rural towns or growth points has to date been restricted by apartheid laws and the nature of tribal land tenure, it has also been retarded by this same random positioning not only of schools but also of clinics, extension offices, tribal courts and trading stores. Instead of their being concentrated in a central position accessible to most of the community, to which transport is available and in which, because of the concentration of people, offices and buildings, it would be relatively economic to supply services such as water, electricity and telephones and most importantly housing, these facilities are to be found in isolated locations throughout the rural areas where access is difficult and servicing either impossible or unnecessarily expensive.

As mentioned in the introduction (page 4) the absence of any form of democratic local government or organization frequently offers an explanation for certain aspects of educational deprivation experienced in rural areas. Section 3.13 deals specifically with local government's role but its importance is indicated by its relevance to many of the other issues raised.

3.2 FINANCE

Much of the discussion on the financing of education tends to concentrate on expenditure on physical capital or classrooms, ignoring the fact that this is 'one-off expenditure' or the 'tip of the iceberg' as compared with future costs that will be incurred as a result of the erection of classrooms. Salaries, administration costs, textbooks and other resources, apart from demanding larger sums than classrooms, are also recurrent expenses. This point is of particular relevance in rural areas where educational expenditure is determined by the existence of physical facilities rather than as a result of policy decisions taken in response to local needs.

The history of the financing of education in South Africa reflects a strong anti-rural bias. It is present in the policies of both the KDEC and the DET. As described in 2.1 & 2.2 both departments only take the initiative and bear the entire capital cost of the provision of education in the case of state, as opposed to state aided, schools. Such schools are generally only found in urban areas. In rural areas it is left to individuals or communities to take

the initiative, bear all the initial capital costs and only later claim a subsidy. It is not surprising that this results in undue emphasis being placed upon the capital costs of education as the provision of education (in perpetuity) in a particular location is entirely dependent on the community providing the resources to meet the costs of the building in the first place. The system makes the provision of education in rural and peri-urban communities dependent on the ability of those relatively poor communities to raise sufficient money to erect the buildings in which the state will subsidize education. Capital costs (which although marginal to the state, as compared to the eventual recurrent costs it will incur, are enormous for the community) thus become the controlling factor in the provision of rural education. The system does not allow for the provision of education on the basis of a needs analysis, cost effectiveness or the ability of the state to meet recurrent costs. Nor does it allow for an assessment of the ability of the school community to meet certain of the costs either by local taxation or school fees.

As was indicated in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 this discrimination or anti-rural bias is not limited to capital costs but persists throughout educational financing.

Acceptance of the principles of centrally managed educational financing and equality of expenditure on pupils regardless of race or residence will not alone remove existing educational inequalities. The inequalities of the past will have to be specifically redressed. It may, moreover, be necessary to target disadvantaged groups in perpetuity. Even if education is made compulsory and there is no discrimination in funding, it will be necessary to take socio-economic conditions into account if equal access to education is to be ensured for all. If education is only made compulsory for seven years and the subsidy provided by the state is not total even for that limited period, the costs of any further education and the balance of the costs for the initial period will have to be borne by the consumer. In rural areas additional costs - transport, boarding, teacher accommodation - are likely to be incurred and leaving these costs to be met by inevitably poorer communities will ensure that inequalities in education persist.

Similarly a single education budget based upon principles of equality will not necessarily ensure universally improved access to education where ultimate expenditure on, or the provision of, education depends on action

at a regional or local level. Where structures or constraints are such that all communities do not find it possible to access that finance, access to education will continue to be unequal. Indeed some of the finance set aside for education may remain unspent despite the fact that the initial allocation was considered inadequate. The state may declare education compulsory and set aside the funds, but where actual provision is dependent on activity at a regional level potential pupils may be unable to access either these funds or an education where the 'community' or region is unable to act - whether because of internally or externally imposed constraints. Only through the removal or neutralization of these constraints will it be possible to ensure the widest availability of education, in particular in those areas which have traditionally been deprived and appear unable to initiate provision.

Educational decentralization will require the adults in rural communities to play an increased role in the provision of education. This they will be unable to do unless their own illiteracy and lack of education (and other resources) are addressed. The need for adult education, both as a consequence of their educational history and of future demands, is probably greater in rural areas than elsewhere, but it would seem less likely to be supplied unless by the state (see 3.5). There will need to be positive discrimination by the state in favour of rural areas in the form of higher subsidisation of adult education in rural as compared with urban areas, if any real impact is to be made in this area.

The development of democratically elected and accountable local authorities in rural areas might do much to assist a policy of decentralized education. Their credibility and powers would also be enhanced were they empowered to collect local taxes and then decide on what local venture the money should be spent.

3.3 PRE-SCHOOL

The physical location of pre-school children and their mothers/minders in rural areas may call for different treatment of the pre-school issue from that in urban areas. Pre-schools should be as integral a part of the education system in rural as in urban areas and would undoubtedly serve as valuable a role, but distance, the unavailability of transport, and/or the cost of transport may make it impractical, unwise or dangerous for children to

attend school at an age younger than 6 or 7. Where mothers/minders are not employed away from the home and there is little or no opportunity for them to be so, a creche would not be required as a place to care for children during the absence of their parents. The time and cost involved in enabling children to attend a creche or pre-school need to be viewed in the light of conditions in the area.

Where the school system is designed for children who have spent a year or more in pre-school, it will be necessary to provide 'bridging' for rural children who have not had this opportunity if the educational disadvantages they experience as compared with urban children are not to be exacerbated. Possibilities such as making the pre-school year or Class 0 a part of the primary curriculum through adding a year or increasing the number of school days in a year might be considered.

3.4 SECONDARY EDUCATION

Whatever education policy is finally adopted in South Africa it is unlikely that free and compulsory education will initially be provided for more than seven years. This will cover what is currently considered the primary phase. What types of secondary education will be provided, through what type of institution and at what cost to whom remain to be determined. However the state will probably take less of the initiative and bear less of the cost of secondary education than it will of primary education. Currently very little secondary education is available in rural areas. The provision of education in rural areas has been left to rural communities. This has resulted in the uneven provision of education at lower access rates to lower levels than in urban areas where the state has borne the cost and responsibility for the provision of secondary education.

