

CHAPTER FIVE: EVIDENCE FROM MWENEZI DISTRICT

The previous chapter outlined extensively the procedures that were taken to gather data from the participants namely school heads, teachers, guardians of learners with parents in the diaspora and the learners themselves on the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews and focus group sessions as articulated in the preceding chapter. Data about attendance and enrolment patterns were gathered from class attendance registers and admission registers respectively. Furthermore, learners' performances were gleaned from exercise books and progress records while completion rate statistical records provided information on completion rate trends for learners left behind by emigrants. This chapter presents the results of the empirical study and their analyses following the sub-research questions. The major research question of the study was: How are the educational needs of learners with parents in the diaspora catered for, in the Mwenezi District? This major research question was further split into the following sub-research questions:

1. How do learners with parents in the diaspora experience schooling in the Mwenezi District?
2. What are the educational challenges faced by learners whose parents live in the diaspora in the Mwenezi District?
3. How do parents in the diaspora cater for the educational needs of their children back home in the Mwenezi District?
4. How are the learners whose parents live in the diaspora assisted in the home to meet their educational needs in the Mwenezi District?
5. How are educational welfare programmes implemented in the Mwenezi District?

Views of the participants are presented and analysed in line with the qualitative content and thematic analysis as recommended by Creswell

(2014) and Vaisimoradi *et al.* (2016). The themes that emerged are learning experiences of learners with parents in the diaspora, educational challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, societal influence on the education of learners left behind and educational welfare programmes for learners with parents in the diaspora.

Prior to the presentation of data gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions, biographical data of the participants are presented in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Biographical Data of Guardians (*Field notes*)

Guardian	Level of education	Sex	Age range (yrs.)	Period of guardianship	Nature of guardianship	Relationship to learner participant
G1SS	Primary	F	70+	13years	Same household	Grandmother
G2SS	Not educated	F	70+	16years	Same household	Grandmother
G3SS	ZJC	F	30-40	4years	Different household	Aunt
G1SN	O' Level	F	30-40	8months	Different household	Aunt
G2SN	O' Level	F	30-40	4years	Same household	Aunt
G3SN	Primary	F	60-70	3years	Different household	Not related

Key to Table 5.1

G1SS-Guardian 1 at School South
at School South

G2SS- Guardian 2

G3SS-Guardian 3 at School South
at School North

G1SN- Guardian 1

G2SN-Guardian 2 at School North
at School North
F-Female; O' Level- Ordinary Level
Junior Certificate

G3SN- Guardian 3
ZJC-Zimbabwe

The data about guardians show guardianship experiences that ranged from eight months to sixteen years. Grandmothers whose approximate age ranged from seventy years had long experience of guardianship. Besides grandmothers, three of the learners were also being taken care of by their aunties while one learner lived under the guardianship of a non-relative. Except for one guardian, the other five had at least some formal education. The guardians' level of education, relationship with the learners and experience in guardianship made the respondents appropriate for the data sought by the researcher. There was also equal distribution of the guardians in relation to the status of guardianship where out of the six, three stayed in the same households with the learners whilst the other three stayed in separate households. Such a scenario made this study a rich one since data were obtained from participants who had vast and different experiences of taking care of learners left behind by emigrants.

Table 5.2: Biographical Data of Learner Participants (*School admission registers and attendance registers*)

Learner	Grade	Sex	Age(Years)	First year of enrolling in Grade 1	Special responsibility at school
L1SS	7	F	13	2015	Prefect
L2SS	7	F	16	2013	None
L3SS	7	F	12	2015	None
L1SN	7	F	12	2015	None
L2SN	7	F	15	2014	None
L3SN	7	M	14	2014	None

Key to Table 5.2

LISS-Learner 1 at School South	L2SS-Learner 2 at School South
L3SS-Learner 3 at School South	L1SN-Learner 1 at School North
L2SN-Learner 2 at School North	L3SN-Learner 3 at School North
F-Female; M-Male	

All the learners were doing Grade 7 and this was necessitated by the fact that when the researcher first went into the field, only candidate classes had opened schools so it was ideal to deal with learners who were at school as that eased gathering of other data that were to be extracted from learners' exercise books, academic reports and attendance registers. The Grade Seven teachers at both schools were asked to identify learners who could participate in the study based on the learners' circumstance of having biological parents living in the diaspora. Though the sample was disproportionate in terms of gender where only one boy made it into the sample against five girls, that did not have any negative implications since the data required were purely about the educational needs of learners left behind which means the participants could freely deliberate on experiences and challenges such learners encountered without specifically bringing the gender issue. However, other researchers may in the future consider the gender issue and opt for a gender-balanced sample. Two learners from the sample had enrolled at the age of six which is recommended by the education system in Zimbabwe, two had repeated grades and the other two had enrolled at the age of seven or eight years. Repeating grades or enrolling at an advanced age could point to some challenges associated with the learners' left behind status. Furthermore, out of the six learner participants, only one had a special responsibility at school of being a prefect. Since it was a small sample one could not wholly

suggest that learners with parents in the diaspora were largely irresponsible and that they could not be trusted by the teachers though such an observation could not be out rightly dismissed.

Table 5.3: Biographical Data of Teacher Participants (*Staff records*)

Teacher	Sex	Professional Qualifications	Teaching experience in the cluster	Teaching level (Grade)	Responsibility
T1SS	M	BED	5	3	D/Head
T2SS	M	DIP.ED	12	6	Sports Director
T3SS	F	DIP.ED	22	2	TIC Infant
T4SS	F	DIP.ED	17	3-7	Ndebele Tr
T5SS	F	DIP.ED	8	ECD	None
T6SS	F	DIP.ED	5	7	None
T7SS	F	DIP.ED	3	ECD	None
T8SS	M	DIP.ED	8	5	None
T1SN	M	DIP.ED	25	4	Snr Master
T2SN	F	BED	4	2	D/Head
T3SN	F	DIP.ED	15	3	TIC Infant
T4SN	M	DIP.ED	16	7	Sports Director
T5SN	M	DIP.ED	12	7	None
HSS	M	BED	3	All	Head
HSN	M	MED	30	All	Head

Key to Table 5.3

TISS-Teacher 1 at School South
South

T3SS-Teacher 3 at School South
South

T2SS- Teacher 2 at School

T4SS-Teacher 4 at School

T5SS-Teacher 5 at School South	T6SS- Teacher 6 at School
South	
T7SS-Teacher 7 at School South	T8SS- Teacher 8 at School
South	
T1SN-Teacher 1 at School North	T2SN- Teacher 2 at School
North	
T3SN-Teacher 3 at School North	T4SN-Teacher 4 at School
North	
T5SN-Teacher 5 at School North	DIP ED-Diploma in
Education	
BED-Bachelor of Education Degree	
ECD- Early Childhood Development	
D/HEAD- Deputy Head;	
Snr Master- Senior Master	
FGDSS-Focus Group Discussion at School South	
MED-Masters of Education Degree	
FGDSN-Focus Group Discussion at School North	

The data show that there was a fair distribution of participants with respect to levels taught, teaching experience in the cluster where the study was done, gender balance, professional qualifications and level of responsibility at the schools and all these improved trustworthiness of the study.

On this theme, a report is on how learners left behind by emigrants were experiencing schooling in some parts of the Mwenezi District. The theme generated three categories namely circumstances that led to the status of being left behind, the relationship matrix between learners left behind and their significant others and learners left behind's school participation and performance.

A synopsis of the learning experiences is presented in the table below.

Table 5.4: Learning Experiences of Learners Left Behind by Parents in the Diaspora

Theme	Category	Sub-category
5.2 Learning experiences of learners with parents in the diaspora	5.2.1 Circumstances that led to the status of being left behind by emigrants	5.2.1.1 Prevalence of learners left behind by emigrants 5.2.1.2 Factors contributing to biological parents' emigration 5.2.1.3 School heads, teachers and guardians' views on the practice of emigration and leaving children behind 5.2.1.4 Unpacking the biological parents returning patterns in the eyes of study participants
	5.2.2. Relationship matrix between learners left behind by emigrants and their significant others	5.2.2.1 Relationship between learners left behind by emigrants and other learners 5.2.2.2. Relationship between learners left behind by emigrants and teachers 5.2.2.3. Relationship between learners left behind by emigrants and guardians 5.2.2.4.Communication between biological parents of learners left behind by emigrants and teachers 5.2.2.5. Relationship between guardians and biological parents of learners left behind by emigrants

To establish how learners left behind by emigrants were experiencing schooling in some parts of Mwenezi, the researcher split the category on circumstances that led to the status of being left behind into four sub-categories in line with what emerged from the empirical study and these are the prevalence of learners left behind by emigrants, factors contributing to biological parents' emigration, school heads, teachers and guardians' views on the practice of emigration and leaving children behind and unpacking the biological parents returning patterns in the eyes of study participants.

This sub-category presents and analyses narratives on learners left behind, gender composition of the learners and their age. One teacher participant revealed that learners of both sexes were left behind and illustrated that;

"For example, I am teaching Grade 3 with 30 learners, 15 have parents in the diaspora in South Africa and 8 are boys and 7 are girls." (T1 FGDSS).

Corroborating his counterpart's observation about the severity of learners left behind, another teacher expressed that learners left behind spread over the whole primary school thus;

"The learners are there, they may not be many but from ECD even up-to Grade 7 because their parents were our students so in every class they could be 5 or 6." (, T1 FGDSN).

T4, FGDSN reported that more and more learners were left behind by emigrants in the part of Mwenezi District where the study was done as parents sought greener pastures and means to improve their families' economic fortunes since;

"In this catchment area seeking employment means going to the diaspora so if you assess our learners either of the parents or both are in the diaspora."

T4 FGDSN's observation of the increasing number of learners left behind was also confirmed by HSN who expressed the view that most

able-bodied people in the district contributed to the number of learners left behind because;

“These parents are between the ages 20 and 50 years. Most of them go for employment in foreign countries, especially neighbouring South Africa. These parents who form most the parents have most the kids in schools.”

Expressing the view that some children were left in child-headed households due to emigrating parents, one guardian reported the concern;

“There is a family where the eldest is 14 years old and it has been some time now in that situation, their mother works in South Africa and they have no father” (G3SS).

The same respondent, G3SS went on to express the concern that traditional leaders were involved in the growing number of learners left behind by emigrating parents by accepting bribes and not helping to address the affected children’s social and educational challenges because;

They must not accept beer from those people and tell them the truth about the experiences of their children and advise them to take their children with them. Every December when they come they spoil kraal heads with beer to silence them on the welfare of the children.

The data presented show that the phenomenon of leaving learners behind as parents migrated out of the country was common in the part of the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted. It was revealing too in the data that able-bodied parents, both males and females were leaving their children behind as they sought greener pastures outside the country. The participants revealed too that some children of school-going age, including children as young as those at ECD level, were left by their parents. Both girls and boys were left behind to experience schooling in the absence of their parents. The emergence of child-headed families because of the diaspora is not a new phenomenon as earlier research indicates that such has happened in several countries including Romania, Albania, Thailand, Indonesia,

Mexico, Jamaica; Zimbabwe among others (Botezat & Pfeizer, 2014; Jampaklay *et al.* 2012; Moreno, 2013; Brown & Ginter, 2014; Dube, 2014).

On a different note, one school head seemed to appraise the practice of seeking greener pastures outside the country as such enabled the parents to meet financial obligations for the learners, by commenting that;

“it is now our source of revenue for the school since it is through parents who pay fees than projects” (HSN).

However, in contrast to the school head’s positive perception of emigrating parents, one guardian had a negative view of the practice since the biological parents disconnected themselves from their *children* once they crossed over and send the learners things that could not assist the education of left-behind children as she observed that;

“Usually they are provided with some phone numbers so that they report once stocks of food are diminishing but those given numbers will never be accessible.” (G3SS).

The extracts show that while some viewed the practice of leaving learners behind as noble since the parents were going for greener pastures, other participants regarded it as child neglect since parents never returned once they crossed the Limpopo into South Africa. These findings confirm UNICEF's (2013) results in a survey in Guatemala and Moldova where the participants reported a positive and negative impact of parental migration on the education of learners left behind respectively.

One reason common among the participants for parental migration was the desire to improve the family's economic life. For one learner, family life before her parental emigration was unbearable and characterised by inadequate food provisions, lack of clothes and being

sent away from school for non-payment of fees among other life necessities hence;

“When they migrated out of the country, they intended to look for employment so that I would lead a normal life” (L1SS).

Expressing similar views to L1SS’s, L2SN identified the actual necessities that the parents intended to accumulate upon finding employment in the diaspora thus;

“They went out to seek money for our education, clothing and food”.

