

# 6

## POLICY GOALS AND SCHOOL LEVEL EFFECTS ON EQUITY: “INTENTIONS AND TENSIONS”

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to present the key findings on the effects of the school funding policy (SFP) on equity at school level? In seeking appropriate answers to the research question, this exploratory study focus was on what happened after the implementation of the SFP as an intervention strategy, which is input oriented. Simply put, questions such as the following ones needed to be responded to:

- ◆ Was there more money after the implementation of NNSSF policy at historically disadvantaged school level?
- ◆ Were the allocated funds equitably distributed to all schools?
- ◆ Did the previously disadvantaged schools receive more money than the historically advantaged schools?

Furthermore, as a result of the financial injection (input indicators) from the State to the schools (Section 21 schools in particular) —

- ◆ Did the said schools develop the necessary capacity to develop and manage the school budgets effectively?
  - ◆ Was the school able to link the budget to the school development plan?
  - ◆ Was the school able to develop the capacity to effectively improve curriculum delivery, maintenance plan and fund-raising projects, and
  - ◆ Finally, was more done to diversify the library resources, target previously neglected subjects like mathematics, arts and science at the previously disadvantaged schools?
- These set of critical questions constitute the main part of this chapter.

In seeking appropriate effects of the funding at school level, data for question two was gathered using the following data collection strategies:

Scrutiny of the institutional and departmental records before and after the adoption of Section 21 status through (i.e., Implementation of the NNSF), semi-structured interviews, school profiling and the use of questionnaires albeit on a limited scale.

In presenting the findings, I have matched the generated data to the critical research question in section one below. In section two of the chapter I paid serious attention to the presentation of data at hand by making cross case analysis, drawing comparisons and drawing conclusions.

Attempts to seek approximations or answers of the school level effects on equity as a result of the implementation of the NNSF policy involved members of the SMT i.e., principals, deputy principals, departmental heads and one educator treasurer from each school.

In the section below responses are given to the research question: What were the effects of the new school funding policy on equity at school levels? The findings are presented in the following categories (since the effect indicators are assumed to be dependent on the Input indicators):

- ◆ Financial Assistance from the department
- ◆ School fees and the utilization of funds

## **SECTION ONE**

### **6.2 FINDINGS AT FIVE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS**

#### **6.2.1 TSHWENE PRIMARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDY #1**

The effects of the new school Funding policy on equity differed among teachers in accordance with their official position or role at school level. However, a mixed response to the effect indicators of the NNSF policy was noticeable among the majority of the school staff. This

implies that there were both positive and negative effects as a result of the new policy on funding.

Financial assistance from the department: In response to the question “ what do you believe are the emerging effects of the NNSSF policy on equity with respect to state allocation, The principal responded as follows:

*Ever since we received money from the Department we are able to do many things in our rural schools which we were not able to do in the past. In the past it was only the town or township schools, which were well looked after by government.*

*Now in my school since we received money as Section 21 schools we are able to plan our things properly and get the necessary assistance quickly. For example, when we buy goods we no longer wait long time for the warehouse to deliver to us. We buy directly from shopkeepers as we place our own orders.*

Upon being probed further on whether the money received is sufficient to cater all the schools needs the said principal responded as follows:

*The money is not sufficient (records indicated that only R93 000,00 was allocated for the 2001/2002 Financial year). But if we were workshopped on how to use the money better we could have used the money much more efficiently (TSH. Pri<sup>1</sup>.16).<sup>42</sup>T*

The state allocation to the previously disadvantaged school like Tshwene seemed to have added value towards a positive direction of development e.g., school improvement. The interview with the school principals revealed a sense of appreciation as a result of the state of allocation.

Throughout the whole interview at Tshwene Primary school, training was stressed. The cry for training was understandable given the limited workshops given to the school principals. But the question of additional training perhaps required further attention. Presumably one can still inquire upwards at both provincial and national levels about how the capacity building programmes was conducted. Indeed inquiring upwards confirmed the absence of efficient training.

---

<sup>42</sup> TSH.PRI<sup>1</sup>.16 -

This assertion is informed by the following information gleaned from the Provincial Project Management Committee (PPMC) records charged with the main responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the NNSSF policy across the school system through the educational regions. According to the departmental records of 1999 dated 29 /11/99:

The first advocacy workshop conducted for 110 managers (i.e., chief directors, Directors, District and Circuit Managers) was held at Rustenburg, Safari Hotel with the main aim to create common understanding of key concepts related to NNSSF policy as key instruments of equity.

The departmental records indicated that the workshops “*marked the kickoff of the implementation process that will lead to the logical conclusion where all schools in the province will have qualified as Section 21 schools with all functions allocated*” (NWED, 1999:3) (Internal memo).

The fact that this was the first advocacy workshop held very late in the academic year (i.e., the end of November 1999) in preparation for the kick off of the implementation in the year 2000 does not only raise vexing questions, but also adds a lot of controversy to the whole implementation process of the NNSSF policy. On the basis of the information picked up from the documents pertaining to the workshop, it can be argued with confidence that by the end of November 1999, the NWED did not ready itself properly for the policy. It appeared to be in a state of shambles given the immensity of the Implementation of the NNSSF policy as a whole.

