

Corruption and whistling-blowing do not share an office in our public institutions; the other wants to expose, the other does not want to account but want to eliminate

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ABSTRACT: Public schools rely on norms and standards which are from the department of education allocated from Treasury which is responsible to distribute the taxes collected by SARS in our country therefore the funds used in our public schools and public institutions come from the citizens of the country. Whilst using these public funds in our institutions there are lots of things that happen to achieve different goals either for the institution or for the individuals in charge of such institution. Public institutions should hire people of integrity to protect the public funds rather than using the position of authority to benefit themselves, associates and their relatives. Funds are given to ensure that effective teaching and learning do happen in our schools and when it comes to these other public institutions funds are given to ensure effective service delivery is provided to its constituencies without any compromise however there is corruption done by those who are supposed to guard against misuse of such public funds whereby there are some within the institution who believe that any cent given by Treasury should be spent for its purpose and therefore try by all means to expose such criminal elements within the system but these people of high integrity are not wanted by those who are in charge of the such institutions because they need accountability on what the money has been spent for.

Corruption Watch receive a lot of complaints weekly or monthly from our public schools and other public institutions of which the department officials who are supposed to investigate such allegations do keep them under carpet citing that to do investigation on cases of this nature is very expensive. Rather they do informal investigation on who reported such allegation of corruption than to investigate the issue reported to them in order to hold the official accountable. People who speak out against such doings mostly put their lives at risk as there is no protection in our country for such people despite several recommendations made by trade unions and experts on the field of fighting corruption and maladministration in our country as well as Zondo commission's recommendation on protection of whistle-blowers and hold perpetrators accountable on what they are accused of as long such has been proven to be true after investigation.

Constitutional court made a ruling in 2011 that there is a need to establish an independent anti-corruption commission which will be reporting to parliament on its functions of which some of its duties will be to protect whistle-blowers once they have reported corruption with supporting evidence for further investigation upon the accused and to ensure that this hard-won democracy is protected at all cost, however, since 2011 to date the government in charge including GNU has not yet established this institution to deal with corruption in our country of which if it was already created, allegations raised by Lieutenant General Mkhwanazi there would be no need for Zondo Commission and to appoint Madlanga Inquiry Commission for six months to deal with the allegations of corruption by criminal justice cluster in this case led by the minister of Police who is on suspension.

KEY WORDS: auditors; Sgb; Sadtu; Principals; Chairpersons; Hod; Mec; Senior managers; Premier; Speaker; Parliament; Public schools; Public institutions; Municipal managers; Directors; Councilors; Cabinet members; State capture commission; Unions; Nehawu; Samwu; Corruption Watch; Saps; Whistle-blowers; Board members; Councils; Covid-19; Protection unit

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is vital to the development of South Africa. The value of education should be good enough in order for learners to acquire valuable skill and knowledge in the international economy. The norm of education is the corner stone of economic development and transformation (Bayat, Louw & Rena, 2014: 53). I believe education is the only tool which could transform one self's mind for the better; transformed mind has potential to change the society where someone resides ultimately the community at large will benefit. Studies conducted by Duma, Kapueja & Khanyile (2011:51)

have found that it is essential for members of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to be given the necessary training in areas related to leadership, accountability, the recruitment of employees, report writing, presentation of research reports and conducting quality audit exercises in public schools. Hall and De Lannoy (2019: 14) have highlighted the need for accountability and transparency among school governing board members and inspectors. Public schools cannot fulfil their mandates unless they are willing to allow members of local communities to take part in planning and decision-making processes that affect the quality of education provided to their pupils. Iwu, Ezeuduji, Iwu, Ikebuaku and Tenegh (2018: 25) have argued that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) must be allowed to take part in developing policies, enforcing discipline, the assessment of the quality of education, and raising funds and resources that are required in poorly resourced public schools. Doing so has the potential for instilling discipline, accountability, professionalism and productivity in poorly resourced South African public schools (Mncube & Mafora, 2013:20).

The quality of education is undermined in almost all South African public schools due to lack of capacity, shortage of resources needed for teaching, lack of adequately qualified and experienced teachers, poor infrastructure, poverty, unemployment and lack of good leadership and accountability (Modisaotsile, 2012: 1-7; Duma, Kapuela & Khanyile, 2011:19-24; Mathe, 2014: 25; Mestry, 2017: 1-12; Motala, 2017: 15-29; Motsisi & Worku, 2019: 2220-6140). Mestry (2018: 385-400) has proposed a practical framework that is suitable for cultivating the value of education provided to South African pupils enrolled in under-resourced public schools. One of the key strategies followed by the Limpopo Provincial Department of Basic Education is promoting the involvement of local communities in the operation and management of public schools (Adukaite, Van Zyl, Er & Cantoni, 2017: 172-190). Adequate participation of local communities in the affairs of public schools is vital for alleviating obstacles to effective teaching and learning. Maluleke, Cassim and Karodia (2016: 14) have argued that SGBs can play a role of leadership in public schools by allowing community members to have a say in the affairs of public schools. Anderson-Butcher and Aston (2014: 37-45) have pointed out that school level education is a societal issue that needs participation from all stakeholders. All relevant stakeholders must be able to play their role in ensuring quality school level education in order for learners to be able to contribute positively to the economic growth of South Africa (Maluleke, 2014: 11; Maponya, 2010; Rangongo, Mohlakwana & Beckmann, 2016: 24-29).

