

Critical Role of Governance in Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Governance promotes effective delivery of education services and should result in outstanding performance of the pupils. Weak structure of the Governing Body (GB) will result in poor functioning and affect the well-being of the educational institutions and their activities. To make any sustainable changes relating to proper governance, especially of minority institutions, there is an urgent need to carry out a proper study on governance, and hence a major research project was done during 2009-10 on a representative random sample of 36 church operated educational institutions in Meghalaya interviewing in depth the GB members and institutional heads in terms of responsiveness to ground level realities, problems faced, efficiency and effectiveness. Despite several lacunae in GB membership and deficiencies in optimal functioning, there was still a statistically significant bivariate and multivariate correlation between the GB rating and institutional performance of +0.66 and +0.79 respectively. With re-balancing of the structure in terms of gender, age, tenure and skills, there would be better functioning and much higher institutional outputs, especially in the performances of the pupils. Several suggestions are made, hopefully resulting in clearly written policies and suitable guidelines on how the board members can best work together with all stakeholders (196 words)

Keywords: Educational Institutions Governance, Structure, Function, Meghalaya, India.

INTRODUCTION:

Governance requires a group of individuals who control an institution or organization through various mechanisms to ensure that its constituents follow the established policies, processes and decisions for a given area of responsibility (Stoecz, 2000). Towards the end of the twentieth century, governance has gained the attention of donor agencies, social scientists, philanthropists and civil society and this attitude had originated from a range of issues, relationships and institutions involved in the process of managing public and private affairs (Committee of Experts, 2006). Governance *per se* as well as its role in educational institutions has been reviewed extensively over the past few decades globally and in the context of enhancing its effectiveness (Hess, 2002). Despite its importance, data to support the claim that governance is a useful concept has been lacking (Hyden et al, 2005; Carver, 2006).

Good governance in education systems promotes effective delivery of education services (Lewis & Pettersson, 2009) and offers constitutional and legal frameworks that support education and address issues of education equity, standard of accountability and transparency, participation and oversight for the public services. There have been reports that a few educational institutions have had to struggle for survival because of poor or weak governance (Anand, 2009). It is emphasised that management of education needs to be better planned and the institutions should be made to follow the same corporate governance rules (Rao 2009). Although Meghalaya attained its statehood in

the year 1972, it had no education rules and regulations of its own adopting the 1922 rules and regulations of Assam state (Assam Education department, 1922), which only acts as a referral document or simply a guideline to the education sector of the state. (Nongsiang, 2010)., It is hoped the new Education policy (Govt.of Meghalaya Education Department, 2018) will improve matters but the policy does not provide detailed guidelines on governing bodies, their composition and functioning. Currently, in the absence of rules and regulations of its own it appears that there is some disparity and non-uniformity in the governance of educational institutions in the state.

The central problem could be that boards generally define their accountability too narrowly and are too easily influenced by the managements resulting in poor performance of the students. Of late, there has been a great need for accountability in the education sector because of decreasing state funding, increasing personal cost to students and their families on account of an increase in tuition fees and national agenda for making educational institutions more competitive in the light of global challenges. Most of these problems are not systematically and completely documented.

To make any sustainable changes relating to proper governance, especially of minority institutions, there is an urgent need to carry out a proper study on governance (1) To analyse the structure of Governing Boards / Managing Committees of church-operated educational institutions; (2) To examine the governance practices in terms of responsiveness to ground level realities, problems faced, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, etc., and finally (3) To identify improvements that could make the functioning of Governance more effective.

Material and Methods:

The research was carried out during 2009-10 in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya state where Shillong the capital is also situated. According to these records obtained from the office of Inspector of schools, East Khasi Hills District and Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, Government of Meghalaya. There are altogether 30 colleges and 225 schools, of which 8 colleges and 69 schools are operated by the two major religious churches, viz., Catholics and Protestants. From each major group among the various religious and other groups, it was proposed to select a random sample, taking into account the possible variations or styles of functioning. The minimum sample sizes were determined based on variability, type 1 error, power, and precision required for the estimates, and it was decided to choose the sample size proportional to the number of institutions in the various groups, using the random sampling numbers. Altogether 13 Protestant and 11 Catholic institutions were randomly selected. From the other institutions, again a representative random sample was chosen with probability proportion to size, to provide a control group of 12 institutions to match the catholic and protestant institutions making a total sample of 36 institutions for this research.