The testimony on the positive effects of the new school funding policy on equity at school level, in particular Tshwene Primary School appeared not only restricted to the opinions of the principal. Other officials interviewed shared some further light on the size of the school budget. Upon my interview with the teacher treasurer who doubled as both the classroom teacher and the financial manager the said educator commented as follows:

*The quarterly allocation we received from the department: (records show R23 411-25) we are able to develop the curriculum of our schools, even if our needs are more*

*than the funds. But since we have no electricity i.e., our school is not electrified. We have now started tubing the classrooms (TSH EDU. 6).*<sup>43</sup>

In the light of this development, further effects of the NNSSF policy at school level can further be picked –up from the results of the Questionnaire.

According to the questionnaire on the school levels effects administered to the whole staff at Tshwene Primary School i.e., Case Study #1, the following data in Table 6.1 reflects the opinions of school practitioners as far as effects are concerned.

**TABLE 6(a): THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF THE POLICY**

	<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	<b>Agree (A)</b>	<b>Disagree (D)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>
Financial awareness	15	3	2	3
	65%	13,0%	8,6%	13,0%
Fundraising	18	2	1	2
	78,2%	8,6%	4,3%	8,6%

Table 6(a): Educators at Tshwene Primary School show a clear financial awareness on the NNSSF. The staff also did effective fundraising.

On the basis of the information as reflected in Table 6.1 (a) above, there was a sense of appreciation at case study one i.e., Tshwene Primary School. This simply means that comparison between section 20 (when the department still controls money for the school) and Section 21 (self-managing) school positive effects indicators were realised in the form of positive attitudes from the staff. The positive effect of the School Funding Policy at school level can be explained from different perspectives. *Firstly*, the change of attitude can be attributed to the fact that in the past, rural schools especially were not directly assisted in terms of finance. This point was confirmed by the school principal when he said “in the past it was only the township or town schools which were well looked after” (Tsh.Pri<sup>1</sup>.16). The change of

<sup>43</sup> TSH. Edu-6 Stands for Tshwene Primary School while Edu stands for the educators treasures and 6 for the number of the Question.

attitude of member of the staff can be explained from the fact that as a result of the state allocation, the school began to look internally i.e., What it can do in the name of self-management (taking charge of its development.)

Since it is one thing to receive money from the state but quite different a task to translate such financial inputs into qualitative improvements, it was really gratifying to see how Tshwene Primary School utilized the state allocation to do things which were difficult to do in the past i.e., before becoming a Section 21 school. In this connection, the following changes or effects can serve as indicators of success:

As a result of the state allocation, which was augmented with a small fee (to a tune of R80.00 per learner) from the parents, the school was able to procure resources (in the form of consumable such as chalks, photocopier papers) faster than placing orders (requisition) through the regions to the Warehouse. This point was further strengthened by the comments from both the deputy principal and the teacher/treasurer (Tsh.Pri<sup>1</sup>.16). They positively commented as follows:

*We are able to control our own resources. We spend a lot of time on financial management because we must make sure that all the money is spent properly. But the problem we encountered is the absence of clerks at our schools. In most cases I leave the classes unattended so that I can have time to balance the books (Tsh.TRE<sup>1</sup>16).*

*In the past, i.e., before becoming Section 21 school, we used to wait for many months before our orders (requisition) could be attended to. Sometimes our quotation used to be sent back with the reason that the quotations had expired. Ever since we became Section 21 school we are able to buy things timeously i.e., according to our plan. (Tsh.D.PRI<sup>1</sup>16).*

It is clear from the statements made by the principal, deputy principal and the teacher-treasurer that some significant progress was registered after the school became Section 21. The positive attitudinal effects demonstrating a sense of appreciation to the input done by the state to be looked at contextually. I showed that the different case study schools had experienced the implementation of the NNSSF policy differently. For example, Siege Primary School had a different experience of the policy. But interacting with this point it has to be noted schools

found themselves in different contexts. In this case study research Siege and Tshwene appeared to appreciate the policy differently.

Another equity indicator worth mentioning here was the actual use of the state financial allocation and private tuition (school fees) to address the delegated functions at school level such as the following: maintenance, curriculum development, requisition of both stationery and textbooks as well as fundraising project.

*School fees and equity: According to the NNSSF policy, SASA 1996 imposes a responsibility on all public school governing bodies to do their utmost to improve the quality of education in their schools by raising additional resources to supplement those which the state provides from public funds (Section 36).*

In the light of the above, sufficient evidence existed which pointed out to the usefulness of the state allocation to the general conditions of the case study school. At the beginning of the implementation of the NNSSF policy, Tshwene's building was deteriorating at an alarming rate. For example, the principal's office which served as their multipurpose centre since it accommodated library books, laboratory equipments, kitchen utensils plus administrative books, was found not only too small but also in dilapidated conditions. It needed some refurbishment. In this regard both the SGB and school management decided to utilize the state funds to renovate the principal's office. The self-produced visual text below captured in the year 2001 shows, how bad the office was.

**PHOTOGRAPH 6(a): THE POOR CONDITIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (TSHWENE PRIMARY SCHOOL)**





*The principal's poor condition suggests lack of attention to infrastructure, especially rural school.*

**PHOTOGRAPH 6(b): CLASSROOM-CUM STAFFROOM**



*The self-produced photograph (2001/11/30) depicts the poor condition of the principal's office at Tshwene Primary School*

The conditions of both the principal's office and teachers' staff room should be evaluated against the money set aside for infrastructure development. This raises the question of the difference between rhetoric and hard work, promises and delivery. According to IDASA (2002:16)<sup>44</sup>

*South Africa's most vulnerable citizens are still short-changed in education spending. Huge amount of money available for improving the plight of the country's most disadvantaged schools goes remained unspent by the end of the last year i.e., 2001. Whether because of underspending or lack of budgetary provision, the neediest and most vulnerable citizens remains short change. Among the education priorities worse hit by underspending was the Thuba Makote Rural School Project. Only R1,5 million of R48 million allocated was spent.*

<sup>44</sup> Thuba Makote Project was intended to develop rural schools in the province. It falls under what is called Conditional Grant.