Despite the learner participants’ views that parental emigration was motivated by the desire to improve family economic life, the guardians pointed out that at times it was the need to relieve stress from home after family disintegration. On family disintegration as the underlying cause of emigration, one of the six guardians of this study outlined that;

“What necessitated my guardianship to these kids is that their parents separated and then the mother went for employment.” (G1SS).

In the same vein, G3SS alluded to family disintegration by also indicating that:

“We had to take care of these learners because our parents died in 2009 when we were still young so we had to assume the role. It’s only the two of us staying here in Zimbabwe, the rest are in South Africa. If a problem arises, like a sickness, one of us must attend while the other will be left behind to look after the kids.”

The major factors cited by the guardians and the learners left behind as reasons for parental emigration were family disintegration necessitated by the death of a spouse or divorce and the need to improve family economic life. Sadly for Zimbabwe, these factors reported in the present study among others as propelling out-migration have been reported too in earlier research findings (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009; Dube, 2014; Filippa, 2013; Moyo, 2017; Tawodzera & Themane, 2019)

which points to the fact that the country is taking long to find the most appropriate strategies to redress the problems that prop up out-migration.

The school heads, teachers and the guardians who participated in this study were largely sceptical about the biological parents regarding their practice of leaving their children behind while living abroad. In their view, the practice was tantamount to child abuse as the learners became exposed to the vice and pressures of modern life in the absence of their parents who could provide both psychosocial and learning materials. The G1SS scoffed at the idea of leaving children behind with other families and expressed the concern that;

“If you leave children behind even if you have gone outside the country and never look back it shows a high level of unreasoning on your part.”

Also, while acknowledging that both boys and girls were affected by being left behind, G3SS was much more critical about leaving the girl child alone since in her view, girls could be easily sexually abused especially if remittances were not forthcoming. She narrated how girls who resided close to the residence of the learners she was taking care of were susceptible to sexual exploitation thus:

Even if you were to get there, you will appreciate the predicament those children go through, most of the time they are without basics which unfortunately leads them into promiscuity and if you are to enquire they will tell you that their mother has not been remitting for months.

The G2SN took a swipe too at the emigrants for the burden they put on others whilst they remained in South Africa even though there was nothing meaningful they were remitting and lamented that guardianship was a challenging task because;

“at times you just must contend with it that there is nothing you can do these are just children as long as the food is there and the rains are available you must get into farming so that they go to school because once the parents are used to South Africa...”

The arguments presented by most of the guardians on the practice of leaving learners behind while one lives in abroad were also shared by one of the school heads who commended that;

"I don't regard it as a good idea, people do it because of the need to search for a living but it's bad for the children. My reasons are that; fees are not paid in time then behaviour wise such learners do not behave well."
(HSS).

Contrary to HSS's negative view of the practice of leaving learners behind, HSN seemed to support the practice since according to his assessment it was risky for the parents to go with the children into the diaspora and leaving them behind was therefore in the best interest of the learners because;

"most of those parents when they go there they don't have permanent settlements, are scavengers who live in squabbles, they live in shacks which do not allow them to take their children with them."

Besides poor living conditions in the destination countries, HSN also noted that it was risky too for possible emigrants to take their children along since,

"most of those parents in the diaspora who leave their children do not have passports, they are border jumpers, so it is difficult and very risky for them to carry their children."

While the HSN justified the practice of leaving learners behind citing those issues to do with the learners' safety both on the way and at the destination countries, the general sentiment raised by most the participants was that the practice exposed the learners to when they stayed alone or under the care of non-biological parents. Parallels can be drawn with respect to findings of the present study to Mabharani's 2014 study in Dzivaresekwa in Harare, Zimbabwe and Chakombera and Mubikwa's (2018) study at Nemakonde High School still in Zimbabwe who also reported mixed views of participants regarding parental motivation for migration and leaving the learners behind. The findings, therefore, compel me to conclude that the debate on whether

parents should leave behind learners or take them along as the parents out-migrate remains open not only in the Mwenezi District but in Zimbabwe as a whole.

Some of the learners left behind experienced learning for long periods in the absence of their biological parents. L1SS reported that it had been some time since she last saw her father because;

“My father went away when I was in grade three and up-to-now I don’t know where he is. I am not sure as to when mother went with us but had to return home for us to get a better education back home.”

In a similar predicament as with L1SS was L3SN because it was reported that, “Bennet’s parents never come back.

Bennet’s father last came in 2016, I can’t remember the last time his mother came but both of them are in South Africa.” (G3SN).

Though some parents visited their families, still it was not enough as expected by both the learners and the guardians because they rarely visited and the visits were too short as L2SN revealed that;

“They come back every December and leave in January after a short stay.”

Just like with the case of L2SN, L3SS also reported that her parents visited during the festive season only and bemoaned her limited time with her father and stated that

“They went, my father returns only in December.”

The subject of returning patterns of the biological parents torched a storm during data collection among some of the learners who could not hold their emotions and just cried uncontrollably. It showed that while the learners and the guardians wished the biological parents to work outside the country, they too expected them to come back as often as they could just to be physically present. One learner reported that despite all the provisions she got from her parents, she still felt that there was a void because;

“I just want to see them often (L3SS).”

The excerpts testify that the biological parents of the learners left behind rarely visited their families. For the few who visited, it was only for short periods during the festive season. As the learners revealed, non-returning by biological parents emotionally affected the learners left behind which in one way or the other could negatively impact the learners' education.

The negative effects of non-returning parents on learners' education expressed by the participants are not unique to this study since Zirima (2016) also reported on the negative psycho-social effects on children of non-returning parents. In another study, IFFD (2018) reports that children in Jordan were also traumatised by their parental absence irrespective of remittances sent to them by their parents in the diaspora. The present study, therefore, upholds that the non-returning of emigrants is negatively impacting the education of learners left behind in the Mwenezi District of Zimbabwe.

The researcher consulted the principle of triangulation of the family systems theory which expounds on the importance of interdependence among family members, to find out how the learners with emigrant parents related with significant others and the impact of such relationships on the learners' realisation of educational needs.

The participants expressed mixed views regarding how the learners with parents in the diaspora related with other learners. With respect to the learners themselves, most of them said that other learners never mentioned or initiated discussions related to their status of staying alone or under the care of non-biological parents whilst their parents were in the diaspora. However, L3SS shared that other learners were encouraging her to focus on the future irrespective of the absence of her parents;

"They would say please friend continue learning so that your mother will have peace of mind at her work knowing that you are attaining position 2."

Another learner also shared similar views regarding how her classmates were encouraging her to be hopeful of her father's eventual return and reported that;

"They say he will return." (L2SS).

The positive reports made by the learners with emigrant parents regarding how they related with other learners were somehow disputed by the school heads from both schools where the present study was conducted. The heads cited the issue of the behaviour of the learners thus;

"Ok... in most cases when we get reports of bullying, they involve these learners with absent parents and the major contributing factor is that their guardians are not strict on rules, while we instil discipline here at school, little is done at home in that area." (HSS).

Adding on and qualifying the sentiments raised by a fellow head with regards to the relationship between the learners with parents in the diaspora and other learners, HSS categorised the former into two categories and lamented that:

It now depends, there are some learners with parents in the diaspora whose parents may not afford to buy them even uniforms or pay school fees and those pupils are usually inferior to pupils with uniforms but there are those whose parents buy them everything from abroad those usually think they are in the best class and are very showy.

On one hand, the excerpts show that there were learners who could not relate well because of an inferiority complex necessitated by poverty that was caused by parents who were not remitting. On the other hand, there were other groups that could not associate too because they felt that they were too affluent to mix with the less privileged. Based on the above excerpts on how the learners with emigrant parents related with others, a conclusion was made that the learners left behind had relationship challenges irrespective of the quality of participation of their biological parents in their education.

There were conflicting sentiments raised by the participants regarding how teachers related to the learners with parents in the diaspora. While the teacher participants indicated that there was bad blood between them and the learners grounded on a lack of respect for the former by the latter, the latter reported that the two parties were in a cordial relationship. For the teachers, the learners with emigrant parents were difficult to work with because:

They are very few who respect teachers. I think it's because of the influence of the parents, they view teachers as people at the extreme bottom end of the social ladder and it leads them to tell their children that teachers are not all that important and after all, you shall come to South Africa so it's a challenge, especially at upper grades (*T3 FGDSN*).

All the teacher participants who raised concerns regarding their relationship with the learners left behind linked that poor relationship to the learners' parental influence as another teacher also lamented that:

They look down upon me just because I am poor as they are used to talking about this when they are at home. When I have seen that this one is looking down upon me I develop a negative attitude towards him or her. I will try by all means but naturally, you know I will be compelled to have a negative attitude (*T1, FGDSS*).

The HSN expressed similar sentiments raised by the teachers that the learners with parents in the diaspora were disrespectful of the teachers simply because those learners thought that they were in better financial positions than the teachers which unfortunately brewed strained relations between the two groups and he stated it this way:

Teachers fail to control them because those children bring cash for lunch which the teacher cannot afford so behaviour usually is not under strict control of the teacher because the teacher is inferior and he or she reports they are failing to control the learner.

Another source of acrimony between teachers and learners left behind by emigrants as revealed by another teacher was absenteeism. Again

that challenge was associated with a negative learner attitude to education because:

“...the child is pushed to go to school and being human I end up saying these are not for schooling, the book is not well handled so in order for the child to develop an interest in school I will try at first but once I realise that the problem emanates from home then what do you think will be the status of my relationship with the child? It is strained” (*T5, FGDSS*).

It emerged from the participants too that learners’ level of education and age were key variables in explaining the bond that existed between the teachers and the learners as illustrated in the following case:

“...we have a good working relationship maybe it’s because they are young, they show that they can afford, they buy books and pay their fees in time, we crossroads when it comes to schooling because they seem to have little interest maybe it’s because of their better status” (*T3, FGDSS*).

While the teachers said that there was a weak bond between them and the learners with parents in the diaspora most particularly due to the learners’ lack of respect for teachers, absenteeism and negative attitude towards schooling, the learners said that the teachers were commending them for good behaviour and the following excerpts are revealing

“They observe that I am a promising child who may become a teacher or a nurse in the future.” (*L1SS*).

L2SN also expressed her counterpart’s view and reported that

“They commend me for good behaviour.”

The learners’ attestations were echoed by one of the guardians when she shared that

“My granddaughter has never disappointed me. I am yet to get any bad report from the teachers.” (*G1SS*).

School heads and teachers raised similar sentiments upon which poor relations between teachers and learners left behind were premised and these were the learners' lack of respect for teachers and negative attitude towards schooling which led to absenteeism and non-commitment to schoolwork. For the teachers, the learners' negative attitude towards both school and the authority of the teacher because of influence from home where both teachers and education were despised by the biological parents in the presence of the learners, a finding which resonates with an earlier one in a study in Jamaica where teacher participants reported that learners left behind adopted a 'waiting to migrate', the assumption that one does not must work hard now because he or she will migrate to another country at any time (Brown & Ginter 2014). Based on these related findings, it could be concluded that the biological parents of learners left behind in the Mwenezi District largely contributed to the poor relationship that exists between their children and the teachers.

For some guardians, the responsibility of taking care of the learners left behind was a daunting one since most of the biological parents were not fully supportive materially or appreciative of the role the guardians were taking. Communication between the guardians and the biological parents was poor and some guardians reported that the learners were in-disciplined. It emerged from the interviews held that grandparent guardians related well with the learners and viewed the learners as well behaved while non-grandparent guardians had a negative view of the conduct of the learners left behind. One of the guardians could not hide her frustration over her caretaking role and lamented that;

"We take care of them because they are children but they are difficult to take care of." (G2SN).

Another guardian cited behaviour as one of the things that made the caretaking role of learners left behind cumbersome since according to her;

"It's tricky to comment on the behaviour of these girls, you may be very wrong because they can deceive you." (G3SS).

Probed further to explain how she was relating with the learners with reference to her ability to influence their behaviour, she hesitantly commented;

"They are right but they are girls you cannot give them good." (G3SS).

The responses by both teachers and guardians on the relationship between the guardians and the learners point to the poor relationship between the two which emanates from the fact that some learners had more authority over their guardians bestowed on them by their biological parents. When such poor relationships exist between guardians and learners, learners may be uncontrollable, leading to failure in education (Sawyer, 2014; Portner, 2014; Bai *et al.*, 2015).

According to the teacher participants, there was some communication between them and some of the biological parents of the learners left behind that could be initiated from either side because;

"They like to communicate with teachers. We phone them or beep and they respond and even passing a message if you don't have the numbers and once they return they will come straight to see you." (T3FGDS).