After discussion with experts and review of literature, it was finally decided to carry out a descriptive, cross-sectional, epidemiological study design, collecting relevant qualitative and quantitative data, as well as capturing some retrospective histories and experiences of governances.

Two schedules were designed to obtain details of the board and the Institution, that included the tenures of the current chair and secretary, frequency, duration, average attendance of regular and special meetings, whether minutes were made, circulated and confirmed, main agenda items, relevant details of current members such as age, gender, qualification, criteria for selecting members and office-bearers, eligibility of re-election and maximum tenure. The data were collected through the office registers as well as through interviews with the chairperson/secretary and others. Likewise pertinent details were obtained regarding the educational institution, which included the number of pupils in various grades and number of teaching and nonteaching staff of different categories, geographic area owned and leased, facilities, amenities such as school buses, canteen, uniform and books supplied, details on whether the salaries were paid in time and a profile of the performance and output of the students in comparison with other similar institutions, and the pass rate the previous year, disciplinary actions taken and the general rating of the school by the public.

Two Indepth Interview schedules were developed, one for Board members and the other for heads of institution, The chairperson, and one member of the Board were interviewed on their considered views on the membership composition, profile and functioning of the Board, decisions on agenda formation, maintenance of minutes and their follow up, difficulties if any, and their comments on further improvement of board composition and functioning. Similar in depth interview was done with the head of the institution and one other senior teacher regarding their profile and of the institution, functioning of the Board and any suggestions for improvement, whether annual reports and budgets were constructively discussed and followed up, whether the boundaries between the Board and Administration are clear and maintained and any confidential remarks on the board functioning

In addition, a special structured check list of 25 items was prepared to summarise the board composition and

functioning particularly in terms of its role in policy making and financial support. A similar structured check list of 25 items was also prepared to describe the institution, its strengths, weaknesses, performances and potential. Thus, each institution had 6 research proformae which were subjected to pilot studies, discussed with experts and finalized. All interviews were done by the first author. Data from each form were entered onto MS excel sheets, checked for errors or incompleteness, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS software.

FINDINGS:

(a) Profile of the Institutions:

There were 5 colleges and 31 schools in the study sample. 27 % of the schools had 500 or more children. In the colleges, the students varied from about 200 to over 2000. The number of teachers varied from less than 20 to 100 or more, indicating that many institutions were conscious of a proper Teacher: Pupil ratio. Many institutions had a large component of non-teaching maintenance staff including drivers for school buses. A vast majority of the institutions (33 out of 36) had their own land and 3 had leased suitable land. Most institutions had sufficient recreational facilities and playgrounds, canteen facilities. In all institutions, the staff salaries/wages and other perks are disbursed on time. About a quarter of the institutions are rated as excellent, another significant number as good, and 3 as fair, reflecting the high academic achievement of their institutions, regardless of the church affiliation. Most have rated their institution as excellent or good in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. Almost all Catholic institutions, a third of Protestant and half of Others have considered their institution as in the top 25%. On the other hand, 5 Protestant and 3 Others have mentioned that the relative performance was in the bottom 25%. The final year public exam results last year show that, in general, the students have done well. Almost all schools/colleges reported regular parent-teacher meetings. Records of these meetings and recommendation on each student are maintained. Students with poor performance are given special assistance in a majority of institutions, here also, the respondents felt that the public rating of their institution was either excellent or good. Relatively more disciplinary actions are taken in Catholic schools. In summary, most of the institutions in the sample seem to have good administration and facilities for the pupils who had performed well in their academic and nonacademic spheres.

(b) Profile of the Governing Board (GB):

The size of the board was generally 12, the number of women members showed significant variation from zero to twelve. In 33 of 36 boards, there were none below the age of 30 years. On the other hand, there were many beyond the age of 50 years. The constitution of the institutions does not specify any quota for special groups, such as women or those below 30 years. Maximum tenure for each member is 3 years; followed in 32 of 36 boards. Almost all were eligible for re-election except for two (Protestant institutions), all other boards were solely constituted for a particular institution. A majority of the Boards had regular meetings three to four times a year, and special meetings as necessary. The notice period for convening the meetings averaged 7 days, but in some cases it is short. The percentage of average attendance at the regular meetings was around 80%. The average duration of the meetings was 1-2 hours, and the minutes mostly recorded, circulated and confirmed at the next meeting. Actions taken or not taken were not always reported.