If one put the IDASA statement in context and move an inch further by looking at the conditions of Tshwene's buildings, it defies any logic why the NNSSF policy was started without first attending to the infrastructure. But the underspending which appears to have become the government's policy is not only puzzling in my view but also shows lack of capacity across the education system. This mean the incapacity to think, plan, deliver and being sensitive to the plight of the poor children.

Although positive attitudes among the teaching staff of Tshwene Primary School was noticeable, the conditions under which both the principal and staff work do not inspire a sense of comfort and security. In the light of this, it is difficult to expect productivity let alone quality education.

Nevertheless, as a result of the state allocation in the year 2003, the SGB managed to refurbish the principal's office in order to give it a new look. In this regard it was easy to categorically state that in rural schools like Tshwene Primary the effects of the NNSSF policy were found in the capacity of both the school management and the SGB to effectively repair and maintain the school buildings.

In relation to this qualitative improvement of the school's infrastructure the principal of the school commented as follows

*Well, even if what we get from head office is not enough to satisfy our needs, at least we can still do something with the little we get. In April 2003 we managed to renovate my office. We are also putting some toilets for the children. We can therefore say that we are better off compared to the past (Tsh.Pri<sup>1</sup>.16).*

Although it is easy to state that the implementation of the NNSSF policy had positive effects as far as renovation and maintenance were concerned, the issue of the incorrect interpretation of the policy and the inadequacy of the state allocation to the school warrant some brief discussion.

The principal of Tshwene Primary had indicated that they had used the state allocation to 'put additional toilets for children' which was good. But both the spirit and the letter of the

NNSSF policy are very clear on the difference between maintenance, minor repairs and additional structure. The question of additional infrastructure was not catered for in the state allocation, nor the policy directives. This implies that the additional structure is a violation or misinterpretation of the School Funding Policy.

Looked at from another angle the action of the SGB can be justified on two counts. *Firstly*, the implementation of the NNSSF policy without first leveling the playing fields can be cited as one of the weaknesses of the policy. This point draws its strength from the fact that R93 000.00 cannot be enough to attend to all the educational needs of the school. Therefore I think the Department was supposed to have directly intervened by not only renovating the school buildings but also attending to additional infrastructure such as staff room, library and administration office.

*Secondly*, the use of the ring-fenced<sup>45</sup> money in the construction of additional toilets for the children can be morally defended. This implies that both the SGB and the school management had no option but to utilize what was available. *Thirdly* and finally, the question of wrong interpretation of the policy by the SMT, perhaps can be attributed to either the poor training by the provincial officials or lack of monitoring and evaluation. This assertion finds support from the following comments from the principal:

The budget given to us is inadequate. But still we need further training on budget development, as well as linking it to the schools.

School fees: The decision to allow the charge of school fees appeared to be at the heart of the challenges facing implementation and the achievement of equity in particular. The charge of the school fees seemed to be more telling at both advantaged and disadvantaged school. For example, at Tshwene Primary School where both the principal and deputy principal responded to the following set of questions, their responses were full of helplessness and despair: Do you charge school fees? And how do you ensure that every parent pays?

---

<sup>45</sup> Ring-fenced means money set aside for a particular purpose (earmarked)

*Because of our condition we charge school fees which is R80.00 per learner. But ever since the policy was announced in 1999, parents are no more willing to pay school fees. Even those who can afford are reluctant to pay. Since we cannot take them to the lawyers<sup>46</sup> we take them to the local chiefs (Tsh. Pri<sup>1</sup>:10).*

The principal, commenting with a tone of despair to the interviewer, highlighted the tension between the charge of school fees and the state of allocation to the needy schools. In this regard, it was never the intention of the NNSSF policy to cancel out school fees. But any rate it happened.

The deputy principal also commented as follows:

*Even if they can be taken to the lawyers for not paying schools fees, one has to be aware that they cannot even afford legal costs. And the rate of unemployment in this village is very high. Most of the parents cannot even afford to buy food (Tsh.D.Pri<sup>2</sup>:10).*

The responses from both the principal and the deputy principal locate the implementation of the school funding in a context dominated by poverty, high rate of unemployment and the fear by the school management to press legal charges against parents who are reluctant to pay school fees. In this regard, the fundamental question becomes why school fees are charged? Or why does the department allow the school to charge school fees?

In the light of the problems surrounding school fees charged by the school governing body and the educational needs at Tshwene Primary School such as: library books, laboratory equipment and other essential items, one can say with confidence that R93 000.00 given to the school was insufficient. This argument was further strengthened by two statements from both the school principal and departmental head number three when they commented as follows:

*The money allocated to my school for 2001/2002 financial year is R93 000.00 and I think the allocation is not enough:*

*Learners' Support Material: I do not think it is enough because when we try to allocate it according to different classes it is not enough to cover our needs. But we have a different allocation for Learner Support Material from the Department.*

*Curriculum Development/OBE: Yes it is not enough, but if we can continue getting what we got this year, it will be enough (TSH.Pri<sup>1</sup>:8).*

---

<sup>46</sup> Lawyers: The reason advanced for not taking parents to the lawyers were based on fear to be rejected by the communities. This implies that it is not easy to pursue legal suit in the village.

