

SCHOOL FEES AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE
PROVISION OF EDUCATION

by

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Thesis

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR EDUCATIONIS

in

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT



UNIVERSITY
in the
JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND NURSING

at the

RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY

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October 2004

DEDICATION

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO MY WIFE SURAYA, MY CHILDREN TAHIR AND
NAZRANA AND MY LATE FATHER AND LATE MOTHER WHOSE MOTIVATION
LIVES ON



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the following people.

- The Almighty God, for granting me the strength, courage, and perseverance to complete this thesis.
- Professor Tom Bisschoff, my supervisor, for his guidance, unrelenting assistance, enduring patience and confidence in my ability to complete this thesis.
- My co-promoter, Professor R. Mestry for his constant support and guidance throughout this research.
- Mrs B. Rabbikisson, Mr A.S. Mungalee and I. Dasruth for the typing.
- My colleagues at Dr Yusuf Dadoo Primary School who assisted me during various phases in the study.
- The Rand Afrikaans University for their financial support.
- The Gauteng Department of Education for allowing me to undertake this research.
- Professor B.R. Grobler for his assistance, encouragement and support.
- All the respondents who responded to the interviews and questionnaire.
- My wife Suraya, for her constant encouragement and support.
- Mr V.K. Joseph and Dr K.C. Naik, for proof reading and editing of the thesis.

SYNOPSIS

This research focuses on School fees at public schools in Gauteng: implications for the provision of education.

The demand for free education is no longer one made by revolutionaries or radicals only. Even the World Bank – key architects of user fees – have come around to this way of thinking, seeing that charging school fees for primary education is bad for development.

The subject of school fees has been in the news because of the disruption of schooling by the Pan African Student Organisation in Tskane (Gauteng) and Balfour (Mpumalanga). In Tskane, students demanded a reduction in fees from R300-00, (Secondary Schools) and R120-00 (Primary Schools) to R50-00 and R25-00 respectively.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) has called for the total scrapping of school fees over the next three years. Cosatu and Sadtu President sang from the same hymn book, “education fees are a tax on the poorest and must be dropped” (The Educators’ Voice, 2002b:2).

The Freedom Charter, a beacon of the revolution, was drafted by popular assembly in Kliptown in 1955 by the African National Congress Alliance. Declaring, “the doors of learning and culture shall be opened,” it championed the right to education, which shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all, and adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan. (The Educators’ Voice, 2002b:3)

The Reconstruction Development Plan document based on the Freedom Charter, which served as the African National Congress-led alliance electoral platform for the 1994 elections, stated that the democratic Government must ensure that all children go to school for at least 10 years. The ten-year compulsory general education cycle should proceed from a pre-school reception year to the present grade nine. The Government must phase in compulsory education as soon as possible. To achieve this objective the Government must rebuild and expand our schools. Classes of 50-80 or more learners are unacceptable. “We must ensure that no class exceeds 40 learners by the end of the decade.”

In many developing countries the levying of school fees prevents children access to school. Even in countries where primary education is meant to be free, the cost of buying books and uniforms means that many poor families simply cannot afford to educate their children. The World Bank recently called for the elimination of school fees. Immediate action to increase resources to countries which have education plans and a three to five fold increase of donor funding for primary education is needed (The Educators' Voice, 2002b:3).

A report on school funding and resourcing commissioned by former National Education Minister Professor Kader Asmal, found worrying indications of disregard by Education Department employees of the rights of the poor. The report found that while discrimination against impoverished learners was not widespread, it was common enough to merit intervention.

As the "new" South Africa forges ahead with rebuilding and transforming its education system following the end of apartheid in 1994, the levying of school fees has emerged as a highly controversial issue – one that resonates in many developing countries around the world. Such fees are regarded by many South Africans as exacerbating a problem – a plagued national system of education funding that falls short of meeting even the most basic needs of the nation's historically disadvantaged learners. Most of those learners are black children who make up roughly 90 percent of our learner population (The Educators' Voice, 2002b:3).

However, to many education officials and principals, school fees are a necessary financial tool as the government tries to address the severe education inequities such as crumbling classrooms and insufficient textbooks that are reminders of apartheid's hateful legacy. The government does not have the money to bring all schools up to standard. A coalition of activist, researchers, educators, and lawyers are now using school fees as a rallying cry for an effort, they hope, will spur more substantive improvements to South Africa's ailing schools.

The goal of the Education Rights Projects is to ensure that all children, especially the nation's indigent youth, have access to a free basic education (<http://www.epnet.com>). In addition to school fees, the group plans to address the dearth of proper school buildings and teaching resources, the hardships experienced by rural students, and the sexual harassment of and violence to female students. Katarina Tomanevski, the special rapporteur on the right to education in the United Nations office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that it

is possible to eliminate school fees, noting that Uganda and Tanzania abolished them in recent years. The World Bank is strengthening its opposition to school fees because countries that charge fees cannot ensure that poor children still have access to school, said Robert S. Prouty, the bank's leading education specialist. Daria Roithmayr, an associate professor of law at the University of Illinois, who wrote a paper on school fees, contends that school fees violate the South African Constitution which guarantees the children's basic right to education. School fees also contradict international law, including the *Convention On The Rights Of The Child*, an international human rights treaty that requires governments, including South Africa, to make primary education "free" for all (<http://www.epnet.com>).