While T1 FGDSN concurred with T3FGDSS that there was communication between the teachers and the biological parents of the learners left behind, he hinted that it was only minimal, largely insincere and did not include most the biological parents and he expressed it this way;

"Yes some of them but only a few we communicate with them those who are concerned. Because when they come back from South Africa they come to school to show off, they visit the office to consult about their children."

Contrary to T1 FGDSN's view that the biological parents of the learners left behind's contact with the schools were chiefly motivated by pride, HSN, praised the emigrants because in his experience:

Most of the people with a positive attitude towards the development of the school are people in the diaspora. Parents in the locality do not have contributions that are above those in the diaspora. It is only parents in the diaspora who are donating funds, and who are improving school revenue.

To qualify his observation about the positive role the parents in the diaspora were initiating for the development of the school, HSN highlighted some of the contributions that were made by those parents which he chronicled as;

They once came and threw a farewell party for the Grade 7 pupils. We have also received another group of parents who have decided to create a facility for holiday lessons for the pupils. We have also found that there is a group of parents in the diaspora who have decided to employ some teachers for Early Childhood Development.

The extracts show that to some extent, some teachers communicated with parents in the diaspora concerning the education of the learners left behind. Despite the divided experiences about communication between some teachers and the biological parents based in the diaspora, it emerged that both groups valued communication. Earlier studies elsewhere also established that communication between schools and the biological parents of the learners was instrumental in triangulating the truth about the education of the learners (Bhamain, 2012; Btezat & Pfeiffer, 2014; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015).

It emerged from the study that there were two categories of guardians, one comprised of old grandmothers and another one made up of young nieces, aunts or mere house girls. It could be inferred that the former category of guardians rarely communicated with the biological parents of the learners left behind contrary to what was happening with the latter category of the guardians. One old grandparent guardian tearfully lamented that;

“We had never been in contact since he left. However, I once sought an audience with his brothers seeking their views regarding their kin over his unsupportive behaviour toward his children’s welfare. They too said that they had tried to engage him but in vain.” (G1SS).

In a similar situation was G3SN who revealed that there was no direct communication between her and the biological parents of the learners but, only learnt about them through other people thus, she commended;

"We are not communicating; --- I don't have even the contact numbers."

However, for those guardians who were communicating with the biological parents of the learners left behind, the major issues included;

"We phone them when food stocks run out but normally they send the food before that happens." (G1SN).

Other than food issues, G3SS said that in most communication initiated by the biological parents;

"They would be emphasising for the kids to attend school at the opening. Recently, they asked the Maths teacher to conduct extra lessons with (Name concealed on ethical reasons) as she has problems in Maths."

For some guardians, even though there was some communication with the biological parents of the learners left behind, its effectiveness was hampered by a lack of frequency in communication because;

"Sometimes it's two or three months between calls depending on availability of airtime." (G2SN).

The other challenge that reportedly obstructed the smooth flow of communication between guardians and the biological parents of the learners left behind was connectivity as G3SS lamented;

"Network is scarce so I rarely communicate with their parents."

The extracts show that communication was very important in linking the biological parents and the guardians. It was revealed too that while there were network connectivity challenges in the area studied, efforts were made from both sides to initiate communication primarily to appraise each other about how the learners were learning. Despite the importance of communication especially in cases where parents and children lived apart from each other, the data collected revealed that

some biological parents never communicated or took up to three months without communicating with their children.

Generally, the present study reveals that there is a poor relationship among learners, guardians, biological parents of learners left behind and teachers which unfortunately limits learners left behind's educational access. Similarly, Dube (2014) in another study on socio-economic effects of cross-border migration established that learners in Beitbridge and Plumtree also despised both guardians and teachers resulting in the teachers failing to control them.

In this category, a report is made on the level of participation in school-related assignments by learners with parents in the diaspora, their academic performance and achievement and the learners' school completion rate and attendance patterns.

Data from the interviews were buttressed by data from the analysed documents namely attendance registers and completion rate registers as illustrated below:

Table 5.5: Attendance statistics for learners left behind for Term 1 2021
(*School attendance registers*)

Learner	Actual attendance	Possible attendance	%attendance
Learner1School South	48	56	85.71
Learner 2 School South	30	56	53.57
Learner 3 School South	45	56	80.36
Learner 1 School North	45	56	80.36
Learner 2 School North	33	56	58.93
Learner 3 School North	38	56	67.86

Percentage attendance ranged from 53.57% for the lowest to 85.71% for the highest learner. Generally, the attendance was poor considering that these classes were examination classes that were supposed to have regular attendance since the learners were preparing for examinations. The data indicate that the learners` attitude towards education could be negative.

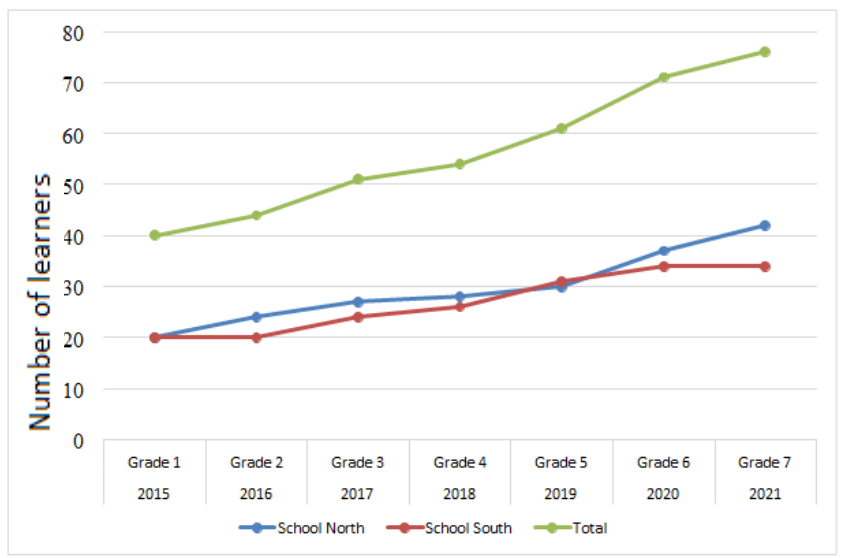


Figure 5.1: Learners Left behind for the Seven-year Period (*School Admission and attendance registers*)

The data show that the number of learners left behind increased in a progressive pattern from 40 in 2015 when the learners enrolled for Grade 1 to 76 in 2021 for both schools, representing 47.37% for the seven years. This shows that parents were leaving children whenever they thought the children were mature enough to look after themselves. Such a trend was also established in surveys carried out in Moldova, Mexico, Jamaica and China (UNESCO, 2018; UNICEF, 2013).

Resonate with documentary evidence on the patterns of school attendance and completion rate trends of learners left behind were views shared by school heads and teachers on the matter. In the case of absenteeism, one teacher participant blamed the learners since according to him;

"It depends on whether the learner has an interest or not, so it's just a few days attendance in a week." (*T1 FGDSN*).

By mentioning learner interest as a determinant factor of learner absenteeism, T1 FGDSN suggested that learners were wholly responsible for their absenteeism. However, T2FGDSN directed the blame to the biological parents because;

"Some of them go to South Africa during the holidays and it takes them long to return and you would think that they are no longer coming only to see them popping up one day."

Another concern raised by the teacher participants was the poor completion rate. It emerged that although some learners left behind were completing their primary schooling, they did so later than their age mates because of their school attendance inconsistency for example;

"in my case in Grade 5, about 15 did not return from South Africa, some who returned did not complete their Grade 4 so their performance is going down hence they may complete but with 9s because they missed a lot." (*T5 FGDSS*).

The other factor which affected the learners left behind's completion rate was the age at which they enrolled;

"They start Grade 1 at 7 to 8 years so they will be around 15/16 years by the time they are in Grade 7 which makes it difficult to control them because most of their age mates will be at the secondary level." (*T3 FGDSN*).

The issue of enrolling late at school was addressed by T4 FGDSN who raised the concern that;

"Such cases are a result of some scenario where the parent could have taken the child to South Africa and returned with the child late."

Teachers' concerns regarding poor completion rate among the learners left behind were also raised by the school heads who singled out boys for absconding lessons and truant behaviour because;

"they do not have parental care and most of them are left behind under the control of uneducated people who do not have quality education to encourage children to fulfil." (HSS).

The HSS concurred with HSN on the low school completion rate among learners with parents in the diaspora and added;

"They are not guided so that they cherish the value of education."

It emerged from the responses of the participants that the completion rate was poor among learners left behind due to a lack of supervision on attendance by the guardians. Secondly, it was revealed that most such learners were held too long in South Africa when they visited their parents resulting in the learners missing learning time. One may conclude that both guardians and biological parents were largely responsible for the challenges of the learners' poor completion rate. There is a concurrence of the current results to those found in Albania where it was concluded that parental emigration was responsible for a significant drop in learners left behind's school attendance, especially in rural settings where fathers had emigrated (Giannelli & Mangiavachi, 2010; Botezat & Pfeiffer, 2014).

The documents gleaned namely exercise books, academic reports and progress reports pointed to a distressing situation with regard to the school performance of the learners left behind. Of the six examinable subjects that the learners were studying, none of the learners had passed all of them as per first term 2021 academic report records. Rather, five of the learners left behind had passed one subject only. L1SS had however passed four subjects. Other than the learners' first term 2021 performance in summative examinations, the exercise books observed also showed that all the other learners in the sample except for L1SS and L1SN were not satisfactorily performing. Surprisingly,

the learners left behind's current performance was not reflective of what they used to do when they were in the lower grades. For example, L3SS and L1SN were outstanding learners as revealed by the progress records availed by the teachers. To that effect, one of the teachers commented that;

"As they grow up, they will be deteriorating academically, at Grade 1 to 3 they are better but from Grade 5 the problem starts because they begin to get attracted by many things so most Grade 5, 6 and 7 it will be just a formality as they are ready to go." (T1 FGDSN).

The results in the present study are in sharp contrast to Botezat and Pfeiffer's (2014) study in Albania where they established that grades of learners left behind improved since the learners worked hard in school in anticipation of following their parents in the diaspora. It was like that because Albanians earned their places in the diaspora due to high educational qualifications, a case different from the situation of emigrants in the present study where most them were undocumented and rarely had formal education. Parental emigration had therefore little influence on the education of the learners left behind hence the learners' unimpressive academic results in the Mwenezi District.

The teacher participants lamented that the learners left behind were not fully participating in schoolwork due to abscondment and absenteeism. One of the teacher participants had this to say;

"Most of them don't come to school regularly. Some of them abscond lessons once they are out at break time they don't come back because there is no one home who would control them." (T1, FGDSS). Stressing a similar view as pointed out by T1 FGDSS, another teacher added; "They don't write, they hide the books." (T5 FGDSS).

Furthermore, the blame for learners left behind's poor participation in school curricula was put on the biological parents who rarely took heed of professional advice from the teachers and sometimes forced the learners to proceed into subsequent grades irrespective of their performance which unfortunately hampers learner confidence

resulting in the learner withdrawing from school activities. T3SN bemoaned the bad influence of biological parents on learners' progression into grades when she shared;

"I was chatting with some on WhatsApp and they were saying their children are coming to this term but the last term they didn't come but the instruction was that they maintain their grades".

Echoing related sentiments as given by the teachers about reasons for poor learner participation in school curricula, HSS blamed the parents too for failure or delayed fees payment which disturbed learners' learning attendance since;

"it affects the learners when they are often paraded for none payment of fees and that coupled with behaviour challenges they end up not attending lessons."

HSS further exonerated the learners left behind on their school curricula participation because they often had no one to assist them to do their homework because;

"A good number of them stay with grandmothers who upon the learners' request for homework assistance would simply say; we never did this, so the homework is never done."

Chiefly, the teacher participants and the school heads cited negative attitudes towards education by learners left behind and lack of parental control and input on the academic affairs of the learners as the main reasons that contributed to failure among most learners left behind by emigrating parents. It was also revealed that most of the parents rarely sought professional advice from teachers on the academic progress of their children but were interested in seeing their children complete the primary school level.

The teacher participants revealed that there were many cases of learners left behind by migrant parents in their classes. They too lamented the poor working relationship between them and the learners left behind due to what they referred to as the learners'

negative attitude towards education. The teachers thus reported that the learners left behind were lagging in terms of school attendance, academic performance and achievement. The completion rate among the learners left behind was very low. The teachers' most concern was high cases of indiscipline, behaviour that included abscondment, bullying, misuse of phones, not writing schoolwork, absenteeism and general lack of respect for the teacher. The teachers' sentiments revealed that it was problematic to leave learners behind under loose parental control. These findings were very close to what other researchers uncovered elsewhere. In a related study in the Philippines, Portner (2014) also found out that in school attendance, girls left behind were severely affected by the absence of their mothers to the extent that at times it looked like the girls were dropouts.