(c) Feedback from GB on governance of the institutions:

The interview with the chairperson and one other member of the GB/MC gave mostly a good picture of the structure and functioning of the boards, although there were some suggestions for improvement. Almost all agreed that the composition and number of members were adequate and the board functioned well as a team. They felt that the meetings were generally well attended and there was active participation and interest from all the members. They reported that the minutes of the meeting were circulated within two weeks almost always. The supporting papers were not usually sent earlier. Most of the decisions taken after discussion were by consensus and in several instances the sub-committees were formed to help in major decisions. The chair's role was reported to be well-defined and the decisions monitored carefully for appropriate implementation. The meetings were conducted with decorum and seriousness. Confidentiality was maintained and the records of the meetings kept in order, securely and confidentially. There were difficult decisions to make, especially when there were conflicts, but they were managed well, with full cooperation from the heads of the institution. Various standing committees were formed to help in the decision-making. The members felt that in some of the institutions, there were serious problems in terms of staffing and human resource development. However, the GB/MC had no serious difficulty in managing public relations, infrastructural problems and other major issues. In their opinion, the GB/MC was able to govern well and at the same time, they agreed that governance was not always easy.

(d) Feedback from the institutions regarding governance:

In contrast, the interview with the officials of the institutions pointed out many deficiencies and lacunae in governance, and provided a number of valuable suggestions for improvement. They felt that the GB/MC was generally supportive in solving their problems. A majority felt that in their opinion, the functioning of the GB/MC can be improved. In their opinion, the GB/MC can be more helpful, with more qualified members. Not all felt that the annual reports were constructively discussed and suggestions made for better functioning of the institution. The budgets were not always approved and respondents felt that the boundaries between GB/MC and institution administration (head of the institution) were generally clear and there was not much interference of the board members in routine administration.

(e) Grading of Boards

Using the summary checklist, the Governing Body was graded on 25 characteristics describing the structure and functioning. The Number and Percent of Governing Boards graded as Good for each item on the check list is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Rating Of Governing Board Based On Summary Checklist By Church Affiliation

Characteristic	CHURCH AFFILIATION							
	CATHOLIC		PROTESTANT		OTHERS		ALL	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age	1	9.1	1	8.3	1	7.7	3	8.3
Gender	2	18.2	7	53.8	7	58.3	16	44.4
Skills	2	18.2	0	0.0	2	16.7	4	11.1
Representation	6	4.5	4	30.8	8	66.7	18	50.0
Size	9	81.8	12	92.3	11	91.7	32	88.9
Tenure	10	90.9	3	23.1	4	33.3	17	47.2
Notice Period	7	63.6	10	76.9	11	91.7	28	77.8
Quorum	9	81.8	11	84.6	6	50.0	26	72.2
Frequency	4	6.4	5	38.5	7	58.3	16	44.4
Duration	2	8.2	5	38.5	3	25.0	10	27.8
Agenda	5	45.5	4	30.8	3	25.0	12	33.3
Leadership	4	36.4	3	23.1	1	8.3	8	22.2
Decision taking	10	90.9	13	100.0	12	100.0	35	97.2
Follow-up	10	90.9	9	69.2	8	66.7	27	75.0
Orientation	7	63.6	3	23.1	2	16.7	12	33.3
Policies	1	9.1	1	7.7	0	0.0	2	5.6
Finance	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	2.8
Chair's Role	0	0.0	1	7.7	1	8.3	2	5.6
Supportive	9	81.8	10	83.3	5	41.7	24	68.6
Serious problems	2	18.2	6	46.2	4	33.3	12	33.3
Discipline	10	90.9	12	92.2	12	100.0	34	94.4
Functioning	5	45.5	8	61.5	5	41.7	18	50.0
OVERALL	6	54.5	2	16.7	5	38.5	13	36.1