The aim of this research is:

- to elicit the perceptions of SGB members regarding the payment of school fees.
- to elicit the perceptions of SGB members regarding the utilisation of school fees.
- to determine the benefits of collecting school fees in previously disadvantaged communities.
- to establish the impact of the present funding norms at public schools.
- to determine the barriers that confront learners/parents with regard to the payment of school fees; and
- to develop strategies that will assist schools to ensure the provision of education by managing the income and expenditure side of school fees.

The following research methods were employed to gather relevant research data :

1. A focused literature study was conducted to clarify some of the basic concepts underlying school fees.
2. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain the perceptions of the SGB in respect of the payment of school fees by parents; and
3. A random sample of principals and SGB members from Gauteng West District D2 was selected to complete the questionnaire, the data was analysed using multivariate statistical methods.

The study concludes with recommendations and guidelines to support school governing bodies to collect and manage school fees in their quest for the provision of education.

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie navorsing fokus op die heffing van skoolgeld by openbare skole in Gauteng en die implikasies daarvan op die voorsiening van kwaliteit onderwys.

Die aandrang vir gratis onderwys kom nie meer slegs vanuit rewolusionêre en radikale oorde nie selfs die Wêreldbank, sleutelargitekte van verbruikersfondse, begin dink aan gratis onderwys. Hulle beskou die heffing van skoolgeld vir primêre onderwys as 'n negatiewe invloed op ontwikkeling.

Die kwessie van skoolgeld het in die nuus beland as gevolg van die ontwrigting van skole deur die "Pan African Student Organisation" in Tsakane (Gauteng) en in Balfour (Mpumalanga). By Tsakane het die studente 'n vermindering van skoolgelde vanaf R300-00 na R50-00 by hoërskole en vanaf R120-00 na R25-00 by laerskole geëis (The Educators' Voice, 2002a:2).

Die "Global Campaign for Education" versoek die algehele afskaffing van skoolgelde binne die volgende drie jaar. Cosatu en Sadou se President ondersteun die standpunt deur te sê dat skoolgeld 'n belastingheffing op die armstes is wat afgeskaf moet word.

Die Vryheidsmanifes, 'n baken van die rewolusie, is in 1955 in Kliptown opgestel deur die African National Congress Alliansie. Daarin word verklaar dat "the doors of learning and culture shall be opened". Dit bepleit die reg tot onderwys wat vry, verpligtend, universeel en gelyk vir almal sal wees met die doel om volwasse ongeletterdheid deur 'n massa staatopsvoedingplan te beëindig (The Educators' Voice, 2002b:3).

Die Heropbou en Ontwikkelingsplan is gebaseer op die Vryheidsmanifes wat op sy beurt gedien het as die verkiesingsplatform van die African Nationalist Congress geleide Alliansie. Hierin vervat is die gedagte en wens dat die demokraties verkose regering moet verseker dat alle kinders vir ten minste tien jaar onderwys moet ontvang. Hierdie tien jaar verpligte algemene onderwyssiklus behoort te strek vanaf 'n voorskoolse jaar tot die huidige Graad nege. Die regering moet ook verpligte onderwys so gou moontlik implementeer. Om dit te bewerkstellig behoort skole herbou en vergroot te word. Klasse van 50 – 80 leerders is onaanvaarbaar. Daar moet verseker word dat geen klasse teen die einde van die negentigerjare meer as 40 leerders sal bevat nie.

VIII

In baie ontwikkelende lande veroorsaak die heffing van skoolgeld dat baie kinders nie toegang tot onderwys het nie. Selfs in lande waar primêre onderwys veronderstel is om gratis te wees maak die koop van boeke en skooldrag dit eenvoudig onbekostigbaar vir baie gesinne om hulle kinders skool toe te stuur. Die Wêreldbank het onlangs 'n beroep gedoen op die afskaffing van alle skoolgeld. Onmiddellike optrede is nodig om hulpbronne te vergroot aan lande wat onderwysplanne in plek het. Verder is 'n drie- tot vyfvoudige toename in befondsing deur donateurs vir primêre onderwys dringend nodig (Educators' Voice, 2002b:3).

'n Verslag oor skoolbefondsing en hulpbronne, opgestel deur 'n kommissie aangestel deur die vorige Minister van Nasionale Onderwys, Professor Kadar Asmal, het 'n onrusbarende verontagsaming deur Departementele werknemers van die regte van armes aan die lig gebring. Die verslag het bevind dat hoewel diskriminasie teen arm leerders nie grootskaals voorkom nie, dit tog algemeen genoeg voorkom om optrede te regverdig.