It was apparent from the details given in the interviews and focus group discussions that learners left behind by emigrants in the Mwenezi District had a plethora of learning challenges. Most of the challenges given were compatible with schooling experiences which in most cases were influenced by the age of the guardian and level of education, individual learner characteristics, learner's immediate social environment and the biological parent's frequency of returning and capacity to remit. In that respect, the challenges cited bordered on four major categories namely: inadequate educational material support, behavioural and attitudinal challenges that characterised learners with parents in the diaspora, factors that led to the challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora and strategies to ease challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora. The identified challenges and the categories that emerged thus helped in finding responses to the research question that sought to establish the challenges learners in the Mwenezi District were experiencing in the absence of their biological parents.

Table 5.6: Educational Challenges faced by Learners with Parents in the Diaspora

Theme	Category	Sub-category
5.3 Educational challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.1 Inadequate educational material support for learners left behind by emigrants	5.3.1.1 Non or late payment of fees 5.3.1.2 Inadequate provision of stationery and uniforms 5.3.1.3 Inadequate food and shelter provisions
	5.3.2. Behavioural challenges for learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.2.1 Indiscipline behaviour 5.3.2.2. Negative attitudes of learners left behind towards education
	5.3.3. Background factors to challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.3.1 Inadequate firm authority over learners by guardians 5.3.3.2 Inadequate educational guidance of guardians 5.3.3.3 Inconsistent remission and return by biological parents 5.3.3.4 Inadequate resource management by learners left behind by emigrants and guardians 5.3.3.5 Ramification of negative parental conduct emulated by learners left behind by emigrants 5.3.3.6 Exposure to and use of negative social media by learners left behind by emigrants
	5.3.4. Strategies to ease challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora	5.3.4.1 Government's role in easing challenges 5.3.4.2 Biological parents' role in easing challenges 5.3.4.3 Guardians' role in easing challenges 5.3.4.4 School heads' role in easing the challenges 5.3.4.5 Role of the community in easing challenges 5.3.4.6 Role of teachers in reducing challenges 5.3.4.7 Role of other learners in reducing challenges

This category generated three major sub-categories namely, none or late payment of fees, inadequate provision of stationery and uniforms and inadequate food and shelter provisions. It emerged from the data collected that the identified categories had an immense influence on how the educational needs of a learner are fulfilled.

The learner participants attributed the challenges of non-payment or late payment of fees to wrong priorities by the guardians or failure to remit by the biological parents because as one learner observed her guardian was not sincere in the use of money she received because;

“Money is sent but unfortunately she opts to pay for her biological children at our expense. Normally fearing that the school fees may be misappropriated, they send it separately at the opening of schools but still, my mother’s sister often decides otherwise.” (L2SN).

The L2SN insisted that her parents sent them fees because:

They advise us through the phone and instruct us how to use the money and mostly it’s R1000 to be used for clothing and pocket money. In every case, my aunt is also given her R1000 for her use. Normally fearing that the school fees may be misappropriated, they send it separately at the opening of schools but still, my aunt often decides otherwise.

On L2SN’s side with respect to how remittances sent by emigrants were misappropriated by guardians was HSN who also lamented that;

“Most parents in the diaspora send their fees through guardians who may not be faithful enough to pay the school fees.”

The COVID-19 pandemic, a highly infectious disease which led the governments of almost all nations put restrictions on gatherings and movements hence stopped some people from going to work from 2020 through 2021 and attacks on foreigners in South Africa were also blamed for some challenges faced by some learners left behind. According to L1SS, the two events were responsible for her mother’s failure to pay fees in time as she lamented that;

"It all started with the outbreak of COVID-19 and there were xenophobic attacks in South Africa as well. Grandma's chickens were finished so there was nowhere she could find my school fees and even grinding mill fee."

L1SS` experiences regarding the genesis of her fees payment challenges were also echoed by one of the guardians who reasoned that emigrants needed to be exonerated from blame with regard to non-payment of fees because;

"in some situations such as this lockdown era finances may be difficult to get for many people." (GSN).

While it was sometimes understood by the school authorities that fees for learners left behind could at times take long to get to the schools due to the distance of the source of the money, the school heads expressed their displeasure over the parents` failure to keep to their promises as one of the heads lamented;

"The problem is those parents promise to pay and we exonerate their children from being sent home and let them learn but at the close of the term some may fail to pay." (HSN).

Concurring with his fellow head on school administrative challenges that emanate from late payment of fees by learners left behind, HSS further explained that the practice was not only bad for the school but also the concerned learners for the reason that;

"because their fees are paid late it emotionally affects the learner when they are often paraded for non-payment of fees."

The above excerpts from school heads also indicate that the two schools where the studies were carried out had policies that called for punishment for those learners who delayed or failed to pay fees. This view was buttressed by one of the guardians who reported the predicament one of the learners she was taking care of was going through

"He cannot attend holiday lessons because no one pays for him." (G3SN).

The responses from school heads, guardians and learners show that fees for most learners left behind were not paid in time. While the heads and learners blamed the guardians for holding on to the money, the guardians reasoned that in some instances the biological parents could not have sent the money. It shows that both biological parents and guardians took advantage of the dearth of a link that connects them to the school system thereby not being open about financial transactions and such a concern is the central pillar of the concept of triangulation as enunciated by the family system theory on which the present study is grounded on (Johnson, 2010).

The other challenge cited by the participants had to do with the provision of inadequate stationery and uniforms. The shortage of stationery and uniforms for some learners left behind strained some guardians such as G2SS who despite her advanced age reported that;

"I must look for piece jobs if I am to provide them."

G2SN also pointed out that the challenge of providing adequate stationery was exacerbated by the fact that she had to split the little resources that came her way because;

"I have my children who look up to me for support. The money sent is not enough for books, so if I buy books I share equally and the shortfall will be sorted out later."

While the teacher participants concurred with the guardians' affirmations that some of the learners left behind had no adequate stationery such as books, they reasoned that the challenge was worsened by the fact that;

"Yes, most of them lack resources and may spend half of the term without them. However, there would be no one to monitor them when doing their homework, so it's difficult to know whether the books are not there or something else." (T3 FGDSN).

For T4 FGDSN, learners with emigrant parents lacked stationery because their parents were not supportive of their children's educational course and only participated when pushed so as;

"to avoid a situation where people will question as to why their kids are lacking when the parent is so rich, it's only a few who do not need to be pushed, the majority is a non-starter."

The lack of personal commitment by emigrants to their children's education as pointed out by T4 FGDSN was somehow illustrated by L1SS who narrated that although her mother sent her stationery;

"the books she sent were donated to her by her employer's child."

Regarding school uniforms, the researcher noted that out of the six learners who participated in the study, two were in complete uniform during the two days each of the learners was observed. However, both the learners and the guardians reported that the biological parents were providing the uniforms. One guardian reported that the learners had no challenges related to uniforms and stated that;

"They buy them school uniforms and all other school requirements." (G1SN).

L3SS absolved her parents from negligence when it comes to the provision of school uniforms because;

"They buy me everything I need and they are appropriate."

It looked like the learner participants and the guardians did not regard jerseys and shoes as part of the school uniform since they all reported that the learners had all the uniforms they needed at school even though some of the learners reported that they had no school shoes and jerseys. One learner said it all thus;

"I have one pair of school shoes. I don't have school jerseys my mother prefers to buy me the ones like this one I am putting on." (L1SS).

Buttressing what the learner participant said about the type of uniforms that may be provided by the biological parents, one of the teacher participants sarcastically confirmed that;

“Even uniform they can bring anything from that side inscribed Fountain High School just to show off.” (T5 FGDSS).

The participants also indicated that the biological parents were at times discriminatory when providing educational material needs citing situations where nothing or little was provided for the learners in the lower classes. Sentiments captured in that regard include;

“a kid can spend the whole term without a book and they will begin to intervene when the kid reaches grades 5, 6 and 7 but in the lower grades they do not lay the foundation, especially at ECD and grades 1, 2 and 3.” (T3 FGDSN).

Even though some of the biological parents had money that they could dispose of for the educational material needs of their children, the teacher participants grumbled over the inappropriateness of some of the materials provided and commended that;

“Most of the books are inappropriate because at times you find that a Grade 1 learner is given an A4 exercise book, white paper, or a ledger used in accounts.” (T2 FGDSS).

One of the teacher participants, however, credited some biological parents for paying fees and providing all other basic material necessities required for the education of the learners but indicated that still, the learners had challenges linked to lack of parental monitoring thus;

“They pay fees and buy stationery and school uniforms but because of the child’s negative attitude towards education and that there is no parental care one at home, the book is left at home or torn into pieces to avoid doing anything at school.” (T3 FGDSS).

Two groups of biological parents emerged from the data collected from the participants. There were those parents who were supportive

of their children's education and provided everything that the learners required and then the other group that rarely catered for the material needs of their children.

The extracts from the participants indicate that in most cases the learners were deprived of the necessities for their education. Without things such as uniforms and stationery, one wonders how the learners could be motivated to learn. Such a challenge of material deprivation could have had ripple effects and negatively impacted the learners' attitude towards education.

The other challenge that emerged from the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions was the issue of food. The participants revealed that some learners brought nothing to eat at school. Also, some guardians lamented that some of the biological parents were not remitting or their food supply to their children was not consistent resulting in the learners going to school hungry. Lamenting the issue of inadequate food provision, one learner revealed that;

"Sometimes I come to school without food." (L3SN).

G2SN concurred with L3SN that at times learners attend school without food and blamed the biological parents for that challenge because the biological parents only participated in fees payment and;

"didn't care about the food they expect you to make a plan."

The issue of non-provision of food cited by the two participants above was also echoed by another guardian who blamed her son for the food predicament L2SS was facing since the father;

"doesn't send anything it's me and my son here who is responsible even if you enquire from our neighbours they can testify." (G2SS).

Contrary to sentiments raised by most the participants who claimed that biological parents were not sending food to the learners left

behind, one of the participants absolved the emigrants for inadequate food supplies but put the blame on those responsible for carrying the food from the diaspora and commended that;

“the food will never be adequate even if you send, the transporters will take a share from the goods meant for the kids.” (G3SS).

G2SN bemoaned the practice of sending learners to school without food as in her view;

“It emotionally disturbs and bringing back the child when others are eating at school while he or she has nothing to eat. It distracts the child’s concentration in class as the child will be thinking about poverty and not the studies.”

G2SN’s observation of the negative impact of hunger on learners was observable in L3SN who could not hold his emotions as he narrated his ordeal. Again, on the day of data collection, the same learner said that he had nothing to eat during feeding time. His situation was further echoed by one of the teacher participants who reported that failure by a learner to bring food had no detrimental effect on the learner alone but also on the teacher because;

“those of us who teach ECD find that some who go to the diaspora do not remit anything and the child brings nothing to eat so you find the child isolated during feeding time so in such cases, I would not feel comfortable because we monitor them as they feed...” (T4 FGDSS).

With respect to accommodation, the researcher managed to infer the status of L1SN, L2SN, L1SS and L2SS. Guardians of the other two learner participants, that is, L3SS and L3SN were interviewed away from the residences of the learners since they only monitored the learners from afar. The purpose of visiting the homes of the participants was not to observe their residences but to interview the guardians in their natural environments commensurate with the qualitative research approach which guided this study (Creswell, 2014). During the interviews, however, the researcher noted that L1SN

stayed in the state-of-the-art house mounted with solar panels which could have had a positive impact on her schooling. However, the other three learners seemed to have shelter challenges since they stayed in very small and poorly constructed mud huts. It was evident that those learners who lived in make shifts huts were impacted negatively on their education due to a lack of learning space and lighting.

All the teacher participants and school heads reported that the learners with parents in the diaspora had behavioural challenges which they attributed to a lack of parental control. However, some of the guardians, especially grannies seemed protective of their grandsons and daughters since they all reported that the learners were disciplined. This section reports what was expressed by the participants regarding the discipline of the learners and their attitudes towards schooling.

Learners left behind in the Mwenezi District engaged in anti-school activities which according to HSS emanated from loose parental control and included;

“they come to school late and rarely do follow school rules because they stay with their grannies who pamper them with love and rarely rebuke their bad behaviour and we find that they are bullies here at school.”

Also sharing similar observations as those by HSS about learners left behind’s disciplinary challenges was the fellow head who however brought the issue of gender into the debate as he remarked that;

“It is only girls who seem to behave well. Boys usually adopt bullying, they become violent.” (HSN).

In a contribution that sustained HSN’s view regarding how violent the learners left behind sometimes become, T1 FGDSN narrated an incident when the learners

“threw stones at the school head intending to stone and the following day the learners were back at school with tinted hair, knobkerries and some other weapons.”