Rural communities have failed to provide secondary education on a significant scale for a number of reasons. Rural adults themselves have lower educational levels than urban adults and their relatively limited experience of the requirements of the modern state make them less aware of the need for secondary education than their urban counterparts. Despite this and markedly lower incomes in rural areas rural schools are only established on the initiative and at the expense of the rural community. In order to be viable secondary schools in rural areas frequently need to draw pupils from an area which goes far beyond the bounds of any natural

community. Co-operative initiative is far less likely to occur in this 'wider community' where there are no local government or organisational structures binding the community together. This is generally the case in rural areas.

The current backlog in rural areas is likely to get worse rather than better if secondary education is privatized. Even if the state no longer automatically provides secondary education in urban areas it is more likely to be available there. Firstly the urban areas are already relatively well provided with secondary facilities; secondly where these facilities are lacking the communities are better equipped both economically and educationally to provide them than rural people, and thirdly if the provision of such facilities is going to be left to the private sector, and more particularly industry, they will be provided in the urban areas where the demand is greatest and where the graduates that the private sector and industry require will be close to where they are needed. The cycle of economic and educational poverty that currently traps rural children will be reinforced unless there is some positive intervention to make secondary education available to children in rural areas.

All the factors which militate against the provision of adequate education in general apply to secondary schools in addition to those which may be peculiar to them. Thus the problems of teacher accommodation, access to services and others which are discussed below all bear some responsibility for the status of rural secondary education.

3.5 ADULT EDUCATION

Parents cannot play a significant role in the education of their children where their own education is poor and the environment not conducive to learning. This is especially the case in rural areas - both on commercial farms and in the homelands. Figure 1 (on page 22) shows that the percentage of persons with no education is highest in rural areas, as is the percentage of persons whose education does not go beyond standard 2.

Adult education is required in rural areas for reasons additional to its intrinsic and universal value. The greater the decentralization of education functions the greater the need will be for adult education in rural areas. Adult education is also required to ensure the development of democratic

and accountable local government without which adequate and acceptable education at a local level is unlikely to be found. Adult education (and literacy) is required in rural areas to give adults the necessary organizational skills, experience and information to participate effectively in local affairs.

If the provision of adult education is left to private enterprise and the trade unions little is likely to be found in rural areas. The objectives of such adult education are likely to be short term and self-centred, directed at 'the 30% society' and of little help to marginalized rural people. Without state or outside assistance largely illiterate and deprived communities are unlikely to establish their own adult education centres.

3.6 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND OTHER CHOICES.

Curriculum development is one of the issues that illustrates well the tensions of the debate as to the relative merits of centralized and decentralized decision making. The question is whether the special conditions pertaining in rural areas require national or local decision making in order to ensure that education empowers rural people, enables them to exercise their democratic rights and to control, manage and respect their environment, but does not restrict them or trap them in a cycle of rural poverty. There may be advantages in focussing parts of the curriculum on rural society, in matching timetables and terms to climatic and agricultural conditions etc., but the decision needs to be taken at what point the curriculum, instead of empowering rural people, is withholding from people who will need to leave rural society, the skills and knowledge that will enable them to do so. On the other hand a curriculum should not lead scholars to reject their own society or undermine their values particularly when there are minimal opportunities for them elsewhere.

Should such matters be dealt with centrally or be decentralized? If the latter, to what level and to whom? Who is best able to represent the interests of scholars and future scholars? What information or skills are required to make informed decisions in these areas?

It has been suggested that these are matters that should be left to teachers as professional and well-informed people. This they may be but in general

they are a considerable distance from rural people and their needs. Rural teachers seldom come from the area in which they work. Few rural teachers are committed to the areas in which they work. They tend not to identify with the local communities and have little social intercourse with them. Both on commercial farms and in the homelands there often appears to be a 'gulf' between the teachers and the school community, which undermines claims that they are aware of the grassroots needs of the community. Teachers tend to remain 'expatriots' throughout their rural teaching careers and to constitute an elite in the rural community.

The suggestion that these decisions and choices should be left to the school community raises different questions. Do they have the necessary information to decide what subjects should be taught or what their content should be? Do they know the options available or the requirements of communities other than their own?

The issue of the medium of instruction (MOI) currently being put to farm school parents by the DET well illustrates the dilemma. To date DET schools have used home language as the MOI until the end of Standard 2 when there has been a switch to English or Afrikaans. As a consequence of reports of the educational problems associated with this policy and the recommendation of greater flexibility based on parental choice, legislation was introduced in 1991 stating that 'the language or languages to be used as the medium of instruction... and the extent and duration of such use shall be determined by the Minister after consultation with the parents of pupils enrolled at that school'.

In recognition of the importance of the decision as to MOI the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) has issued a pamphlet on the proposed procedure which in the preamble states: 'This is a very important decision because the language teachers use in their classes affects how well the child can learn in school. It also affects the way the child sees his or her language, history and community. The choice of language will also influence the child's ability to take part in political decisions and it will affect his or her chances of getting a job when leaving school.'

Although it is a matter of national concern, the language/MOI issue has not been debated at a national level and there has been no educational awareness campaign around it. Nevertheless, the parents of the more than

5000 farm schools in the RSA (along with the parents of other DET schools) are currently being asked, within a tight time schedule and on the basis of minimum information, to select one of three policy options¹⁰ suggested by the DET for MOI. Are these parents aware of the implications of selecting a MOI and the stage at which it is introduced? How well informed are they about the ability of teachers to use the language, whether teachers have been trained to teach in the language, the availability of textbooks in the different languages, the limited access of rural teachers to the In-Service Training necessary to facilitate any change, the lack of opportunity for rural teachers and students to use the second language MOI out of school, or of international experience? Would not any decision they reach be more likely to be based on South African political experience and history than on educational criteria, particularly as underlying the DET documentation is an acceptance that the current low status of African languages will remain? Home language as MOI or bilingual alternatives are not proposed as policy options despite their particular relevance to rural areas. Home language MOI is generally considered the most educationally sound particularly for rural children who are not exposed to a second language outside of the classroom. The fact that, for historical or political reasons, home language instruction is unpopular in black South African communities, should not mean that parents remain ignorant of its educational advantages.