Terwyl die "nuwe" Suid-Afrika voortsnel met die heropbou en hervorming van die onderwys na die beëindiging van apartheid in 1994, het die heffing van skoolgeld 'n omstrede kwessie geword, een wat manifesteer in baie ontwikkelende lande dwarsoor die wêreld. Skoolgeld word deur baie Suid-Afrikaners gesien as die verergering van 'n probleem. Hierdie stelsel neem nie die mees basiese behoeftes van die histories agtergeblewe leerders, waarvan ongeveer 90% swart leerders is, in ag nie (Educators' Voice, 2002b:3).

Desnieteenstaande is skoolgeld volgens baie onderwysbeamptes en skoolhoofde 'n finansiële noodsaaklikheid terwyl die regering probeer om die ernstige onderwys probleme soos vervalde klaskamers en onvoldoende skoolhandboeke, wat herinneringe is aan apartheid se gehate gevolge, aan te spreek. Die regering het nie die nodige fondse om alle skole dadelik op dieselfde standaard te bring nie. 'n Koalisie bestaande uit aktiviste, navorsers, onderwysers en wetsgeleerdes gebruik tans die heffing van skoolgeld in die hoop om wesenlike verbeterings in vervalde skole aan te bring.

Die doelwit van die "Education Rights Projects" is om te verseker dat alle kinders toegang tot basiese gratis onderwys het. Aanvullend tot skoolgeld beoog die groep ook om die skaarste aan geskikte skoolgeboue en onderwyshulpbronne, die probleme en swaarkry wat die landelike leerders ondervind en seksuele teistering en geweld teenoor vroulike leerders, aan te pak.

Katarina Tomanovski, die spesiale gesant vir die reg tot onderwys in die kantoor van die Verenigde Nasies vir Menseregte, sê dit is moontlik om skoolgeld uit te skakel met verwysing na Uganda en Tanzanië wat skoolgeld onlangs afgeskaf het. Die Wêreldbank versterk sy teenkanting teen skoolgeld aangesien lande wat skoolgeld hef nie kan verseker dat behoeftige leerders, volgens Robert S. Prouty, een van die bank se leidende onderwysspesialiste, wel toegang tot skole en onderwys kry nie 'n Medeprofessor in die regte aan die Universiteit van Illinois, Daria Roithmayr, het 'n bydrae geskryf waarin sy tot die gevolgtrekking kom dat die heffing van skoolgeld 'n oortreding van die Suid Afrikaanse Grondwet is aangesien die Grondwet kinders se basiese reg tot onderwys waarborg. Die heffing van skoolgeld weerspreek internasionale reg waaronder die Konvensie oor die regte van 'n Kind, 'n internasionale menseregte verdrag wat wêreldwyd van regerings (insluitende Suid-Afrika) verwag om primêre onderwys en opvoeding gratis vir almal te maak (<http://www.epnet.com>).

Die doelstellings met hierdie navorsing is:

- om die persepsies van Skoolbeheerliggaamslede aangaande die betaling van skoolgeld te ontlok.
- om die persepsies van Skoolbeheerliggaamslede aangaande die gebruik van skoolgeld te ontlok.
- om die voordele van die heffing van skoolgeld op ouers van die voorheen benadeelde gemeenskappe te bepaal.
- om die impak van die huidige befondsingsnorme by openbare skole vas te stel.
- om die beperkinge wat leerders/ouers betreffende die betaling van skoolgeld konfronteer, vas te stel.
- om strategieë te ontwikkel wat skole sal help om opvoeding te verseker deur gesonde finansiële bestuur.

Die volgende navorsingsmetodes is gebruik om relevante navorsingsgegewens in te samel:

1. 'n Gefokusde literatuurstudie is onderneem om sommige van die basiese konsepte onderliggend aan skoolgelde te verduidelik.
2. 'n Gestruktureerde vraelys is gebruik om persepsies van SBL, betreffende die betaling van skoolgelde deur ouers te verkry.
3. 'n Ewekansige steekproef van skoolhoofde in Gauteng was gekies om die vraelys te voltooi. Die data was geanaliseer deur gebruik te maak van multi-variërende statistiese metodes.

Die studie sluit af met aanbevelings en riglyne om SBL te steun om skoolgelde in te samel en te bestuur in hulle poging om opvoeding daar te stel.



DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by references.

It is being submitted to the Rand Afrikaans University, in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor Educationis in the Faculty of Education and Nursing.

It was not submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.



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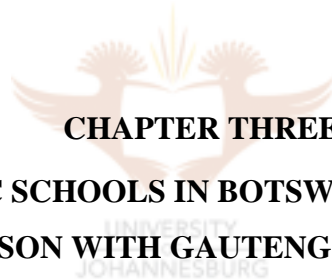
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCESS	Alliance For Children's Entitlement To Social Security
ANC	African National Congress
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Union
DoE	Department of Education
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
HOD	Head of Department
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
METF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NACTU	National Council of Teachers Unions
PED	Provincial Education Department
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SRN	School Register of Needs
WSE	Whole School Evaluation