However, HSN’s assertion that boys were more prone to indiscipline behaviour than girls was disputed by G2SN who argued that;

“there are bound to be many challenges when children stay alone because there is a time when the child can sleep around in the case of a mature girl so it comes with serious complications because the child will be free to do as she pleases knowing that there is no one to reprimand.”

In the focus group discussion, it was revealed that learners left behind sometimes just decided to come to school without uniforms especially;

“when they are bought new clothes they will leave their school uniforms home to show off.” (T3 FGDSN).

While most the teacher participants described the learners with parents in the diaspora as in-disciplined, some teacher participants brought in the age variable as a factor that determined the extent to which the learners behaved and reasoned that;

“It depends on the learners in my case they are still young so in terms of discipline they are right just like others.” (T3 FGDSS).

The age variable brought in by T3 FGDSS as a key determinant of indiscipline behaviour also got a credit from T3 FGDSN who submitted that;

“Boys and girls in the upper classes will be in love relationships.”

G1SN commented too that early marriages were rampant among learners with emigrants and cautioned that once that happened it was irreversible because;

“if you withdraw her from the husband, you are initiating her into promiscuity.”

The respondents revealed that learners left behind had disciplinary challenges at school that included bullying, undermining teachers’

authority, absenteeism, absconding from lessons, love affairs, sexual immorality and general disregard for school rules.

One other challenge associated with the learners left behind as per respondents' submissions was that the learners had a negative attitude towards education. As T1 FGDSN put it, the learners' negative attitude towards education was such unbelievable that;

"a learner may write English paper 1 and fails to turn up for paper 2 and when you make a follow they don't cooperate, an indication that they don't value education so much that they buy time for them to be mature enough to be able to leave for South Africa."

A similarly related example to that given by T1 FGDSN was another by T1 FGDSS who reported that learners left behinds negative attitude towards education was classically shown in the year 2020 when;

"some of the learners went to South Africa to their parents and never returned."

However, T1 FGDSS traced the source of the learners left behind' negative attitude toward education to the parents since the parents' interest was for the learners to proceed from one grade to the next because irrespective of some situations such as what happened during the lockdown era where learning did not take place, the parents;

"will tell you that they cannot keep paying for someone who is static so would push the child on to the next grade."

The above excerpts from the teacher participants roped in the biological parents as key in influencing the attitudes of the learners towards education. Revealed in the participants' contribution was that the learners were not motivated to learn since they got influenced by their parents that one day they would leave for South Africa, just like the parents had done. There was an indication that the parents were not much concerned about the learners' educational outcome since they could not take advice from the teachers regarding grades the learners could enter.

The teachers' observations regarding attitudes of the learners towards education were however in contrast to the views of one of the guardians who reported that;

"His attitude is positive even though he is poor because even if they send him home for a whole week for non-payment of fees, he doesn't tire."
(G3SN).

Conversely, G2SN shared similar views with teachers that the learners left behind had a negative attitude toward education because with respect to the learners she was taking care of;

"Interest is there but with a push."

As the extracts from the interviews reveal, learners with parents in the diaspora's challenges relating to attitude toward education were mainly caused by guardians' lack of control over the learners. Cross-reference to the results of the present study can be made to the Chinese experience where the United Nations General Assembly (2017) also found that learners left behind under the care of grandparent guardians became defective in behaviour leading to the learners not performing well in school. Also, Kurebwa and Kurebwa (2014) in a study in Bindura, Zimbabwe made similar observations when they concluded that leaving learners under the guardianship of old parents was next to child abandonment since these old people are so fragile that they can hardly control the learners.

The reasons enunciated by the participants for learners left behind's bad behaviours and negative attitude towards education include inadequate firm authority over learners by the guardians, inadequate educational guidance by guardians, inconsistent remission and return by biological parents, inadequate resource management skills by both learners and guardians, ramifications of negative parental conduct emulated by learners left behind, exposure to and use of negative social media by the learners left behind.

Inadequate firm authority over learners by the guardians prominently featured in deliberations made by the teachers as one of the reasons the learners left behind had learning challenges. As T4 FGDSN put it some learners left behind stayed under the control of powerless housemaids who;

“do not have reprimanding authority, who cannot tell the learner to go to school so the learner has the freedom to decide when he or she wants to attend school.”

Expressing similar views to T4 FGDSN, T3 FGDSN reiterated that lack of parental control was a major challenge for the learners left behind because;

“these kids no longer have anyone to shape their moral behaviour as their housemaids do household chores and only without doing anything in line with their behaviour code.”.

Other than the inability to control the learners under their care, it was also reported that some guardians fuelled indiscipline among the learners by being bad role models in such circumstances as;

“if the guardian brings home her boyfriends the girl child, and the boy, would see what would be happening between the two.” (T7 FGDSS).

While the housemaid guardians were reported to negatively shape the behaviour of learners left behind through bad role modelling and limited reprimanding authority over the learners, the grannies guardians were accused of;

“pampering the learners left behind with love and rarely rebuked the learners’ bad behaviour.” (HSS).

The sentiments raised by the teacher participants with respect to inadequate firm authority over learners by guardians were also observed by the researcher from the engagements with the guardians in the field. It was observed that most of the guardians who took care of the learners with returning parents largely depended on the remittances sent by the biological parents of the learners for survival

and were reluctant to talk about the challenges the learners were experiencing only to do so after persuasion cautiously though.

The teacher participants claimed that one of the sources of challenges that characterised the learning life of learners left behind by emigrants was inadequate educational guidance by some of the guardians because;

“Even when the learners are given homework, there is no one to assist them, they would just copy answers.” (T2 FGDSN).

Also associated with inadequate educational guidance from guardians as articulated by the participants was the guardians’ lack of motivation to engage the learners in academic issues even though those guardians could be educated. For the teacher participants;

“Guardians only do their routine duties of cooking and taking care of domestic animals but anything concerning education they don’t mind unless if the kid is their relative.” (T2 FGDSN).

It also emerged from the participants that some of the guardians were complicit in some of the anti-school behaviour depicted by the learners as HSS raised the concern that;

“the guardians do not provide good advice so it’s like if the child chose not to go to school observes that, the guardians don’t question so all our efforts are then rendered useless. Even if you write a letter it may not be delivered.”

HSS’s observation regarding the negative influence of some of the guardians on the learners’ behaviour was echoed by T3 FGDSN who raised the concern;

“I have observed that in Grade 5, they are now painting their fingernails. I inquired and was told that the guardian was responsible for that but they never used to do that.”

As revealed elsewhere in this report that economic lives in the area studied largely depended on remittances sent by the parents in the

diaspora, it follows that both inconsistent remission and inconsistent return by biological parents bred most of the challenges that were experienced by most of the learners left behind. One guardian related deteriorating academic performance by some of the learners left behind to emotional stress necessitated by the learners' parental absence as she commented that;

"The one doing Form 1 is doing very well but she will be affected by the mother's absence." (G3SS).

Related to the view raised by G3SS on the negative impact of not returning by parents on learners left behind, L2SS also stated that she felt let down by her father's absence and empty promises he allegedly often made that he would come every December and her major concern was that;

"I don't know him, and I had never talked to him. It is said that he promises to come every December but it has never happened and I am deeply hurt."

She further suggested that even though her father was not coming, he could lessen her ordeal by;

"buying me school accessories and paying fees." (L2SS).

The guardian of L2SS tearfully confirmed what was said by the learner with respect to her son's non-commitment to the provision of the educational needs to his daughter and said;

"He doesn't send anything it is me and my son here who are responsible you can enquire from our neighbours they can testify." (G2SS).

Related to L2SS's situation of the non-remitting father was L1SS who, however, exonerated his father and blamed her clansmen for casting a bad omen on him and in tears lamented that;

"My mother said that he once promised to buy me all school accessories. It's like the interest to buy is there but he is brain twisted."

Probed to explain what she meant by being brain twisted L1SS broke into tears and mumbled;

“He is brain twisted by members of our family such that he never thinks about his daughter. It is magically done and is meant to prevent him from thinking about returning home.”

While acknowledging that life situations of some families were improving in their area due to diaspora remittances, G3SS affirmed sentiments raised earlier by both other guardians and learners that not many of the emigrants were remitting which unfortunately impacted negatively on the educational life of the learners left behind and wished that;

“It was going to be better if they could spend a year here monitoring the education of their children but sadly these parents are responsible for the educational demise of their children.”

The participants revealed that there was no consistency in both remitting and returning by most emigrants in the part of the Mwenezi District where the present study was conducted. Unfortunately, as it emerged from the respondents, those inconsistencies in remitting and returning led many learners left behind to suffer from a lack of adequate learning provisions and emotional stress as they stayed long without interacting with their parents.

Notwithstanding the fact that the school heads and teachers also cited the dearth of remittances among some families, they added that even in those other families where the emigrants were remitting, the educational needs of learners left behind were rarely met because both the guardians and the learners left behind were inadequately skilled to manage the resources. In that respect HSN enunciated that learners left behind’s educational provisions were never adequate because of some decisions made by the guardians in that;

“It is usually the guardians who decide according to their priorities whether to pay fees or to buy food so usually the money will be diverted to food and clothing other than education.”

Concurring with the head's assertion on some guardians' misplaced priorities, L2SN also blamed her guardian for inconveniences such as being paraded or sent home for non-payment of fees as the guardian;

"At times she just decides not to pay."

Other than the guardians setting wrong priorities with the learners left behind's money entrusted to them, T5 FGDSN shifted the blame to the learners themselves because at times they shunned learning and competed on fringe items such as cell phones and his argument was based on what he observed thus:

If you observe them, especially at lunchtime, they buy so many fancy items at the tuck-shop and the learner's phone is worth R6000 and is better than that of the teacher so all those negatively impact on the motivation for schooling so they come waiting for the attainment of the right age so that they follow their parents.

The teacher participants and the school heads also narrated that some of the challenges they encountered managing learners with parents in the diaspora emanated from the biological parents of the learners themselves who modelled violent behaviour to their children. The violent behaviour was associated with what the emigrants experienced when out of the country and as HSN put it;

"the type of life they get there is violent, they portray that type of life to their children and their children then think it is the right type of behaviour."

In concurrence with the above observation on the source of violent behaviour, one teacher participant asserted that;

"Those people based in South Africa are impatient you can tell even when they share their experiences with you that they are impatient so they tend to be role models to their children." (T2 FGDSN).

T4 FGDSN bemoaned the immense influence of the diaspora in the community which he opined had transformed local community culture:

because of the influence of South Africa, whenever people gather it means blood would be shed, for them it would seem to be normal as they watch this happening and this will happen in view of these children, it might be their relative and it would be part and parcel of their life.

In the same vein, T1 FGDSN added too that above the parental influence on the learners left behind's behaviour, what the learners experienced when they visited South Africa also impacted the behaviour of the learners arguing that:

when some of the learners go for holidays, their behaviour changes completely on their return, life experiences over that side are completely different from this side. For instance, we are opening on Monday and some are on their way back you find that the hair will be burnt.

The emigrants were also blamed for their children's negative attitude towards education which they influence by spoiling the learners with a lot of goodies in T2 FGDSN's words;

"The parents flush their children with a lot of things to the extent that the child feels that schooling is insignificant."

The excerpts reveal that most learners with parents in the diaspora who were violent could have emulated such behaviour from their parents who tended to display violent behaviour in the presence of the learners every time they visited. It was reported too that the learners' negative attitude towards education was also due to parental influence where the parents could spoil the learners with expensive items such that the learners would end up not seeing the essence of education since most of the parents in the diaspora from the area studied were not educated.

The participants also reported that learners left behind were susceptible to the negative impact of social media since there were no authoritative adults who could monitor and guide the learners on the use of social media. In that regard, T1 FGDSN remarked that;

“Influence from what they are exposed to like materials send in their phones if you happen to have access to their phones you see a lot especially movies may impact negatively on the behaviour of the learners.”

Corroborating T1 FGDSN on the nature of things the learners viewed on their phones due to lack of monitoring and which negatively impacted their behaviour was another teacher who added that;

“Their phones are not monitored since they stay alone so they receive all sorts of things including violent films and pornographic ones which unfortunately impact negatively on the behaviour of the learners.” (T5 FGDSN).

T6 FGDSS bemoaned the bad influence social media was casting over most learners including those without phones and gave a case of one learner at their school who shared immoral films with other learners since;

“...is not interested in schooling he is interested in playing with his phone whilst the lesson is on. He hides his phone at break time and shows videos, porno or whatever to the kids.”