Study conducted by Mestry (2018: 385-400) shows that an SMT should create positive atmosphere that is welcoming to local community members and parents in order to partake in school activities. Maluleke (2014:8) argues that consistent findings have emerged from various researchers regarding parental involvement in schools, such as how it improves student achievement, attendance, and behaviour at school, as well as how it leads to increased community support for schools, including human, financial, and material resources. School community should come together to form some local tertiary funds which supports meticulous students at different institutions by inspiring and tempting parents, teachers, and students have pledged to collaborate in order to achieve the best quality. If offspring are to be steered to work hard towards attainment of quality results so that they may improve their household conditions, the family morals toward education are critical aspects to nature the offspring in concentrating in receiving education.

The management of public schools requires discipline, commitment and respect for good leadership and governance (Worku, 2019: 109-120). The key to ensuring enough commitment and discipline in public schools is to foster accountability, transparency and respect for the basic principles of accountability, transparency, fairness and objectivity. All relevant stakeholders must be allowed to have a say on the quality of education provided to pupils enrolled in public schools. The study aims to fill the gap in the literature by assessing and evaluating the extent to which governors respect the principles of accountability, objectivity, fairness and respect for the rule of law (Raju, 2018: 30). Study by Rangongo, Mohlakwana & Beckmann (2016:2) cited Thesaurus (2002) states that maladministration can be understood as connected to mismanagement, incompetence, inefficiency, malpractice and dishonesty. Rangongo (2016:2) argues that the literature defines financial mismanagement as the poor management of finances in schools, maladministration as a corrupt behaviour, corruption as wrongdoing on the part of an authority and misappropriation as a dishonest use of funds for one's own use. Corruption causes deep-rooted misery for poor and deprived communities, by imposing an extra burden on the users of public services, reducing government revenue, and reducing the quality and value of education (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2012; Gupta, Davoodi & Tiongson, 2000; Kaufmann, Montoriol-Garriga & Recanatini, 2008; Van Niekerk, 2012).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine whether the applicable system has appropriate institutional policies for ensuring sound

governance and administration in our public institutions;

- To assess the level of accountability by governors and administrators in our public institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Corruption is a sarcoma in our public institutions :Study by Rangongo, Mohlakwana & Beckmann (2016:2) cited Thesaurus (2002) states that maladministration can be understood as connected to mismanagement, incompetence, inefficiency, malpractice and dishonesty. Rangongo (2016:2) argues that the literature defines financial mismanagement as the poor management of finances in schools, maladministration as a corrupt behaviour, corruption as wrongdoing on the part of an authority and misappropriation as a dishonest use of funds for one's own use. "Principal Ockie Vermeulen has been accused of misappropriating almost R70 000 and of being a "racist bully who behaves like a dictator". "The principal and the chairperson have colluded to mislead the SGB on this issue. This unlawful payment has resulted in more than R69 000 being paid out from January 2018. This is the school's money" (Ntsaluba, 2019:4). The researcher is of the view that the persistence of this wrong doings by the principals and chairpersons in most of our schools show that no consequences are meted out by the department upon the perpetrators who have been looting state resources since the dawn of democracy and this will just give them that notion that using the school's money for personal use could not lead you to any punishment as the department seems to cover up such cases when they get reported to them and this could not improve the education system if cases of this nature are simply ignored once they have been reported to the relevant authority with the power to act.

Rangongo et al (2016:1) cited Joubert and Van Rooyen (2008) who contend that many schools in South Africa are faced with significant problems of mismanagement, managerial incompetence, lack of leadership, and limited capacity. This echoed by the reports from anti-corruption agencies such as Corruption Watch (2012, 2015), Public Service Commission, Republic of South Africa (2011) and Talane and Pillay (2013), which state that, despite the concerted efforts made by the civil society to combat corruption, it remains rife in South Africa. The aforementioned reports further state that in Limpopo, principals are the number one offenders when it comes to financial mismanagement, which involves, amongst other things, misappropriation of funds, lack of financial accountability, disregard for due processes and a lack of financial reporting to both parents and the SGBs. Corruption causes deep-rooted misery for poor and deprived communities, by imposing an extra burden on the users of public services, reducing government revenue, and reducing the quality and value of education (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2012; Gupta, Davoodi & Tiongson, 2000; Kaufmann, Montoriol-Garriga & Recanatini, 2008; Van Niekerk, 2012). The researcher is of the view that managerial incompetence is very common in a number of public schools whereby the rights of the learners are violated regularly as most of the governors are not familiar with the laws; multiple repetition in one grade by a learner is not permissible in terms of National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, section 31 hence the researcher whilst working at Thomas Mofolo Secondary school in Soweto had to challenge the SMT on this matter as there were almost 32 learners who were made to repeat grade 8 & grade 9 for three years. DBE under the then minister Angie Motshekga assigned officials to visit the school to investigate this issue whereby 26 learners were promoted in 2018 to the following grades and today are graduates.

SGB treasurer, Priscilla Magosane accused the principal of misusing the grant which the department deposits into the school's account. "We decided to protest outside the school to send a message to the Gauteng Department of Education about the mismanagement of school funds. The school account is forever dry. I have lodged a complaint with the department," she said. The principal, Moroba Iekgalake, said the problem started when the current SGB took over. "However, I now have a problem started by the treasurer who kept the petty cash box with her, and it has been four months now." he said. "She also failed to account for the R 20,000 that she took from the school's account and till this day we are waiting for receipts. When I asked questions, she started accusing me of misusing the school funds." (Sobuwa, 2020:5). The researcher believes that once these cases are reported to the department in order to curb this tendency the department should report this to law enforcement agencies for further investigation as this amount to crime committed by officials in charge with finances. A publication made by Ntsaluba (2019:4) states that the SGB member, who cannot be named for fear of victimization, said the principal of Meyerspark Primary School in Gauteng province also authorized the payment of R6 355.20 per month to a general assistant without the knowledge of the SGB. "The financial affairs of the school are kept between the chairperson and the principal, away from the SGB". The researcher posits that this behaviour is very common in many schools as the principals mostly collude with chairpersons to misappropriate school funds for their own personal interests of which, in most cases, the department does not Act, hence, this behaviour persists to happen in our public schools. "The auditing was done on June 30, 2018. The SGB was not consulted and did not sanction such auditing. The SGB does not even know how much the