*Maintenance: there is enough for maintenance. We can even do some renovations.  
Water and electricity: We do not pay water since we have boreholes. The electricity connection is new, we have not yet got an account.  
Since it is very difficult to make sure that the parents pay school fees even if we hold the learners report. I can say that the money from the State is not enough. For instance, we need more money to do photocopies and material production for the outcomes-based curriculum (OBE) (Tsh.H.O.D.<sup>1</sup>:6).*

A look at the two statements confirms both the inadequacy of the State allocation and the difficulty of collecting school fees. The inadequacy of the State allocation to school in the NWED was further confirmed by both the provincial education office and the regional officials. For instance a senior official at head office commented as follows:

*(Mr Conradie 13/10/2002) we are the only province that allocates learners R94-00 for the Norms and Standard Policy. Even that R94.00 sometimes never reaches schools. The reason why we allocated less to learner per capital is based on two factors. Firstly, our personnel budget is growing at an alarming rate, presently we are at 92% of the total budget. Secondly we are being underfunded by the Provincial Government. Since 1994 our budget has been declining from 41% to 34% of the provincial budget.*

The issues of the school fees, the inadequacy of the State allocations to schools and lack of attention to the physical infrastructure can be regarded as system barriers to the effective implementation of the NNSSF policy. These appeared to be fundamental issues that cannot be left to either the school or provincial departments to resolve on their own. In this regard, I think the role of the National Government (in reviewing social spending) and National Department of Education (NdoE) in addressing these systemic barriers for the realization of equity is crucial.

Notwithstanding the above painted picture which centres around the inadequacy of the State allocation and the difficulties of handling school fees, some progress was registered at case study number one. The available data in the table below seeks to confirm the school level effects of the NNSSF policy.

### 6.2.2 SIEGE PRIMARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDY #2

At Siege Primary School which is a historically well established school (former Model C) originally meant for white children until 1994, the NNSSF policy was implemented under a totally different context i.e., a school endowed with essential resources and magnificent buildings see the school profile page 15. In this regard the school level effects of the School Funding Policy are reported in accordance with the following:

The State allocation: Evidence gathered at Siege Primary School intended to address the question “What were the effects of the School Funding on equity at school?” Suggests a negative trend. All the interviewees at the school level pointed out to the negative effects of the NNSSF policy due to the inadequate State allocation. For example, in response to the question on the emerging effects of the School Funding Policy on equity the principal of the school commented as follows:

*Let me point out to you that for this financial year (2001/2002) our school as allocated R24 037.00. The amount was based on the perception that we are a historically rich school. I do not agree with this point of view. State allocation should be based on the needs of the schools with regard to the maintenance of the buildings, formulated on the actual floor space of the building as well as the total size of the school grounds and sport facilities. To use a 50:50 norm is to simplify matters. The allocation per learner is not enough especially with expenses of OBE. For example the number of OBE support material per grade (for approximately 120 learners) amounts to more than R9 000 per annum excluding other resources such as non-fiction material, material of arts and crafts as well as technology etc. (Sie.PRI<sup>2</sup>.5).*

The eloquent but emotional account of this former Model C school appeared not only to be drawing attention to the negative implications of the NNSSF policy but also laying the firm base and justification for the charge of school fees. Further interpretation of the principal’s emotional account can perhaps suggest the under currents of resistance and the laws of certain privileges. However, on the basis of the letter and spirit of the NNSSF policy, as well as the legislative intentions, the small state allocation (R24 037.00) to the former Model C school can be justified. For instance, it is clearly stated that:

*... all parents, but particularly those who are less poor or who have good income, are thereby encouraged to increase their own direct financial and other contributions to*

*the quality of their children education in public schools. The Act (SASA 1996) does not interfere unreasonably with parents' discretion under their own resources on their children education (DoE, 1998:12).*

A close analysis and interpretation of both the principal's statement and the extract from the NNSSF policy highlights not only tension between the policy and practice but goes further in demonstrating the dynamism between what is espoused and done and what is planned and translated and the fact that there is no permanency in the state of richness or poverty. The fact that majority of white people used to be rich during the apartheid era does not necessarily suggest that they would continue with such status even in the new dispensation. This appeared to be one of the elements, which the policy failed to address or foresee.

On the basis of the small state allocation to Siege Primary and the importance of maintaining quality education, schools devised some mechanisms to counter-act the negative implication of the state funding taking full advantage of the provisions of both the Constitution and the NNSSF policy. Ironically it is sad to note that the move to counter-act the legislative intentions of the NNSSF policy ended up causing tensions between the school SGB and the parents, between the school and the departmental officials, between school leadership and student movement and finally between the department and organization for Human Rights such as the following structures: Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), Education Right Project (ERP) currently led by Salim Vally and teachers' organizations such as SADTU, NAPTOSA and SAOU.

In the light of the above indicated development both SGB and SMT of Siege Primary School engaged in the following activities "to address the problem of inadequate funding i.e., state allocation.