It may well be that if all considerations (technological, market requirements, individual equality, national unity etc.) are taken into account the value of home language as MOI may, in current circumstances, be outweighed by the advantages of English. What is clear however is the need for a local approach to the issue of MOI, and the need to ensure that those to whom power is delegated to determine the MOI, have equal and adequate access to the information and resources necessary for making informed and effective decisions. The decision-makers will need to know what the various policies mean for teachers and learners; whether the necessary infrastructure and attitudes for their successful introduction exist; the pedagogical strengths and weaknesses of the various options or the wider social, economic or political implications. They need to be able to consider both short and long-term options. Currently the implications for rural dwellers are such that a sudden and immediate switch to English might well increase the rural/urban divide rather than improve the rural dwellers' access to English and the social, economic and political advantages this is presumed to bring. The conditions for the success of this

model (teachers fluent in English; teachers trained to teach in English; adequate textbooks and other English resources; exposure to English and a literate culture outside of the classroom etc.) at present obtain only in middle-class urban areas. Such a policy would reinforce the English speaking urban elite and exacerbate urban/rural and class divisions. It could lead to a yet higher failure and drop out rate and to children leaving school barely literate in either English or their home language.

In-service teacher training for enliteration in a second language is generally not available for rural teachers. Rural school children have few opportunities for using English out of school. The majority of rural adults are not only illiterate but do not speak English. Most do not have TV's and although many have radios they are often unable to afford the batteries to operate them. They do not have access to libraries where they could obtain books in English; their schools are poorly supplied with text and library books and almost none are electrified and therefore in a position to make use of distance learning via electronic media - if they could afford it.

3.7 RURAL TEACHERS

Rural schools experience worse pupil/teacher ratios than urban schools. Their teachers tend to be under- or un-qualified. Although there are outstanding examples of rural teachers who are totally committed to the community in which they work and have made a lasting contribution to its development, they often form an educational and economic 'elite' who are isolated to a greater or lesser degree from the community in which they work and may be criticized for their lack of leadership in and commitment to the wider school community.

Rural teachers on the other hand work under socio-economic and professional conditions which make it surprising that they achieve even the unsatisfactory results which pertain in rural areas today. They are posted, generally against their will, to remote schools where there may be no accommodation for themselves, let alone their families; where they are most unlikely to have access to the services (water, electricity, sewerage, telephones, transport etc.) to which they have been accustomed in town; where they incur enormous transport costs; where they are isolated from their friends and families; where they are professionally isolated from other teachers and officials; where they are required to teach, in inferior

buildings, classes with horrifying pupil/teacher ratios with very little equipment and few books. Financially rural teachers may incur the additional costs of maintaining two homes and of regular travel to and from the rural school, at the same time as being unable to make use of the housing loans and medical aid offered to all teachers.

Few teachers whether on farms or in the homeland relocate themselves permanently with their families when they are appointed to a rural school. Even where there is family accommodation the school may be situated in such an isolated place that it is unacceptable to the teacher's family either because suitable employment and education (other than primary) is not available, or simply because they would find it difficult to identify with the local community. A consequence of this is that many teachers arrive in the area in time for school on Monday and have left by midday on Friday. This makes it impossible for them to develop a commitment to the community which goes beyond the classroom. This and their superior education and relatively high incomes results in there being a serious gap between the teachers and the school community which has detrimental consequences for the school.

This gap makes it difficult for a school committee to play the role it should or obtain the input and guidance it might from the teachers. It further has serious implications for some of the suggested additional areas of decentralization of school control. How effectively could a committee 'hire and fire' teaching staff while they were 'looked down upon' by the teachers?

The existing devolution to the farm school manager of the authority to employ and dismiss the teachers at farm schools has raised certain questions as to the mobility, transferability and promotion prospects of farm school teachers. These issues need to be addressed if school committees are to have these responsibilities devolved to them.

Certain of the problems confronting rural teachers might be removed if it were possible to appoint to rural schools teachers who came from those areas or nearby or similar areas. However the history of education in these areas is such that this is unlikely to be possible except in a few cases and then generally only for primary school teachers.

There has been research which indicates a positive correlation between student performance and teacher turnover or the time a teacher has been at a particular school (Riddell 1991). Rural teachers under present conditions are quick to seek a transfer. Improving the conditions under which they work would make them less likely to do so.

Many of the difficulties experienced by teachers spring from the random location of the school in the area, and not necessarily from the fact that it is rural. Their isolation and deprivation, both social and physical, might be improved were schools located in central points accessible to most of the community, to which transport was available and in which, because of the concentration of people, offices and buildings, it would be relatively economic to supply services such as water, electricity and telephones. If larger schools (particularly secondary schools) were positioned in such places and housing or housing areas developed, teachers would not only be able to make use of housing loans but would be less isolated, more independent and able to live in an environment which was more likely to be socially congenial. The professional isolation of rural teachers would also be reduced by giving them improved access to colleagues and the education department whether by transport, postal service or telephone.

The Education Departments require that the houses, for which they are prepared to grant housing loans, are within 50kms of the school. Rural schools are generally on white farms or tribal land and in neither case are there likely to be houses nearby which are available for purchase. Many rural teachers have obtained housing loans by disregarding the 50km rule. Those who live in these houses during the week travel great distances to school each day. Apart from incurring significant travel costs this probably means that they arrive at the school just in time for class and leave straight after the last lesson ends. Their input into the school and community is accordingly limited solely to formal classroom instruction. In these circumstances they could not even be accused of constituting an elite in the community - they are simply not part of it.

The formula for housing loans relates the amount a person may borrow to her salary. As so many rural teachers are unqualified their salaries are low and the amount they can borrow limited accordingly.

While accepting that the certification and payment of teachers should be

decided at a national level and that salaries should be equalized as between departments and areas, it is sometimes suggested that financial incentives might be used to ensure equality in the quantity and quality of teachers in rural areas. It is not clear that this would achieve the desired result. It might merely result in the widening of the gap between teachers and rural communities where teachers' income levels tend in any case to be well above the community mean.

Such measures would be particularly problematic if the community itself was expected to supply the additional funding. It is most unlikely that poor rural communities would be able to do this, and indeed it is the wealthier urban communities, which would naturally be more attractive to teachers, which would have the capacity to raise funds to attract teachers. Resources for such an incentive scheme would have to be found nationally and it is unlikely that they would be.

