

The Role Played by the Government in Enhancing Equity in Gweru Urban Schools in Zimbabwe

M. Kurebwa* and N.Wadesango**

*Zimbabwe Open University, Midlands Region, Zimbabwe

**Walter Sisulu University, East London, RSA

KEYWORDS Colonial Rule. Effectiveness. Under-privileged. Equality. Equity

ABSTRACT The study sought to investigate the role played by the government in enhancing equity in Gweru Urban Schools. A qualitative interpretive research methodology was adopted. The sample constituted nine schools from which nine school heads and twenty- six teachers participated. Five education officers were also included in the sample to make a total of forty respondents. Data were collected using face to face interviews and questionnaires. The study established that the government was playing a role in enhancing equity, however, some disparities continued to exist. The study also revealed that there were more male heads than female heads. Furthermore, it emerged that more girls dropped out of school than boys and the main cause of dropping out was poverty. The recommendation of the study is that a legal instrument should be instituted to ensure effective implementation of the policy of education for all so that all school going age children acquire some education and avoid dropping out plus supportive activities on the ground for example educational campaigns in rural and urban areas also be put in place.

INTRODUCTION

In any egalitarian state, the concept of educational opportunities for all people is of paramount importance. Zimbabwe, as a new nation in 1980, was faced with a mammoth task of correcting the inherited legacy of inequality from the colonial era that encompassed all aspects of life. This led to the vast expansion of the education system with the purpose of eliminating these inequalities from the colonial past. The imperative to provide education was not only political and ideological but also based on the premise that education was a fundamental right as well as being basic to economic growth and development of society. Dosey (1996: 30) concurs with this view and posits that: "Mass education is perceived as the main instrument to creating a more egalitarian society and for expanding and modernizing the economy and as an essential component of the nation building."

The expansion of education was geared at eradicating social inequalities that prevailed during the colonial era. These were mainly rooted from race and that Black females were more disadvantaged than males, for example, there were few women in positions of responsibility.

Ironically despite the Government's attempt to eradicate these inequalities in education, the

Zimbabwean education system conveyed inequitable traits, which were not yet remedied. Many things had been accomplished, of course, for example the vestiges of serious past racial discrimination have been largely erased (McMahon 1996). Even with these strides, however, there was a continuation of inequalities which were still of major significance in our educational system. Most notable were the economic disparities that existed among individuals and schools; for example, some schools had more fiscal resources than others. Some inequalities were also based on access to schools, dropout rate, and differences in inputs as well as gender related inequalities.

Dorsey (1996) supported the above views and concluded that educational disparities during the colonial period were based on race, but the current inequalities in Zimbabwe were rooted in class structure of society, for example, the resource base of different schools was not equal, with differences in the amount and types of material; and non-material resources available in the various types of schools. The government also envisaged the need to establish a balance between sexes more so at workplaces. Women furthered debate on gender equity by clamouring for their human rights championed this. The then Minister of Women Affairs was quoted by the Balezat and Mwalo (2006: 61) as saying: 'The policy of this government aims at the transformation of women's status so that they can assume their rightful roles in society as par-

Address for correspondence:

Dr N Wadesango

E-mail: nwadesango@wsu.ac.za

ticipants alongside men on the basis of equality.’

To support the above observation, Barnes and Win (2004: 65) say “Times have changed, today’s woman must be educated and be productive as man because she must also help to build the nation.” All these serious backlogs necessitated the introduction of equity programmes. Eide (1991: 5) contends that, “Equity programmes promote parity between citizens by increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups or individuals. Thus preferential treatment is given to groups or individuals because of past and present disadvantages suffered by them.” In this respect the government had since taken cognisance of these educational disparities and tried to smooth over the gap by, for example, giving more per-capita grants to poor schools than they do to rich ones. Furthermore, a number of affirmative action programmes had been put in place in order to enhance equity. Some of the programmes were the Social Dimensions Fund, Women Advancement, Basic Education Assistance Module, just to name a few. Equity policies had also prompted the government to examine promotion practices more carefully in favour of the minority groups such as women. According to the gender policy (2000), “More competent women should be appointed to decision making levels to create equitable representation of the sexes.”