It appeared that the major challenges that affected learners left behind in the Mwenezi District emanated from inadequate guardian control and the biological parents’ lack of or limited involvement in the educational affairs of the learners. Earlier research studies indicate that when children are not controlled or given adequate appropriate guidance commensurate with their age, they regard themselves as adults and do as they wish which unfortunately leads to failure in school as teachers may not be able to manage them (Dube, 2014; Moreno, 2013; IFFD, 2018; UNICEF, 2013).

It has been widely reported in this document that learners with parents in the diaspora were experiencing a plethora of educational challenges. While some learners could get all the material resources, they required guidance on the use of those resources. Parental care and love were

sometimes inadequate yet other learners were deprived of both material and non-material support due to parental absence. In that regard, the participants suggested several strategies that could be utilised by the government, biological parents, school heads, communities, teachers and even other learners to redress the challenges the learners left behind were experiencing.

The government has been advised to work out modalities for the resuscitation of the economy so much so that citizens cherish working in the country thereby ensuring that parents stayed with their children and responded to the educational needs of the learners in time. One of the strategies suggested by T5 FGDSN was for the government to;

“create cooperatives that generate income to reduce motivation for out-migration.”

The issue of employment creation for income generation for the citizens was also viewed as a giant step towards inhibiting excessive emigration which would ensure that parents remained closer to their children as they would work in places close to home which would also help citizens;

“have a vision of working for their country...” (T1 FGDSN).

Other than employment creation, HSS suggested that the government needed to establish social structures in schools and communities meant to train people in modern parenting skills hence in that regard:

The government has a big role to play in this issue one being the guidance and counselling programme mentioned earlier. The other possible programme may involve training individuals on parenting and then those will then train guardians on how better they can take care of learners with absent parents.

Another school head opined that restructuring bureaucratic hurdles in some governmental institutions could help ease some of the challenges

that hindered some access to educational opportunities to learners with parents in the diaspora and acknowledged that:

Yes, the government has got a big role. Usually under different departments if we look at the department of registry, the government should ease the problem of issuing birth certificates. Usually, the government prioritises biological parents first. It is through this system that most learners complete school without birth certificates... (HSN).

He added that:

...through the Ministry of Health, the government should assist the health of the learners. These pupils with parents in the diaspora usually are not treated the same when it comes to the supply of drugs. They need the biological parent usually who should supply the baby clinic card and it is through this system that most of the girls passing through puberty fail to get treatment from the Ministry of Health.

HSN went further and suggested that;

“Under the Ministry of education, the government should provide a facility that allows these pupils with parents in the diaspora to move or transfer automatically where the parents are or even our schools to receive those pupils without reservations.”

The head proposed for a shift in transfer arrangements involving learners with parents in the diaspora to ensure that there is a transfer documents waiver for learners left behind when they returned from abroad since the issue of transfer documents was blocking some such learners to enrol in their schools of choice because:

We are not allowed to enrol pupils from South Africa who were born in South Africa with parents without a transfer letter from abroad. So that child ends up through some strict headmasters failing to get a place. So the government’s role is to allow that flow of information without interrupting the kid (HSN).

Other than directing efforts towards improving the broad national economic environment that would discourage out-migration, the participants added that the government needed also to amend the

education act so that learners who transferred from the diaspora were co-opted into the school system easily as a way of encouraging enrolment intake among such learners. Such a move would also likely improve the attitude of both the parents and the learners towards education and help keep them in school.

The participants suggested that the biological parents of the learners left behind ought to communicate regularly with the guardians and with the teachers to get information concerning the educational welfare of their children. T7 FGDSS argued that regular communication would help the biological parents;

“seek correct information about resources required from responsible authorities.”

The issue of seeking correct information about resources required at school was also echoed by HSN who declared that;

“parents should supply all pre-requisites that we need for the pupils to be comfortable at school.”

The head went further and advised that since one of the challenges faced by learners left behind by emigrants was late or non-payment of fees due to misappropriation of funds by some guardians, the biological parents needed:

“to send their money directly to the office through biller code or special account for the school and avoid the guardians.” (HSS).

It was also suggested that the biological parents of learners left behind needed to attend consultation invitations at the schools so that they remained close to the teachers of their children. In addition to consulting with the class teachers, T4 FGDSN further advised that;

“the biological parents should assign teachers to monitor their children while they are away and inform them if they absent themselves from school and for them to pressurise their kids they must get in contact with the administrators regularly.”

One of the participants however noted that some biological parents were taking their children to the diaspora in reaction to the challenges the learners encountered when they remained separated from their parents and seemed to endorse the move thus,

“these parents no longer have an option because they are condemning the situation in Zimbabwe and they are now taking their children to South Africa, if those kids come back the school will be too small to accommodate them.” (T1 FGDSN).

The participants lamented that there was a dearth of communication between the biological parents and the school authorities and that rendered some provisions by the parents not acceptable at school. Communication between the biological parents and the schools needed to be maximised irrespective of the distance that could be separating the two groups. The biological parents were advised to provide all the school requirements and to deposit fees directly into the schools' accounts rather than through the guardians.

While the guardian participants outlined their contribution towards easing some of the challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, the other participants especially teachers and school heads felt that the guardians were letting the learners down by being loose on the learners with regards to discipline. Even though, the guardians reported that;

“Regardless, however, I at times chip in through selling chicken or marula nuts.” (G1SS).

Another guardian who acknowledged that there were challenges meeting the provisions of the educational need for learners said that even though;

“it's not easy to pay fees for seven children so at times I make payment plan arrangements with the school authorities but if I fail to meet the agreed payment dates the children are sent home for non-payment.” (G2SN).

The excerpts indicate that though the guardians were poor and old as noted in most of the cases, they were embarking on some strategies within their means to try to assist learners to pursue their educational aspirations in the absence of the learners' biological parents.

However, the teachers and school heads felt that the guardians needed to be more honest with the money they occasionally received and pay the fees accordingly;

"The guardians should attend to the grey areas we notice for instance the issue of fees, they give stories pertaining to where the fees could have been sent but at times they are the ones who could have used the money." (HSS).

HSS added that the grandmother guardians were spoiling the learners left behind by being too lenient with the learners and hence needed to:

"educate their grandchildren the same way they educated their children who are in most cases the parents of these learners, they need to advise them properly."

Corroborating his counterpart's views regarding what guardians could do to improve the situation of learners left behind, HSN asserted that the guardians needed to be fully involved in the education of the learners left behind by;

"Ensuring that these pupils come to school, to ensure these pupils have good health and to come and attend meetings at school. Also, their role is to come to school and supervise the learning of the pupils on open days."

T1 FGDSS opined that while it was necessary to talk about what guardians may improve on for learners left behind to learn comfortably, it was prudent too for the biological parents of the learners to hire the guardians based on some basic attributes such as;

"should be one who can help the learner in schoolwork, should relate with the teacher, should communicate with the teacher about daily homework status. Also should inquire from the learner on homework given."

T5 FGDSS corroborated her counterpart's suggestions on consideration of some specific qualities when hiring a guardian and added that;

"Serve to assist in homework, the guardian should assist the learner socially by not engaging in sexual immorality or abusing drugs."

It emerged from the responses of the participants that some guardians helped in the provision of educational needs of the learners left behind by selling *marula* nuts to raise the fees. However, other than the fees, it was suggested that the guardians ought to use the remittances honestly. The participants suggested too that guardians needed to have such attributes as literacy and good social standing so that they will be able to assist the learners in homework and be good role models respectively.

The school heads shared what the schools were already doing to help ease educational challenges experienced by learners with parents in the diaspora. One programme operational at both schools where the study was done was guidance and counselling as HSS reported that;

"We normally instruct the guidance and counselling team to assist the learners as a measure to clog the gap left by the absent parent."

HSN said that they have incorporated the learners with parents in the diaspora into the vulnerable group since some of them lived alone without parental care and insisted that in his view it was the responsibility of every school head to;

"evaluate the welfare of the kid and then categorise the kid either as vulnerable or not vulnerable and to graduate the kid from one grade to the next if the child qualifies."

Other than guidance and counselling and facilitating the learners left behind to be considered in welfare programmes such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), HSS suggested that schools needed to,

“embark on awareness programmes to the parents about the challenges these learners experience especially during meetings so that corrective measures can be collectively mooted.”

The heads emphasised that their concern was more on those learners who had challenges of material needs and that the heads were liaising with the community leadership for the identification of the learners for them to benefit from welfare programmes at school. Above such a gesture, however, the teacher participants also brought another dimension through which the heads could play a pivotal role in contributing to the fulfilment of the educational needs provisions of learners with parents in the diaspora and articulated that;

“Yes the heads should socialise these parents on the importance of education. They should make them see that with the education they will be employed in better jobs compared to those who are not educated even when they go to South Africa.” (T3 FGDSN).

Concurring with her counterpart at School North on the heads’ socialisation role, T5 FGDSS also stressed the need for the school administrators to open up communication channels so that:

“the school heads advise the parents on appropriate items to buy, it’s like educating the parents that uniform should be appropriate, the same as books.”

The teacher participants highlighted that there was supposed to be regular communication between school authorities and both guardians and biological parents of the learners so that notes on parenting could be shared for the benefit of the learner.

The community through their leadership structures were advised to be less discriminatory when treating learners, especially on issues to do with welfare. HSS opined that leading exemplary life was important for the learners left behind because;

“the guardians may admire and encourage the learners to emulate.”

It was also submitted that the community through community leadership should select learners suitable for welfare programmes after due consideration of the real circumstances characterising the learner irrespective of the migration status of the biological parent of the learner. According to HSN, such strategies would ensure that deserving learners benefited from welfare programmes because: “selection could have been done objectively.”

The extracts show that the participants had high hopes that if the community leadership was considerate of the circumstances of some of the learners left behind, most of those learners could get adequate assistance and do well in school.

As to how the teachers assisted the learners with disciplinary disorders, the teachers said that they counselled some of the learners and donated some books just to occupy them. This is what T5 FGDSN had to say:

At times we find them exercise books to get them to concentrate because when the learner is not writing the teacher may request an exercise book from the office with the assumption that the learner has challenges not knowing that he or she has left books at home.

The other way teachers assisted the learners with parents in the diaspora was through counselling the learners and as T3 FGDSN articulated, counselling and giving general advice were benefiting those learners with a positive attitude towards learning while not serving a purpose to those with a negative attitude;

“Those who are serious normally adhere to the advice and consult but others with a negative attitude towards school would not consult from anyone so it depends on the child on how they value education.”

While the teachers reported that they found it necessary to consult with the guardians as they counselled the learners, they at times faced

challenges as they failed to relate with the guardians who may because of old age or attitude just say;

“it’s your duty I cannot do your work what are you paid for.”(T1 FGDSS).

With respect to how teachers could help ease the challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, HSN asserted that the teachers needed to have enough information about each learner which they should gather through;

“ensuring that these learners attend lessons, checking the welfare of the pupils inside and outside of the school and giving feedback to the office.”

In line with HSN’s observation on what the teachers ought to do to help reduce challenges faced by learners with parents in the diaspora, HSS stressed the need for teachers to target the behaviour and attitude of the learners and shared his belief that:

When teachers teach subjects such as Family Religious and Moral Education, they ought to dwell much on topics such as Ubuntu/unhu and how one’s aspirations in life can be achieved. If such subjects are well taught they will help mould learners’ characters including characters of those with parents in the diaspora.

The finding on the role of the teachers to reduce challenges faced by learners left behind by emigrants point to counselling and teaching of appropriate topics that could help the learners develop positive attitudes toward education.

The heads also believed that other learners though to a limited extent could also help reduce challenges faced by their counterparts with emigrant parents through behaving themselves well as HSS expressed that;

“not much from the other learners can be expected serve for model behaviour that can be emulated by some.”

Also important for the other learners to help reduce learners left behind's negative attitude towards education was to treat the learners fairly. Referring to other learners, HSN explained that;

“Their role is to regard those learners as their colleagues. They should treat those learners the same way they treat themselves and at the same time they should not differentiate the welfare of the pupils from their welfare.”

It emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions held with school heads, teachers, and guardians of the learners left behind and the learners left behind themselves and from the documents peeped through the government, biological parents, community leadership, school heads, teachers and other learners could take a leading role in easing the challenges if they worked collaboratively through regular communication, regular contact, counselling and teaching life skills. This finding resonates with the basic assumption of the family systems theory which informs that for a system to work properly, all components of that system ought to work collaboratively with all other parts (Johnson, 2010).

It emerged from the present study that feminisation of guardianship, learners' home chores and sports and marketing events that characterised the studied area in the Mwenezi District had a great impact on how learners valued education and responded to expectations from schools.