Financial incentives would not, moreover, increase the commitment of teachers to their communities, reduce their professional isolation, increase their mobility or promotion opportunities or improve their lifestyles. Referring to the difficulty of filling social worker posts in remoter areas Lund (1992:58) states that, although the new improved salary scales had made it easier to attract staff, some places were so remote that it was very difficult to either open up social work services or keep staff.

Rural teachers have lower qualifications than their urban counterparts and work under more difficult conditions, and yet there is far less likelihood that accessible in-service training will be provided for them or that they will have the necessary resources to enable them to overcome their own and their school's shortcomings. In-service training programs and the provision of teaching aids such as televisions and computers are in general concentrated in urban or at best peri-urban areas. It is in the rural areas where the teachers are not fluent in English, where they lack qualifications, where there are no libraries or resource centres, that there is the greatest need for distance teaching to assist the teachers and yet very few rural schools are electrified or have the necessary funds to buy the equipment required to access distance learning. Few non-government organisations (NGO's) operate in these areas and the private sector has little interest in them.

The repeal of the land acts and other racially based legislation could, if followed by the introduction of a democratic constitution, result in important changes in the social, economic and political position of blacks in the currently 'white rural areas'. This could have significant implications for those currently classified 'farm school teachers'. Communities of individuals with status and rights in the location in which they live and work should emerge. It remains to be seen whether farmworkers and their families and those who have gone into the rural areas to serve them are able to take advantage of the changed and changing legal situation.

3.8 SCHOOL COMMITTEES, PTA'S AND THE COMMUNITY

School Committees or PTA's operating in rural areas encounter many difficulties and hurdles not faced by their urban counterparts. In considering what functions should be devolved to the community or school committees it is important that the conditions under which they operate be taken into account.

Most rural schools owe their very existence to the emergence of a committee which sought the original permission to establish the school and thereafter raised the necessary funds. The make-up of the committee is often revealing, reflecting the power and resources of the local community.

Rural areas are home to a disproportionate number of old and young persons and are deprived of the presence and input of many of those in the economically active age group. The 1991 Census shows 8.2% of KwaZulu's rural population to be aged 60 or older. This category constitutes only 6.7% of Natal/KwaZulu's population and only 5.5% of Natal's urban population. The economically active age group (20 - 59 year olds) constitutes only 35.2% of the rural population (as compared with 44.3% over all) and is disproportionately female - 62.6%. Rural areas on the other hand contain 64% of Natal/KwaZulu's schoolgoing population - the 5 - 19 year olds.

Rural areas also have a history of educational deprivation which is reflected in the educational levels of their people (See Figure 1 page 22).

The incomes of rural people are low in comparison with urban dwellers. There are not many who are in a position to donate freely of their time to

fulfil the functions of a committee member. Although few rural people may be tied by the hours of formal employment, their working hours may in fact be longer than those of employed urban dwellers as they perform agricultural and trading functions, build and maintain homes, fetch water and fuel and care for the young and the old.

Distance and the lack of infrastructure are additional factors which undermine the efficiency of committees in rural areas. There are generally no telephones on which to contact people; there is no postal service; few people have their own transport; there is little public transport for those who could afford it and there are no banking facilities and few supply centres.

These physical and human deficiencies prove great handicaps especially where there are large sums of money to be handled or where a significant number of functions have been decentralized to the school community level. Few committees have access to skilled bookkeepers. The knowledge required for successful budgeting is very often absent. Banking facilities are generally only available at considerable distance and expense. The poorer the community and the less equipped, the more money and responsibility it is asked to handle. Inevitable problems ensue with accountability. Such committees may be suited to handle the '40 cents' (the annual school fee prescribed by the KDEC) collected from each pupil where banking facilities and supply stores are close at hand, but they are hardly equipped to handle the hundreds of rands collected from members of the school community, which, in rural areas, are required to pay the privately paid teachers and build and maintain the schools, in addition to buying the blackboard chalk and toilet paper which state schools require.

The educational, economic and physical deprivation experienced by individual members of school committees or rural communities coupled with the elite status of rural teachers and the gap which often exists between them and the local community make for a far more problematic relationship between teachers and committees than is the case in urban areas. Committees may feel unqualified to act with authority in hiring and firing teachers and directing the way the school is run. Their inability to provide acceptable housing options for rural teachers has been shown to lead to the position where teachers are not part of and do not identify with the local community. This makes it difficult for the community and the

teachers to develop the relationship necessary to ensure the best interests of the school.

The existing system of providing education based on community initiative followed by significant financial contributions from that community is not well suited to handle a sudden influx of new settlers into an area. The fact that the old established residents of an area have themselves established and paid for the schools in the area may in addition lead to tensions when those schools are put under pressure by new arrivals to the area who made no contribution to the schools. The industrial decentralization area of Isithebe illustrates the problem. For the first 20 years of its existence, despite the fact that millions of rands were spent establishing and subsidizing factories in the area, no social infrastructure was supplied - whether in the form of housing or schools. Although some 2000 houses and three schools were subsequently built in the township of Sundumbili the majority of the +21 000 employees of Isithebe and their families were left to provide services for themselves in the tribal areas surrounding Isithebe. This effectively placed the education ball in the court of the local chief and induna who, having just managed to supply adequate primary schooling for the traditional residents of the area, were not well disposed to providing more for strangers.

Nor is such a system with its reliance on community action well suited to handle new population settlements where a sense of community has not yet developed. In rural areas the development of such 'communities' may furthermore be constrained by their existence within traditional tribal communities (with their own authority structures) of which the new settlers do not really feel part. In the area surrounding Isithebe there is little evidence of the new settlers taking the initiative in the provision of education for their children. Those children have instead found a place in the existing schools in the formal township, the surrounding tribal area or on nearby white farms.