These special compensatory measures were designed to give the target group members access and support in education. The ultimate goal of such programmes was to enable these individuals through educational achievement to have greater socio-economics opportunity and stability (Panterotta 2000). With this background it was therefore the zeal and enthusiasm of the researchers to establish the role played by the Government in enhancing equity in Gweru Urban schools through the programmes and policies put in place.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative interpretive research methodology which allowed the researchers to get the data directly from the subjects themselves by sitting with the respondents and hearing their views, voices, perceptions and expectations in detail. This strategy contends that knowledge is subjective and ideographic,

and truth is context-dependent and can only be obtained after entry into participants’ reality. The researchers recognised several nuances of attitude and behaviour that could not have been noticed if other methods had been used. A phenomenological case-study research design was adopted. A case study is described as a form of descriptor research that gathers a large amount of information about one or a few participants and thus investigates a few cases in considerable depth (Thomas and Nelson 2001). Data were collected from 9 Gweru urban schools in Zimbabwe. The population sample comprised of 26 school teachers, 9 school heads and five education officers. In order to get an in depth of the analysis of the role played by the Government, a series of interviews were conducted over a 2 months period of time. To get further insights in the role of the government, the authors administered a questionnaire

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that 38.5% of the teachers were from the secondary schools as opposed to 61.5% from the primary sector. The statistics further revealed that 33.3% of the heads were secondary and 66.7 of the heads were primary. In such a scenario, the responses might be biased towards primary school experience. However this would not distort the findings in any way, hence this difference could be ignored.

Table 1: Types of schools

<i>Types of schools</i>	<i>Teachers N = 26</i>		<i>Heads N = 9</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Secondary	10	38.5	3	33.3
Primary	16	61.5	6	66.7
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0

In Table 2, 50% of the teachers were from high density schools and 50% were from low density schools. This suggested that the views would be balanced. The statistics further revealed that 55.6% of the heads were from high density schools. The variance was also low that it would not give biased views in favour of primary or secondary schools.

In Table 3, 60% of the education officers were primary school education officers and 40% constituted secondary school education officers. This as in Table 3 gave an insignificant vari-

Table 2: Location of school

Location of schools	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9	
	No	%	No	%
High – density suburbs	13	50	4	44.4
Low – density suburbs	13	50	5	55.6
Total	26	100	9	100.0

ance. Therefore the responses were not likely to show bias towards any one type of education officers.

Table 3: Are you an education officer for secondary or primary?

Education officer	E O's N = 5	
	No	%
Primary	3	60
Secondary	2	40
Total	5	100

Table 4 shows that 80% of the teachers said no and only 5% said yes. On the other hand 100% of the heads said no. Of the 5 education officers, 80% said no and only 20% said yes. These percentages seemed to suggest that high – density schools did not have more resources than low-density schools. The interviews carried out on the heads, 100% said no. These interviews also confirmed the responses in the questionnaires that high-density schools did not have more resources than low-density schools (Table 4).

Table 5 shows that 69.2% of the teachers, 66.7% of the heads and 69% of the education

officers indicated that parents in low density suburbs were rich hence they provided more resources. Also 15.4% of teachers, 22.2% of heads and 20% of education officers indicated that low-density school inherited most of the resources from former group A schools. Lastly 15.4% of teachers, 11.1% of the heads and 20% of the education officers indicated that high – density schools belonged to poor and middle – income parents. All these three reasons seemed to suggest that high-density schools did not have more resources than low-density schools. These reasons also supported the findings in table four above. The reasons also further confirmed what literature review suggested that rich schools have maintained their elitist nature as they enjoy the facilities and materials inherited from the community they served.

