

**SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE QUINTILE SCHOOL FUNDING  
IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the quintile system outlined in the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999 (NNSF) is formulated and implemented in South African public schools, and its implications for the achievement of equity and redress. The quintile system is a redistributive strategy of resources that calls upon provincial education departments to categorise (rank) all public schools according to their level of economic and social disadvantage, with poverty levels, geographical area where the school is situated, literacy level of the local community around the school, and income levels as the major criteria. The central question underpinning this study is: To what extent has the implementation of the quintile system been able to achieve equity and redress in the manner the policy envisions?

Thus I chose two research methods, namely conceptual analysis and questioning (Burbules & Warnick, 2003), in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of whether or not the implementation of the quintile school funding system has been able to achieve equity and redress in the manner the policy envisions. Whereas conceptual analysis was employed to explore the constitutive meaning of concepts, such as *quintile*, *equity* and *redress* with reference to the NNSF (Department of Education, 2000), the questioning method was employed to examine the current practice of the quintile system. The results indicate that, despite the fact that South Africa has accomplished some significant achievements in transforming the education system, there still are some disparities among public schools in terms of how funds are allocated to schools.

**Key words:** *Educational justice, Funding, Quintile, Equity, Redress*

## OPSOMMING

In hierdie tesis word ondersoek ingestel na die manier waarop die kwintielstelsel wat in die beleid oor Nasionale Norme en Standaarde vir Skoolbefondsing van 1999 (NNSSB) uiteengesit is in Suid-Afrikaanse openbare skole geformuleer en geïmplementeer word, en die implikasies daarvan vir die bereiking van gelykheid en regstelling. Die kwintielstelsel is 'n herverdelingstrategie van hulpbronne waarvolgens die provinsiale onderwysdepartemente alle openbare skole volgens die vlak van ekonomiese en maatskaplike agterstand moet klassifiseer (rangeer), met armoedevlakke, geografiese gebied waarin die skool geleë is, geletterdheidsvlak van die plaaslike gemeenskap om die skool en inkomstevlakke as die vernaamste kriteria. Die kernvraag wat hierdie studie ondersteun het, was: Tot watter mate kon die implementering van die kwintielstelsel gelykheid en regstelling bewerkstellig, soos deur die beleid in die vooruitsig gestel?

Ten einde dus 'n diepgaande begrip te verkry van die suksesvolle bereiking van gelykheid en regstelling al dan nie deur die implementering van die kwintielstelsel op grond van die beleid, is twee navorsingsmetodes gebruik, naamlik konseptuele analise en ondervraging, soos deur Burbules en Warnick (2003) voorgestel. Konseptuele analise is gebruik om die wesenlike betekenis van konsepte, soos kwintiel, gelykheid en regstelling, met verwysing na die NNSSB (Departement van Onderwys, 2000) te ondersoek, en die ondervragingsmetode is gebruik om die huidige praktyk van die kwintielstelsel te ondersoek. Die resultate toon dat ondanks die feit dat Suid-Afrika aanmerklike vooruitgang gemaak het met betrekking tot die transformasie van die onderwysstelsel, daar steeds ongelykheid onder openbare skole is met betrekking tot die toekenning van fondse aan skole.

Sleutelwoorde: *onderwysgeregtigheid, befondsing, kwintiel, gelykheid, regstelling*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS**

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ANC	African National Congress
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DoE	Department of Education
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
NNSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
PED	Provincial education departments
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SALC	South African Law Commission
SASA	South African Schools Act
SCR	Social and Cultural Rights
SGB	School Governing Body
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## CHAPTER ONE

### CONTEXTUALISATION OF AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa's first democratic elections were a turning point in the country's educational history. Chisholm (1997:50) observed that "this signalled a move away from the fortitude of policy by a white minority state for a black majority". Chisholm further found that official state education policy, historically geared towards building a united white nation, was now re-oriented to redressing inequalities and nation building between white and black people. Instead of being predicated on exclusion and the denial of social, political and educational rights, policy became based on the principles of inclusion, social justice and equity (Chisholm, 1997:50). These changes have found their way into legislation by way of specific policies, including those relating to the education system. This explains why, since its inception in 1994, the democratic government has developed a framework of policies to redress historical inequalities and established a rights-based education system of equal quality for all (Christie, 2008). At the core of education restructuring was the necessity to address the unequal funding of education, which favoured the white population, while other racial groups were funded unequally. In this regard, black Africans were at the lowest end of the funding system (Dolby, 2001; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

Although this move was a necessity, it is worth noting that the restructuring of South African education appears to draw heavily on conceptual frameworks and priorities promoted by international agencies, such as the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – first in 1970s, and then in the 1980s and 1990s. The approaches of the World Bank are intended for universal application despite being uniquely different and having a specific historical context. Their rationale remains the production of trained manpower capable of raising productivity. Furthermore, South Africa entered transition shackled to huge debt (Chisholm, 1997) inherited from the apartheid regime and settled disputes through negotiated political settlement (Chisholm, 1997; Christie, 2008; Fataar, 2010). These features have become remarkably influential in the development of education policy in South Africa.

In the pursuit for justice, which was intended to eliminate the imbalances mentioned above, the new government took as its obligation to develop policies that address these inequalities. Hence, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) of 1999 were developed and implemented in 2000 (Department of Education, 2000). It is within this framework of NNSSF policy that the quintile funding system is located to redress these imbalances and bring about equity (Christie, 2008, 2012:9; Fataar, 1997:81; Fiske & Ladd, 2004:116). The quintile funding system was developed as a strategy for distributing education resources with the aim of redress. The quintile system calls for all schools to be classified from National Quintile 1, for the poorest, to National Quintile 5, for the least poor, using the target lists of nine provincial education departments (PEDs) (Department of Education, 2010). Although much progress has been made with regard to the implementation of the quintile funding system, inequalities still persist and more needs to be done. For example, there still are schools made of mud in rural areas, schools that do not even have basic facilities such as electricity, running water, computer laboratories, libraries, enough classrooms and toilet facilities (Fataar, 2010; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The time and space in which the South African transition took place form the basis on which the quintile system needs to be understood. Hence, this thesis seeks to understand why these inequalities persist by examining the implications of the quintile school funding system for South African public schools. This is an attempt to obtain an understanding of equity and redress in the South African context. Finally, this study will examine if the quintile school funding system has achieved equity and redress in our public schools. The study employs the qualitative research methodology in an attempt to develop an understanding of equity and redress within the South African context.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

This study is partly a reflection on my work as an educator at a previously disadvantaged school, Linge Primary School in Nyanga township (on the Cape Flats). I have also served as a maths consultant, providing support to various primary schools in the East Metro District in Cape Town. The teaching and learning environment in previously disadvantaged schools was not conducive to teaching and learning due to the lack of both human and physical resources. This situation persists even in the post-apartheid era, and it is a huge challenge with which educators grapple, as they often have to cope with a large population of learners with minimum

resources at their disposal. When visiting schools through inter-school sport activities over the past few years, I found enormous discrepancies among schools for different racial groups. The school in which I was working happened to be one of the ill-equipped schools, mainly as a result of poor funding or a lack of funding.

Due to the obviousness of inequalities in the distribution of resources in South African public schools, the national government had to develop a funding policy referred to as 'the quintile system' in order to address the situation. The quintile system is a strategy of resource administration in which schools are categorised according to the poverty levels of the community, the geographical area in which the school is located, and the income levels of the community around the school (Department of Education, 2000). While performing my duty of providing learning support in schools, I observed that some schools were misclassified. The misclassification of schools can arise for two reasons: (1) proximity of the school to affluent and high income-earning communities, and (2) population of learners from low-income households attending a school located in a geographically affluent area. Regardless of the quintile system legislation on equality of access to and opportunity for education, there still is inequality in the funding of public schools in the post-apartheid era. Schools in most disadvantaged communities have poor infrastructure and are overcrowded. In their research, Fiske and Ladd (2004) observed that schools that served the black communities in the apartheid era are still serving black students in the post-apartheid era; and schools that were serving white students currently are partially mixed. For example, in the Eastern Cape province, where there is a majority of black people and large rural communities, schools are still not provided with electricity and other basic needs. In contrast, most of the schools in the Western Cape province have basic facilities for teaching and learning. This situation shows that the quintile system has failed in its primary aim, which is to ensure the redress of past imbalances.

### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

There have been some dramatic reductions in the inequality of resources and funding in the education system of South African public schools from apartheid to the democratic government. Despite this, significant inequalities remain (Reschovsky, 2006:21). However, the new democratic government is faced with a huge challenge of reversing policies of overt racial inequality in education, as well as in all other sectors of society (Fiske & Ladd, 2006:96). Thus, the education policies in the post-apartheid era are aimed at redressing inequality in all spheres

of South African society. De Clercq (1997:127) takes this argument further by stating that the educational restructuring policy frameworks, as they have been formulated and reformulated, are unlikely to fulfil their promised intentions of bringing about greater development, equity, participation and redress in the education system. De Clercq (1997:127) elaborates on this by stating that because of the way policymakers understand and address the problem, these policies are in danger of creating conditions that will assist the privileged education sector to consolidate its advantage while making it difficult for the disadvantaged to address their problematic educational realities. I argue that, while the government has established the NNSSF and the quintile system in order to eliminate disparities in education, it is entrenching disparities. For example, section 35 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, encourages parent bodies, through school governing bodies (SGBs), to encourage guardians and parents to make financial contributions to the schools through the prompt payment of school fees. This obligation imposes a huge burden to the poor due to the socio-economic circumstances in which they find themselves, for example as a result of the high rate of unemployment, lack of access to improved health facilities, and poor housing conditions – all of which are beyond their control.

I concur with De Clercq because, drawing from my experience as a maths consultant in the Western Cape, the policy on funding does not achieve its goals at these schools. For example, some of the schools were ranked as quintile five, while the learner population in such schools came from poor home backgrounds. This is due to the geographical area in which these schools are located, in this case, affluent areas.

The complexities surrounding the implementation of the quintile system are enormous. For example, the new democratic government inherited a very large debt backlog from the apartheid government (Marais, 2001), as well as low economic growth (Fataar, 1997), political pressure from opposition parties (Jansen, 2003) and the influence of the neo-liberal system (Christie, 2008). All of these have posed a huge challenge to developing countries, including South Africa, resulting in a reduction of expenditure on education and other social responsibilities in order to qualify for financial aid from the World Bank (Christie, 2008; Fataar, 2010). Due to this reality, the government had no choice but to comply with the requirements of the World Bank to be reckoned as a member of the global economy (Christie, 2008; Fataar, 2010).