auditing work costs the school. The SGB was supposed to have authorized payments, if there were any payments to be made to an auditing company,” a source said (Ntsaluba,2019:4). The researcher is of the view that the mandate of the legal structure, which is the school governing body, is being compromised by the chairperson and the principal in this regard and therefore should be disciplined as they violated their code of conduct in terms of SASA 84 of 1996, Section 18A (5) which states that after due process, the Head of Department may suspend or terminate the membership of a governing body member for a breach of the code of conduct.

“It must be noted that the department has attended the SGB meetings to assist them with their roles and responsibilities. However, we have observed no adherence to policy prescripts by some members, which is concerning, and this will be raised with them,” said Mabona (Ntsaluba, 2019:4). These doings have now become normal in our public institutions as there is no any sanction or consequence management meted out upon the culprits hence we had state capture during the tenure of the former president Jacob Zuma and now we have another form of capture which includes police, prosecutors and judiciary officers working in cohort with criminals as per a surprise explosive revelation by police general of KZN, Lt General Nhlahla Mkhwanazi.

Publication by Khumalo (2015:10) contends that financial mismanagement was the most common type of corruption as it was at 37% in schools which fall under the Gauteng Department of Education and most cases being reported in Johannesburg. “Principals are the number one culprits when it comes to corruption in schools,” said the Corruption Watch report. The researcher posits that with this picture in mind, it is very worrisome that officials who are supposed to champion the interests of learners at heart are the ones who make use of state money for their personal gains and therefore tight mechanism at public schools by the SGBs with the support from the school-community at large, should be developed to monitor how school funds are utilized for the benefit of the good cause, which is a quality education with value. Publication by Sobuwa (2021:2) posits that there were allegations of mismanagement or misappropriation of school funds at JSM Setiloane Secondary School in Kroonstad, Free State, but the principal refused to avail financial statements and the matter was referred to the Free State Education Department.

Publication by Monama (2013:9) cites that the Limpopo education department spokesman Phuti Seloba said: “The principal of Jim Yingwani High School, Justice Maluleke, reported to the district office for three years for mismanagement of funds and only went back to the school last year.” “We have declared all our schools Section 21 schools to monitor their finances. We have published and now legislated a new accounting mechanism that clarifies the appointment of auditors and how financial books are prepared. We have concluded a skills audit of all our principals, and those lacking financial skills will be supported through financial skills development programmes” (Khumalo, 2015:10). The researcher posits that civic organizations, religious people, local councilors and traditional leaders should champion the interests of their schools in areas where governors and department fail to hold the officials who misused school finances accountable.

In terms SASA 84 of 1996, S30 (1) stipulates that a governing body may establish committees, including an executive committee of which a finance committee is one of those committees that should be established by the SGB and appoint persons who are not members of the governing body to such committees on grounds of expertise, but a member of the governing body chair should be in each committee. The researcher believes that this is done to ensure that each and every committee has a SGB member who has to be the eyes of the governors at the school. Studies have shown that the department lacks the will to act in the interest of learners (Muller, 2018:23). The researcher posits that if the department lacks the will to act the school community structures in a form of civic organizations, religious people, local councilors and traditional leaders should close this void for the benefit of their schools and communities.

Whistle-blowers are blemished than protected : Study by Cassim (2012) contends that Corruption Watch has reported several allegations to the Department of Education, but people in the Department have indicated that not much would be done. Allegations are too expensive to be investigated, explained an official. South Africa is sinking due to corruption, which has been exacerbated by leaders who act with impunity, writes Corruption Watch executive director David Lewis (Watson, 2015:3). Public funds are being misused and mismanaged as a result of such leaders in high positions of public entity who lack moral values to address the country’s socio-economic challenges other than being concerned with satisfying personal desires by virtue of holding positions of authority (Maluleke, Cassim & Karodia, 2016:10).

The researcher is of the view that the Department has to speed up the process of disciplining its members once they have received formal complaints about misconduct from their employees and this could instill trust

between the stakeholders, that if there is a matter which is in the hands of the Department is receiving the necessary attention and this will encourage them to report unwanted behaviour continuously. This has the potential to create an amicable and conducive working environment for the learners. The whistle-blowers who speak to Corruption Watch believe this is one of the main reasons people do not report corruption in schools. "They will make sure my name is blemished and maybe one person will be fired," the source said (Cassim:2012). Corruption in schools was identified as the most prevalent form of dishonesty in the country. The Gauteng Department of Education said it has commissioned a forensic team to investigate all the books of certain schools identified through its fraud lines and expected a report to be released in July. Equal Education, which analyses trends in the nation's institutions of learning, is also concerned by what the report uncovered. "When there's corruption in schools, it's like taking money directly from the parents' pockets," Equal Education spokesperson Nombulelo Nyathela said (Khumalo, 2015:10). "Given this, we were prompted to launch a School Campaign. Through it, we aim to influence policy and practice regarding the management of school funds, as well as to support access to information about the use of these funds. "The overarching goal is to encourage the public to resist and report corruption in schools," said Corruption Watch executive director David Lewis (Watson,2015:3). The researcher believes that if many cases are reported and no any consequences are meted out to perpetrators, whistle-blowers will be reluctant to continue reporting cases of this nature but will result in protests which will interrupt teaching and learning.