Table 6 revealed that of the 26 teachers 84.4% said no and 15.45 said yes. All the 9, 100% of the heads said no. The statistics further revealed that of the 5 education offices 80% said yes. These percentages seemed to suggest that the government was not adequately assisting the poor.

Table 7 shows that 69.2% of the teachers said yes as opposed to 30.8% said no. On the other hand 88.9% of the heads said yes while 11.1% said no. All the education officers, 100% said yes. Thus a significant majority said yes, to that pupil had problems in paying fees. These statistics thus revealed that some pupils might be having problems in paying fees.

Table 8 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that dropping out was common in

Table 4: Do High density schools have more resources than low density schools?

Types of schools	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		E O's N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	5	19.2	-	-	1	20
No	21	80.8	9	100	4	80
Total	26	100.0	9	100	5	100

Table 5: Motivation for response in item 4

Reasons	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		E O's N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Parents in low-density suburbs are rich hence they provide more resources	18	69.2	6	66.7	3	60
Lo-density schools inherited most of the resources from former Group A Schools	4	15.4	2	22.2	1	20
High density schools belong to poor and middle income parents	4	15.4	1	11.1	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 6: Is the government adequately assisting the poor?

Response	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		EOs N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	4	15.4	-	-	1	20
No	22	84.6	9	100	4	80
Total	26	100.0	9	100	5	100

Table 7: Do pupils have problems in paying fees?

Response	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		EOs N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	18	69.2	8	88.9	5	100
No	8	30.8	1	11.1	-	-
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

schools. As reflected in table eight, 53.8% of the teachers said yes and 46.2% of the teachers said no. The statistics further revealed that 80% of the education officers said yes while only 20% said no. The findings therefore reflected that dropping out was common in schools.

Most of the teachers in Table 9 were of the view that girls tended to drop out more than boys. These constituted 73.1% as opposed to 26.9% who felt that boys tended to drop out more. The findings further revealed that of the 9 school heads (7) 77.8% said girls tend to dropout of school more than boys. On the other hand, 80% of the EO's supported the majority of the teachers and heads and said girls tended to drop out of school more than boys as opposed to 20% who said no. The statistics tended to suggest that girls dropout of school more than boys.

A number of causes for dropping out were advanced as shown in Table 10. The main cause was poverty. This cause was cited by 76.9% of the teachers. The same cause was also cited by 77.7% of the heads and all the heads and all education officers 60% of the heads interviewed also confirmed that poverty was the main cause of dropping out. Negative attitudes for girls were also considered as a significant cause of dropping out but did not play a major role. In the same vein, 15.4% of the teachers and 22.2% of the heads cited this. This was also confirmed by 20% of the interviewed heads. However, teenage pregnancies was a cause, which was cited by 7.7% of the heads but did not seem to be significant also. The statistics seemed to suggest that the main cause for dropping out of school, mainly for girls in Table 10, was likely to be poverty. Therefore poverty would be viewed as the main cause of dropping out.

Table 8: Is dropping out common in schools?

Response	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		EOs N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	14	53.8	7	77.8	4	80
No	12	46.2	2	22.2	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 9: Who tends to drop out of schools more, girls or boys?

Types of schools	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		EOs N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Boys	7	26.9	2	22.2	1	20
Girls	19	73.1	9	77.8	4	80
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 10: Main cause of dropping out?

Types of schools	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		E O's N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Poverty	20	76.9	7	77.8	5	100
Negative attitudes for boys	-	-	-	-	-	-
Negative attitudes for girls	4	15.4	2	22.2	-	-
Poor performance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teenage pregnancies	2	7.7	-	-	-	-
Any other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 11 shows that of the 26 teachers 76.9% said yes as opposed to 23.1% who said no. On the other hand, 88.9% of the heads said yes while 11.9% said no. The majority of the respondents hold the view that the government had done something to reduce dropouts. It was therefore likely that the dropout rate is reduced to less than what was present because of the government's efforts.