Amongst the challenges to the implementation of the quintile system was that the quintile system has been open to misinterpretation by different people at different levels of the government. Subsequently, there has been conflict relating to the implementation of policies, i.e. NNSSF and SASA, as discussed in the previous paragraph. McLaughlin (1987:174) therefore contends that bureaucrats responsible for the implementation of the policy could give meaning and interpretation to the intended policies that could change or even subvert the policy makers' original intentions. It is not my intention to elaborate on this policy here, although I will elaborate on it in Chapter 4. The success of a policy depends on two factors: local capacity and will (McLaughlin, 1987:173). In other words, if the people at grassroots are not motivated and do not have the correct attitude towards the policy, it will not succeed. Other influences, such as environmental influences, will also affect the success of the policy. This is why the quintile system seems to be ineffective, because at each level of its dissemination process, starting from bureaucrats to implementation at school level, each of those involved add their interpretation, interests and power. Because of different agendas, interest and power within this process, people are able to subvert the policy from what it was envisaged to be (Ball, 1994). Therefore, the key issue is whether the quintile school funding policy is addressing equity and redress within South African public schools.

Reflecting on the possibility of achieving equity and redress through the quintile school funding policy, De Clercq (1997:128) posits that policies must be analysed and evaluated in different ways, depending on their nature and scope, as they indeed vary in their purpose, complexity, target groups, and distribution of costs and benefits, and in the location of their impact. De Clercq (1997) and Christie (2008) are of the opinion that there are substantive policies, which reflect what the government should do, procedural policies, material policies, symbolic policies, regulatory policies, and substantive and redistributive policies. They further argue that most of the education policies in South Africa are symbolic, substantive and redistributive. Looking at the quintile school funding system, my interest is drawn to its implementation in public schools. In the following section I shall discuss what education policy is in view of the recently amended NNSSF policy of 1999 and the quintile school funding system, as I believe that having a deeper understanding of what policy is and how it is formulated will enable us to understand the dynamics behind policy formulation, as well as the challenges facing its implementation. In brief, the rationale for this research can be articulated thus:

- To identify gaps for the government to reconsider the quintile funding formula

- To interrogate the implementation of the quintile funding formula for the government to re-consider the implementation of this funding system
- To produce a sound argument on the quintile system that forms the basis for policy makers to consider reviewing the quintile system

## 1.4. CONCEPTUALISING EDUCATION POLICY

### 1.4.1 Conceptualising education

The concept of education is an example of what has been called essentially contested concepts (Carr & Hartnett, 1996, cited in Van Wyk, 2004:10). Like other social concepts whose meanings are contested, the criteria governing the meaning and proper use of 'education' are constantly challenged. Van Wyk (2004) argues that such disputes are 'essential' in the sense that arguments about these criteria turn on fundamental political values and beliefs. Based on this notion, Van Wyk (2004:10) elucidates:

The word 'education' may be derived from one of two Latin words or perhaps both. These are *educere*, which means 'to lead out' or 'to train' and *educare*, which means 'to train' or 'to nourish'.

Following this definition, education is a process of guiding, training or nurturing people to develop the competencies required to live a fulfilled life in society. Therefore, education is regarded as a vital instrument that society employs to nurture its citizens.

An analysis of the concept of education in identified three complex criteria that map out the distinction between 'education' and other human pursuits (Van Wyk, 2004:10). The first criterion is that 'education' in its full sense has a necessary implication that something valuable or worthwhile is going on. Secondly, 'education' involves the acquisition of a body of knowledge and understanding that surpasses mere skill, know-how or collection of information. According to him, such knowledge and understanding must involve the principles that underlie skills, procedural knowledge and information, and must transform the life of the person being educated, both in terms of his or her general outlook and in terms of becoming committed to the standards inherent in the areas of his or her education. Thirdly, the process of education involves at least some understanding of what is being learnt and what is required in

the learning. For example, we must not be 'brainwashed' or 'conditioned' into education, and must have some minimal voluntary participation in such processes.

### **1.4.2 What is policy?**

The literature shows a lack of consensus when discussing policy (De Clercq, 1997; Fataar, 2010; McLaughlin, 2000; Taylor, Rizvi & Henry, 1997). A lack of consensus in the conceptualisation of policy may lead to multiple perspectives on the meaning and nature of policy. Defining policy is not an easy task. Fataar (1997, in Fataar, 2010), argues that the term 'policy' could variously refer to defining objectives, setting priorities, describing a plan or specifying decisions or rules. The general vagueness on the description of policy is displayed in the impalpable reference to it as simply what governments choose to do or not to do. Furthermore, Fataar (2010) states that critical policy sociologists advance some pertinent views on the definition of policy. According to Fataar (1997:64), policy represents a political commitment to a set of social ideals that are constructed in deeply contested ideological and political processes.

With the inauguration of the democratically elected government in 1994, the political climate in South Africa took a different turn, engendering high expectations for the majority of people, who had been marginalised for a long time under apartheid laws. These people anticipated radical policy shifts in all the activities and programmes of the government. In their thinking, the ideal situation would be that policies should favour the poor now that apartheid had been abolished. Unfortunately, the reality proved this thinking wrong; the opposite is what is happening today. Although government hopes to redress these inequalities in society, the challenges that it faces could not allow it to fulfil its mandate. Rather than confronting those challenges, the government instead formulated new policies in order to legitimise change (Jansen, 2003).

### **1.4.3 What is education policy and how is it formulated?**

Education policy can be considered as a set of political decisions which have been taken by those who exercise power, through a prescription of actions aimed at changing educational institutions or practices (Waghid, 2002:1). In other words, only those in power can make political decisions on how to govern the country. In this case the ANC is in power as the



majority party in South Africa, although there are opposition parties that also play a crucial role in policy development, hence the country has a multiparty democracy.

Given this definition of education policy I attempt in the subsequent paragraphs to incorporate an analysis of the process of formulating education policies. Kruss (1997) and De Clercq (1997:146) state that education policy-making can be conceptualised in terms of two broad models: the rationalist model and the political model. They posit that the rationalist model assumes that policy-making is essentially a rational process that operates linearly. The characterisation of these steps is as follows: 1) agenda-setting, which involves stipulating policy priorities; 2) policy formulation; 3) policy adoption; 4) policy implementation; and 5) evaluating the policy to determine whether policy implementation has been successful (Badat, 1992:19-23).

The political model provides a more plausible conception of the policy-making process. This model emphasises the centrality of power relations, conflict and contestations in shaping the policy. It is critical of the notion that implementation is a matter of automatically following a fixed policy text and putting legislation into practice. The political model endeavours to expose the political and ideological dimensions embedded in policy. Policy meanings are shaped by material conditions on the ground, as well as by the willingness of educational participants to implement the policy. In other words, policy meanings manifest at the interface between text and practice, rather than prior to practice (Fataar, 2010:53). Fataar (2010:52) criticises Badat's model, contending that, while Badat's model is useful as a starting point in policy considerations discourse, it does not account for the complexity of the policy-making process. Taking the debate further, Fataar (2010) argues that Badat's linear delineation of the process suggests that the five phases are discrete and non-interactive. Fataar criticises Badat's linear delineation of the policy process for being an example of the rationalist model of policy formulation. In my view, the political model provides a suitable explanation of the policy-making process in the South African context. In addition, Fataar's (2010) perspective on the contested nature of the political model has influenced my thinking, as Fataar (2010:52-53) refers to the rationalist and political models of policy-making, and to the centrality of power relations, conflict and contestation in shaping the policy-making process.

Policies are formulated with the intent of being implemented to improve the day-to-day functioning of organisations and the general well-being of the society. McLaughlin (1987:173)

elucidates that it is hard to implement policies across layers and institutions in society. This is because policy implementation requires a lot of pressure to ensure that the policies filter through to lower levels. McLaughlin (1987) further states that the success of a policy depends on two factors, namely local capacity and will. If people at grassroots level are not motivated and do not support a policy, implementation of said policy may not succeed. Besides people's attitudes, there are other influences, such as environmental influences, that will affect the success of the policy.

Several factors have an impact on the formulation and implementation of education policy, and these factors need to be identified and addressed to ensure that the policy survives and succeeds. Giese *et al.* (1991:3) note that modern education systems are subjected to repeated calls for change or reform, and that the interests of specific groups are reflected in most of these calls. Most calls involve assumptions about the potential effects of innovations. In most cases, these assumptions are not backed by research. Biddle and Anderson's (1991) view may indicate that policies are supposed to serve the interests of certain groups in society, a view that corroborates Fataar (2010), who argues that policy processes are inherently political in character, involving compromise, trade-offs and settlements. These views imply that there are competing interests in the policy process, manifesting in compromise over struggle (Fataar, 2010; Taylor *et al.*, 1997:27). Struggle is subdued by power and control, although both are central in policy processes. Ball (1994) seems to echo the latter view by identifying three steps that are involved in policy formation and implementation, arguing that the policy process can be categorised into three, as 'policy as text', 'policy as discourse', and 'policy as effect'.

With regard to text, Ball (1994) contends that policies are contested in and between arenas of formation and implementation. Different parties and processes are involved in the construction of the policy text and its implementation. However, the opportunity for reforming and re-interpreting the text means that policy formation does not end with the legislation; in this regard some researchers, for example Ball (1994:16), seem to agree with McLaughlin's (1987) notion when he claims that policy as text gives rise to various interpretations, as it is disseminated through various bureaucratic levels, especially when it reaches the ground level or school level where it will be implemented (Fataar, 2010:55). The intended and unintended consequences of the quintile system, as outlined in the NNSF policy of 1999, have led to a situation in which schools are misclassified in terms of quintile ranking. This is due to the fact that bureaucrats at different levels interpret and re-interpret and re-contextualise the policy in their particular

contexts. Adams (2006:41) advances this argument and asserts that “what the text signifies no longer coincides with what the author meant, henceforth, textual meaning and psychological meanings have different destinies”. This situation arises when discourse passes from speaking to writing. Thus Ball (1994) contends that authors of education policy cannot control the meaning of their texts. I like Ball’s conceptualisation of policy, which I believe gives an understanding of policy and how to analyse it, what it is and its trajectories. Ball inhabits two different conceptualisations of policy: policy as text and policy as discourse. I discuss these concepts in the following section.

In an effort to discuss policy as discourse, Adams (2006:42) asserts that the policy process, when viewed as an angle of continuity and contextualisation, consists of three interrelated contexts. In this regard, the *context of influences*, in Adams’s terms, serves as the first context. This is where the public policy is initiated and where policy discourses are constructed. It is within this domain that interested parties struggle to influence the definition and the social purposes of education (Adams, 2006:42). Policy concepts are established within this context and it is also where these concepts acquire currency and credence (Adams, 2006:42). Fataar (2010:54) seem to agree with Adams and identifies two further contexts, namely the context of policy text production, and the context of practice. The second policy context is the context of policy text production. In relation to this context, Fataar (2010) postulates that policy is normally articulated in the language of the general public good, which often disguises its lack of clarity and internal coherence. Examples are government legislation contained in acts and white papers. The second context is the context of practice. Fataar (2010:54) argues that “what is of relevance here is that policy is not simply received and implemented in practice, but is subject to interpretation and then recreated”. Thus, policy is interpreted differently by different officials as it is disseminated through different levels of governance, and when it reaches the implementation level it tends to subvert from what it was envisaged for (McLaughlin, 1987).