Overall, Only a third are graded good, while another third are rated poor, more among Protestant and Others. However, the overall differences by church affiliation were not statistically significant ($p=0.38$). Less than 10% rated the age structure good while the gender balance was good for less than 20% of Catholics, and nearly 60% for Protestant and Others. Nearly 80% had rated the skills as fair, and there were no statistically significant differences by church affiliation

(f) Grading of institutions

As per the Institutions Checklist, parameters graded as "GOOD" are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Institutional Characteristics Graded as “Good” According to Church Affiliation

Characteristic	Church affiliation							
	Catholic		Protestant		Others		All institutions	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Vision/Mission	8	72.7	2	15.4	6	50.0	16	44.4
Parental Support	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	2.8
Supporting Body	9	81.8	11	84.6	5	41.7	25	69.4
Geographical Access	5	45.5	3	23.1	2	16.7	10	27.8
Infrastructure	10	90.9	5	41.7	4	30.8	19	52.8
Size	7	63.6	2	15.4	1	8.3	10	27.8
Financial status	9	81.8	5	38.5	3	25.0	17	47.2
Income Generation	0	0.0	2	5.4	1	8.3	3	8.3
Teacher: Pupil ratio	7	63.6	11	84.6	11	91.7	29	80.6
Teacher Qualificn	8	72.7	8	61.5	7	58.3	23	63.9
Nonteaching staff	3	27.3	1	7.7	2	16.7	6	16.7
Facilities	3	27.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	8.3
Extracurricular	4	36.4	1	7.7	1	8.3	6	16.7
Amenities	6	54.5	3	23.1	1	8.3	10	27.8
Uniform/Books	5	45.5	2	15.4	2	16.7	9	25.0
Adm. Procedures	1	9.1	0	0.0	1	8.3	2	5.6
Percentage Passed	10	90.9	7	53.8	9	75.0	26	72.2
Tuition poor stud	4	36.4	3	23.1	1	8.3	8	22.2
Parent-teacher	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	2.8
Wages/Incentive	9	81.8	7	53.8	6	50.0	22	61.1
Disciplinary act	5	45.5	1	7.7	1	8.3	7	19.4
Annual Reports	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	25.0	3	8.3
Public Rating	10	90.0	10	76.9	10	83.3	30	83.3
Solving Problems	7	63.6	6	46.2	3	25.0	16	44.4
Compared others	11	100.0	4	30.8	6	50.0	21	58.3
OVERALL	8	72.7	2	16.7	3	23.1	13	36.1

Seventy-three percent of Catholic institutions are rated good as compared to only 17% among Protestant and 23% among Others. On the other hand, 9% of Catholic as compared to 33% of Protestant and 46% of others are rated poor. The differences by church affiliation are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). As compared to only 9% of Catholic institutions, 62 % of Protestant institutions vision and mission was rated poor. More than 80% of Catholic and Protestant institutions, as compared to only 42% of Others, the supporting body's role is rated as good. The differences were statistically highly significant ($p < 0.01$); 91% of Catholic, but only 42% of Protestant and 31% of Others have rated their infrastructure as good. Highly statistically significant differences are seen ($p < 0.01$), with 82% of Catholics having a good financial status as compared to only 40% of Protestant and 25% of Others. Nearly 60% have rated the income generation as poor, and there were no statistically significant differences by church affiliation. However, 45% Catholics have rated income generation as fair, compared to only 25% of Protestants and Others. The differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$); almost all Protestant and Others have rated the facilities as poor as compared to only 50% among Catholics. Although the differences are not statistically significant, one could see the vast differences by church affiliation, with 40% of Catholics rating this as good as compared to less than 10% among Protestants and Others. The differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with 55% of Catholics rating this as good compared to 23% of Protestants and only 8% among Others. Among Catholics, the amenities were rated poor for less than 10%, as compared to 40% among Protestants and nearly 70% of others.

(g) Impact of Governance on institutional performance

The correlation of the total score for the Governing Board with the institutional total score is given in Table 3

Table 3: Relationship of total scores of Governing Board and the institutions

Grade of Institution	Grade of Governing Body	Total		
	Good	Fair	Poor	
Good	10	2	1	13
Fair	3	5	4	12
Poor	0	4	7	11
Total	13	11	12	36

It is seen that in 22 out of 36 institutions (60%) the board score and the institutional score were consistent (G-G, F-F or P-P). There were 7 institutions which were better (P-G or P-F) and 7 institutions which were worse (G-F or F-P).