According to the financial records at Siege Primary budget information records, school fees have been on the increase since the year 2000. For example, in the 2002/2003 financial year, school fees per learner rose from R2 000.00 to R2 500.00. This is an increase of 25% which can be out of the reach of many parents. In direct response to the probing question why the school was charging school fees? The headmaster made the following comment:

*The amount given to us (R24 037.00) for the financial year does not cover one quarter of the essentialities mentioned earlier (i.e., electricity, water, etc.). The money is not adequate since we have to maintain the existing buildings in order to keep them up to standard. Failure to do this would lead to the deterioration of our beautiful building (Sie.Pri<sup>2</sup>.6).*



**PHOTOGRAPH 6(c): THE STATE OF ART OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY**



*6( c ) But the library books and material were not diversified to accommodate learners from other race group.*

Siege Primary School increased its school fees so as to cope with both electricity and water bills. According to both the principal and his deputy, water and electricity happened to be very expensive to maintain. In the light of the above inside story given by both the principal and deputy, the NNSSF policy had little effect at Siege.

Another factor which contributed to Siege Primary School charging of high school fees has been attributed to the employment of additional teachers at the school's expense. According to the post-provisioning model/policy of the academic year 2002/2003 Siege Primary School qualified for 16 teachers but they ended up paying for four additional teachers.

The fact that schools such as Siege are able to employ additional staff at the cost of parents while there are many teachers in excess can be viewed as a deliberate attempt to slow down transformation at two levels. *Firstly*, despite the push for equity in the redeployment since 1996, and the changes in the profile (demographic) of the learner population (majority of them black) Siege Primary School had not changed the profile of its staff i.e., majority of them remain white. This contradicted the provisions of the PPM policy, which argues for the

equitable distribution of teachers taking into account colour and race. Furthermore, the alarming increase of the school fees almost yearly as a practice works against the fundamental objectives of the NNSSF policy since such a move makes education unaffordable to an ordinary person on the street. This undermines not only the letter and spirit of the country's Constitution (which makes equity and quality education right issues), but also the overall framework of EFA which seeks to extend the provision of quality education from the elites to the masses of the population.

In response to the question that sought to determine the advantages of the NNSSF policy at Siege Primary School, the principal was unable to identify some positive school level effects besides mentioning two. He commented as follows:

*At present, there are very limited advantages. The only advantage is that the Provincial Department of Education pays the salaries of educators as well as the learners' stationery. (Much of the latter is inadequate as it cannot be used by schools. We are, e.g., supplied with Irish linear stationery. Our learners don't use this material. Furthermore, the pens and pencils are of poor quality. There is poor control over delivery of expensive textbooks. We have received a surplus and after many telephone calls no one fetches these surplus books). To make SGB responsible for the school's finances is a positive step forward. In our school, the SGB, parents and staff work just as hard as in the past to raise funds so that the BASIC expenses can be met.*

A close look at the principal's statement raises many issues not only about the way the policy is being implemented, but also sheds some light on the capacity of the NWED in general. The central themes which dominate the school level effects as perceived by the principal can be indicated as follows: limited advantages (insignificant value), inadequate resourcing; ordering of wrong materials which are of poor quality, poor control of the distribution of learners support materials, poor feedback and wastage of resources. These themes which were directed at the Department of Education and on how far the schools had progressed since attaining Section 21 status draw ones attention to the internal weaknesses of the department and the limitation of the policy. On the basis of the information at hand it appears clear that the head office section in charge of ordering and delivering LSM to schools did not do a good job. In this regard, the materials delivered were not only of poor quality but were also wrong. But why the NWED had ordered materials of poor quality needed to be located at the size of the provincial budget. As indicated earlier, the allocation of R94-00 per learner cannot buy

materials of quality. In this regard see section two of Chapter two, about the carry-through effects of the adequate budget.

At the same school on the same question, the departmental head number one also made similar comment which appeared not to be recognizing the usefulness of NNSSF policy.

*Since we became Section 21 school we spend most of our time involved in fundraising projects in order to improve our financial position (Sieg.H.O.D.1:9).*

The principal added by stating three intriguing observations as follows (which seemed to be pointing to the limitation of the policy).

- ◆ The perception that a progressing school with resources needs fewer resources than a needy school is wrong.
- ◆ The size of the school buildings as well as the total area of the school grounds is not taken into consideration with regard to the maintenance expenses per annum when allocations are made.
- ◆ To believe that a school in a good residential area has more money through fee payment by parents is simply not true. By the end of August, our school's budget was R143 000.00 in arrears due to parents who refused to contribute to school fees (Sieg.PR<sup>2</sup>.9).<sup>47</sup>

On the basis of the data presented for this case study and the analysis thereof it is easy to conclude this case study with the following observations: The NNSSF policy affected the Siege Primary negatively.