With regard to the quintile system, Griese *et al.* (2010) assert that the quintile system disguises inequalities in public schools. At the implementation level of the quintile system, the funding of education does not eliminate disparities, instead entrenches them. It is worth noting that the construction or production of these discourses is closely related to issues of power (Ball, 1994:21-22). Discourses are about what can be said and thought, and also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. In other words, discourses lead to the redistribution of voices so that only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative (Ball, 1994:23).

Discourses embody the meaning and use of propositions and words. At the same time, other combinations are displaced or excluded by these discourses (Ball, 1994:21-22).

In order to understand education policy development and its implementation in South Africa, I shall be focusing on the funding policy in the post-apartheid era. The focus will be the NNSSF policy of 1999, specifically the quintile school funding system adopted as a mechanism to distribute resources. As a researcher of the quintile school funding system, I believe conceptual analysis of the key concepts will provide me with the necessary tools to explore the system as outlined in the NNSSF policy. This can be done by philosophical analysis, which studies concepts in relation to other concepts and takes into account the political and educational ideology in which these policies are embedded (Van Wyk, 2004:21).

#### **1.4.4 Why do we need conceptual analysis of education policy?**

Due to the nature of this study I propose to discuss the need for conceptual analysis of education policy within the South African context in the post-apartheid era. This is done because of the policies that have been developed for addressing disparities of the past. In this regard, Badat (1992:37) provides a possible rationale for education policy research in post-apartheid South Africa. According to him, progressive academics and researchers can contribute to the transformation of the social order by moving into the sphere of policy research. Badat (1992:33) further argues that “some kinds of research, like policy research, are specialist activities and academics and researchers possess particular skills which need to be harnessed in the service of social transformation”. The author is also very clear about the political accountability of these progressive policy researchers.

If progressive academics and researchers are not simply to be ideological and political functionaries of the liberation movement they must be given space for critical work. This work may sometimes challenge received positions of the democratic movement. The value of the autonomy of the researchers is precisely their ability to pose questions which the democratic movement itself may, for a number of reasons, be unable to reflect on (Adams, 2006:28).

Adams (2006:28) argues that policy research can investigate the theoretical foundations of policies with a view to improving them. He concludes by arguing that “one might say that the

rationale for policy analysis by progressive policy researchers is that they can promote the transformation agenda in post-Apartheid South Africa". He suggests that the first way is to improve existing policies by challenging their theoretical foundations. Secondly is to reflect critically on the political priorities of new policies, while thirdly is to pose questions for reflection in terms of research priorities (Adams, 2006:29). In the section that follows I discuss the legal framework of the funding of South African public schools as required by the Constitution of 1996, the SASA of 1996, and the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999 (NNSSF).

## **1.5 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE FUNDING OF SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

In order to be able to understand education policy, it is important to understand the context in which it was formulated (Fataar, 2010). The South African Constitution of 1996 and section 29 of the Bill of Rights guarantee that (1) everyone has the right to (a) basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible. In furtherance of this, the funding of such public schools is vested in the state. In 1996 the new government established the South African Schools Act, No 84 (SASA), with the aim of democratising the education system and decentralising power in the communities through the establishment of school governing bodies (SGB). In the preamble to the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 it is stated that:

Whereas this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and, in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talent and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and language, uphold the right of all learners, parents and educators, and promote the acceptance of responsibility for the organization, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the state (Department of Education, 1999).

The above statement shows that all learners should have equal access to quality education, irrespective of their social, economic, ethnic, religious, gender and cultural backgrounds, as

this will lead to equal access to opportunities. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding document was published in 1999. Section 34 (1) of the South African Schools Act clearly articulates that the state must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the right to basic education and the redress of past inequalities. The NNSSF deals with:

- a) The funding of public schools, in terms of section 35 of the SASA.
- b) The exemption of parents who are unable to pay school fees, in terms of section 39(4) of the Act.
- c) Public subsidies to independent schools in terms of section 48(1) of the Act (Department of Education, 2000).

An understanding of the way in which these issues are implemented in public schools in South Africa will help in understanding the extent to which the quintile system of funding has helped to achieve equity and redress in South Africa. The research procedure employed to explore these issues is discussed in Section 1.6.

## **1.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

My background, as discussed in Section 1.2, motivates me to add my voice to the on-going debate on issues concerning education funding policy. The inequalities that existed during the apartheid era continue to exist today, both in society at large and in education in particular. I do so, however, not as an expert in education policy, but as an informed citizen and a research student of education policy. As a concerned citizen, I have observed that different policies have been developed in the post-apartheid era, aimed at eliminating disparities and bringing about equity; however, the reality is that the disparities seems to be further entrenched in contemporary South Africa. I do not say this in order to downplay the progress that has been made thus far, but wish to state that there is much more that needs to be accomplished. It is my wish to be part of the solution to education ills in South Africa. As a research student I have had the opportunity to receive instruction on how to conduct research. During my class work, the two terms, ‘research methods’ and ‘research methodology’ were somewhat like anthems of the research module.

Novice researchers often confuse ‘research methods’ and ‘research methodology’, but these two are different dimensions of the research process. In this section I attempt to clarify these

two concepts. Research procedures include research questions, research methodology and research method (Creswell, 2007). I deal with these briefly in this section, but provide a more in-depth analysis of research methods and research methodology in Chapter 2. Van Wyk (2004:24) states that the design of all research requires conceptual organisation, ideas to express the needed understanding, conceptual bridges from what is already known, cognitive structures to guide data gathering, and outlines for presenting interpretations to others. Thus my research questions are formulated within this framework. In the following section I shall discuss the research question, research methodology and the research methods of the study.

## **1.6.1 Research questions and aims**

### **1.6.1.1 Research questions**

The key question for this study is:

*To what extent does the quintile school funding system achieve redress and equity in South African public schools?*

In order to explore the quintile school funding system in public schools comprehensively, the following research sub-questions emanating from the key research question were investigated:

- a) What is the nature of the quintile school funding system?
- b) What are the reasons for its implementation?
- c) How was it implemented?

The key research question underscores the research objectives of the study. These objectives have been formulated in order to be able to address the research question. There is a lack of consensus on the definition of policy (Fataar, 2010). Different researchers give different definitions of policy and I find it important to interpret these in order to understand the concept. In order to reach a deeper understanding of policy we need to be aware of these different definitions. I argue that in order for us to gain a deeper understanding of education policy, there needs to be no specific definition that can be singled out; rather, an understanding of different perspectives is needed, so that the appropriate perspective can be applied to the appropriate context, in this case the South African context.

### 1.6.1.2 Research aims

In order to achieve this objective, the following have been identified as specific aims of the study:

- To describe the nature of the quintile school funding system.
- To analyse the reasons for its implementation.
- To analyse how it is implemented.

### 1.6.2 Research methodology

In this section I will briefly discuss the theory of the research methodology; this will be discussed again in detail in Chapter 2. Research methodology comprises a variety of techniques used for collecting data and analysing it within a specific framework of research. This is a descriptive study (Mouton & Babbie, 2010) located in a qualitative research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Silverman, 2010). Waghid (2002:43) claims that particular frameworks of thinking constitute research methodology; one can infer that frameworks of thinking can also frame education policy research. He distinguishes between positivist inquiry, interpretive inquiry, critical inquiry and deconstructive scrutiny as distinctive patterns or frameworks of understanding. Whereas positivist inquiry is associated with quantitative research, interpretive inquiry, critical inquiry, and deconstructive scrutiny are associated with qualitative research. Details of these approaches are provided in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Although it is not my intention to utilise interpretive inquiry in this study, I like the fact that this paradigm links with the qualitative methodology employed for this study in the sense that, in an interpretive inquiry paradigm, education policy research can be described as “qualitative if characterised by the use of archival knowledge, narrative knowledge or observational knowledge” (Waghid, 2002:47). Due to the nature of this study I intend to focus on archival knowledge, which includes documents (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:377) like NNSSF, the 1996 Constitution and the SASA of 1996 (Department of Education, 2000). I believe that this will help me to gain a deeper understanding of the quintile school funding system in our public schools. Waghid (2002:47) argues that narrative knowledge usually takes the form of in-depth



interviews, oral histories, autobiography, narratology and phenomenology, but extends privilege to participant observations. Observational knowing tends to privilege ethnography and action research through participant observation, and the writing of detailed field notes to capture the words and behaviour of people. In this study I chose neither of these paradigms, but utilised documents as the source of data.

Iris Marion Young (cited in Van Wyk, 2004:25), eloquently describes a paradigm as a configuration of elements and practices that define an inquiry, metaphysical presuppositions, unquestioned terminology, characteristic questions, lines of reasoning, and specific theories and their typical scope and mode of application. A paradigm determines how a problem is formulated and tackled methodologically. Depending upon the objective of a particular research project, emphasis is laid on one or the other paradigm. De Vos *et al.* (2011:40) states that the term paradigm originated in linguistics and refers to the various forms that a word can take in some languages according to the declension or conjugation of that word, especially as a model for other similar nouns or verbs. I found this to be important, since language is used in the documents as texts, which were examined. The document that was read in detail and subjected to an examination of text was the NNSF. This was done to uncover embedded constitutive meanings of equity and redress within the quintile schoolfunding system, and particularly to assess how effective the quintile system is in achieving these goals.

Babbie and Mouton (2008) further state that social research serves many purposes, of which they identify the three most common and useful to be description, explanation and exploration. They explain what each entails, for example description entails that the researcher observes and then describes what was observed. They argue that, because scientific observation is careful and deliberate, scientific descriptions are typically more accurate and precise than casual descriptions. For example, the census and surveys undertaken by Stats S.A. and market research companies are excellent examples of descriptive social research.

Mouton and Marais (1991:43) state that there is a large variety of types of research within the spectrum of descriptive studies. On the one hand they state that it is possible to emphasise the in-depth description of a specific individual, situation, group, organisation, tribe, sub-culture, interaction or social object. On the other hand the researcher may emphasise how often a specific characteristic or variable occurs in a sample. The description of phenomena may also range from a narrative type of description to a highly structured statistical analysis. The latter

type of analysis is characterised by the use of systematic categorisation of variables by means of frequency tables, arithmetic means, medians, and cross-tabulations. In other words the term descriptive research has developed into an umbrella term used in many different types of research. The term descriptive study is used for case studies, interviews, surveys, qualitative studies and observation (Jackson, 2007).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2008), the other purpose of social scientific research is to explain things. For example, reporting on the voting intention of an electorate is a descriptive activity, but reporting on why some people plan to vote for A and others for B is an explanatory activity. The major aim of explanatory study is to indicate causality between variables or events. A large proportion of social research is conducted to explore a topic or to provide a basic familiarity with that topic. Exploratory studies are also appropriate for more persistent phenomena, and are typically done to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desires.