There was a high statistically significant correlation coefficient also($r=+0.66$, $p<0.01$). However, there are discordances, both ways as seen from the Table 4, where institutions have fared well despite poor governance and vice-versa.

Table 4: Correlation between Governing Board & institution scores according to specific categories

Category	r	P
I. Type of institution		
(a) School	+0.574	0.001
(b) College	+0.969	0.007
II. Size of institution (Total pupils)		
(a) Poor	+0.355	0.194
(b) Fair & good	+0.697	< 0.001
III. Nature of institution		
(a) Co-educational	+0.672	< 0.001
(b) Unisex	+0.666	0.036
IV. Type of category		
(a) Church	+0.724	< 0.001
(b) Control	+0.068	0.833

It is interesting to note the highly statistical significance in relation to church -operated educational institutions, by size, co-educational, regardless of school or college. The multiple regression analysis, there were associations among the key institutional characteristics such as church affiliation, size of school, co-education or not, school or college on the overall relationship between total institutional score and total Board score. A model 1(linear) multiple regression analysis showed. the multiple correlation coefficient, R was = +0.789 ($P<0.01$)

DISCUSSION:

Governance has been the focus of a considerable body of literature on democratic transition and consolidations but data to support the claim that the concept is a useful one has been lacking (Hyden et al 2005). Barring a few inadequacies and lack of clarity, the research showed that there was a strong relationship between governance and institutional performance which was statistically highly significant, indicating that in general, governance of church-operated educational institutions have achieved their objective in enabling the institutions they governed to perform very well. A major role of governance is in terms of producing the best students from the educational institutions. This link between school governance and school performance has been of great concern nationally and internationally, and various types of governance widely debated (Wylie, 2007). Studies in the England & Wales, Unites States and New Zealand have clearly come out with many recommendations for enhancing school governance (National Audit Office, 2006; IASB, 2000).. Based on his research, Hofman et al (2002) found out that coherence between institution governors, leaders, teachers and the community (parents) shapes conditions that have a positive effect on pupil achievement. Governance is concerned with the package of arrangements that constitute the framework within which teaching and learning occurs (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000). To this end the governing boards are formed with competent members and are given suitable guidelines for functioning and directing the institutional staff to perform their duties of teaching, student nurture, staff