### **6.2.3 BANOGENG PRIMARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDY #3**

In this former Bophuthatswana rural school, besides the principal, deputy principal and the teacher-treasurer, most of the members of the senior management team interviewed and probed further indicated the mixed but varied effects on equity. In direct response to the key

---

<sup>47</sup> Sie stands for Siege Primary School, PR<sup>2</sup> stands for the principal of case study two and 9 represent the question.

question on the advantages of becoming Section 21 school, thus receiving money directly from the education department, both the principal and the teacher-treasurer confirmed the usefulness of such by making the following comments:

*Since becoming Section 21 we are able to know what amount of money is due to us from the department. Because we receive money in the form of cheques from the state, we are able to plan our requisition needs well. For instance since we do our own orders, we no more wait for longer periods before the goods can be delivered to schools. In the past we used to wait longer for simple things like chalk to be delivered from the warehouse. Presently we place our own orders (Ban.Pri.8).*

The teacher/treasurer also commented as follows:

*We are able to do our own planning. This also means that getting resources is easy now. One does not wait longer period for the resources to be delivered.*

A closer analysis of the above two statements may shed some light on the effects of the school funding policy on equity. The two respondents managed to draw attention to progress made between Section 21 and non-Section 21 (i.e., Section 20). As a result of becoming Section 21 the school was able to do the following (which can be regarded as effect indicators):

- ◆ The school was able to engage itself in the planning exercise for development.
- ◆ The management of the staff was able to acquire resources quickly since becoming Section 21.
- ◆ The school was able to do effective planning as a result of access to finance.

Further analysis of the two statements made by the principal and teacher-treasurer gave rise to the following central themes: Financial awareness (we are able to know the amount of money) procurement plan/schedule (plan our requisition needs well). In the light of these developments pertaining to the capacity of the school to do planning and procurement plan, I think that one can still say significant progress was registered at their rural school. But such progress needs to be contextualized since such a move has a bearing on the outcome of the policy.

In response to the financial assistance from the department intended to assist the school to engage in qualitative improvement such as school development/improvement or effectiveness. The implementation of the school funding policy yielded positive effects among the members of the staff even if serious reservations were levelled against the inadequacy of the state allocations to the school. Banogeng commented as follows:

*The allocation of funds given to us is not enough, but at least we are getting something. The state allocation which is often given to us very late in the year we supplemented with the school fees from the parents. Taken together we are able to do certain things which we were not in the position to attend to in the past. For instance from the state allocation we are able to buy the following: photocopy papers, payment of telephone and the payment of auditors who are auditing our financial books (Ban.Pri).*

In addition to what the principal said, two heads of department interviewed also confirmed both the inadequacy of the state allocation and the usefulness of such in assisting the school to attend to basics. For instance, their common input is represented in the following comment:

*If the department can increase what it is already allocating to us, we can make a lot of progress as a school (HOD and HOD 31/10/2002).*

The continued trend which depicted the inadequacy of the state allocation to the school appeared not only confined to this case study school. Senior officials both at provincial and regional level had also expressed doubt regarding what was allocated to schools in most telling terms. For instance, Mr Menoe, attached to Head Office where the NNSSF policy is being driven from, commented as follows:

*In the past most of the schools were supplied with consumables such as chalks, chalkboard dusters, teaching aids and equipment. Presently things are getting worse because the schools do not get these even if they place orders.*

Repeated comments on the inadequacy of the state allocation to the schools and the immense task of collecting school fees emerged as common themes which warrant attention as two sides of the same coin. Since one without the presence of the other seemed to be posing a major threat as system barriers. For example the principal of Banogeng commented as follows:

*We as school principals, especially in the village, often encounter problems in the collection of school fees. Even if we charge less than R100.00, the parents do not*

*want to pay school fees because they think we receive a lot of money from the department. The money is so little that it cannot pay for everything. The department must give attention to the maintenance of school fees and how best to collect school fees. Even parents who can afford to pay school fees are reluctant to do so. We often manage by holding children's reports or sending children home to collect the outstanding funds. We do get something when we follow this method, but in most cases the department threatens us with misconduct or dismissal (Ban. Pri.8).*

Indeed the issue of school fees i.e., to pay or not to pay has emerged as a topical and controversial issue in the course of the implementation of the NNSSF policy. A sense of frustration displayed by the principal of Banogeng about how the department complicates the untenable situation in which the school leadership found themselves is recounted. According to departmental circular addressed to all schools dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2003 the following instruction was made explicit:

*The attention of both school principals and the members of the SGB are drawn to the right of the child to education. In this regard the school has no right to withhold learners reports for the non-payment of the school fees. The school must contact parents first (NWED, 2003.3).*

On the basis of the information from above the departmental circular, two issues can be inferred here concerning school fees. *Firstly*, the parents who refuse to pay school fees either confuse the state allocation to school with free education or are against the policy of fee exemption which appears to favour the needy. *Secondly*, the departmental officials including politicians clinically separate the school fees (payable by parents) from lesson attendance, withholding of the learners' reports and the necessity of procuring materials for tuition appeared to lack contextual information. The point I am developing here is that threatening principals especially the ones in villages and township public school with misconduct without giving them alternative mechanisms can be viewed as a dead-end. The issue of school fees and the right to education require a better implementation framework and insight into local contextual factors.

As already pointed out elsewhere, it appeared very easy for the principal of a former Model C school in town to pursue the issue of outstanding school fees through legal means (legal suit against non-payments) than the principal of a rural school located in an illiterate and improvised community. The difficulty of resolving this is based on the fact that the two

schools find themselves operating in two different contexts. For example, a village principal who is pressing legal charges against parents who refuse to pay is likely to be rejected by the school community even if the legal suit succeeds. Furthermore, such unemployed parents may not be in the position to settle the lawyers' fee. In the light of this arrangement, one has to appreciate the politics of the area in which the school is located.