Based on these purposes of research (description, explanation and exploration), I locate my study within descriptive research. In this study, documents like the NNSSF and related documents will be analysed to gain an understanding of quintile funding in our public schools. As has been explained earlier in this chapter, the methodology used in this study will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. It was hoped that the qualitative research methodology would help me to achieve the objectives of this study.

### **1.6.3 Research methods**

Research method involves techniques of proceeding with gathering evidence (Waghid, 2002:43). In this study I used the following methods: conceptual analysis, which is linked to constitutive meanings, and questioning, which is linked to critical inquiry (Burbules & Warnick, 2003). There are certain reasons why I choose these two methods.

I found Burbules and Warnick's (2003) ten research methods in philosophy of education to be useful, and I only used conceptual analysis and questioning a policy or practice as research methods for my study. As I was interested in quintile funding, I realised that conceptual analysis would enable me to analyse key concepts of the policy, like equity, redress and the quintile system, and give them constitutive meanings. I also thought that utilising these methods would help in identifying the gaps and contradictions in the policy.

Drawing again from Burbules and Warnick (2003), I found the ‘questioning a policy’ method useful with regard to questioning the quintile school-funding policy. The questioning method helped in understanding whether the quintile school funding system was an appropriate mechanism in achieving equity and redress in order to eliminate disparities in the South African education system. It also helped in finding gaps and contradictions within the policy. The following section is a short introduction to the three key concepts, namely equity, redress and the quintile school funding system. A detailed discussion of these key concepts is provided in Chapter 3.

## **1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

As has been discussed, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999 aimed to address the inequities inherited from the apartheid era. People use the same concepts for different meanings and interpretations in different contexts. It therefore is crucial that concepts like equity, redress and the quintile system, as key concepts in the study, are clarified for a better understanding of their meanings in the context of the school-funding policy.

### **1.7.1 The quintile school funding system**

In order to address the inequalities in education, a provision was made in the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999 (NNSSF) to pay special attention to poor schools. According to the NNSSF policy of 1999, schools were to be categorised according to quintiles using the target list of all the schools in the province. Schools were categorised from National Quintile 1 for the poorest, to National Quintile 5 for the least poor. Quintile 3 was categorised as medium and quintiles 4 and 5 were categorised as least poor. The following are the criteria according to which the quintile system categorised schools:

- Poverty levels of the community in which the school is situated.
- Literacy levels of the community
- Geographical location of the school (Christie, 2008:132; Motala, 2006:188).

### 1.7.2 Equity

Defining equity in the South African context is complex, and researchers interpret equity differently. For the purpose of this study it is important to understand or be aware of these definitions so that we can locate the relevant definition within the appropriate context, in this case South Africa. For example, Fiske and Ladd (2002:37) contend that equity focuses on how the objects of interest, such as educational inputs, are distributed across the population. Within the South African context, the interest groups are those defined by race, for example black Africans, coloureds, and Indians. They argue that, for some purposes, distributional equity may be defined with respect to public funds alone or to the sum of public and privately funded resources. They also argue that trade-offs must be made in promoting equity. This is because it would be counterproductive if resources provided to the top schools were to be directed to the level of the lower groups. If this were to happen, some of the fee-paying families might leave the public school system for the private. Considering that the revenue generated by wealthy schools through high school fees lessens the burden on the government, this must be avoided. It is for this reason that equity is an elusive goal (Amsterdam, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004) and that government funds, for example resources, are distributed unequally in order to be fair. The government had to address the inequalities in order to bring about equity.

Christie (2008:136) is of the view that equity can take the form of equal treatment, where there is no discrimination on the basis of race and everyone is treated equally. It may also take the form of equal educational opportunity, or may take the form of educational adequacy, which shifts attention to outcomes. Fataar (2010:56) states that equity refers to processes and policies on which institutions embark in order to achieve equality. For example, affirmative action might be regarded as a short-term measure to achieve equality in access to university. A previously disadvantaged group would thus receive positive discrimination in order to facilitate their equal participation in society.

Amsterdam (2006:26) states that, despite the progress report of equity, equity is an elusive goal in South Africa. She argues that this is due to severe backlogs in the poorest schools, which were neglected, and to limited funding. In supporting this argument Amsterdam states that the United States of America travelled the same path of racial segregation and inequality in education that South Africa is travelling. In both contexts, equity emerged as a dominant principle. Brown (2006) identifies two equity approaches, namely the horizontal equity

approach, which means “equal treatment of equals”, and the vertical equity approach, which is “unequal but equitable treatment of unequal”.

### 1.7.3 Redress

Given the historical background in South Africa, the concept “redress” becomes one of those highly contested concepts, even though it might seem easy to understand. One of the challenges to an understanding could be based on the fact that, in the quintile funding system, it goes together with equity. In this respect, the political landscape of the country has an influence on the definition of redress. Barnes (2007) states that redress became a blanket code word for historical inequalities, but the term “redress” had very different implications at different times, and for different people, in South Africa. The meaning of redress in use at any given time includes ‘rectifying a wrong’, ‘reparation’, ‘restoring equality’ and ‘empowerment’ (Barnes, 2007). Each of these variations has carried important implications for state policy in relation to institutional actions and stakeholder contestation. Barnes further states that in South Africa redress has always been defined in monetary terms, and each of the varied meaning has had at least a conceptual price tag attached.

According to Fiske and Ladd (2002:37), redress recognises the inequities of the past and therefore calls for what is known in the United States as affirmative action to offset those inequities. Given the deep inequalities in South African education, characterised by unequal patterns of schooling, the idea would be to direct more resources to previously disadvantaged schools and communities in order to alleviate inequalities. Just like the ‘principle of redress’ referred to in John Rawls’s book, *A theory of justice*, (1999:86, cited in Van Wyk, 2004), Van Wyk (2004:43) observes that redress consists of treating “all persons equally, to provide genuine equality of opportunity”. That is to say, more attention should be given to the less advantaged with “less favourable social positions [in order] to redress the bias of contingencies in the direction of equality” (Van Wyk, 2004:43).

In other words, more educational opportunities should be provided according to peoples’ needs to offset the inequalities and redress social injustices. Van Wyk (2004:43) contends that the principle of redress touches on several aspects that deserve closer examination. The first is that of ‘undeserved inequalities’, which is a critical issue in the South African society. Thus, this

study aims to examine the quintile school funding system in South African public schools to understand why these inequalities are persistent in post-apartheid South Africa.

## **1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth discussion of the research methods and methodology of the study. The following research methods were employed: conceptual analysis and the questioning method. The methodology that was employed was a descriptive study utilising the qualitative research methodology, for which the NNSSF documents will be examined.

Chapter 3 provides a historical background, focusing on the trends of unequal funding of South African public schools, based on race, and on the policy aspects of the quintile school-funding strategy in South African public schools. I examine the quintile school-funding strategy with reference to the meaning of equity and redress. The meaning of basic education as a socio-economic human right is also explored from an international perspective to a South African context. This chapter also explores and discusses the model of public exchange in order to understand the trajectories of policy formulation with the aim of identifying policy gaps.

Chapter 4 focuses on policy analysis based on documents, highlighting limitations and challenges with regard to the funding of public school in South Africa, specifically focusing on the funding of public schools, with the emphasis on fee schools, no-fee schools and independent schools. The funding system will be examined in order to discover if it does achieve equity, redress and equality as outlined in the NNSSF policy document and in the South African Constitution of 1996 pertaining to the state obligation to fund education.

Chapter 5 focuses on the findings of the study and their implications, and comes up with some recommendations and conclusions. I also look at what might be some of the lessons gained from the quintile system that can help frame future policy on funding South African schools.

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the focus has been on introducing the study and providing a brief historical background on the unequal funding of schools in South Africa. The policy formulation process

was also discussed. In exploring the dynamics of policy formulation, two conceptualisations of policy were discussed. These are the rationalist approach and the political policy approach. Elmore (cited in Fataar, 1997) suggests that backward mapping is the best approach in policy formulation. Elmore explains that backward mapping starts with the lowest level of the education system in order to generate policy that takes implementation conditions on the ground into consideration.

In the light of the process of transforming the education system, the understanding of key concepts embedded within the quintile school funding system, such as redress and equity, were described. The South African Schools Act of 1996 was adopted in order to regulate the education department and bring about equity. Based on the historical background, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding were promulgated in 1999 and implemented in 2000 as a strategy for the redress of past inequities in education. The quintile system was used as the mechanism to distribute resources to schools. According to the quintile system schools are categorised according to their poverty level, the family incomes in the community and the geographical area in which the school is located. The rationale for this study was also discussed, with the focus on the implementation of the quintile school funding system. Finally, Chapter 1 also briefly described research procedures, including research method and methodology, and the chapter outline of this thesis was given.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research methods and the research methodology that were employed in this research are discussed. However, it is also important to provide a distinction between the two within the context of this study, as various researchers have defined “research methods” and “research methodology” in different ways. The distinction between the two is explained thus: “research method” involves the specific technique for gathering information, while “research methodology” refers to a particular framework of thinking or paradigm. I regard research methodology as the theoretical point of exodus for this study. With regard to research methods, this study utilised conceptual analysis and the questioning method. Given this methodology, this study is a descriptive study within the framework of qualitative research methodology. An in-depth discussion of the methodology and methods will further be provided in the following sections.

#### 2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Silverman (2001:4) posits that research methods are specific research techniques that include quantitative techniques, such as statistical correlations, as well as techniques like observation, interviewing and audio recording. “These techniques themselves are not true or false, rather prove to be more or less useful, depending on their fit with the theories and methodologies being used and the hypothesis being tested or the research topic that is selected” (Silverman, 2001:4). Waghid (2002) advances that a research method involves techniques of proceeding to gather evidence, such as listening to informants, observing behaviour, or examining historical traces and records.

At different times and under different circumstances, depending on the research topic, more than one method can be utilised to optimise the findings. Thus, many authors are calling for the triangulation of research methods in order to improve the validity and quality of research. It is for this reason that I have tried to avoid what may be categorised as ‘methodological monism’, that is, the insistence on using a distinct research method. I believe that all methods



are valuable if used appropriately. My choice was informed by Burbules and Warnick's (2003) methods for philosophy. Burbules and Warnick (2003) identified ten methods and this study employs only two of them, namely questioning and analysing. Each method will be discussed in detail and its use will be justified in the section below.