School communities on white farms face different problems. They, unlike other rural dwellers, are often characterized by a lack of permanency or security. (This instability is reflected in the high drop-out rates in farm schools.) Although legislation has been introduced to allow for the introduction of school committees where the farmer so wishes, few exist. Such communities have in the past been virtually 'without status' in the

areas in which they worked and lived. They had no status to act in the provision of their own education - or in any other area. They are not accustomed to being able to take charge of their own lives. However, with the recognition of organizational, labour and political rights and the repeal of the group areas and land acts their position has changed legally and practical changes may ensue. They will nevertheless still face the difficulties associated with farm dwelling. Many parents live considerable distances from the school. Most are employed and can only attend meetings after hours. After dark meetings in areas which are not electrified and do not have public transport are not well attended. Illiteracy levels of farm workers are higher than those of rural dwellers in general. They have little experience of social, economic or political conditions outside of the farm environment. They are not in a strong position to provide effective leadership in the provision of education for their communities.

3.9 SUPPORT

In the past rural education has suffered from a lack of professional support. Schools have seen far less of circuit inspectors on a far less regular basis than their urban counterparts. They, however, have more need of this type of contact and support in view of their isolated position and the fact that in general they have no access to telephones and probably have to resort to a poor postal service in order to communicate. Private support organizations (READ, Science and Maths Programs, Teacher Upgrading etc.) are likewise less often found in rural schools. If functions such as circuit inspection, planning and curriculum development are decentralized the position may well deteriorate rather than improve. The poorer and more remote a district the less likely that it will be able to afford such services and the less likely that it will be able to attract quality circuit inspectors etc. Any move to decentralize should be designed to avoid decreasing already inadequate services or increasing isolation.

If support services are to be effective they need to be adequately funded. In particular this means that in rural areas the transport required to ensure that the service reaches all schools should be allocated the necessary funding. If the responsibility for funding the service and its transport is left to poor and disadvantaged communities, the communities will be denied the very support they need to redress the inequalities of the past.

The SIDA report on Education in Zimbabwe (Colclough 1990) shows how the decentralization of administrative machinery to provincial and district levels, which was aimed at improving the quality of supervision, was rendered ineffective as a result of financial and human resource constraints.

3.10 RESOURCES

Apart from their inferior physical facilities rural schools are less well equipped than their urban counterparts. They are in general without electricity; they do not have typewriters, roneo machines or photocopiers; they do not have radios, TV's or audio-visual equipment let alone computers. In view of the fact that they do not have libraries or laboratories, that these are not available locally either, and that rural schools exist in communities in which there is no deeply rooted culture of learning and which are economically deprived, rural schools have greater need for all such resources than their urban counterparts. If a start is to be made in redressing the inequalities of the past, rural schools will have to be equipped with the best educational resources available. This will not occur if the provision of such resources is the responsibility of the local community.

3.11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An appreciation of the nature of local government in rural areas is an essential prerequisite to an informed discussion regarding the provision of education there. The increasing number of functions which are being, and are likely to be, transferred to a regional, local or community level make local government an ever more important ingredient in achieving adequate provision of education.

Local government, let alone democratic or accountable government, has been notable for its absence in rural areas. Apart from that exercised by chiefs or indunas few attempts at local government have been permitted. Even official or bureaucratic representation has only occurred on a very occasional basis. The most frequent visitor to rural areas is probably the dip inspector followed by mobile clinics and the pension teams which are only in an area once every two months. Other than at the magistrate's court, of which there is not even one in every magisterial district, there are generally no bureaucrats based in rural areas on a permanent basis. There

is no one representing any particular state department (such as health, education, or interior), nor is there anyone acting on behalf of a number of departments as is the case with clerks and other officials in the magistrate's courts. There is no one responsible for carrying out the functions of the state in rural areas nor is there anyone whom individuals in the community can approach whether with regard to fulfilling certain functions (e.g. registration of a birth or death) or accessing services of the state (e.g. health, education, agricultural extension.).

Apart from the general education required to bring about a change of climate with regard to the need for and the nature of local government there will be a need for specific education to give adults the necessary organizational skills and knowledge to enable them to participate in local government. If local government is to achieve the desired results in areas in which the role played by the state remains critical (despite any decentralization that might have taken place) its access to the various state departments must be facilitated. This would be difficult if rural areas remain un- or under-served and devoid of authoritative representatives of the state. Such persons might be officials of the local authority, answerable to the community, but having the necessary skills, infrastructure and authority to access the state and act on its behalf. At a purely practical level the need for a suitably qualified person, with an office, telephone, other communication networks and the necessary knowledge and authority to act is unlikely to be met if each department of the state and local government act independently. The department of education alone could not place officials throughout the rural areas in order to facilitate the provision of education. Nor would this be justified. Where however such an official were to act on behalf of a number of departments and fulfil a variety of functions such an appointment could be both practical and justified. Clearly such officials could not perform the professional functions associated with the departments they were representing, but they could play an important role facilitating the provision of professional contact and exposure.

There are a number of functions such persons might perform which would in turn facilitate the provision of effective education in the area. If it were possible to register births without travelling considerable distances and incurring large expenditure more births would be registered. A relatively accurate local register of births would enable education or local authorities

to plan ahead to ensure that the necessary education facilities would be available when required. Access to the Department of Health which led to the local availability of health and nutrition services would promote the health of the juvenile population putting them in a stronger position to take advantage of any education provided. Official and regular contact with the Department of Works would assist not only in the building of facilities but in the provision of water, sewerage and other services at these facilities. Liaison between all departments should result in better all round planning. Schools could be sited in the optimal position with regard to water supplies, transport routes, electrical take-off points, housing and population distribution.

3.12 INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

As informal settlement has not generally taken place on proclaimed urban land or land set aside for occupation by blacks, the state has seldom if ever considered the provision of education for such settlements its responsibility. Indeed the circumstances in most informal settlements are such that it is not clear how education could be supplied legally. The settlements themselves are usually illegal or at least established without the consent of the landowner. In the absence of action by the state, the owner of the land is highly unlikely to establish a 'farm school'. The community, because it does not own the land and has no status in the area, is unable to take action itself. Any approach by the community to funding organisations like the IDT is likely to fail.

There is not only a need for the system for the provision of education to be adjusted to provide for informal settlements but also for a fast track method of education delivery to be developed to cope with such situations. Informal settlements are fragile enough without there being no education provided for the children resident in them. The argument, that the provision of services will encourage such settlements or cause those that exist to continue, is naive and in most cases unrealistic. The non-provision of services is not going to cause the settlements to go away and their provision would do much to improve the living conditions of their residents.