welfare and holistic development of students entrusted to them (Crease & Earley, 1999). A number of developments in education have led to changes in governance relationships. Increases in school size, de-regulation, enhances awareness of the social function of education and the wish to further professional services are developments that have incentivised institutions to renew their governance arrangements. Results from this research show a statistically significant correlation between the overall score for the profile of the Governing Board and the overall scores of the institutions. At the same time the analysis also shows that a small number of institutions have shown a good performance despite poor governance, and vice-versa. Similar findings were observed by the National Audit Office (2006) and they state “a school with a very good leadership team can still succeed in spite of a weak governing body”. Earley & Weindling (2004) suggest that it may be possible to have a successful or effective institution with an ineffective governing board but how much more successful might that institution be with an effective governing board working in close partnership. Given the wide background of the institutions, there are bound to be certain discordances in the relationship, which should be studied further. Among the many features of good institutions the strong infrastructure as well as staff and students amenities would be playing a critical role in the development of the children. Likewise the discipline enforcements would also give a message to the students to take their studies seriously. The system governance based on strict rules for input into the learning process- a fixed teacher student ratio, number of books and facilities per student inhibits innovation at the institutional level (Forum on governance of higher education in India, 2003). It is not possible for any governing body to dictate terms to the institutional authorities as some of the drawbacks may be unavoidable due to the background of students as well as their parents (Robinson et al, 2003). It is possible as seen from the response of the interviewers that some GB have not included certain institutional concerns in their agenda, or given adequate time for interaction with the stakeholders or addressing deficiencies in the school. Concerns such as financial inadequacies and recruitment of competent teachers are of vital importance to be discussed in the GB to enhance the output of the institution and performance of students. It was observed that many institutions had a good public image and had also fared well in their academic performance, which are not possible without the strong support of governance. Governance must cooperate with each other, share information via open lines of communication and have transparent, trust worthy process of operation (Eurydice European Network 2008). In this context the vision and mission of the institutions as set by the sponsoring and Governing Board play a key role. No doubt the strategies adopted may have to be varied according to changing circumstances and it is here that the role of governance is clearly seen. Unless the Governing Board is progressive and forward looking, their decisions are likely to be archaic and sometimes down grading. Suitable age groups and gender balances and necessary skills among the membership will play a major role in the functioning of the Governing Board. Evidence from other countries and experiences from several studies point in the direction of strong impact of governance on institutions (Wylie, 2007). In the case of church-operated educational institutions, the responsibility for ensuring optimal governance rest on the nomination of the right members who have the commitment, passion and attitudes for balanced and wholesome development of children. Public image of church-operated educational institutions has been fairly good probably because of the transparency and application of Christian principles in the administration. These attributes place a greater responsibility on the church-operated educational institutions to form the right GB and to direct their functioning based on Christian values. In this research it was not possible to fully evaluate this aspect directly, but only through comments obtained from the various respondents on the structure and functioning of GB/MC. Given the long history of the Christian church in the North East and particularly in Meghalaya, and the strong influence of church in the educational patterns (Snaitang, 1993), it would be interesting to trace the attitudes and practice of Christian values in the light of current contemporary societal factors such as competitiveness, corruption and nepotism. For the church-operated educational institutions, it becomes a challenge for the governance to recognise and correct the problems to enable the best possible Christian witness among the staff and students, and maintain or enhance the public image. Although the population chosen for this research was predominantly urban, it was pointed out that there was no reason to believe that governance of the educational institutions in rural areas would be significantly different from the urban.

The results showed that members of some governing boards were not aware of the roles they have to play and in instances there were overlapping functions between the Governing Boards members and the head of institutions. Perhaps one of the main reasons of confusion is that the government through its directions has made the head of the government institutions automatically the secretary of GB (Assam Education Department. Rules and Orders, 1922). Governance requires a strong policy-making role to guide the administration in implementing the policies (McNamara, 2010) observed, when the governing board focuses on operational concerns rather than on governance concerns, it contributes to confusion of the two words. From this research, it was clearly observed

that in many GB appropriate guidelines on board policies were lacking and unless these lacunae are rectified, they can lead to further problems. Board members need to know what their job is and distinguish clearly between making a judgment inappropriately about the educational system, and their understanding of where the process of delivery failed. In other words, it is important that boards understand the implications of decisions made in their deliberations that boards understand what its job must be (Taylor 2000). . Bagchi (2007) said that board rooms should be gender balance places. Not everyone believes that the traditional board room is ready for a face over and women are seen to be best fit. There were many GB members, however, in the research that supported this view and agreed that there should be a gender balance in the boards. It is therefore appropriate to make provision for encouraging a balanced representation of men and women in the composition of the governing board. It can be argued that in terms of competence and experience, gender may not matter; at the same time, one cannot deny that the perspectives of women are often different and therefore complement the suggestions in relation to framing of policies, rules and regulations, particularly concerning women staff and students. Given the fact that the educational institutions deal with the growth and development of children, it would be to the benefit of the whole board to It was apparent from the responses of institutional heads and teaching staff that there should be a maximum time limit set for with regards to the tenure of members in order to generate fresh ideas from time to time.