Table 11: Efforts of the government to reduce dropout rate

Government efforts	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9	
	No	%	No	%
No	6	23.1	1	11.9
Yes	20	76.9	8	88.9
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0

The statistics on Table 12 portrayed that 84.6% of the teachers said that the government was assisting the poor. This was also confirmed by 100% of the education offices. The statistics also portray a 15.4% of the teachers who

said no. The majority of the respondents were of the view that the government was assisting the poor.

The data in Table 13 reflected that most of the respondents were of the view that government's assistance to the poor was inadequate. About 84.6% of the teachers said that the assistance was inadequate while 77.8% of the heads and 80% of the education officers further confirmed this. On the contrary 15.5% of teachers said the assistance was adequate. 22.2% of the heads and 20% of the education officers also echoed the same sentiments. The statistics seemed to suggest that the government was giving assistance as reflected in table 12, the assistance was not adequate. Therefore one would be compelled to conclude that the poor continued to be disadvantaged.

Most of the respondents in Table 14 were of the view that promotion requirements were in favour of females. In the table above, 69.2% of the teachers, 77.8% of the heads and 60% of the education officers indicated this. On the contrary only 38.8% of the teachers, 22.2% of the heads and 40% of the education officers felt that

Table 12: Is the government assisting the poor?

Types of schools	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		E O's N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	22	84.6	-	100	5	100
No	4	15.4	9	-	-	-
Total	26	100.0	9	100	5	100

Table 13: How adequate or inadequate is the assistance?

Response	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9		E O's N = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Inadequate	22	84.6	7	77.8	4	80
Adequate	4	15.4	2	22.2	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 14: Are promotion requirements in favour of either sex?

Response	Teachers <i>N</i> = 26		Heads <i>N</i> = 9		EOs <i>N</i> = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	18	69.2	7	77.8	3	60
Male	8	30.8	2	22.2	4	40
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

promotion requirements were in favour of the males. However since the majority of the respondents stated that promotion requirements were in favour of the females, one was persuaded to infer that promotion requirements were in favour of the female sex.

Table 15 shows that a number of reasons were advanced to confirm that promotion requirements were in favour of females. In the same vein, 38.5% of the teachers said that government started to give women equal opportunities with men. The same sentiments were echoed by (4) 44.4% of the heads and 60% of the education officers respectively while 38.5% of the teachers and 55.6% of the heads also felt that because of the affirmative action promotion requirements were in favour of females. On the other hand 23% of teachers and 40% of the education officers echoed that encouraging eligible women to apply for posts whenever there are some advertisements. Basing it one the reasons brought forward one was therefore persuaded to conclude that promotion requirements were in favour of the female sex.

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that there were more male heads than female heads thus 84.4% of the teachers as opposed to

15.4% were of this opinion and were supported by 88.9% of the heads of schools. Likewise, 80% of the education officers also held the same opinion that there were more male heads than female heads. This tended to suggest that although promotion requirements were in favour of women, men continued to dominate females in so far as administrative posts were concerned. The statistics further suggested that women continued to be disadvantaged in so far as administrative positions were concerned. These views were also confirmed by the interviews, which were carried out on 5 heads of schools, as they posited that men continued to dominate in leadership positions.

A number of reasons for having males in positions of responsibility were advanced in Table 17. The reason that historically and culturally women were looked down upon and were not given leadership posts was given by 50% of the teachers while 60.7% of the heads and 60% of the education officers confirmed this reason. This seemed to suggest that despite that promotion requirements were in favour of the female sex, males continued to dominate in the administrative posts because of historical and cultural factors. This reason was also ex-

Table 15: Motivation for the response in item 14

Reasons	Teachers <i>N</i> = 26		Heads <i>N</i> = 9		EOs <i>N</i> = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Government has started to give women equal opportunities with men	10	38.5	4	44.4	3	60
Affirmative action	10	38.5	5	55.6	-	-
Encouraging eligible women to apply for posts whenever there are some advertisements	6	23	-	-	2	40
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 16: Are there more female schools heads than male school heads?