The DET has stated that it generally requires seven years between the time that a school is first motivated for and the time that the first pupil is sitting

in a desk. This may be an unsatisfactory situation for any community but for those that grow up overnight in deprived circumstances it is an impossible one. However temporary or provisional facilities and teachers might be, it must be possible to make some more expeditious arrangement.

Where populations are officially removed or settlements planned, development education should be provided from the earliest settlement in the area to facilitate the relocation. This will not happen if sites are merely allocated for educational purposes or the DET informed that schools will be required, although this may be an improvement on waiting for the community (which initially will be non-existent) to get itself sufficiently organized to approach the DET or to establish a school itself, with or without the assistance of the state or some NGO. The early provision of education in a new community might be ensured by making it a condition of the granting of housing or land loans, whether under the IDT R7500 scheme or any other state or private scheme, that they would not be granted if certain services (in this case education) were not available. It is particularly important that educational facilities are provided from the beginning where people are resettled or granted sites adjoining communities where educational facilities are already overextended. Good relations of the new arrivals with their neighbours will to a large extent be dependent on the 'immigrants' not worsening the position of those long established in the area. The provision of educational facilities in areas of new settlement is unlikely to occur where this function is decentralized or where it is left to 'communities' to provide their own facilities and then claim subsidies. There will have to be procedures to deal, temporarily at least, with such situations outside of the usual ones.

3.13 SERVICES

The servicing of rural areas naturally lags far behind that of urban areas. When it occurs it is often more expensive. Services which have particular relevance for schools are transport, water, electricity and telephones. Levels of access to housing and health services also have important implications for education. Services generally become available in rural areas when the demand for them is sufficient to make provision economic or when they are considered sufficiently important for the state or some other body to subsidize them. Schools which wish to ensure the availability of services should either locate themselves where these services are available or are

likely to become so in the future or ensure that they qualify in terms of some subsidy.

Existing systems of land tenure in the rural areas of the homelands and Group Areas legislation in rural South Africa have restricted the development of natural growth points, rural centres and towns. This along with the system of school building financing has led to the establishment of schools whose location may be termed random in relation to ease of access to services or indeed areas in which services could rationally and economically be developed. Schools sites have been selected on criteria other than easy access to transport, water and electricity. This is a legacy for which the education system will have to pay dearly as it attempts to supply these basic services in the future. Having established the need for such services future educational planning should take these factors into account in order to ensure that the funds allocated to education are spent in the most economic way. It may be possible to persuade an international aid agency to spend R100 000 on an electrical cable to a poorly located school but this method will never ensure the electrification of all schools, quite apart from the fact that the funds might have been used to provide five additional classrooms.

3.13.1 Telephones

The role played by telecommunication is often overlooked when reviewing the problems of rural education.

Rural teachers do not in the normal course of events interact with teachers from other schools; they seldom if ever have the opportunity to meet with officials of the education departments; they usually live far from post offices and even where they can reach them rural postal services are slow and unreliable; they are often separated from their families and friends with whom they are unable to communicate between visits home.

Telephones offer instant contact with the party from whom information is being sought. Rural schools are frequently frustrated believing that they should be performing some function, filling some form, setting an exam, changing a syllabus, should have received some instruction etc. and yet are unable to establish the facts. They write letters which are either not answered or to which they receive an answer long after the relevant event

has occurred. Had they access to telephones they would be able to contact the DET or KDEC directly and be provided with an immediate answer. The ability to communicate instantly and effectively, particularly with the education department, would make an enormous difference to their efficiency and contribute greatly to reducing their isolation.

Schools would also benefit from being able to contact other schools in their area; enquire from distant stores whether text books or uniforms are in stock; enquire from the station whether parcels from the department have arrived; call ambulances when people are injured or seriously ill and teachers would be able to reduce their social isolation by obtaining an effective method of communication with their urban families and friends.

3.13.2 Electricity

In discussions of issues such as double sessions, adult education, audio-visual equipment, distance teaching etc. their dependence on electricity is seldom mentioned - it's availability being taken for granted. This is an invalid assumption as far as rural schools are concerned. It is estimated that 91% of Natal/KwaZulu schools are without electricity. Almost all of these schools are in rural areas.

These schools are without electricity for a number of reasons. Firstly a general supply of electricity may not be available in the area. In such cases schools wanting electricity would have to obtain, at their own expense, solar or diesel lighting plants. Where electricity is available rural schools are generally unable to afford either the costs of installation or the monthly extension charges. In urban areas the state usually bears both the capital and running costs of electricity in schools. In general the installation and running costs are considerably lower in urban areas than they are in rural areas. Schemes for the supply of a relatively cheap and simple electricity supply through a ready board and card meter or keypad have recently been introduced into certain rural areas and schools have been amongst those to benefit. Rural electrification schemes are however only undertaken after Escom has conducted a feasibility study and consulted with the community, and are only likely to be introduced where there are sufficient people in an area who wish to participate to make the scheme viable. Thus only schools situated at natural growth points or where the population is relatively dense are likely to benefit. The cost for the

installation of a ready board (which has three plugs and one light connection) is only R30 and the monthly extension charge is unlikely to exceed R100 which compares very favourably with the usual rural supply installation fee of R2000 and a monthly extension charge which could be as high as R2000 - though the extension charge simply for lights and a few items of electrical equipment would probably not exceed a few hundred rand per month. (These costs do not include the costs of wiring the buildings.)

The provision of capital (whether by the state, the private sector or NGO's) to meet costs of electrical wiring and installation will not necessarily redress the anti-rural bias of the past if the school community is unable to meet the extension charges. Rural communities may in addition not be prepared to provide the resources to meet a cost which urban communities do not have to bear.

Electricity has become indispensable in the provision of technical education, providing access to audio-visual equipment and other educational aids, enabling participation in distance learning and the upgrading of teachers who are unable to attend residential courses on a regular basis. It is also required for the introduction of double sessions and adult education - two means often suggested for addressing educational inadequacies - when it is necessary to utilize school buildings out of daylight hours. Electrification has accordingly been seen as a means of significantly increasing the provision of education in an area. However the electrification of a school in a rural area will not automatically enable that school to be used for adult education or double sessions if the school is isolated, the population density low and people unwilling to walk to the school after dark when public transport is not available. If the intention is that schools should be used after dark they need to be positioned such that the public to which they are directed are within close walking distance or are served by public transport.