Publication by Naki (2020:5) argues that professor Lesiba Teffo believes that whistle-blowers should be acknowledged and handsomely rewarded. "The information they gave helped to solve corruption that otherwise would not have been solved. Let the money and items seized be used to assist the whistle-blowers or their families. They were not doing this for themselves, but for the country. I consider them patriots. In the US and other countries, whistle-blowers were compensated. But in South Africa we throw them to the wolves, we forget about them, when they have done an important civil duty." In its annual report, Corruption Watch says that while corruption is widespread throughout the government, it is particularly endemic in schools (Watson,2015:3). The researcher believes that this notion to acknowledge whistle-blowers should be adopted in our country in order to curb the spread of corruption in our schools because many do not report things which do happen in front of them as they know that they may be victimized and suffer emotional harm sometimes physically harm which could lead to the loss of their lives.

The decision by Judge Raymond Zondo, the chairperson of the State Capture Commission, to lay criminal charges against erstwhile SAA chairperson Dudu Myeni for exposing the name of a whistle-blower sends the right message, that in the struggle for transparency and accountability, witnesses play an invaluable role. Myeni had no problem refusing to answer simple questions under the guise of fear of implicating herself but felt brazen enough to reveal the identity of a witness whose name Raymond Zondo had clearly indicated should not be made public (Sunday World, 2020:15). Judge Raymond Zondo believes that the protection of the whistle-blowers is very important to the work of the State Capture Commission, and no one should compromise this aspect by exposing their names to the public without any permission given in this regard. The researcher believes that in protecting the whistle-blowers the judge set a good precedence which could help going forward that whistle-blowers should be protected as they play an invaluable role in exposing corruption in our schools and in all spheres of government where the tax of ordinary public is being misused to benefit the few.

Judge Raymond Zondo, the Chairperson of the State Capture Commission recommended amongst others the publication of a national charter against corruption in procurement, with a binding code of conduct; the creation of independent agency against corruption in procurement which includes a council, an inspectorate, a litigation unit, a tribunal and a court; the creation of a procurement officer professional body; and various other changes to public procurement legislation and regulations. The Commission also recommended enhancing transparency and strengthening protection for whistle-blowers (Pillay, 2022:7). The SAPS crime intelligence (CI) division has been fingered as the culprits who hacked President Cyril Ramaphosa's email while he was serving as deputy president. The unit was fingered in an affidavit deposed to by police whistleblower Brigadier Tiyani Lincoln Hlungwani, who painted a disturbing picture of the misuse of state resources for political espionage. The hacking system allegedly used, referred to as Ultra Profiler, was acquired by the police as replacement for Ripjar software. The Ultra Profiler is described as having capabilities to intercept and read people's emails and SMS messages. In the run up to the ANC's 2017 national conference, emails from Ramaphosa's private Gmail accounts, Were leaked, suggesting that he was having multiple extra-marital affairs with women young enough to be his children, despite being married (Stone, 2025:5). Ramaphosa, then deputy president of the country and the party, was campaigning to become the head of the governing party. The affidavit submitted by Hlungwani to the Commission of Inquiry into allegations of State Capture, outlines a culture of corruption, political

interference, and the capture of crime intelligence by factions within the ANC. But Hlungwani never got to testify despite supplying the commission with boxes of evidence, according to former commission insiders. One of the most explosive allegations in the affidavit concerns the attempted purchase of a “grabber” device for R 45-million. The grabber, capable of intercepting phone calls and tracking devices, was allegedly intended for use at the ANC’s Nazrec conference. Hlungwani claimed the procurement process was riddled with irregularities and driven by political motives. Despite his warnings, the purchase was pushed forward, allegedly under pressure from senior officials, including the then National police commissioner (Lt-Gen Kehla Sitole) and minister of Police by then was Nathi Nhleko or Fikile Mbalula (Stone, 2025:5). The researcher is of the view that matter should be tested before Madlanga Commission of Inquiry as it deals specifically with corruption and capture of police, judiciary and prosecutors amongst others.

The researcher is of the opinion that this view should encourage school communities; civil organizations; public servants and governing bodies associations to stand up against corruption of all odds and abuse of power to ensure that the governors play an active role in the governance, especially to ensure that the norms and standards are utilized primarily for intended purposes, if the money is meant for service delivery or for educational purposes such has to be done without any deviation. Parallel analysis should be drawn from the Corruption Watch report and State Capture Commission that principals and CEOs as well as municipal managers are the most senior officials who purport corruption and mismanagement of funds in the country, of which this should be an issue of concern to the public and the State as whole particularly with emergence of Lieutenant General Nhlahla Mkhwanazi’s revelation on the network of politicians working together with prosecutors and judiciary officers to let off the hook the criminals, such is very worrisome, hence his protection as whistle-blower has been emphasized to be strengthened in many corners of the country. Publication by Saunderson-Meyer (2025:12) posits that National Commissioner, Lt General Fanie Masemola, has made it clear that he was not the one ordered the task team’s disbandment and told a press conference that unless president Ramaphosa decreed otherwise, Lt General Mkhwanazi would face no disciplinary action and that security around him as whistle-blower had been strengthened, in response to the threats on his life.

A charismatic young police general, dramatically flanked by heavily armed bodyguards, held a surprise press conference where he made explosive allegations of political interference and criminal collusion at the highest levels of law enforcement and justice systems. If the allegations are true, they would expose the past six years of Ramaphosa’s presidency to have been a hollow sham. Not only has the ANC government failed to bring to book any of ministers and high-ranking officials identified by the Zondo commission, it appears to have allowed corruption to continue and spread (Saunderson- Meyer, 2025:12). The pattern showed the systemic weaknesses in appointing, vetting and managing the senior leaders have never been addressed, Cameron said. Witness Maluleke, a senior criminologist at the University of Limpopo, said Saps’ leadership power struggle as one of the executive organs of the state was a worrying factor. Rising crimes rates, he said, had dented public confidence in the police (Dube, 2025:2).