### **2.2.1 Questioning**

As mentioned in the previous section, I used the questioning method to examine the quintile system and its underlying principles to seek a better understanding of these. I found Burbules and Warnick's (2003:24-25) observation useful for this study, namely that, with regard to questioning a particular educational practice or policy, "a good deal of work in philosophy of education is less concerned with discourses, principles, and systems, and more with specific policies and practices that define educational business as usual". They use charter schools and the test-based system of accountability as examples, and argue that these may be questioned on normative grounds or on epistemological or metaphysical grounds. In this regard the quintile system will be questioned about whether it addresses inequalities in education. I am of the opinion that the quintile system needs to be assessed on normative grounds if it does justice to the previously disadvantaged, as was envisaged by the policy makers. If school principals are to sign a performance agreement based on learner achievement, how does this legislation alleviate disparities? Schools in the townships and rural areas are still experiencing a huge backlog in terms of infrastructure; they have overcrowded classes with minimal resources, yet are expected to perform at the same level as schools with better resources. The principals can only manage what is inside the school; they do not have control over what is happening outside the school parameters.

In support of this argument, a critical examination of "choice" models of education might include an analysis of the free market assumption that drives many choice policies, such as the idea that consumer choices will drive inferior products out of the "market", and to ask whether such thinking is appropriate to public schooling. Burbules and Warnick (2003) claim that such an examination may challenge the political motivations and agendas that have given rise to many calls for more choice in schools, and may enquire about which kinds of students will benefit from increased choice, and also who will be left out. I concur with Burbules and Warnick's view that, given the history of inequalities in education in South Africa, it is evident that everyone, given an adequate or equal opportunity, will choose to take their children to a

wealthy school with resources, highly qualified teachers and good learner performance. Unfortunately, not everyone has a choice in education, as only the wealthy do. This means that children from wealthy families will have access to quality education and children from poor families will have no choice but to stay in poor schools with overcrowded classes, poor resources and poor quality education. This translates into poor learner achievement.

I believe that the questioning method advocated by Burbules and Warnick (2003) helped me to understand and question the quintile funding system in South African public schools. This questioning of the desirability of the funding policy was carried out on normative grounds in order to determine whether the funding policy supported or violated the principles of justice, fairness and equality. Does it violate certain rights? In answering this question I looked at the other researchers' findings and related documents pertaining to this topic. This will be discussed later in relation to the literature review.

Questioning can also be done from a different perspective. Schulkin (1992) argues that questioning can be referred to as a "critical inquiry" and "analytical inquiry". I draw from the work of Van Wyk (2004:47), who asserts that human beings are natural inquirers, and that inquiry is not tied to blind positivism or detached from rationalism, but grounded in mind, body and discovery. Thus, the conception of 'critical inquiry' infers that I adopted a critical stance in my analysis of the quintile school-funding strategy. Given the economic reality in South Africa, this led in questioning the quintile funding system with reference to equity and redress. South Africa is a developing country with very limited resources, slow economic growth and inherited inequalities. Weiller (1998:265, cited in Fataar, 2010) states that:

As the modern state...faces a chronic deficit of legitimacy, the recourse to the legitimating potential of symbolic action becomes an important strategy...The idea, it seems, is to maximise the political gain to be derived from the design of educational reforms and minimize the political cost of implementing them.

Because the majority of people in South Africa were oppressed during apartheid, so much was expected from inequities being addressed. The ANC-led government had no choice but to legitimise its stance on liberation. Both the government and the policy makers understood the dilemma faced by the state with regard to inadequate resources. This means that it is impossible for schools to be adequately funded in order to eliminate disparities (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

Thus policies developed for redress were in fact symbolic rather than substantive. From this understanding it suffices to note that these policies were developed to address inequities within the education system in favour of the poor, but in reality the danger is that they are advancing the previously advantaged (De Clercq, 1997:127).

Thus, a central dimension in understanding education policy is to examine the political, ideological and symbolic dimensions that education policy is used for, as much as the educational practices it purports to engender (Fataar, 2010:33). I concur with this thinking, and such symbolism could be the financial constraints of the country, the political pressure from other political parties, pressure from apartheid bureaucrats who had know-how, and the lack of skills and governing experience of the ANC politicians. This further could mean that the government and policy makers had no choice other to depend on symbolic policy to legitimise change. Hence, I suggest that analytical inquiry or questioning is required in any attempt to understand education policy. Soltis (1998:196) describes analytical inquiry in terms of three dimensions: the personal dimension, the public dimension and the professional dimension.

### ***Personal dimension***

According to Soltis (1998), a personal dimension of inquiry is based on a set of personal beliefs of what is good. It requires one to be thoughtful and self-directed in order to gain a better understanding of the educational process in general, and one's own belief system in particular.

According to Soltis (1998:196), "to have a personal dimensional inquiry is to possess a set of personal beliefs about what can be considered good, right and worthwhile to do in education". This therefore means that, as a researcher, I need to analyse in a scientific way and think what best can be done for the learner or child in education. What is possible and what is desirable enables one to gain more insight into the curriculum, teaching of a subject, education policy and management. Waghid further alludes to the idea that personal analytical inquiry makes it possible to examine one's own system critically from the inside, while at the same time clarifying ideas on what is possible, before deciding whether something is in fact desirable.

### ***Public dimension***

Alongside the personal dimension is analytical inquiry in the public dimension. The public dimension of analytical inquiry is everybody's business (Soltis, 1998:197). Analytical inquiry

in the public dimension aims to guide and direct the practices of “the many”, which may include educators, policy analysts, academics, intellectuals, politicians, journalists or philosophers. Soltis further posits that public philosophy of education is everyone’s business. The point is that, as citizens, and collectively, we need to provide our children with education that is in line with the market. The curriculum needs to fulfil the needs of the market. That is why businesspeople must have a say in education, and the education system must always transform to keep up with developments at a global level. Hence, with regard to the complexities surrounding the implementation of the quintile funding system, I am of the view that there should be a robust debate on the implementation of the quintile system amongst all stake holders. There should be an on-going debate from school level, including the parents and the community at large.

### ***Professional dimension***

According to Soltis (1998) analytical inquiry in the professional dimension aims to make the educational enterprise as rationally self-reflective as possible by providing philosophically rigorous examinations, critiques, justifications, analyses and syntheses of aspects of the educator’s conceptual, normative domain. This means that professionals, for example teachers, policy makers, principals, officials and other authorities, need to think about and debate how successful the education policies are. For example, it has been observed that some of the schools are misclassified with regard to the quintile funding system and are not working within the desired outcomes.

### **2.2.2 Conceptual analysis**

In his classical study, *Political Discourse on The Terms*, the political scientist William Connolly (cited in Christie, 2008:118) asserts that the language we use channels our thoughts and actions in certain directions. He further argues that language is a structured set of meanings and concepts, and the words we use may easily cloud our discernments without us apprehending it. He therefore suggests that we critically reflect on the terms of political discourse in order to explore alternatives – more radical perspectives. Connolly further suggests that there are many concepts in politics whose meanings are less certain than they appear to be, such as democracy, freedom, legitimacy, violence and tolerance. He argues that these concepts are open to endless disputes that are not likely to be resolved because people hold different

beliefs about the meaning of these concepts. According to Connolly, “education” has all the features of an essentially contested concept. Furthermore, there are numerous concepts within the education system that are fundamentally contested, for example, the ‘right to education’. He finally suggests that these concepts should be continually probed and not taken for granted (Christie, 2008:118). In this study the key concepts are the quintile system, equity and redress. Van Wyk (2004:3) says that, before attempting to examine conceptual analysis, we need to gain a deeper understanding of ‘analysis’ and what constitutes a ‘concept’. According to Van Wyk (2004:3), analysis has been described as the elucidation of the meaning of any concept, idea or unit of thought that we employ in seeking to understand ourselves and our world, by reducing it, breaking it down into more basic concepts that constitute it, thereby showing its relationship to a network of other concepts or discovering what the concept denotes.

I shall now proceed with a discussion of what constitutes a ‘concept’ for a better understanding of conceptual analysis. Van Wyk (2004:3) draws a very clear distinction between words and concepts, or between verbal and conceptual analysis. He states that words and concepts are not identical, and therefore linguistic analysis cannot be co-extensive with conceptual analysis. When we analyse a concept like “punishment” we examine the principle or principles that govern the appropriate use of such a word. If we can make these governing principles explicit, we have uncovered a concept. The latter governing principles can also be referred to as logically necessary conditions for the use of the word “punishment”. A logically necessary condition for the use of the latter word is that something that is not pleasant should be done to someone. In support of this argument, Hirst and Peters claim that if someone has murdered another person, but is being congratulated and praised for the latter deed by the police, we would refuse to apply the word “punishment”. The action of inflicting something unpleasant therefore forms part of our concept of “punishment” (Hirst & Peters, cited in Van Wyk, 2004:4).

### **2.2.2.1 Why do we need conceptual analysis?**

The point of doing conceptual analysis is to get a clearer picture of the types of distinctions that words have been developed to designate. The point is to see through the words, to get a better grasp of the similarities and differences that can be picked out. These are important in the context of other questions that we cannot answer without such preliminary analysis.

Conceptual analysis has no point unless it is coupled with making further philosophical issues more manageable (Hirst & Peters, 1998:34). Thus Taylor (1985:24) is of the view that, to understand a concept,

[W]e have to be in a certain experience, we have to understand a certain language, not just words, but a certain language of mutual action and communication by which we apply such a concept using the rules that governs the Queens moves to chess to illuminate his argument . If one suspends the latter rules, then this is not chess any longer. Such rules which make chess what it is, are constitutive rules, these constitutive rules governs a certain behaviour in such a way that the mentioned behaviour cannot exist without these constitutive rules.

What Taylor explains in the above statement is that human behaviour is concomitant with certain experiences, which depend on mutual action and communication. It also is necessary for us to note that the meaning of concepts can only be understood in relation to other concepts (Wittgenstein, cited in Hirst & Peters, 1998:32). A conceptual analysis of a concept further requires that we must examine the use of words in different types of sentences. To understand the use of these words in sentences it also is necessary to understand the different sorts of purposes that lie behind the use of sentences. And this requires reflection on the different purposes, both linguistic and non-linguistic, that human beings share in their social life (Hirst & Peters, 1998:33).

Furthermore, Hirst and Peters (1998:30) state that to have an understanding of a concept “covers both the experience of grasping a principle and the ability to discriminate and use words correctly”. To grasp a principle means to have an understanding of what makes a concept what it is, its constitutive meanings or rule (Taylor, 1985:137).