The costs of electrification go beyond installation and extension charges. Expensive equipment is required and has to be maintained. Buildings need to be built with higher security specifications where they contain expensive equipment. In the past the state (and the private sector) have tended only to supply such equipment to the larger urban schools. Rural schools will have a large backlog to make up. They are also likely to experience

difficulties in the servicing of equipment and the education of personnel in the use of it. The more decentralized education functions are, the less likely it is that such services will be available at the local level - which is where they will be most needed.

3.13.3 Water

The absence of clean, piped water at most rural schools has serious implications for hygiene and the efficient operation of the school. The collection of rain water may, except in times of drought, provide the pupils with essential drinking water but it cannot supply tap water in laboratories or allow for the introduction of waterborne sewerage. Many of the possible solutions to the water problem are expensive and can only be applied where a school has electricity. The importance of a reliable, clean and economic supply of water should be taken into account when the positioning of rural schools is considered.

3.14 SCHOOL SIZE

In areas where population densities are low, distances are long, roads are poor, public transport minimal and incomes low, it will automatically be more difficult to meet the accepted standards for access to schools. Even if Lubbe's (1986) view is accepted that no pupil up to the level of Standard 2 should be required to walk more than 2km to school or to transport to school (and older pupils more than 3km), this may be impractical to achieve in certain rural areas. Public transport is often unobtainable or unaffordable and the low levels of population density lead to small schools with combined classes. Such schools, provided they are suitably equipped and the teachers trained accordingly, need not present a problem at the primary level but at a secondary level the demands are such that they would not be satisfactorily met in a school of less than 100 pupils and two teachers - the position in the average in farm school¹¹. Far from suffering from overcrowding such schools experience a shortage of pupils and solutions such as double sessions have no part to play.

The diverse and technical education that is required today, particularly at secondary level, cannot be supplied in small schools with non-specialized teachers - just as it cannot be effectively supplied where there is no electricity (or other essential resources).

In some areas it would be possible through the rationalization and centralization of schools and the provision of transport to establish sufficiently large schools to enable them to supply the specialized and diverse education that will be required to equip pupils for the future. The concept of cluster schools, which between them provide all necessary options, may provide the answer in urban and peri-urban areas, but cannot help in rural areas.

Where the provision of transport is not a viable option the provision of boarding schools may provide a solution where pupils live long distances from the nearest school. This has always proved an expensive option which makes it an unsuitable one for poor rural areas. It would only be feasible if the state were to provide a larger per pupil subsidy in those rural areas which require either transport or boarding facilities. This would ensure equal access to education for pupils in those areas without greater expenditure than pupils in urban or more densely settled rural areas.

Boarding schools have in the past often had better educational reputations (which in most cases appear justified) than other schools which have made them attractive, not only to people who have no option other than to board, but also to those who have educational aspirations for their children or wish to remove them from their home environment for some reason. If boarding schools were to be introduced as a means of solving the problem of educational provision in sparsely populated areas, some control would have to be exercised to ensure that the facilities were not utilized by those who did not in fact need them. It would be particularly important to do this if decentralization and the method of financing meant that much of the cost of boarding was borne by the relatively poor rural community. In the past the situation has arisen where local children whose families had paid for the erection of a community school were unable to obtain admission to that school because the places had been filled by children from other areas whose parents had made no contribution. The situation is particularly inflammatory where urban children who obtain admission to rural schools have the option of attending an urban school which has been supplied by the state at no cost to the school community.

3.15 CONCLUSION

Although there is widespread acceptance of the need for educational

restructuring in general and a growing appreciation of the educational discrimination currently experienced in rural areas, at this stage little is clear about how these issues will be addressed. All that seems certain is that RSA's eighteen education departments will be collapsed into one which means that the DET farm schools of rural Natal and the KDEC community schools of KwaZulu will fall under one education authority. This will result in the changing of school boundaries and the structure of school communities, and should allow for a more rational planning for the provision of education. The social, political and economic changes which are likely to occur simultaneously in areas other than education will impact upon those occurring in the education arena. For example the empowerment of rural communities would significantly influence the role that might be played by school committees or communities.

It has yet to be determined how existing schools will be brought under one authority, whether all types of school will be included and how they will be controlled. If it is accepted that there will be a place for private, community, semi-state and state schools in a future unified education system, a structure will have to be developed which incorporates all such existing schools, making it possible to control them where necessary and to subsidize them to agreed levels. To ensure the provision of education of an acceptable type and level to those who are not receiving such at present the structure adopted will also require a dynamic element.

In order that the state should accept responsibility for rural education and control it, the 1986 Synthesis Report recommended that the state (in this case the DET) should buy or lease existing farm schools. Such action seems both unnecessary and an ill-advised means of achieving the stated aims. It would lead to the expenditure of scarce resources on educational facilities which are available anyhow when they might be used to provide or extend education where there is none at present. In many cases it would lead to expenditure on schools which were badly sited and barely viable. While accepting that all such schools should be incorporated into a unified system and treated equally with regard to subsidization, staffing, resourcing etc., it should be possible to obtain the desired level of control over farm or other private or semi-private schools without incurring any capital expenditure. Educational matters could be adequately controlled by legislation or regulations controlling the establishment, staffing and running of schools; while issues such as the prevention of the exploitation

of children might be better achieved through labour legislation rather than by substituting the farmer's control of farm schools with control by the DET.

If schools are not taken over or expropriated by the state there may be cases where farmers, churches or other organizations wish to sell or lease schools, or request subsidization of extensions or maintenance. If rational and economic use is to be made of limited educational resources these requests should only be granted where the schools meet certain basic requirements similar to those supposedly applied to community schools today. That is schools should not be established where there is any doubt about an adequate enrolment; school locations should be selected taking into account access to water, transport, electricity, teacher accommodation etc. There are many farm schools which are badly positioned and have a very small (and generally declining) enrolment. The state should not, through the purchase of such schools, get itself into the position of having to subsidize such schools in perpetuity. Where people wish to maintain or establish private schools in such circumstances, the state's contribution could be limited to its existing subsidies.