Another balance in the board should be in terms of parent representatives who usually represent the viewpoints of the entire parent community and at the same time contribute their suggestions in improving governance in the institutions. The respondents strongly endorsed the view that parent representatives to the GB are very important as their contribution to the boards is significant. They also remarked that the selection of parents was not carried out properly in term of their capability, interest and availability. Kristoffersson (2009) regarded parents as the most important constituent on boards as they can influence decision making to a large extent. It is quite clear that governance depends on many factors related to the structure of a GB which. this research has identified in terms of ideal size, character and composition of members which decides the manner in which the board carries out its functions of governance. It is generally agreed that the foremost function of a board is planning and policy development which includes determining the vision and mission that charts the future direction of the organisation (Martinelli, 2010: Arwine 2002). As observed from this study, the GB need to indulge much more on serious matters of policy rather than those of routine nature. It is the responsibility of the president/chairperson and other key members to ensure that the agenda is prepared in such a manner that allows such discussion. Based on extensive experience, Carver (2006) concluded that rather than spend time at meetings to plan, discuss and decide on critical issues, boards simply approve and disapprove matters. Boards exist to govern and secretary often uses boards for advice, so much so that directors/person can begin to see their jobs as more advisory than supervisory (Carver, 2000). Likewise it was also seen from the responses that the boards were merely information and approval bodies. .One major agenda item in governance concerns the planning for the future of the institutions taking into account the changing environment, concentrating on strategic management. McNamara, (2010) simply said that strategic planning determines where an organisation is going over the next year or more and that is what boards are to focus. In a survey carried out in New Zealand by Robinson et al (2003), involving school administrators, local communities, school teachers etc., three major difficulties in school governance emerged: skill and understanding, difficulties in interaction with professionals, and inadequate understanding of the governance role. The factors that sustain these difficulties were explained along with implications for the improvement of governance of schools and various reforms suggested. In this research, also several deficiencies were pointed out in the manner in which some GB/MC functioned. Financial oversight is a familiar job that boards usually do well (Arnwine, 2002: James, 2008).. A major loophole identified in the study is that the financial matters were not always openly discussed in the boards which restricted transparency of operations. Large variations are seen in terms of regularity and absenteeism which would affect the momentum of the GB in driving the institutions on proper lines. There is therefore a need to examine how board meetings are attended with full quorum.

One of the major problems highlighted in this research was the lack of coordination among the key members of the GB which resulted in overlapping roles and some amount of confusion. The responses of the presidents/chairpersons of the GB during the interviews were rather guarded in terms of the difficulties in overcoming lack of coordination or other weaknesses in the functioning of the GB, but it was obvious from the interviews with the institutional representatives, that all was not well with the leadership roles in several of the GB, and that there needed to be a clear directive on this matter.

One of the major tasks of the Chairperson would be in the careful preparation of agenda. It ensures that the board has a manageable agenda to initiate necessary discussion for deciding on such board matters (Association of independent school of SA, 2005). This would include not just the routine monitoring of action taken on previous

minutes but also examining existing policies and rules and discussing suitable remedies where needed. As mentioned before, one of the duties of the president/chairperson is not just to call meetings but also to set the agenda for board meetings. From this research it was obvious that this role was not consistently adopted by the chairperson as reported by the institutional respondents. Another task of the president/chairperson would be to initiate necessary steps to nominate suitable members of the board in terms of their background, capabilities and availability as well as to ensure full and active participation of all the members. The chairperson play a key role in recommending members with a passion to the strategic planning, brand management, finance and goal setting tasks. (McNamara, 2010). The leadership role becomes clear in the functioning of the board, regularity of meetings and cordial relationship with all the stakeholders. The leader should be sincerely committed to the welfare of the institution, the students as well as the staff in ensuring the utmost performance both in terms of academic and non-academic activities. The chair's job is to see to it that the board gets its job done. The chairperson should also ensure that the resolutions made and passed are followed up and implemented. Often this may not be so as seen from the findings. One important responsibility of the chairperson is to initiate discussions and organise measures to ensure the financial sustainability of the institution including obtaining resources for building up necessary infrastructure for the wholesome development of the institution. Leadership must also establish aggressive fund raising goals. (McNamara, 2010). The president/chairperson should also be involved in developing policies and finances to ensure fair wages for the staff and in formulating satisfactory personnel policies. Educational boards should also ensure statutory compliance relating to finance, personnel, work place health and safety (Ecker, 2005). Above all, boards expect the chairman to provide leadership and need the CEO (head of institution) and secretary to process business successfully (Levao, 2002, Carver 2000).

CONCLUSIONS :

Despite various drawbacks and inadequacies, the research proved that governance of the church- operated educational institutions was reasonably good, nearly 60%, as seen from the impressive institutional performances, both academically and in terms of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. Failure of governance to have a greater impact needs to be examined in terms of lack of clarity of the terms 'governance' and 'administration' as well as other factors such as structure and functioning of the governing body, institutional amenities, recruitment of teachers and financial inadequacies.

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