Types of schools	Teachers <i>N</i> = 26		Heads <i>N</i> = 9		EOs <i>N</i> = 5	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Male	22	84.6	8	88.9	4	80
Female	4	15.4	1	11.1	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 17: Causes of the imbalance in item 16

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Teachers</i> <i>N = 26</i>		<i>Heads</i> <i>N = 9</i>		<i>EO's</i> <i>N = 5</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Historically and culturally women were looked down upon and were not given leadership posts	13	50	6	66.7	3	60
Women lagged behind in education, due to traditional or cultural factors.	2	7.7	-	-	1	20
Female teachers were not interested in leadership due to their marital status.	8	30.8	3	33.3	-	-
Sex discrimination policies inherited from previous regimes where men were regarded as superior to women.	3	11.5	-	-	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

posed by 80% of the heads that were interviewed. In the same vein, 38% of the teachers and 20% of the Education Officers also felt that cultural and traditional factors played a role. This reason was also tied to the first one and it confirmed what literature review suggested that, if families were to choose between educating a boy or a girl, because of cultural preferences for boys over girls, it is often the boy continues with schooling. Therefore, the scenario that there were more male heads than females might be attributed to the cultural and traditional factors as confirmed by the literature review. Likewise, 30.8% of teachers, and 33.3% heads felt that women were not interested in leadership because of their marital status.

It emerged that 11.5% of the teachers were of the view that sex discrimination policies inherited from the previous regime where men were regarded as superiors was a cause for this scenario in Table 16. These sentiments were confirmed by 11.5% of the teachers while 33.3% of heads and 20% of education Officers, 40% of the heads interviewed also cited oppressive cul-

ture against women as a cause for the above scenario. These statistics seemed to further suggest that despite the government's effort to bring about gender equality, many other factors come into play before the realisation of gender equality.

The statistics in Table 18 reflect that the government was making an effort to enhance a fair distribution of posts 92.3% of the teachers as opposed to 7.7% said yes while 88.9% of the heads and 80% of the education offices shared these sentiments. One was therefore persuaded to say that the government was doing something to enhance a fair distribution of posts amongst men and women.

Table 19 shows that of the 26 teachers, 84.6% posited that affirmative action was the main effort advanced by the government to enhance gender equality. Similarly, 55.6% of the heads and 50% of the education officers also concurred with this view. This tended to suggest that affirmative action was utilised as a corrective measure of the scenario in table 16.

The statistics further revealed that 15.4% of the teachers said that women were encouraged

Table 18: Is the government doing anything to enhance the fair distribution of posts?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Teachers N = 26</i>		<i>Heads N = 9</i>		<i>EO's N = 5</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	24	92.3	8	88.9	4	80
No	2	7.7	1	11.1	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

Table 19: Effort made by the government

<i>Government efforts</i>	<i>Teachers N = 26</i>		<i>Heads N = 9</i>		<i>EO's N = 5</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Affirmative action	21	84.6	5	55.6	4	80
Encouraging competent women to apply whenever posts are advertised	4	45.4	4	44.4	1	20
Total	26	100.0	9	100.0	5	100

to apply whenever there was an advertisement. This statistics tended to confirm that the government was doing something to enhance a fair distribution of posts amongst men and women.

Table 20 reflected that of the 9 heads 88.5% said that there were equity policies in schools. This view was confirmed by 80% of the education officers. Thus the responses from the majority of the respondents as reflected in table 20 tended to confirm that there were equity policies in the schools.

Table 20: Are there any equity policies in schools?

Responses	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9	
	No	%	No	%
Yes	5	19.2	-	-
No	21	80.8	9	100
Total	26	100.0	9	100

The data on Table 21 confirmed that there were equity policies in schools 44.4% of the heads and 40% of the education officers cited the Basic Education Assistance Module as an equity policy meant to help the poor and to reduce some drop out rates. This policy tended to suggest that the poor were given some kind of assistance by the government. These views were also confirmed by 60% of the interviewed heads while 33.3% of the heads and 20% of the Education officers cited the equalisation grant given to P2 and S2 schools in high – density suburbs. This suggested that different schools received different grants. Eleven percent of the heads and 20% of the education officers came up with the AIDS levy meant to assist the AIDS orphans. Lastly 11.1% of the heads and another 20% of education Officers cited the affirmative action policy. The equity policies cited above revealed that there were equity policies but the Basic Education Assistants Module being more prominent.