Burbules and Warnick (2003) state that there are several dimensions of this method. According to them, for many philosophers this parsing of multitude meanings is in itself a valuable contribution to knowledge. Apparent misunderstandings or disagreements are often attributable to people using the same terms or concepts in tacitly different ways. If we understand these meanings more clearly, it becomes possible to understand what is actually in dispute. Burbules and Warnick (2003) use the example of the argument on school choice. People understand “choice” in different ways. What constitutes a “choice”? People have different assumptions

about this concept and they can only argue about the term when and if they recognise that these assumptions are hidden within their different uses of the same term. He argues that, in other instances, unexamined concepts may mask an underlying confusion or equivocation. When you conceptualise the problem at hand it may help one to make a good choice with regard to the solution.

Another case in point is our understanding of the terms “equity” and “redress”, especially as they pertain to the funding of South African schools. Considering the deep inequalities of the past, as well as of the present, I needed to understand whether the quintile system did address equity and redress in our public schools, as envisaged by the policy makers. I believed that the literature would guide me to finding what progress the government has made with regard to equitable funding, looking at equity and redress.

### **2.3 Constitutive meanings**

Fay (1996:116) states that constitutive meanings are presuppositions of activities, and as such are not automatically known by those who operate in terms of them. Van Wyk (2004:40) shows a conceptual link with constitutive meanings. He posits that a different, but related, way of exploring a concept is to construct “constitutive meanings”. Because of the nature of the study I realised that constitutive meanings of equity and redress need to be explored. Waghid (2002) posits that to understand a concept one needs to examine the underlying principle or principles that constitute the concept. I shall now move to a brief discussion of the constitutive meanings of equity and redress as the key concepts of the funding policy.

Van Wyk (2004:42) argues that equity has been the cornerstone of educational policy since the inception of publicly funded mass education system in the nineteenth century. According to him, equity means fairness, but fairness is a two-edged word. He explains this by stating that being fair involves both giving to each according to the common lot (horizontal equity), and giving to each according to need and merit (vertical equity).

According to Van Wyk (2004:43) the principle of redress touches on several aspects that deserve closer examination. The first is that of ‘undeserved inequality’. The inequalities can be traced from colonial times, and from the apartheid era until post-apartheid South Africa, where



these inequalities still persist. Van Wyk (2004) suggests that redress must address ‘the bias in the direction of equality’. However, Rawls (cited in Van Wyk, 2004) posits that equality is an elusive goal.

## **2.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Waghid (2002) is of the view that a particular framework of thinking (paradigm) constitutes research methodology. One can infer that this framework of thinking can also frame research methodologies employed when investigating education policy issues. According to Silverman (2001:4), research methodology refers to the choice we make about cases to study methods of data gathering and forms of data analysis in planning and executing a research study. Methodology defines how we will go about studying any phenomena. Silverman further posits that, in social science, methodology may be defined very broadly, for example qualitative or quantitative, or more narrowly, as in grounded theory or conversation analysis. Methodologies, like theories, cannot be true or false, but are more or less useful (Silverman, 2001:4). The aim of methodology is to help us understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry, but the process itself (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:45). This study falls within policy research and the purpose is to examine the implementation of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999 in public schools in South Africa, focusing on the quintile system, which calls for the ranking of schools according to poverty levels, from Quintile 1 for the poorest to Quintile 5 for the least poor. Therefore the researcher resorted to the qualitative research methodology for this enquiry.

Research methodology as used within the discipline of education can be viewed as an “attempt to describe, explain and change (improve) human behaviour in educational contexts” (Waghid, 2002:42-43). Waghid (2002) further states that research methodology has become the practice of educational research. Waghid (2002:42) posits that constitutive meanings underlie social practice in the same way that practice underlies actions and makes practice what it is, that is thoughts or ways of understanding and seeing the world, also known as ‘paradigm’. Paradigm also referred to as a grammar of thinking, a form of discourse’ a ‘shape of consciousness’ or a ‘form of rationality’ (Waghid, 2002:42). This study falls under a descriptive study approach that employs a qualitative research methodology. Thus, in the following section the definition of a descriptive study will be provided and the qualitative research methodology will be discussed.



### **2.4.1 Descriptive study**

In explaining what a descriptive study is, Jackson (2006:79) states that, as the word implies, a descriptive study allows you to describe a situation, although it does not allow you to make accurate predictions or to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between variables. According to him, descriptive studies include observational methods, case studies, archival methods, qualitative methods and surveys.

Babbie and Mouton (2008:80-81) posit that many qualitative studies focus primarily on description. They use the example of an ethnographic study that may try to detail a particular culture of some preliterate society. At the same time, such studies are seldom limited to a merely descriptive purpose. According to these authors, researchers usually go on to examine why the observed patterns exist, and its implications.

Babbie and Mouton (2008) further state that the spectrum of descriptive studies includes a large variety of types of research. They contend that, on the one hand, it is possible to emphasise the in-depth description of a specific individual social event, group, company or social artefacts. On the other hand, one may emphasise the frequency with which a specific characteristic or variable occurs in a sample. In this regard, as alluded to above, the emphasis of the study was focused on the frequency of inequalities in the funding of public schools. The disparities were inherited from apartheid, yet they continue to exist in the post-apartheid era. The description of a phenomenon may also range from a narrative type of description (as in historical and discourse analysis) to a highly structured statistical analysis (such as in correlational studies).

I find it imperative that a brief definition of the qualitative methodology be given and discussed. For this study, the quantitative methodology will not be utilised because of its nature, as it focuses on numbers and statistics, unlike the qualitative methodology, which focuses on the phenomena that occur in natural settings, and its data typically are analysed without the use of statistics. Thus this study employed the qualitative research methodology.

### **2.4.2 Qualitative research methodology**

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:6) define qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities that privilege no single activity over another. They posit that, as a site of discussion or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. Further, it has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. Multiple theoretical paradigms claim the use of qualitative research methods and strategies, from constructivism to cultural studies, feminism, Marxism and ethnic models of study. It is used in many separate disciplines and does not belong to a single one. Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. Qualitative research uses semiotic, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis – even statistics, tables, graphs and numbers.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) also draw on and use the approaches, methods and techniques of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research and participant observation, among others. All of these research methods or practices can provide important insight and knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), and no method can be of privileged over another.

Babbie and Mouton (2008:53) posit that the qualitative research method is concerned with describing and understanding (*verstehen*), rather than explaining and predicting human behaviour, with naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement, and with the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider, as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm. However, in this study I looked at documents, as mentioned above. Babbie and Mouton also state that a qualitative study is concerned with non-statistical methods and small samples, often purposively selected. A quantitative study is based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisation of the theory holds true (Creswell, 1994:1-2).

Jackson (2009:87-88) states that qualitative research focuses on the phenomena that occur in natural settings, and the data are typically analysed without the use of statistics. Jackson adds that qualitative method researchers are more interested in interpreting and making sense of what they have observed. Data are collected in a spontaneous and open-ended fashion, and data collection is an on-going process.

I chose the qualitative methodology for this study as I believe that reading what other researchers say will help me to shape and interpret the documents and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy. This will help the study to make a contribution to the on-going discourse on the subject of funding in education. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:583) are of the view that qualitative research is increasingly being used in policy studies, whereby the intention is to study how various actors bring meaning to and make meaning in actual concrete settings, and the consequences of these actions. They posit that qualitative policy research is aimed at having an impact on current programmes and practices. The focus can be on the impact or consequences of policy, and on the process of how official laws or policies are translated and interpreted, from the height of inception down to the point of implementation – to street-level realities. Drawing from this position, I believed that the qualitative research method would help in answering the research questions this study has posed with regard to the quintile school funding system as a model of the distribution of resources through NNSF policy. For the benefit of the study I needed a better understanding of the effectiveness of the funding policy under prevailing financial constraints and deep inequities in the country, as it has been shown that equity is “elusive” (Adams, 2006) and that equity in the South African context can be “equal opportunities” or “equal treatment” (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

Thus, I found the qualitative research method to be appropriate for this study. It is more flexible than traditional qualitative research, and has the potential to adjust research agendas to meet changing demands in the field, as well as to study the complex social and bureaucratic processes through which laws and policies are actually implemented, while, on the other hand, the focus of quantitative research is usually on outcome measures.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:583) concur that “Assuring the quality of research, and particularly the quality of qualitative research in the context of policy-making, must be conceptualised as a vital and dynamic process that is always subject to further scrutiny and debate. The process cannot be ensconced in a single research method or a once for all set of standards”.

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter has outlined the research methods, which are consistent with the purpose and conceptual framework of the study. I selected two of Burbules and Warnick’s ten philosophical methods, namely questioning and conceptual analysis. In terms of Burbules and Warwick

(2003), these methods were utilised to gain a deeper understanding of the quintile school-funding process in South African public schools. Firstly, conceptual analysis linked to the constitutive meanings of equity and redress were utilised for the study. Conceptual analysis enabled me to clarify the meaning of the key concepts of the study (equity and redress). Secondly, the questioning method was also utilised, as it helped in giving answers to the study.

Research methodology defines how to go about studying phenomena. In this case the phenomenon was the National Norms and Standards for School Funding, with the main focus on the quintile. The methodology used for this study was the descriptive study methodology, which includes a variety of methods. Using qualitative methodology, relevant documents like the South African Constitution of 1996, the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999, government gazettes, completed theses and others will be examined in order to understand the underlying assumptions on the establishment of quintile school funding.

In the next chapter, an in-depth literature study of the key concepts, quintile school funding, equity and redress, will be presented.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE STUDY ON THE FUNDING OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Education policy is thought to be one of the most effective tools of the government for equalising economic opportunities in society (O’Gorman, 2010:1); yet, in many countries, including South Africa, education itself is unequally provided, thus reducing the ability of the system to equalise opportunities. Fataar (2010:1) argues that education is expected to play a key role in South Africa’s overall transition from apartheid to a full democracy over the next few decades. In this light, the quintile school funding system was established to facilitate transition within the education system. This chapter explores the literature on the quintile system, with a focus on equity and redress. The key concepts of the study are educational justice, funding, quintile, equity and redress, with a view to understanding the meanings of these concepts. I believe that exploring these meanings will help to locate the concepts in appropriate contexts, and to construct new understandings of equity and redress.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the historical inequalities in South African education. I attempted to expose the trend of inequalities and the impact they have on the quality of education for black South Africans. I did this in an attempt to extend my understanding of why the quintile funding system was adopted; in other words, why there was a need for education transformation. I then discuss the obligation of the state, as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, namely that the state shall fund education. I attempted to conceptualise the state (Fataar, 2010) and democracy (Mathebula, 2013) in order to conduct a robust analysis of the policy to formulate the basis on which the implementation of the quintile system should be situated, explored and understood. The quintile system and its implementation are also discussed in an attempt to understand how education resources were distributed amongst schools from quintile 1 (the poorest) to quintile 5 (the least poor). Doing so helped in identifying the gaps within the policy. The concepts of equity and redress are discussed, explored and analysed in order to gain a deeper understanding so that an appropriate meaning can be allocated to an appropriate context.