Effective education planning is dependent upon accurate predictions of population movements. These have been made especially difficult as a result of the many changes, constitutional and other, that are expected to flow from the 'new South Africa'. On the commercial farms in rural Natal there is likely to be a further decline in the population, with the possible exception of those areas where new forms of land tenure are introduced or land is subdivided. On the other hand there is likely to be growth in the population of rural towns. These probable demographic changes have important implications for the viability of farm schools in terms of enrolment or potential enrolment, and any extensions, subsidizations, purchases or leases should be considered in the light of them.

Future population movement both within and out of rural KwaZulu will be determined at a number of levels. The development of rural towns and attendant services may lead to concentrations of the population within the area. An improvement in the economic climate of the RSA and in urban lifestyles would no doubt lead to increased urbanization and an accompanying decrease in the rural population, but the extent to which this might happen, and with what degree of permanency, is difficult to

predict. It would in addition depend on circumstances in the rural areas - both economic and social.

The growth of a democratic tradition in general should encourage the development of educational equality in rural areas. The reaching out of local government and services into rural areas should increase the efficiency and effectiveness of much in educational provision at a practical level. The general improvement in services and lifestyle in rural areas should in turn attract better qualified teachers who are prepared to commit themselves to the area and who through improved circumstances are able to do a more professional job.

Throughout this paper there is evidence of the tension between the need for more democratic participation of rural communities in local government and schooling, and the fear that decentralization will further add to the material and organizational burden of poor and uneducated communities. Whether decentralization of power in education will benefit rural communities will to a large extent be determined by other developments in rural areas. Socio-economic factors will continue to play a crucial role, but of great importance will be any infrastructural and servicing developments that might occur as well as the extent to which democratic, accountable and effective local government emerges. The ability of rural communities to become effectively involved in education will be determined by their general ability to become involved in democratic local organization. This will be dependent not only upon their general education and resources but also upon their acquiring the necessary organizational skills, knowledge and attitudes which support the principals of grassroots democratic organization and allow for effective participation in its procedures. Proposals for the further decentralization of power in education need to be continually related to current and changing conditions in the areas to which power is to be decentralized if they are to be appropriate and effective. It is of course true that the effectiveness of centralized policies will likewise depend on the infrastructure and resources at the local level and the level of communication between the centre and the periphery.

It is unlikely that the position of education in rural areas will improve or current inequalities be redressed if the new unified system does not discriminate in favour of disadvantaged communities. This is true not only

of the historical position but also of the ongoing situation. If the educational grants or subsidies made to schools do not meet the full capital, teaching, administrative and resourcing (including textbooks) costs, 'poor schools' will remain poor and the inequalities in education will be perpetuated. Poor communities will be unable to provide libraries, laboratories and offices; they will be unable to make up the deficit in the funds provided for teaching resources; they will be unable to provide acceptable teacher and boarder accommodation; they will be unable to attract qualified teachers, which will result in the subsidization they receive in the form of teachers salaries being lower than that received by 'rich' schools where the teachers are qualified and their salaries accordingly higher. Poor communities will be trapped in a cycle of poverty if their ability to break out of their deprived situation through addressing the educational inequalities currently experienced is dependent on their paying for the improvements themselves. If regional disparities are to be attended to, support (and not only financial support) from the central state will be required. This should be supplied both to ensure equity and to ensure the development of human resources currently being neglected on a grand scale.

NOTES

1. In this report where use is made of official Census data the definition of 'rural' used by Central Statistical Services has been adopted. This definition is unsatisfactory in that it defines an urban area as one in which there is 'some or other form of local authority' rather than according to the nature of settlement in the area with the result that large settlements may be classified rural because of their informal nature and/or lack of local government structures. However if use is to be made of census data aggregated on a rural/urban basis or on information relating to the location of schools in Census districts the use of the CSS definition cannot be avoided.
2. This is the age group for potential scholars used by RIEP at the University of the Orange Free State who have the most comprehensive set of national educational statistics.
3. The SADT was set up by the 1936 Land Act to acquire land for settlement by blacks in terms of the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936. Its functions apart from the acquisition of land were 'to develop such land, to promote agriculture in native reserves, and generally to advance the material, moral and social wellbeing of the Blacks.' (Letsoalo:1987)
4. Currently 75 percent of building costs may be claimed.
5. Neither of these magistracies is typical of the situation in rural Natal. Inanda, although classified rural by the Census, is in fact a densely populated area of informal settlement where the state has recently erected a number of large schools. Although there are no schools in rural Eshowe farmers in the area have been active in assisting in the building of schools in nearby areas of KwaZulu with the result that the access to schools of children on the farms is comparatively good.
6. This agegroup, rather than the 5 - 15 agegroup (which was used for the calculations based on the 1985 Census) has been adopted here as it is the agegroup most commonly used, and in particular is the one used to represent potential pupils, by RIEP at the University of the Orange Free State.
7. According to the 1896 Synthesis Report almost half of farm school teachers have no teaching qualification and only 8% have passed Standard 10.
8. If Natal and KwaZulu are considered together and an undercount of 20% allowed for, it appears that 75% of potential scholars were at school in 1990.
9. Calculations based on the 1991 Population Census and the 1990 KDEC and DET enrolment figures imply that 90.1% of potential pupils in KwaZulu/Natal were in school in 1990. If an undercount of 20% in the Census is allowed for, this figure is reduced to 75%. As was indicated in Section 2.1.1 the equivalent figure for the Lower Tugela magistracy would be 75.6%. These percentages apply to pupils in both urban and rural areas.
10. The options suggested are the 'sudden transfer', 'straight for English' and 'gradual transfer'. The system currently operating is the 'sudden transfer'. 'Straight for English' implies tuition in English in all subjects from the first day at school while 'gradual transfer' means that, while first receiving tuition in mother tongue, English will be introduced as medium of instruction in one or two subjects a year until it is used for all subjects.
11. Owing to the relatively high (in rural terms) population density on the north coast of Natal and the sparsity of schools, farm schools have higher pupil enrolments than the national average. See Table 10.

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