Table 21: Main equity policies in schools

Equity Policies	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9	
	No	%	No	%
Basic Education Assistance Module has been introduced to help the poor and reduce drop outs	4	44.4	2	40
Equalisation Grant given to P2 and S2 schools in high density suburbs	3	33.3	1	20
Aids Levy	1	11.1	1	20
Affirmative Action	1	11.1	1	20
Total	9	100.0	5	100

The data on Table 22 reflected that 89.9% of the heads said that equity policies were not adequately addressing equity. All the education officers, 100% concurred with this view while only 11.1% of the teachers felt that the equity policies were adequately addressing equity. Going by the majority of the responses one was persuaded to infer that the policies were not adequately addressing equity.

Table 22: Are the policies adequately addressing equity?

Responses	Teachers N = 26		Heads N = 9	
	No	%	No	%
Yes	1	11.1	-	-
No	8	88.9	5	100
Total	26	100.0	9	100

DISCUSSION

When the findings were closely examined against the review of literature and in relation to the current research study, it was interesting to note the consistency and agreement of the findings with what related review said about equity. Most of the heads said there were equity programmes in schools. The majority of education officers also confirmed this view. The equity policies helped to assist the poor, the women, AIDS orphans and the disadvantaged schools. It should be noted however that, despite the introduction of the Basic Education Assistants' Module (BEAM), there were views that girl dropouts were prevalent in schools due to poverty. In support, Mahlase (1997), in his study found that drop-out rates for girls were twice those of boys in Zimbabwe. He further states that this demonstrates some disparities in schools with the girl child experiencing higher drop out than boys. In support, Dosey (1996), postulates that there is little doubt that the development of Zimbabwe will be seriously ham-

pered if we do not educate our girls. According to Chifunye (1998), dropouts for girls in Zimbabwe increased due to economic situations.

Further, more women continued to be disadvantaged in so far as leadership positions were concerned as reflected by the statistics. It was also noted that the promotion requirements were in favour of females however opinions brought forward revealed that a few women occupied administrative position. This was attributed to historical and cultural beliefs, which held women to lag behind in education and to be looked down upon as candidates for leadership. It was also posited that sex discrimination policies inherited from the previous regime resulted in this scenario. Besides, women were also blamed for shunning leadership positions due to their marital status. They did not want to be separated from their families. This suggested that there was no gender equity in schools. The government was however making efforts to redress the situation through Affirmative action and encouraging those women who qualify to apply whenever there were advertisements. Similarly, Mahlase (1997), in her study of South African women teachers found that women teachers often refused promotions on account of their families because they cannot move easily since their family residence is usually determined by the location of the husband. Coleman (2004) observes that in surveys conducted in 2004 in the UK, women were found to be more likely than men to refer to lack of confidence or their perceived faults that stopped them thinking they could become school heads.

Despite the fact that P2 and S2 schools received equalisation grants, the assistance was said to be inadequate and the schools continued to be disadvantaged in terms of resources. It was therefore inferred that equity programmes existed, but did not adequately address equity, as there were some discrepancies still experienced. The different types of schools were supplied with different grants by the government. P2 and S2 were mainly located in high density areas were supplied by an equalising grant in an endeavour to enhance equity. Furthermore government schools solely depended on the government and, non-government schools were a responsibility of their responsible authorities. These were the reasons advanced why the different schools received different grants leading to differences in the levels of resources in

schools. In support, research by Glass (2000) reveal that differences in the quality of education across school types are due to inequitable distribution of funds and learning materials. Coleman (2004) argues that the government could redress the disparities by increasing funding to poor schools. This would enhance equality in educational opportunity for all pupils.