In one of his shortest-and most decisive-addresses to the nation from the Union Buildings, President Cyril Ramaphosa put police minister Senzo Mchunu on special leave and appointed a commission of inquiry to probe allegations against him. Ramaphosa added: “Among the allegations that the commission may investigate are the facilitation of organized crime; suppression or manipulation of investigations; inducement into criminal actions by law enforcement leadership; commission of any other criminal offences and intimidation, victimization or targeted removal of whistle-blowers or resisting criminal influence (Seery, 2025:3). People implicated by Mkhwanazi are hoping that his removal from society will save their skins. In view of this, we appeal to the law enforcement agencies to prioritize the safety of Mkhwanazi for the interests of SA’s citizens. SA cannot be allowed to become a lawless state where people who expose criminality are eliminated to render their evidence null and void (Bantseke, 2025:13). The researcher is of the view that if Zondo commission’s recommendations were fully implemented by now the president would not have to establish another commission as a permanent investigative commission would had been set up in line with Zondo commission’s recommendations to deal with corruption and issues of procurement as there is no professional board at the moment handling or approving procurement above R100-million hence Vusi “Cat” Matlala was awarded R360-million tender through his connections which are subject of investigation.

The purported evidence of SANDF and SAPS members guarding Matlala also includes pictures and firearms registered in his security company’s name. In a single-paragraph answer to detailed and specific questions, national police spokesperson Brigadier Athlenda Mathe said state-sponsored VIP protection was not for private individuals. “The SAPS VIP protection provides protection to cabinet members at the national and provincial

level, and not to private individuals. We are therefore, not aware about of these allegations about Matlala.” (AmaShabalala, 2025:5). This could only be known by the minister who extended his protection to his crony if the spokesperson is not aware about this VIP protection, this is another form of corruption if Matlala had been guarded by SANDF and SAPS members without the knowledge of the Lt generals and this does expose our policies in respect to who should be provided state-sponsored VIP protection of which the police oversight body in parliament should know this as well.

The public’s fatigue is real. South Africans are tired of promises. They want accountability. They want to know that when they report a crime, they will be taken seriously; that when whistle-blowers come forward, they will be protected not persecuted; and that when people in power abuse that power, they will face consequences-not golden handshakes or quiet transfers. Mkhwanazi took a personal risk in coming forward. If his allegations are substantiated, he may go down in history as one of the rare figures in South Africa who put principle above protectionism. But if the process fails him-if the state fails to protect him or act on what he exposed-his courage will serve only as another cautionary tale in a country that has too many already (Mthembu, 2025:12). A forensic investigation report into the allegedly irregular and corrupt R 880 million hospital oxygen plant tender managed by the Independent Development Trust (IDT) has recommended that disciplinary action be taken against IDT CEO Tebogo Malaka, IDT general manager for supply chain management Dr Molebedi Sisi and other officials. The report found Malaka failed to exercise oversight and confirmed she relied entirely on internal supply chain management (SCM) staff to assure her that the process had followed proper procurement protocol. It further found that Malaka did not verify any of the documentation, act on the red flags raised by the Department of Health or convene the necessary risk committees to access the matter (Cokayne, 2025:18).

Deaths of many whistle-blowers do not encourage people to come forward if they see something wrong happening at working environment because there is no protection from our government or the state. The death of Babita Deokaran is just a night mare to many when they think about exposing the rot where they work, our government failed Babita who exposed the corruption of note at the department of health in Gauteng province though the culprits have been arrested, she should had been protected as she risked her life by exposing those who do not want to be held accountable in the wrong doings. According to (Nyoni, 2021), Babita Deokoran refused to remain silent when she discovered a network of financial fraud and corruption in the Gauteng Department of Health. As Pops Rampersad, the leader of Active Citizens’ Movement (ACM) which campaigns for whistle-blower right, put it: “It is brave people like Babita Deokoran who will speak out and then be mercilessly taken out. It should not require death threats for whistle-blowers to be offered protection.” Six suspects were arrested for Babita Deokoran’s murder of which they were found to be guilty on her second anniversary of her death whereby they have been sentenced to 95 years of imprisonment combined. The identity of the person who ordered Deokarn’s murder remains unknown. Following the assassination, the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), a forensic investigative unit agency of the state, confirmed that Deokoran had been a key witness in a multi-million rand fraud investigation linked to alleged improper COVID-19 personal protective equipment tenders. Deokaran blew the whistle on corrupt colleagues-influential politicians who had allegedly fraudulently manipulated tenders for their own benefit (Global Initiative, 2021). The researcher believes that if the Health Department top officials in the form of DG, MEC and the Minister including the Premier of the province acted swiftly to get her protection like what the National Commissioner did to Lt General Mkhwanazi the life of the whistle-blower in the name of Babita Deokoran would had been protected.