The funding of public schools in South Africa will also be discussed. In Chapter 1, section 1.4.3 the political model of the policy was discussed, hence I find it necessary that public education markets be discussed in order to elicit how the model of public exchange plays itself out within the state. Furthermore, the literature on funding has revealed that South African education is a two-tier system within the public schooling system, that is there are rich schools, the learners of which are predominantly white and from the middle class, and poor schools, the learners of which are predominantly black. This discussion will be conducted in an attempt to understand what impact the quintile system has on the funding of public schools. Next I shall discuss the historical background with a view to understanding why the quintile system was introduced and implemented.

## **3.2 HISTORICAL INEQUALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION**

Fataar (2010) and Christie (2008) posit that inequalities in the South African education system can be traced back to colonial times under the Dutch from 1652, from 1852 as an English colony, and from 1948, when the National Party took over from the British colony. Bantu education for black people was introduced by the National Party government in 1953 in order to reinforce the apartheid laws, which entrenched inequalities in education. The funding of education was racially based, thus leaving black people marginalised. This translated into overcrowded and poorly resourced classrooms and unqualified teachers, resulting in poor education and a high rate of dropouts (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). To illuminate this argument, I highlight the educational strategies that were designed and implemented to entrench racial disparities. I start the discussion by exploring the colonial education system, followed by the Bantu education system.

### **3.2.1 Colonial education**

Historical sources reveal that the first colonists that arrived in South Africa in 1652 settled in the Cape. Some of the settlers were part of the trading company, the Dutch East India Company (DEIC). White settlers among them established themselves as farmers and traders (Christie, 1991). At that time there were few schools in the Cape and the DEIC did pay much attention to education, which was under the jurisdiction of the church. Education under the Dutch regime was formal elementary education meant to provide instruction in the doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). Pupils in these schools learnt to recite prayers and passages from the

Bible. Older learners learnt reading, mathematics and writing (Christie, 1991). Not all white children had the opportunity to go to school because parents had to pay for the education of their children. In 1663 a second school of mixed racial groups was opened, and at that time the education provided was enough (Christie, 1991).

Tracing inequalities in education back to colonial times, Christie (1991) notes that the British paid more attention to education than any other group, and used education as a tool to spread their language and traditions in the colony (enculturation). English was declared the official language of the colony. The Department of Education was set up in 1839. Primary schooling was free, but parents had to pay for secondary schooling; this meant that secondary schooling was only available for those who could afford to pay. After 1893, mission schools were funded by the government to provide education for the poor white communities, but schooling was not compulsory. Many children did not get schooling at all (Christie, 1991:34). There were inequalities between town and country schools, and it is important to note how the education system reflected and shaped division in society in that context: only the richer parents managed to send their children to private schools. In other words, education was structured according to racial classification.

The creation of social class division generally reinforced the lower class position of people of colour. Education for African learners was aimed at nurturing them to participate actively in church activities and to propagate the western way of life, as well as certain work values (Christie, 1991; Dolby, 2001). Education for coloured people was aimed at instilling discipline – obedience and the value of work, and included the learning of some basic skills in reading, mathematics and writing (Christie, 1991).

### **3.2.2 Bantu education and apartheid**

The victory of the National Party in 1948 signalled the ascendance to political power of white Afrikaners (Christie, 1984:170). Policies, of which those on education were no exception, were developed in accordance with the ideology of racial segregation. The Bantu Education Bill was passed in 1953, resulting in an education system that was designed to instil inferiority in black people so that they could hold lower positions or be subordinates to their white counterparts (Dolby, 2001; Fataar, 2010; Soudien, 2007; Unterhault, 1991). Dolby (2001:23) notes that the Bantu Education Bill provided the framework for mass schooling of black Africans, though

it was neither free nor accessible to all. All the educational programmes were thus designed on the framework of an ideology that clearly envisaged and entrenched the separation between black and white people in all structures of the society, including the political and economic spheres. Native reserves were also established to serve this purpose. According to Hendrik Verwoerd's (former South African Prime Minister) policy, institutions of advanced education, like high schools and colleges for black people, were not desired in urban areas (Dolby, 2001; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

According to McGrath (1997:179), the aim of Bantu education was to prepare black people to accept difference as part of the unchallenged order. The emphasis was on vocational training in terms of greater skill requirements from black participants in industry. The introduction of Bantu education in 1953 was aimed at subjugating Africans psycho-ideologically (McGrath, 1997:76). Accordingly, education policies and the categorisation of opportunities were underpinned by ethnicity, as I have alluded to earlier. The categorisation was as follows: the Department of Education and Training was meant for black people, the House of Assembly for white people, the House of Representatives for coloured people and the House of Delegates for Indians (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). McGrath (1997) illustrated these disparities as shown in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1 Comparative education statistics, 1989**

<b>Category</b>	<b>White education</b>	<b>Indian education</b>	<b>Coloured education</b>	<b>African education (DET)</b>
Pupil-teacher ratios	1:19	1:22	1:23	1:41
Under-qualified teachers (less than Std 10 plus a three-year teacher's certificate)	0%	2%	45%	52%
Per capita expenditure, including capital expenditure	R3 082,00	R2 227,01	R1 359,78	R764,73
Standard 10 pass rate	96%	93,6%	72,7%	40,7%

Source: Kallaway (1997)

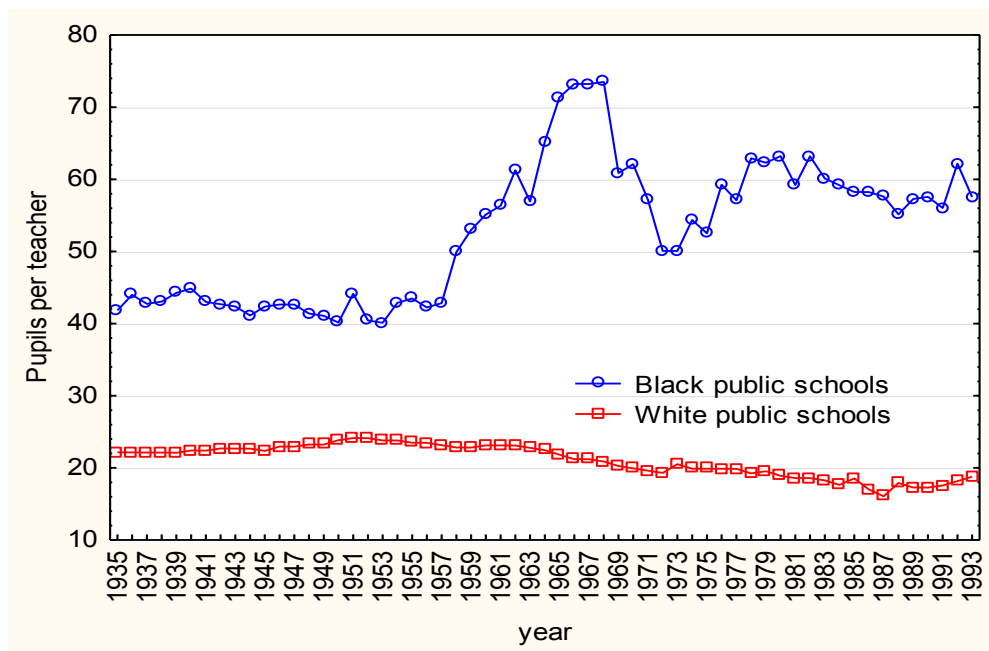


Table 3.1 shows that black African education was characterised by a high pupil-teacher ratio and a high level of under-qualified teachers, with low per capita expenditure and a low pass rate.

When Bantu education was introduced and implemented, people were not happy, knowing very well that it was inferior and racially segregated. The trend of unequal funding continued. The last straw was the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, a policy that attracted widespread condemnation from human rights activists, political activists and all other interest groups, and which eventually motivated the 1976 Soweto uprising. The struggle continued until the 1980s and 1990s, when political activists came up with the ideology of people's education. This notion was aimed at developing an understanding of history from a local perspective in order to enable learners to appreciate what was happening elsewhere in South Africa, rather than focusing on what was happening in other parts of the world. People's education for people's power was initiated as an alternative system that could replace Bantu education. People's education was based on an ideology of democracy and empowerment. Through campaigns, people were inspired to capture the meaning of people's education, resulting in diverse claims or assumptions about people's education. For example, people's education was conceived as:

- Fundamentally an educational movement with the aim of improving education for all in South Africa.
- A strategy to mobilise people politically. It was not really an educational philosophy at all (Christie, 1991:267).

However, the apartheid government ignored people's education. Reschovsky (2006) provides a clear picture of how unequal the distribution of resources was in education prior to 1994. This unequal funding is illustrated from 1935 until 1993 in Figure 3.1 below.



**Figure 3.1: Financing of public schools in South Africa, 1935 to 1993**

Source: Adapted from Reschovsky (2006)

Figure 3.1 shows that, in the period from 1935 to 1993, there were persistent and broad disparities between the education provided to white children and that provided to black children (Reschovsky, 2006:23). As seen in Figure 3.1, from 1935 to the early 1970s, the average pupil-teacher ratio in white public schools remained in the lower 20s (it reached a high of 24 in 1952). During most of the 1970s and 1980s, the ratio was in the high teens. In the early 1990s, the ratio rose somewhat, but it was just below 20 in 1993. Black public schools consistently had higher pupil-teacher ratios. Between 1935 and 1955, the ratio remained at around 40, and rose sharply to 70 pupils per teacher from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. In the late 1960s, the situation in black schools improved, but the pupil-teacher ratios remained between 50 and 60 through to 1993 (Reschovsky, 2006).

Furthermore, Reschovsky (2006) reports that, in each year, real expenditure per white pupil far exceeded expenditure per black pupil. For example, between 1983 and 1993, spending per pupil was nearly seven times greater for white than for black pupils. The spending differences translated into dramatic differences in teacher salaries, physical facilities, and supplies (Reschovsky, 2006). Given the differences in resources devoted to black education and white education, it is not surprising that there were large racial differences in educational attainment. In the next section I discuss the obligation of the state with regard to the funding of public schools, as provided in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

### 3.3 OBLIGATION OF THE STATE IN TERMS OF SCHOOL FUNDING

International declarations signed and ratified by South Africa recognise that education is a basic human right for everyone, and that the state should play its part in funding the citizen's education. It is within this framework of understanding that the South African Constitution gives each person the right to basic education, unqualified by any reference to the availability of resources (Khoza, 2007). It further states that the state must fund education utilising public funds. It is worth noting that, when the democratic government came into power in 1994, it entered a transitional period with an economic shackle inherited from the apartheid era (Marais, 2001:105). At the same time there was a worldwide economic meltdown and the neoliberal system was paramount. This neoliberal ideology imposed pressure on countries to call for austerity measures and was not sympathetic to the agenda of redistribution (Christie, 2008:90). Among the numerous challenges experienced by the government was persuading the ANC to compromise on the negotiated political settlement. This development was significant in limiting the democratic power of the anti-apartheid movement, as well as producing an elite pact around the emerging policy framework and the establishment of educational priorities (Mathebula, 2013:6).