#### **6.2.4 BOGOSING SECONDARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDY #4**

Despite some serious reservation against the late release of money and the size of the state allocation to the school, members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) interviewed gave positive policy effects the SFP on equity at the school level. This estimation of the effects was based on what the school was able to do or has done or is doing since becoming a Section 21 school in the year 2001. To amplify the indicated effects, the deputy-principal commented as follows:

*Acquisition of materials and resources has been added. The hazards of schools lacking funds is resolved even if it is not enough. How to acquire money to meet the expenses is alleviated. This has impacted positively on the morale of the school community in particular teachers. We are able to acquire services that were not accessible in the past (Bog. D.Pri.416).*

At the same school another senior teacher at departmental level commented as follows:

*The R78 000,00 given to our school in 2002 was not sufficient. We are sitting with a learner population of over 1000 and our expenditure is above R250 00,00 but we remain grateful since the money did go a long way in addressing essential things, For example as a result of the funding policy we have been able to do the following: pay telephone electricity and water bill, maintenance of our computer laboratory is also done from the norms and standard funding. This refers to repairs. The advantage of being Section 21 is like being independent and we manage our money. We are more in control of our destiny and responsibility as expected. (Bog. HOD<sup>3</sup>.16).*

An incisive examination of the statements both from the deputy-principal and departmental head number two indicated how far progress has been registered, as attempt to put the school on qualitative improvement towards the achievement of equity. It is worth noting that as a result of the NNESSF policy and state allocation to this needy school in particular significant



progress has been made. In this regard the following progress made can be viewed as effects indicator of equity:

- ◆ Bogosing Secondary School was able to use the state allocation to pay the telephone bills. In the past this possibility did not exist. For example only TED, CED and some DET schools received money for telephone bills.
- ◆ The school is able to engage itself in internal planning which was also facilitated by being in charge of the school funds (in the past funds were controlled from head-office)
- ◆ The school was able to acquire essential resources timeously without waiting for longer periods.
- ◆ Since becoming self-managing, the school became actively aware of the importance of paying water and electricity (these basic services were paid for and accounted for by the provincial education head-office)
- ◆ As a result of the state funds the school was able to acquire additional computers and maintain the existing computer laboratory and library. In this regard, the following photographs show the inside views of both the computer laboratory and the school library.

#### **6.2.5 MOSIMA SECONDARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDY #5**

In this deep rural school the six members of the senior management team I have interviewed show positive school level effects on equity. However the school level effects indicated were mostly around what was input and to a lesser extent what the school was able to do effectively as a result of the allocation. The deputy principal at Mosima commented as follows:

*What we get from the department is too little. This year we got R48 000-00 but this is better than nothing. We are able to do many things from the small amount allocated to us. The only major problem we experience as a school since the allocation of money to us many parents are reluctant to pay school fees. This is creating problem between parents who are not paying. Sometimes the principal is put under pressure by the SGB for not collecting school fees. If he withholds learners' report he is reported to the department (MOSI.D.Pri.5).*

The comments by the deputy principal do not only refer to the inadequacy of the state allocation but also juxtaposed the state allocation with the payment of school fees which appeared to be a headache to school management. In this regard it can still be argued that the payment of school fees within the framework of the NNSSF policy has come to be taken as one of the difficult aspects to be resolved. Perhaps the reluctance to pay school fees can be attributed to the poor understanding of the policy or the actual meaning and expectation of “*full and compulsory education as promised*” by the present ruling party, namely, the A.N.C. At another level I think the vagueness in the right of SGB to decide to charge or not to charge the school fees needed to be reviewed. A proper review of the charge of school fees can go a long way in minimizing tension or conflict between the school leadership and the parents.

Another noticeable effect of the school funding policy is the state of the school building, which was taken care of by the putting up of additional physical structure such as the laboratory, library, staff room and the administrative block. To this end Mosima Secondary School falls under quintile three because of the state of its building. To this end the principal of the school made the following appreciative comments:

*Even if we didn't get enough money from the department, we are very happy with the construction of the additional buildings i.e., the administrative block, library and laboratory.*

According to the NNSSF policy the condition when probed further on how many parents were exempted from paying school fees. The principal of the school argued that they had “not” exempted anyone from paying school fees, but rather most of the parents had long exempted themselves by not paying the fees they had agreed upon in the parents’ meeting.

In line with the working definition of equity i.e., developed on the basis of the review of literature, the following effect indicators of equity emerged:

- ◆ As a result of the NNSSF policy and the allocation of Section 21 status, Mosima Secondary School was able to develop an effective maintenance plan which was actively supported by the local Public Works Department (Ever since the building of

the additional block by the department of Public Works, their employees have been very helpful to us, commented the Principal (MO:Pri<sup>5</sup> 16).

- ◆ Since becoming Section 21 school, which also allowed the SGB and SMT to devise the school development plan and the possibility of augmenting the state allocation. The school was able to constitute an effective fund-raising committee made up of SGB members, learner representative council (LRC) and teachers. In support of this assertion both the departmental heads and deputy principal commented as follows:

*For us, to survive by making ends meet, we have been engaging in fund-raising projects such as collecting coca-cola bottles, raffle papers and selling a variety of food during parents' meetings (MOSI.H.O.D<sup>2</sup>). The deputy principal added from these fund-raising projects we had managed to raise some money. For instance in March 2002 we managed to raise close to R 30 000.*

Although turning schools into business centres in order to generate money is of crucial importance, a careful but balanced approach is essential. Implicit in this argument is that the purpose of the school is the provision of education, too much fundraising can subvert the core business of the school i.e., teaching and learning. This point was further strengthened by the departmental circular dated 30 October 2001 directed to all schools in the province:

*In line with the concerns expressed by parents and stakeholders regarding the excessive fund-raising by some schools, which often involve some children, it has become imperative for the Department to ask the school leadership to refrain from such excessive practices. These fund-raising activities do not only take children away from the classrooms, children are also not safe (NWED, 2001.4).*

Additional to the above indicated progress, the results of the quantitative data (i.e., Questionnaire) confirm the effects of the school funding policy on equity at school level.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **6.3 CROSS-CASE COMPARISON**

In subjecting the five case study schools to a cross-case comparative analysis, it became clear to me that various schools have experienced the effects of the NNSSF policy differently. In this connection the contexts (location) and history to the schools appeared to have played a

part in a positive or negative direction. For example, Siege Primary School did not see the added value of the NNSSF policy apart from appreciating the authority delegated to the SGB.

The negative attitude towards the policy perhaps can be explained from two angles. *First* the perception or the reality that they are being underfunded because they happened to a former Model C school (i.e., previously advantaged) due to the provisions of the policy can be cited as a factor. But such an approach ignores the fact that in the past they were deliberately favoured. *Secondly* the inadequacy of the state allocation to Siege Primary School may not be justifiable given the fact that in the new dispensation the school had admitted mostly African learners, which rightly deserve better funding. On the one hand, despite complaints leveled against the inadequacy of the state allocation, historically disadvantaged schools appeared to have realised the positive effects of the NNSSF policy as far as the amount was and concerned. This change of attitude perhaps can be explained from two levels. Primarily, three types of the schools were mostly neglected and disadvantaged in the past. Therefore the introduction of the NNSSF policy brought some advantages to such schools, hence an element of appreciation. Furthermore, the sense of being “independent” i.e., self-managing appeared to have added a sense pride and confidence to such schools. To this end, one head of department at Bogosing Secondary School gave weight to this statement with the following comments: We really feel honoured by being in charge of our school (Bog.H.O.D.<sup>3</sup>.16).

Additional to the above, the issue of school fees has emerged as a cross cutting theme among the five case study schools. However the charge and payment of school fees was found to have had different implications to different schools, sometimes giving rise to intended and unintended effects. For example, in the historically disadvantaged schools, the charge and collection of school fees by whatever means had created unintended tension between the SGB and the school principal on the one hand and the parents and departmental officials on the other. Perhaps what appeared intriguing is the inability of the departmental officials to realise that in some instances some parents simply refused to pay school fees. Perhaps the behaviour of the parents can be attributed either to the misinterpretation of the NNSSF policy or to the blind belief in the governments rhetoric on ten years of true and compulsory education (DoE, 1995(a):14).

On the other hand, former Model C schools' charge of high school fees can be explained from many perspectives. At one level the increase of school fees can be justifiable if one takes into account the rising cost of education, the need to maintain or improve the standard of education delivery and the importance of augmenting the state allocation plus the fact that three types of schools catered for a new population.

Looked at from another perspective, the charging of exorbitant school fees can be viewed as attempts to undermine government's transformation agenda which seeks to open the doors of learning to all. Therefore the charging of high school fees with the pretext of maintaining standards falls flat in the face of evidence such as a creating incentive packages for school principals and some teachers (*Sunday Times*, 28 October 2003).

**TABLE 6(b): THE HISTORY OF SCHOOL FEES AND STATE ALLOCATION**

Schools (Fictitious name)	Type	Location	2002 State allocation	2003 School fees	Number exempted	2003 state funds
1. Siege	Primary	Urban	R17000-00	R2400-00	4	R 23159-00
2. Tshwene	Primary	Deep rural	R93244-00	R80-00	-	R127719-00
3. Banogeng	Primary	Peri-urban	R33254-00	R100-00	-	R 54805-00
4. Bogosing	Secondary	Rural	R73880-00	R240-00	-	R125392-00
5. Mosima	Secondary	Deep rural	R48250-00	R120-00	-	R 83000-00

On the basis of table 6 it is clear that former model C school like Siege charged parents exorbitant fees compared to the previously disadvantaged schools. However, what appeared to be a serious violation of the policy is that out of five schools only one managed to exempt four parents from paying school fees. In this regard two factors can be cited. One, either the school management did not share the information with the needy parents so as to initiate the application. This point can be based on the fear to exempt learners thus losing the possible income. To exempt learners/(parents) without the department paying can be viewed as a non-starter given the high cost of education.

#### 6.4 CHAPTER SYNTHESIS

This chapter went about presenting key findings to the second critical research question on what were the effects of the school funding policy on equity at school level.

In the light of the findings presented, several conclusions and implications can be drawn from the analysis done and evidence presented. For example, on the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, it can be stated that although progress was registered towards the advance of the policy legislative intentions, significant and fundamental qualitative changes had not been realizing fundamental changes at school level can be traced backwardly and forwardly i.e., from the school to the DoE and *vice versa*. In this instances it can be argued that the process of policy implementation was not a smooth-sailing one when one considers lack of synergy between and among various levels of the education system.

Of significant importance is how the implementation of the NNSSF policy was approached from the DoE up to the school level. In this regard, the approach of keeping the divide between policy formulation and implementation (as emerged from the interviews held with the national officials) whereby all the aspects of implementation were left to the provinces with the assumption that they will do everything within their competence to ensure complete compliance were not necessary.

---oOo---