The statistics also revealed that the government was making efforts to assist the poor. However it was also noted that the assistance was not adequate. It was also likely that there might be a high dropout rate among the poor since government was not adequately assisting the poor. The poor were likely to continue to be disadvantaged since literature review revealed that the poor had other costs they face besides school fees. Literature review further exposed that "poor students have less chance of completing any given educational programme than the relatively rich students because of private costs of a child's labour to poor families was higher than rich students." Thus the poor would continue to be disadvantaged as revealed by the statistics. In support, Todaro (1995) posits that poor children have a less chance of completing any given educational cycle than relatively rich children. Glass (2000) concurs with the above views by eluding that pupils dropout of school as a result of lack of money to pay the various types of school fees.

CONCLUSION

The study established that there were equity programmes in education but however, the programmes were not adequately addressing equity issues. On the issue of promotion requirements, it was brought to the fore that women were favoured by the policy despite what emerged from the study that more men were still occupying positions of leadership in schools. This therefore implies that despite the government's effort to enhance equity, the disparities continue to exist. It was found that different schools received different resources. The government was giving equalisation grants to P2 and S2 schools. However, these schools continued to be marginalised because P1 and S1 schools had a stronger resource base inherited from the colonial period. Furthermore affluent communities supported P1 and S1 schools. One is therefore compelled to conclude that while

there was an equalisation grant as a way of enhancing equity, the amounts were not adequate to boost the resources of P2 and S2 schools to match P1 and S1 schools that continued to benefit from resources donated by affluent communities. The study also established that more girls than boys dropped out of school, the major reason being poverty. This indicated that despite the introduction of the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), girls continued to be marginalised in so far as access to education was concerned. On the other hand it emerged that the assistance was inadequate since besides education costs, the poor incurred other costs such as food, shelter and clothes just to mention but a few that helped to facilitate learning. Therefore, it can be generally concluded that the government was playing a role in enhancing equity in Gweru urban schools, but the equity programmes were not adequately addressing equity issues in totality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of what emerged from this current study, the following conditions are made:

- The equity policies should be revisited so as to make them more effective and efficient in practical terms so as to help disadvantaged groups and schools.
- Poor students must be given financial assistance for other costs such as food, uniforms and stationery since these are integral in the teaching- learning process.
- The government should come up with a system where it becomes imperative for the education system to have more women in leadership posts.
- A legal instrument should be instituted to ensure effective implementation of education the policy of education for all so that school going age children acquire some education and avoid dropping out.

REFERENCES

- Barnes T, Win A 2004. *To Live Better Life*. Harare: Harare Baobab Books.
- Balezat E, Mwalo M 2006. *Women in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Jongwe Printers.
- Coleman M 2004. *Women in Educational Management*. Harlow: Longman.
- Chifunye SJ 1998. *Gender Sensitivity Handbook for School Heads*. Harare: Min of Education.
- Dorsey JB 1996. *Gender Inequalities in Education in Southern Africa Region*. Harare: Mazongororo Paper Converters.
- Eide A 1991. *Equality and Affirmative Action*. Cape Town: Institute for Study of Policy.
- Gender Policy 2000. *Gender Policy for the Republic of Zimbabwe*. Harare: Jongwe Publishers.
- Glass TE 2000. *Women's Choices within Market Constraints*. UK: SAGE.
- Mahlase S 1997. *The Careers of Women Teachers under Apartheid*. Harare: SAPES.
- McMahon W 1996. *An Economic Analysis of Determinants of Expenditure on Public Education*. London: University.
- Panterotta J 2000. *Affirmative Action, Current Status and Future Needs*. New Jersey: McGraw Hill.
- Thomas JR, Nelson JK 2001. *Research Methods in Physical Activity*. 4th Edition. London: Champaign.
- Todaro M 1995. *Economy for a Developing World*. London: Longman.