Table 5.7: Societal influence on the educational orientation of learners left behind by emigrants

THEME	CATEGORY
5.4 Societal influence on the educational orientation of learners left behind by emigrants	5.4.1 Feminisation of guardianship
	5.4.2 The negative impact of domestic chores on the education of learners left behind by emigrants
	5.4.3 Sports tournaments, harvesting <i>Mopani</i> worms, initiation ceremonies and marketing events on learners' appreciation of education

The gender demography of all the participants who were guardians of learners left behind in this study revealed that only females were entrusted by biological parents in the diaspora to look after their children. Three of these were in the age group range of 30-40 years by approximation. One was in her early sixties while the other two were approximately over seventy years. For ease of reference in this report, the guardians in the 30-40 years age range are referred to as the young guardians while the 60 and above are referred to as the older or grandparent guardians.

What was interesting was that the young guardians were taking care of learners with parents who occasionally returned and who were remitting while the old guardians were responsible for the learners whose parents rarely remitted or returned. Whether that was by design or coincidence no one knows.

It also emerged from the interviews that girls as young as twelve years were given caregiving responsibilities in the absence of their parents. One such learner was L2SN who testified that before she relocated to her present place of residence, she was responsible for the day-to-day management of family affairs because;

“Grandmother is now old so it’s me who was responsible for managing the finances. After our parents sent money I would take my siblings to the market for shopping.”

The extent to which the community where the present study was carried out believed in the use of females for guardianship roles, was demonstrated too by a classic description of the duties that were performed by one of the learners left behind as narrated by one of the teachers participants thus;

“I have a case of a student who was left in the care of a sister in law who was sick. Sometimes she would not come to school for some time because she cooks and baths the sick sister-in-law. You will see that the kid is in a difficult situation.” (T3, FGDSN).

It was evident from the interaction held with the guardians and the narratives shared by the participants that females were responsible for guardianship roles irrespective of their age. Unfortunately, as the narratives revealed, the caregiving role entrusted to school going age girls negatively impacted their education since the girls would sometimes be forced to be absent from school due to caregiving role commitments. While this finding concurs with what was found in Moldova, it contradicts with results of earlier studies in Mexico and Jamaica where the number of girls completing school increased more than that of boys who would drop out of school to find work on the farms to sustain lives of their young siblings left behind by emigrants (UNICEF, 2013; Moreno, 2013).

One of the objectives of this book was to establish how the educational needs of learners left behind were catered for in the Mwenezi District. In that regard, this sub-category infers meanings and value attached to education through relating domestic chores done by the learners and time allocated to those chores against schooling time. L3SN tearfully narrated that his guardian had a poor perception of educational needs because she without considering his schooling time needs laboured him with domestic tasks such as;

“Fetching water, watering the garden upon returning from school. I am also responsible for cooking early in the morning before coming to school.”

Concurring with L3SN on the guardians’ disregard for affording the learners adequate learning and resting time, L2SN said that what made her situation worse was that her guardian rarely participated in performing some domestic duties such as watering the garden since;

“Even if we go to the garden it’s only us who will be working while she is seated.”

However, for L1SS, her guardian understood that domestic chores could negatively affect her studies hence to mitigate against such possibilities, she reported that;

“her grandmother does some of the duties.”

The other learner who reported that domestic chores were not negatively impacting her studies said that she managed to balance her school time with that of domestic chores because;

"We have chores to carry out with my sisters"

It emerged from the responses of the guardians and learners that some guardians did not value the education of learners left behind since the learners were laboured with domestic chores thereby stealing the learners' learning time. One would argue and conclude that some learners left behind in the Mwenezi District were underperforming in school due to strain related to domestic duties performed at home. A similar conclusion was made by Sanduleasa and Matei (2015) in a study in Romania where it was noted that domestic work deprived learners left behind their right to education, leisure and play.

The teacher participants also cited out-of-school factors that impacted how education was revered in the area where the present study was carried out. Some activities which allegedly were reported to conflict with the learners' perception of the importance of education included;

"There are sports where the learners go with the house girl and normally come back late." (T2, FGDSS).

With respect to the influence of sports on the learners left behind's anti-school behaviour T2, FGDSS gave a chilling account of what was happening in their neighbourhood thus:

Where I come from, the girl is in Form Two and together with the guardian, they bring boyfriends from where they do sports. The next day the child is expected to go to school, she is tired already because of the night's activity and will not learn so the guardian is a catalyst.

Other than sports another participant added;

"We also have marketing events and we have seasonal factors such as Mopani worms when the maid goes for Mopani worms the child does not come to school." (T1, FGDSS).

While some teacher participants criticised sports tournaments, marketing events and *Mopani* worms for diverting the learners' educational orientation, one other participant inferred that such analysis was misplaced because;

"those who sponsor soccer tournaments are saying they discourage young people from engaging in sexual activities since the youngsters will be occupied so we should not sound crushing the idea." (T8 FGDSS).

T8 FGDSS's view on the utility of sporting events in managing youth behaviour was not disputed by the other participants but their concern was on the negative impact on the learners' schooling time hence clarified that;

"We are not crushing sports our focus is on the school going age learner. When they spend the whole weekend at sports, they usually don't report for school on Mondays because they will be tired and haven't done their homework so they will be doing homework." (T1FGDSS).

One other community activity related to sports that had a bearing on the education of the learners left behind was participation in initiation ceremonies. As one head argued, the community was not fair when conducting such ceremonies because;

"These learners are neglected culturally by their guardians. I haven't seen children with parents in the diaspora participating in initiation ceremonies." (HSN).

When the head was probed to explain how the issue of initiation ceremonies impacted the education of the learners, he inferred that exclusion of the learners left behind in such ceremonies came with mixed opportunities because on one hand the learners will miss out on opportunities linked to the community tradition in the future but on the other hand, such exclusionary practices played to the advantage of the learners because;

"Initiation ceremonies are normally done during school days but those with parents in the diaspora are left out and they have chances of proceeding with schooling." (HSN).

It was established that attendance at marketing events, sports and initiation ceremonies in as much as they helped bind the communities together through interaction, they, however, impacted negatively on the learners' education through crouching into the learners' schooling time as well diverting the learners' attention. While the issue of marketing events, sports and initiation ceremonies could be unique to the present study, the learners left behind have been reported in earlier studies to be ill-equipped in time management where parental guidance is inadequate (Antman, 2012; Mabharani, 2014; Chakombera & Mubikwa, 2018).

This theme produced three major categories namely knowledge of the existing welfare programmes in schools, selection criteria of beneficiaries of welfare programmes and implementation mechanisms of available welfare programmes and the way forward in the provision and management of welfare programmes to learners with parents in the diaspora. The table below illustrates the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged.

Table. 5.8: Themes and Categories of Educational Welfare Programmes for Learners with Parents in the Diaspora

THEME	CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY
5.5 Educational welfare programmes for learners with parents in the diaspora	5.5.1 Knowledge of the existing welfare programmes	5.5.1.1. learners' knowledge about existing welfare programmes 5.5.1.2. Guardians' knowledge about existing welfare programmes in schools 5.5.1.3. Teachers' knowledge about existing welfare programmes

	5.5.2 Discourses on the inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes	5.5.2.1. Debates on inclusion and exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora into educational welfare programmes
	5.5.3 Future of the educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora	5.5.3.1 Learners and community attitudes towards educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora

This category highlights learners', teachers' and guardians' knowledge about welfare programmes available that could help vulnerable learners inclusive of those with parents in the diaspora access educational opportunities. The knowledge sought from the participants related to the identification of welfare organisations and the support those organisations were extending to needy learners. The participants were also expected to describe how those welfare programmes were implemented and make an evaluation of the extent to which the programmes were benefiting the vulnerable learners.

The learner participants indicated that they knew that vulnerable learners were entitled to some assistance from welfare programmes and organisations such as BEAM, PLAN and Bubi Valley Conservancy. L3SS indicated that as far as she knew, vulnerable learners were;

“included in BEAM and got assistance from Bubi Valley Conservancy.”

Another learner who seemed to have similar knowledge to L3SS about the welfare organisations operating in the school also said;

“I only know about BEAM and PLAN” (L2SS).

Other than simply identifying the welfare organisations operating in schools, the learner participants proved that they somehow

understood the mandate of the organisations they identified with respect to the education of vulnerable learners thus;

“Their fees are paid and they also receive books.” (L2SN).

L1SS was supportive of the initiatives of welfare organisations to assist vulnerable learners through paying their fees and provision of other necessities such as books and pens as she professed that;

“I don’t have comfort learning in the company of others who are not writing due to vulnerability so I feel that they need to be assisted.”

Further from only mentioning names of the welfare organisations that were operating in their schools and the assistance the organisations were providing to the vulnerable learners, nothing else could be said about the organisations by the learner participants. There was also no mention of any form of school-based assistance offered to the vulnerable learners indicating that the schools had no such programmes or if they were there, the learners were not aware of their existence.

The guardians demonstrated some know-how about the non-school-initiated welfare programmes that were operating at the schools. The programmes identified included those superintended by PLAN and the BEAM initiative by the government of Zimbabwe. The guardians indicated too that they had some knowledge about the role of parents, the donor community, government and teachers regarding the implementation of the programmes. It was based on that knowledge about the welfare programmes that they could make comments regarding how the learners with parents in the diaspora got treated in the programmes. For example one of the guardians commended;

“They are excluded they say BEAM is for orphans only.” (G2SN).

Although learners left behind were excluded from welfare programmes as revealed by G2SN above, G1SN was opposed to the

selection criteria by those responsible for the selection and insisted that;

“They ought to assist the learners by including them in welfare programmes. For the secondary school learners, they should assist with bicycles because the schools are very far.”

When asked to comment on what they could consider the role of the teacher in the implementation of welfare programmes at schools, the guardians reasoned that;

“The teachers, I don’t see how the teachers can assist someone with parents in South Africa.” (G1SS).

Reiterating her counterpart’s views with regards to the role of the teachers in welfare implementation programmes, G2SS stressed that,

“there is no way teachers can pay fees for a child with a parent in South Africa probably the government may include them into BEAM or any other donors.”

G2SS emphasised that school leaders had no role in the production of lists of possible BEAM beneficiaries since that was the mandate of traditional leaders. However, by that she indicated that she somehow had some knowledge about how the BEAM facility was operating in schools though not explicitly expressed since the responsibility is done by the BEAM selection committee thus:

I don’t see what these school leaders can do because, in the case of donors, the production of a list of beneficiaries is the sole responsibility of traditional leaders who would then send the names to the school. The school leaders have no authority to dispute lists from the traditional leaders.

It emerged from the interviews that government policy guidelines in the selection of welfare beneficiaries were not followed in the schools since inclusion or exclusion depended;

“on the composition of the school board. For instance, they have been benefiting since (Name concealed on ethical grounds) was elected into the committee because he knows the situation since some of his brothers are failing to support their children.” (G3SS).

There was a citation of corrupt activities involving teachers in the selection of some welfare beneficiaries. Asked to explain how the teachers got involved in the selection of BEAM beneficiaries since legally it was exclusively the role of the parents, G3SS lamented that;

“Even though the parents could have drawn a list of beneficiaries, the teachers will later revisit the list plucking out some children claiming that their parents have a good history of paying fees.”

However, another guardian lamented that;

“She has never benefitted from donors. It’s only recently when there was a promise that they will benefit from PLAN so we were attending lessons which were stopped due to reports of an increase of cases of that thing.” (G1SS).

Similar to the learners’ assertions, the guardians also indicated that there were no known welfare programmes initiated at the school level that were meant to assist vulnerable learners including those with parents in the diaspora.

Teacher knowledge about welfare programmes varied depending on one’s level of responsibility at the school. It emerged that those teachers in administrative positions knew modalities around the existence and operationalisation of welfare programmes. For example, one head outlined that;

“We have created a horticulture programme and we ensure that people who are engaged in this programme half of them should be pupils with parents in the diaspora and half of them should be those with parents in the locality.” (HSN).

The head also chronicled the school-based initiatives meant to assist learners with parents in the diaspora thus;

“All pupils with parents in the diaspora are taken at least once a fortnight to the guidance and counselling team to check on areas that are stated there, the welfare at home, where they spend weekends, the duties they do after school.” (HSN).

Progress reported at school North regarding the establishment of projects that could help vulnerable learners was not evident at school South because according to the HSS:

so far we are yet to have any programme that caters for learners with parents in the diaspora specifically because our view is that majority of such learners with parents in the diaspora are well up in terms of things like money. They seem to be better than the residents.

Another teacher administrator shared that at their school they had no specific programmes meant for some specific group of learners since as he put it such an arrangement would have defied the logic of inclusivity promulgated by the government because;

"We have homogeneous classes, so we cater for all the children regardless of one's disability or whatever. As a school we have a feeding programme that caters for all children." (T1, FGDSS).