Institutions of higher learning like UNISA, CUT, UL and VUT just to mention few have been accused by their staff and unions of practicing nepotism and favouritism by hiring less qualified candidates and foreign nationals over highly local qualified candidates or hiring relatives at the expense of most suitable candidates according to the publications made in various media platforms and newspapers which is another form of corruption despite having measures in place to prevent such in a form of hotline and anti-corruption unit within their institutions; UNISA seems to be doing well in handling such concerns, so once the staff and unions do not get necessary protection during such difficult period they end up being afraid to speak out against their employer for fear of reprisal and persecution within the institution and therefore to deal with these types of activities the president has to implement Zondo commission’s recommendations fully in order to ensure that there is a board or unit created to deal only with cases of this nature. Diago reached a settlement with the university but refused to withdraw his allegations of corruption and mismanagement by the vice-chancellor and the university’s council, According to Khaya Xaba, a spokesman for Nehawu. Xaba said: “We have proof that his life is at risk and we have someone who is prepared to testify to this effect, however we are protecting the name of our witness at this stage.” “The union said it was preparing a report on fraud at the University for the Hawks, the public protector, the auditor general and the minister and portfolio committee” (Child, 2019). University of Cape Town (UCT)’s

academics in the faculty of social development have allegedly been awarding higher marks to white student while penalizing black students in a perpetuation of racism and a culture of inequality. Former head of department (HoD), Prof Ndangwa Noyoo, who has been acknowledged by the Department of Higher Education and Training as the UCT whistleblower, revealed this in an affidavit he penned to the department and the presidency. On Friday, July 18, Meshack Ramoshaba of the department, reached out to Noyoo, asking that he substantiate his claims to the Presidency. "When I became the HoD in January 2018, I went after this scourge head-on because I had earlier been approached by black student whistleblowers who complained of being marginalized and penalized by this group of rogue academics. This disturbing trend was spearheaded by the aforementioned six individuals, and most likely this culture of impunity has not stopped. In most instances, this transgression was done to raise the marks of white students while black students were penalized," Noyoo said. He further revealed that the lecturers disregarded UCT's examination policies by opening stickers containing student names while marking scripts, a violation of standard procedures meant to ensure impartiality. "After discovering them, they cried foul and rushed to the acting dean of humanities and deputy dean... who protected this group from any disciplinary action," he said (Stone, 2025:2). This is the best university in the whole continent according to different rankings by various institutions which rank a number of aspects including quality of research outputs publications made by its staff and students.

The office of the president should be given a credit for dealing decisively with this matter of systematic racism by the six rogue academics according to Prof Noyoo and hoping that the minister as empowered by Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, Section 44(1)(b) and Section 45(b)(ii) as this matter has been there for almost seven years whereby there is a certain report that should be in place if the department has done its duties in terms of this act once a matter of serious compromise of quality and fair education to black students has been reported for their urgent intervention and action thereof. White lecturers regard this as normal and acceptable in our public institutions of higher learning; in 2010 at UNISA I once came across this kind of conduct whereby I was subjected to marginalization when marking my script of educational leadership of which I escalated the matter of his seniors whereby it was handled to my favour by Prof Mafora and Prof Lebeloane, fortunately his seniors were black academics if they were white academics my case would not have been handled to my satisfaction as it seems as this kind of conduct is only meted out upon black students.

Allegations of corruption continue to cast a shadow over the Vhembe District Municipality, as the suspended chief of staff in the office of Mayor, Freda Nkondo, Nyiko Nkuna, reportedly returned to work on April 1, despite investigations into his conduct remaining unresolved. Nkuna was placed on a three-month suspension in December 2024, after a video surfaced on social media in which he apparently boasted about appointing his wife to a general worker position within the municipality. Samwu local secretary, Khathu Mapholi, said the union is strongly opposed to any form of corruption (Nduvheni, 2025). Polokwane Municipality Mayor, Makoro John Mpye says there is nothing wrong with awarding tenders to foreign-owned companies, as long as the law is followed, after claims linking a R56 million contract to the alleged Zimbabwean partner of city manager, Thuso Nemugumoni. EFF provincial chairperson Lawrence Mapuolo called on Limpopo Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba to appoint an ad hoc committee to investigate tender irregularities at the municipality. He further submitted that president Ramaphosa must also sign a proclamation to authorize the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to investigate the allegations. ActionSA expresses deep disappointment regarding recent allegations of corruption and maladministration directed at the Polokwane Municipality and its leadership (Mojadibodu, 2025). The South African laws in terms of Company's Act of 2008 do allow registration of foreign-owned company with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) however, a South African must be appointed and registered as the company's representative, who will be responsible for operations and accepting service of documents on behalf of the company. I am of the view that senior political heavy-weights own this company using foreign-nationals to loot the money for their own benefits. The Dumela village community development forum made a complaint of corruption against the MEC, Thandi Moraka in 2022, who allegedly instructed that Dumela library applied to be built at Dumela village be moved to Magangeni village in 2019 all these villages fall under Mulamula area. Limpopo premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba has been accused of little more than making fruitless promises to settle the R23 million Dumela library project. According to WhatsApp messages between premier Ramathuba and Dr. Maluleke of 15 October, 2024, seen by African Times, Ramathuba assured the forum chair that Jerry Maseko, the provincial member of executive council (MEC) for The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, would travel to Dumela area to settle the issue once and for all. However, the MEC has yet to follow on this promise (Mabasa, 2025). The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Limpopo province has also entered the fray and has written to the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee for Sports, Arts and Culture (SAC), Ms Mahodi Mahasela, to request the MEC and her department to appear before the committee to account. Captain Matimba Maluleke of the Hawks confirmed that they are investigating the

Project. "It is true that a case was opened in January 2022 and that we are investigating allegations of corruption" (Tshikhudo, 2022). When asked about the progress of investigation on Tuesday, 25 March 2025, warrant officer Lethunya Mmuroa confirmed receipt of the query. "I received your message. Currently, I'm on leave, but forwarded the message to the relevant official for assistance." (Mabasa, 2025). The researcher is of the view that political influence might be at play taking into account how the Hawks are dragging its pedes to investigate this corruption of highest degree by the then MEC, Thandi Moraka, who is now deputy minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