While administrators showed adequate knowledge about how the BEAM programme was operating, one teacher, a non-administrator could not hide his ignorance about the operationalisation of the programme as he confessed that:

we may not be aware of the protocols or procedures that are used in the selection of BEAM beneficiaries because some orphans are better than children with both parents so at times some may not be considered because the parents are in the diaspora but that will be just a name that they are in the diaspora whilst the child will be in dire need... (T4FGDSN).

The T4, *FGDSN* went further and declared that:

....such children ought to be considered in welfare programmes because some orphans if you are to see them you may not believe that they are orphans yet if another one with both parents is to be paraded there you may think that the child is an orphan so everything being equal such situations need to be considered.

The sentiments raised by the teacher participants indicated that there was a gap between administrators and the ordinary teachers at School North in terms of knowledge about the functioning of the BEAM.

Generally, however, all the categories of participants, namely learners, guardians and teachers indicated that they had some knowledge about the existence of educational welfare programmes in schools that included PLAN International, the BEAM, Bubi Valley Conservancy and Solon Foundation. While the participants described to some extent how the organisations provided for the educational welfare of vulnerable learners, it was clear in the discourses that the target of the organisations was for the provision of material needs only. Since educational needs requirements transcend material needs to non-material needs, it was concluded that most learners left behind in the Mwenezi District needed some educational welfare, be it material or non-material.

There were different views expressed by the participants regarding suitability for assistance in welfare programmes of learners with parents in the diaspora. While some participants reasoned that life was tough for the diaspora-based parents and hence advocated that their children back home ought to be included in welfare programmes, others argued that it was even much worse for the Zimbabwean-based parent hence it was unfair to consider learners with parents in the diaspora for inclusion into welfare programmes ahead of learners with locally based parents.

The debate also arose on whether learners with parents in the diaspora ought to be included in educational welfare programmes or not. One reason given for consideration into welfare was that;

“the child ought to be assisted because a child with parents in the diaspora is akin to an orphan, six months can pass without anything remitted whilst you claim that the parent is in South Africa remember South Africa is just a name.” (G2SN).

Other than the issue of parental irresponsibility as enunciated by G2SN above, G1SN said that from her experience as a regular visitor to South Africa, learners left behind deserved assistance because;

"at times the parents may not have the money even though they are working in the diaspora remember they are foreigners there and at times they can be made to work for nothing so their children must not be deprived of their right to education."

G3SS concurred with both G2SN and G1SN and added another dimension that should propel the community to seriously consider the plight of learners left behind thus;

"They need food assistance especially when there is a donor because their parents may not always send food in time. The children may steal or get married whilst they are still young if they can't find food on the table."

Commenting on the suitability of learners left behind in welfare programmes, one learner decried the non-involvement of the learners in the beneficiaries' selection process hence;

"There is nothing to say because they are selected in my absence. They have selected me for BEAM this year all along I have never been selected. The selection criterion is fine but they leave out other orphans." (L2 SS).

The participants looked beyond school fees assistance and implored that the learners left behind also needed food assistance since in some cases the learners left behind were living in abject poverty. In that regard, the participants recommended that;

"I think they need food assistance and fees because some of them are bright but are betrayed by their unreasonable parents." (G3 SS)

For the guardians, the responsibility to ensure that there was food on the table for learners left behind was supposed to be shouldered by;

"The government should ensure that such children are not segregated against and get assistance just like other children do." (G1 SN).

The teacher participants who called for the inclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes reasoned that such a move needed to be done with due reference to what was obtaining on the economic and educational life of the learner because;

"Whilst they are well up there are other exceptions such as that one whose parents had never returned since when she was a toddler up until Form 5." (T3, FGDSS).

One teacher participant even opined that it was bad to rank learners with parents in the diaspora on the tail end of possible welfare beneficiaries on the basis that their parents were in the diaspora since;

"Some of these orphans have treasures that were left behind that can take them far yet you say they are orphans those treasures can take them far." (T8, FGDSS).

The HSN revealed that learners left behind were getting assistance in welfare programmes and commended that;

"Most parents in the community especially those with the roles of community village works they appreciate this and village heads they appreciate when they see that we consider these pupils."

The support for the inclusion of learners left behind in welfare programmes was however challenged by other participants on the basis that;

"Learners with parents in the diaspora do not deserve donor assistance because their parents send money it's only that the guardians misappropriate the money." (L2 SS).

L2SS's contention was echoed by another teacher participant who also said that:

these learners with parents in the diaspora are excluded from such welfare programmes Just because they are the haves. Bubi Valley and BEAM do not cater for that group because their parents are still alive and are financially capacitated all they need is some education (T5, FGDSS).

T5 FGDSS's assessment of the financial situation of parents of learners left behind resonated with HSS's in that the head also stressed that;

"Like I said earlier, in our view the learners left behind are better as compared to those of locally based parents so they don't deserve to benefit."

The idea to exclude learners left behind in welfare programmes at School South was also influenced by the community because as the head pointed out;

“the community contend that since those parents are better off financially and are never present during collective duties they are to blame and should make efforts to pay something so that the school develops.”

What the head said with respect to the views of the community regarding the exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes was also confirmed by one of the guardians who reported that;

“the traditional leaders won’t entertain that even if you indicate to them that there is need to consider his child who is interested in her studies they will openly tell you that they won’t take it as long as the child has both parents.” (G1SS).

However, another guardian said that the exclusion of learners with parents in the diaspora in welfare programmes was not based on clear consideration of the circumstances of each learner but nepotism since;

“their targets are children of those they know.” (G3SS).

The participants raised two pertinent reasons that should compel whoever would be responsible for selecting learners with parents in the diaspora into welfare programmes. These are that the biological parents could be irresponsible and not remit to the children back home hence failure to assist the learners would be akin to punishing them for their parents’ neglect. The other reason given was that being in the diaspora did not mean that all was well for the biological parents since there were some possibilities that they could be financially strained whilst they were in the diaspora especially now due to COVID-19 pandemic that has resulted in compressed economies the world over. It was also reasoned that getting economic opportunities was not easy for most undocumented migrants, especially in South Africa where most the emigrants were reportedly domiciled. Evidence extracted

from earlier studies demonstrates that there were little economic fortunes realised by most of the non-documented migrants (Zirima, 2016; Dube, 2014; Sanduleasa & Matei, 2015).

Those participants who opposed the inclusion of learners left behind in welfare programmes did so on the ground that in their view the parents of the learners were far much better economically than the local parents hence it could be unfair for their children to benefit ahead of the local parents. Rather they advocated the training of both the guardians and biological parents of the learners to improve financial management.

With respect to the attitudes of the learners and the community to the programmes set in place to ease challenges faced by the learners with parents in the diaspora, the heads gave reactions of learners with parents in the diaspora thus:

Usually, some of them believe it is luck on their part and when they get those programmes they become daily attendances to school. Those who do not have prospects of being included usually drop out of school. Now the pupils who are given such an opportunity as CAMFED OR BEAM attend school regularly (HSN).

The HSN however added that;

“The programmes are useful especially if the social dimension fund is sent to school but if the pupils are not paid the programmes become a disaster to income of the school because the learners will learn using resources that are not paid for by the government.”

Another head also commented on the vitality of welfare programmes they had set in the schools to help learners with parents in the diaspora thus;

“it’s working we have cases of five learners here whose behaviour has since changed for the better after they underwent counselling programmes.” (HSS).

However, HSS went further and raised the concern that;

“With the exception of those, I mentioned earlier who benefited most of them shun counselling. The reason is linked to societal influence and they view our efforts as abuse and infringement of their rights to freedom.”

The heads also shared the attitude of other learners without parents in the diaspora when they saw those with parents in the diaspora receiving educational welfare assistance thus;

“Usually the attitude is if they are also orphans who have been left out and they see a pupil whom they know the parent is in the diaspora they feel discriminated.” (HSN).

In her submission on the future of educational welfare programmes for learners with parents in the diaspora, one of the guardians suggested that;

“If those children are to be assisted, each village should have a person responsible for taking statistics of children with non-returning parents because the reality in our community is that most children are left unattended.” (G3SS).

Stressing her point further about the necessity to compile registers of non-returning parents for possible consideration of their children in welfare programmes she lamented that:

Had you come earlier I could have taken you to a home next to our field and you were not going to control your emotions. There is classic impoverishment, the parents have been away for five to six years and the grandmother is advanced in age it's just disheartening (G3SS).

The heads too called for an attitude shift from the community if the learners with parents in the diaspora were to benefit from welfare programmes in the future. Illustrating the interaction challenges that existed between schools and the community regarding the treatment of learners with parents in the diaspora, the heads lamented that;

“there is this group comprising of guardians who seem to be opposed to the idea because at times we invite them to school to share notes on how we

think they ought to treat the learners and by that they think we are condemning their efforts and overstepping our role." (HSS).

Expressing similar views to his counterpart's regarding the negative attitude of the community towards educational welfare assistance extended to learners with parents in the diaspora, Head School South enunciated that;

"Usually it is the parents in the community where we get the information that they discuss with pupils that when such and such pupils with parents in the diaspora have been included in the programmes, the parents complain so their attitude is negative." (HSN).

The extracts indicate that learners and the school authorities regarded educational welfare programmes as vital for the education of learners with parents in the diaspora. That view was, however, not positively fully taken by some members of the communities and some learners with resident parents who argued that the latter ought to benefit from such programmes ahead of the former. Such differences in opinions could be resolved if as suggested by one guardian there were registers of non-returning parents in the communities that could be used as reference documents whenever some considerations for assistance could be mooted.

The future of educational welfare of learners with parents in the diaspora hinges on two aspects namely the educational aspirations of the learners with parents in the diaspora themselves and their attitude towards welfare and the attitude of the community whose responsibility currently is to select vulnerable learners into welfare programmes.

The excerpts above show that the learners with parents in the diaspora had an educational vision which they thought could only be realised if they received assistance from the government and other well-wishers. In my opinion, such calls from the concerned learners ought to be

listened to since they were the ones who were experiencing vulnerability due to parental absence.

In the chapter presentation and analysis of data about the educational needs of learners left behind by emigrants gathered through face-to-face key participant interviews from learners left behind, guardians of the learners left behind and from school heads were done. Secondly, a report on data obtained from teachers who were engaged in focus group discussions was made too. The data from the participants were also consolidated by data from some official documents such as academic reports and learners' exercise books.

It emerged from the data gathered that learners in the whole primary school from ECD to Grade 7 were left behind by emigrants in the part of the Mwenezi District where the study was conducted.. While school heads, teachers and guardians reported that emigration in the area where the study was done was largely a result of family disintegration or the need for parents to search for greener pastures outside Zimbabwe for family economic emancipation, they all decried that the practice was not to the best interest of the learners since it left the learners under inadequate parental control since most the biological parents were neither remitting nor returning and on that respect, HSS argued that;

"I don't regard it as a good idea, people do it because of the need to search for a living but it's bad for the children."

The learners left behind were further reported to grapple with challenges that include inadequate educational material support where their fees, uniforms, stationery, shelter and food were sometimes not provided or provided in short supply. The participants reported too that learners left behind had behavioural challenges including indiscipline and negative attitude toward education which were attributed to inadequate firm authority, inadequate educational

guidance, inadequate resource management skills, exposure to and use of negative social media and emulations of negative parental conduct.

Considering the challenges faced by learners left behind, the participants suggested that the Zimbabwean government should open up the economy for the citizens to remain in the country. Also, the biological parents were advised to remit and return above recruiting socially responsible guardians who should be able to assist learners in their academic work as well. School heads were advised to open communication channels with the biological parents and guardians of the learners left behind where learner welfare and parenting styles commensurate with the circumstances of the learners could be deliberated. Furthermore, teachers were advised to prioritise guidance and counselling and teaching *Ubuntu/unhu* in their classes. The community was advised to embrace the learners left behind and treat them fairly. Likewise, the other learners were encouraged to accommodate their counterparts.

The other finding from the data were that the society where the study was conducted had a great influence on how learners left behind valued and participated in educational issues. In that regard, it was noted that guardianship in the area was feminised. Domestic chores were also reported to be gendered and negatively affected the girl learner who emerged the one loaded with many responsibilities. The community also engaged in sports tournaments, marketing events and initiation ceremonies within the school calendar and all these activities defined how learners left behind responded to their educational mandate.

In view of all the experiences and challenges that manifest in the educational life of learners left behind, the participants also deliberated on the educational welfare of the learners. Though a strong debate ensued with respect to the suitability of learners left behind on

benefiting from welfare programmes where some suggested that the learners needed not benefit since their parents were financially better off than the local parents, the overwhelming point was that the learners deserved assistance since some parents were non-committal to the welfare of the learners. In the next chapter, further discussions are made on the findings of the study to establish what the findings mean in relation to existing literature.