SAFTU is enraged by the cold-blooded assassination of Mpho Mofole, a senior auditor in the City of Ekurhuleni. We have seen this playbook before-across South Africa, brave officials and whistle-blowers are being silenced, one bullet at a time, while the state turns blind eye. We demand reopening of unresolved whistleblower murders, including those of Moss Phakoe, Jimmy Mohlala, Sam Mahlomi and others. We demand urgent whistleblower protection reform-with real legal and physical protection for those who expose corruption. We demand a commission of inquiry into political and corruption linked-assassinations (Masuku, 2025). I am of the view that the president has to speed up the implementation of Zondo Commission recommendations as it is clearly articulated on how to establish the unit that will deal with protection of whistle-blowers however since the revelation by general Mkhwanazi, masterminds on deaths of whistle-blowers seem to be happening with speed taking into account the arrest of the former Umzimkhulu municipal manager, the mastermind behind the death of the whistle-blower in the name of Sindiso Magaqa. Publication by Patel (2025:2) posits that the former chief justice Raymond Zondo has expressed the pain he had to endure to swear in corrupt Cabinet ministers who had serious state capture findings against them. The president's response to the recommendations of the state capture inquiry outlined his plan of action, as well as his stance and commitment to fighting corruption within the government. In its 16 main recommendations, the Zondo commission found parliament had failed in its oversight role to hold the executive to account after several state institutions were captured, costing the state billions.

A scandal is brewing at DUT, where officials are alleged to have unlawfully appointed a consultant whose fees ballooned by a whopping 27000% over a mere three-year period after being handed a R400-million construction project to complete without tender. The institution's management said the matter is sub-judice due to the ongoing arbitration. The Department of Higher Education distanced itself from the scandal with the minister pleading ignorance. "We were not aware of this matter, but we will follow-up with the university council. The outcome of the discussion will determine our response as we don't condone any form of maladministration," said the university branch deputy director general, Dr Marcia Socikwa (Ncana, 2025:10). The department of transport has filled papers in the Pretoria high court to overturn the controversial R898-million contract awarded to Idemia SA to supply the new machine. The department wants the court to set aside the contract, re-advertise the tender and allow the department of home affairs to take over the printing of driving licence cards, pending the appointment of another bidder. The legal challenge comes after the auditor-general flagged several irregularities in the tender process. The court papers show while cabinet approved R486-million, the money escalated to R898-million resulting in a shortfall of R412-million (Chabalala, 2025:2). This scenario above demonstrates that no any institution of government is immune from corrupt activities and therefore very prudent for the president of the country to implement recommendations of Zondo commission in relation to establishment of procurement board composed by professionals and create investigative commission unit to deal with corrupt activities of this nature.

Judgement by Constitutional Court (Moseneke & Cameron, 2011:86) posits that what follow are the reasons that underpin the conclusion we reach. First, we describe the need for combating corruption and organized crime related to it; thereafter we identify the source of the obligation to establish an independent anti-corruption unit; and third, we examine the content of the obligation. In the end, we assess whether the structural and operational attributes of the DPCI satisfy the requirement of independence. The need and rationale for combating corruption. There can be no gainsaying that corruption threatens to fell at the knees virtually everything we hold dear and precious in our hard-won constitutional order. It blatantly undermines the democratic ethos, the institutions of democracy, the rule of law and the foundational values of our nascent constitutional project. It Fuels maladministration and public fraudulence and imperils the capacity of the state to fulfil its obligations to respect, protect, promote and fulfil all the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights. When corruption and organized Crime flourish, sustainable development and economic growth are stunted. And in turn, the stability and security of society is put at risk. This deleterious impact of corruption on societies and the pressing need to combat it concretely and effectively is widely recognized in public discourse, in our own legislation, in regional and international conventions and in academic research. According to the charge sheet, Desmond Nair, is

accused of taking bribe from Bosasa in or near Silverton, Pretoria, in September 2016 whilst he was a judicial officer and the chief magistrate of Pretoria (Mitchley, 2025). The researcher believes that this kind of conduct takes away the trust placed upon judicial officers in our country and therefore needs harsh sanctions to be meted out upon the judicial officers found wanting in order to restore public trust toward judiciary system in our country which is always regarded as the last hope of the public.

My deductions on this study is that whistleblowers and unions play a huge role in exposing corruptions in different forms within our public institutions like mismanagement of funds, nepotism when hiring, cadre employment for party members without having suitable qualifications, fraud and other forms of irregularities in awarding tenders; Nehawu and Samwu have been in front in exposing corruptions but coming to our public schools governors have been leading in exposing corruptions of which is very worrisome if SADTU does not seem to be near in exposing most of these corruptions which are done in front of them as union and other teacher unions. Such could be interpreted as to cover the wrong doings by their members as most of these corrupt activities in our public schools are reported by SGB members known as governors. Most of the cases at our public schools get ignored at circuit and district level in most of the times is when they reach the office of the HOD and MEC they get to be given attention of which it was not supposed to be like that if our public servants are there to uphold the law and integrity of the service. Corruption does not happen at our public schools only is rampant in all public institutions as emerged on 06 July when charismatic young police general briefed the nation about the crime which is aided by politicians in a form of ministers, prosecutors, senior police officers and judiciary working in cahoots with criminals to kill and evade arrest of which such does compromise the whole criminal justice system.

The researcher believes that quick actions should be taken against the culprits who deliberately steal from the pockets of the public for their personal interests and constructive feedback has to be provided by the governors or state if the case is in their hands, irrespective of who brought the case to their attention. Therefore, to root out corruption from the education system or in any institution is everyone's societal responsibility in the country. The government has to be specific about the time frame in dealing with these cases of corruption and abuse of power by the principals, municipal managers, directors, councilors, cabinet members and governors in our councils so that they may cease to happen in different institutions, but if these cases are ignored, though sufficient evidence may be available to convict the culprits, this type of behaviour will be instilled as culture once you ascend to power or find yourself being elected to serve as a governor or councilor, you find yourself appointed in a position of authority, the notion of my time has arrived to benefit out of the system; in most cases, officials from the public service instead of dealing with the cases reported to them they spend most of their time doing informal investigations on whistle-blowers' motives in reporting such cases to the institution or other state organs. The state has to prioritize the safety of whistle-blowers if indeed it is serious about fighting any form of crime in the country rather than being reactionary to the developments of grave concerns which are brought by principled public servants.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of study is descriptive and cross-sectional. A quantitative method of data analyses was used mainly in this publication. According to Bryman (2015), a descriptive study design is suitable for an exploratory study of this kind. According to Maluleke (2014:48) and Terry (1977:179), a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analyses are appropriate for this kind of publication.

Interaction with respondents : There is due respect for accountability, transparency, rules and regulations in all decisions taken in public schools and independent schools:

School Governing Bodies					Educator					Circuit Office Official				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
0	2	4	13	8	1	6	10	28	13	2	0	8	8	2
0	7%	15%	48%	30%	2%	11%	17%	48%	22%	10	0	40%	40%	10%
100%					100%					100%				

The school governing bodies do agree and strongly agree in large numbers that there is accountability, transparency in this partnership between governors and the educators as all of them perform their constitutional obligations under this environment wherein they have to follow rules and regulations in whatever decision taken in public and independent schools so that when they give report to other stakeholders they take responsibility and accountability in order to respond to whatever could be asked in the school.

Whistle blowers must be protected as a means of ensuring accountability:

Educator		School Governing Bodies		Circuit Office Official	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
95%	5%	96%	4%	85%	15%

Educator; *“Yes, witness protection programme is sacrosanct.”*

Governor; *“Yes, because they protect the community and the school.”*

Circuit Official; *“Yes, this gives them confidence to continue reporting when similar incidents occur; but instead they are exposed to the culprits.”*

According to the percentage from all participants it is clear that whistle blowers should be protected by all means to ensure accountability from all state institutions and private institutions as it has got potential to defraud the institution to its demise if there is not any consequence meted out against the perpetrators to protect the school and the community at large because their tax should be used squarely what it has been intended for. Government uses its tax revenue to purchase the inputs required to provide public goods and services such as law and order, health services, education and housing. To finance these goods and services, households and firms pay taxes to the government (Mohr & Fourie, 2000:429). Members of School Governing Bodies should be assessed for suitability based on their skills and experience:

Governor; *“Yes, for the purpose of getting people who will efficiently and effectively perform the functions of the SGB, it should be done.”*

Members of School Governing Bodies should be assessed for professional integrity:

Educator; *“Yes, it minimizes unnecessary problems at school; unscrupulous members take bribes and use funds allocated to schools for their personal gains. Corrupt SGBs may recommend wrong candidates for employment at school.”*

Governor; *“Yes, it is important for member to be assessed in order to get quality and professionalism.”*

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Annual general meetings with audited statements in our public schools should be inspected by organized civic organizations, traditional leaderships and concerned groups in our purviews to prevent any form of corruption as well as to enforce high level of accountability by school managers and governors for the benefit of the parents and school community at large.
- Any form of suspicious corruption should be reported to the governors as a point of departure in order for them to bring it to the attention of the accounting officers for their further attention to ensure that such is halted and if nothing is done by the circuit it has to be escalated to district from there to the province and national office to make sure that the matter is handled with attention it deserves.
- The Premier of that province as well as the Speaker of provincial legislature are better placed to issue directives on how the matter should be addressed if the MEC of education failed to act on the reported corruption.
- Corruption Watch and Public Protector will be expected to investigate the matter for directives if the MEC, Premier and the Speaker failed to handle the matter.
- Each district should have a unit of auditors and forensic investigators to inspect public funds at our public schools and other public institutions quarterly to prevent and detect corruption at an early stage.
- Auditor-general should be given more powers to refer accounting officers and responsible officials for prosecutions to NPA if dereliction of duty happened wherein finances are not accounted for.
- Department of education portfolios in provincial legislatures and in parliament should play oversight role as anticipated in terms of the law to prevent these corrupt deals in our public schools by holding executives and accounting officers to account.
- Any tender above R50 million should be approved by team of professionals within Treasury at that province to check if the tender has been awarded based on suitability.
- Whistle-blower Protection unit in each province should be created to look at the needs of the whistle-blowers once a corrupt activity is reported at any level.
- Government should establish an Inspectorate and investigation unit on corruption and mismanagement of public funds in our public institutions than setting commissions of inquiry every time there is an allegation

of corrupt doings by our lecturers from our institutions of higher learning as exposed by Prof Ndongwa Noyoo at UCT as well as public servants and representatives as exposed by brigadier Tiyani Lincoln Hlungwani at Sunday World newspaper augmenting the version by general Mkhwanazi that our public institutions are embroiled by corruptions whereby Madlanga commission of inquiry has been set-up.

- Constitutional court ruled in 2011 that the state has to establish Anti-corruption unit which is independent reporting to parliament; it is almost 15 years now but our president has not yet honoured the court order from the apex court in the land.
- Procurement body to deal with tenders in the country should be established as recommended by Zondo Commission three years ago in order to prevent political influence on who is to get tenders to build schools and other important projects like roads, libraries, TVET and clinics in our country.
- Heavy sentence should be meted out upon the culprits who kill whistle-blowers to ensure that our democracy which is won in a hard-fought struggle is protected.

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