In 1994, South Africa was declared a democratic state governed by the Government of National Unity led by the African National Congress. In order for us to understand the inequalities in the post-apartheid era we need to understand the conception of democracy and the conception of the state. One could argue that this understanding helps to clarify why inequalities seem to be persistent, in spite of efforts to eradicate them. To begin with I will discuss democracy, followed by a discussion of the state.

#### 3.3.1 Conception of democracy

According to Mathebula (2013:1), the word democracy originates from two Greek words: *demos*, meaning 'people', and *kratos*, meaning 'power'. Mathebula argues that, in classical Athens, the people who had a say in the ruling of the general public were the free, adult Greek males who had the right to make decisions and speak at general public gatherings. Thus, the Athens democracy did not include the participation of the large section of the population, for example slaves, children, women and foreigners. In this section I, in an attempt to better understand democracy in the South African context, will discuss the conception of democracy

in the Greek city state of Athens. The purpose is to illustrate how classical and modern theorists defined, criticised and defended the Athenian democracy.

According to Mathebula (2013), Plato interrogated the Athenian constitution, particularly its commitment to democratic participation. In this instance Mathebula argues that the Greek *demos* can be understood as ‘the mob’. In the words of Mathebula, Plato is very critical of the Athenian constitution’s support for ‘people’s power’, precisely because of its emphasis on individual freedom and citizens’ active participation in the polity. Plato argued that the *demos* had independence and freedom of speech, and everyone had the right to do as he chose. According to him, this is an enjoyable, lax and variegated kind of political system that treats everyone as equal. Mathebula (2013:2) argues that Plato was in pains to state that Athenian democracy permitted ordinary citizens to do as they wished, and argued that this could lead to anarchy.

Furthermore, strict equality in which everyone has an equal right and capacity to rule would lead to instability, since it entrusts the affairs of the state to people with no political knowledge and skills. Moreover, engaging with the ideas of ‘the people’ could be harmful to the city state. Aristotle seemed to agree with Plato and maintained that, if power was in the hands of ‘the people’, the polity could easily degenerate into a form of autocracy, where the popular majority ignored the limits of the laws and imposed its will regardless. Aristotle emphasised that the *demos* was capable of wisdom, but the “decree of the people overrides the laws, by referring all things to the popular assembly Hence, if ruling required skills, it was absurd or irrational to leave democracy “to the rubble, the vulgar, the unwashed or the unfit (Wolff, in Mathebula, 2013:2). In a nutshell, Plato’s and Aristotle’s criticism of Athenian democracy centred on the proposition that the ‘mob’ did not possess enough intelligence or goodness to rule itself (Mathebula, 2013).

Schumpeter (1950, cited in Mathebula 2013), provided an influential revision of the theory of democracy in his book, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. His main criticism of the classical doctrine was that the central participation and decision-making role of ‘the people’ rested on empirically unrealistic foundations and demanded a level of rationality and reasoning in political matters of the Greek *demos*. Schumpeter claimed that the *demos* was incapable of making everyday political decisions. In the domain of politics the *demos* (masses) have no well-defined role, and the only means of participation open to ordinary citizens is to vote for

political leaders (Mathebula, 2013:3). Mathebula (2013:3) seems to be worried about Plato, Aristotle and Schumpeter's elitist views on electorates as passive, apathetic, inactive and generally uninterested in public affairs, and as subjects who cannot have rational opinions about political rule.

In contrast, Budge (cited in Mathebula, 2013:3) is of the opinion that the elitist claims of Plato, Aristotle and Schumpeter have no basis and are unrealistic. Budge argues that there is no insurmountable barrier; if the *demos* are given an opportunity for full political participation in debates, they will be able to absorb specialised knowledge. Furthermore, through popular participation, 'man's' faculties are exercised and developed, his ideas are broadened, his feelings are ennobled and his soul elevated. In a similar vein, Barber (cited in Mathebula, 2013) argues that democracy in the particular mode creates a political community capable of transforming dependent private individuals with a free and partial and private interest into public goods.

I agree with Mathebula's argument on participatory democracy. However, I argue that talking about democratic processes in elitist terms as defined by Plato, Aristotle and Schumpeter is unrealistic and needs a level of rationality and reasoning in political matters. Given the circumstances, time and space in which the South African state was established, the capitalist world we live in, technological flows, the neoliberal system and globalisation, in which life is so competitive, how feasible it is for the '*demos*' to be granted an opportunity for full political participation? It is worth noting that South Africa is a democratic state. The poor have no power; the rich have the voice in policy decisions. Ball (1994) argues that, policy-making is about the power and positions one holds. Hence all these references tend to favour the top-down or vertical approach.

Furthermore, in the South African context, democracy as defined in classical terms is against the notion of *Ubuntu*. Given the historical background, with its deep social inequalities, the spirit of *Ubuntu* should prevail in its original terms. Although there is no precise definition of the *Ubuntu* (Svarca, 2011:116), I think it is relevant that a brief history and meaning of the concept be given in order to understand the morality it carries for society and its relevance to the quintile system. The word *Ubuntu* originates from the Bantu languages of Southern Africa. It is referred to as 'African humanism' and is translated as 'personhood' or 'humanness' (Svarca, 2011:116). It is a short version of the Zulu expression, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*,

which means ‘a person is person through other persons’ or ‘a person is a person because of other people’. The word was introduced as a national value (Svarca, 2011:117) and is used as a legal principle, although it neither was included as a numbered part of the Constitution nor in the general annexes of the Constitution. Svarca (2011:117) argues that its presence is only visible in a sentence that reads: There is a need for understanding but not vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for Ubuntu but not victimisation.

Drawing from Svarca, within the framework of the quintile system it means that to redress historical inequalities in the funding of education, the government need to be cautious in funding education for all its citizens, and this should not be done on racial or ethnic lines, as this would be against the Constitution. For example, taking resources from rich schools and giving them to poor schools is unconstitutional. But what the government is doing is allocating more funds to the poor schools, although in reality this does not close the gap between the rich and poor schools. Hence, *Ubuntu* prevails within the framework of the quintile system, although this is at the expense of the poor. I argue that, because of this criterion based on geographical space, it stands to reason that the government is moving away from the radical proposals enshrined in the Freedom Charter. Regrettably, the concept of people’s education for people’s power was undermined during the transition from apartheid to democracy (Mathebula, 2013:5). Next follows a conception of the state which will enable a richer analysis of the quintile system.

### **3.3.2 Conceptualising ‘state’**

According to Christie (2008:119), the state is “the whole fixed political system, the set-up of authoritative and legitimately powerful roles, by which we are finally controlled, ordered and organized”. Thus the police, the army and the civil service are aspects of the state, as are parliament and perhaps the local authorities. Trade unions, for example, are not part of the state, because they are voluntary organisations that could, at least hypothetically, be dispensed with, and especially because they directly represent one section of society against another.

Fataar (2010:30) posits that the state is primarily acting as an agent of capital. It is regarded as functional to the structure of the economy and the dominant class relations, and as the reproducer of the conditions necessary for continued class domination. Furthermore, Fataar argues that the state functions to guarantee a context for the continued expansion of capital accumulation and the legitimation of the capitalist mode of production. Thus the central

dynamic of the state's functioning is conditioned by having to mediate between its two mutually contradictory core functions, namely accumulation and reproduction.

According to Fataar (2010:31), accumulation refers to the maintenance of conditions for capital to expand, which is the realm of economic policy. Reproduction refers to the organising and legitimating of social relations that would service accumulation. Reproduction involves spending the surplus profit of the capital accumulation process to provide social infrastructure, such as housing, health care, civic amenities, roads and healthy worker-employer relations (Fataar, 2010).

To illuminate this argument, Fataar provides the example of contradictions such as South Africa's drastic decrease of taxation for business corporations between 1985 and 1995 – from 35% to 12%, and the concomitant increase in direct and indirect personal taxation. Fataar (2010:32) argues that, in view of this analysis, an understanding of education policy requires that the multidimensional process and dynamics that shape education must be analysed. In this case the quintile school funding system underpinned by equity and redress needs to be analysed.

I find Fataar's (2010:30) conception of the state useful in understanding the quintile school funding system. Unlike Christie's approach, which overlooks the accumulation of surplus and the reproduction that I believe are crucial, the impact of the neoliberal policy of the World Bank forced developing countries to structural adjustment and promotion of market production. Fataar (2010:30) argues that the state is primarily acting as an agent of capital. It is regarded as functional to the structure of the economy and the dominant class relations, and as the reproducer of the conditions necessary for continued class domination. Furthermore, Fataar argues that the state functions to guarantee a context for the continued expansion of capital accumulation and the legitimation of the capitalist mode of production. Thus the central dynamic of the state's functioning is conditioned by having to mediate between its two mutually contradictory core functions, namely accumulation and reproduction (Fataar, 2010).

This means that the function of the state is to maintain a good relationship with the middle class and the wealthy. Hence, even the rich schools are being subsidised by the government, despite their parents' ability to pay school fees and generate income through vigorous fundraising and commercial sponsorship (Yamauchi, 2011:148). The wealthy schools generate a huge sum of

revenue from school fees that are not standardised. It is argued that the predominantly white schools tend to overprice education in an attempt to exclude the poor from accessing quality education. Thus, the conception of state provides a useful framework to understand the quintile system in a liberal context. In other words, the quintile system should be understood against this background.

### **3.4 THE QUINTILE SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM**

The educational landscape in South Africa forms part of the context in which the quintile school funding system was examined. This gives rise to questions like (i) what is the quintile system? This question was discussed in section 1.7.1; (ii) Why was the quintile system implemented? and (iii) How was the quintile system implemented? This will help in the understanding of the funding of education, with specific reference to the NNSSF policy. In order for us to understand this scenario, we need first to understand the history of our education, which will help us understand why the quintile system was implemented.

#### **3.4.1 The implementation of the Quintile system**

The discussion above gives rise to the question on how the quintile system was implemented. I have discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis that the NNSSF policy was adopted to eliminate disparities in the funding of education (Department of Education, 2000). A partnership was encouraged between the provincial education departments (PEDs), and the PEDs were mandated to draw up a target list that would determine the classification of schools according to the quintile system to fast track the allocation of resources. Table 3.2 below is the latest target list dated 2010 designed by the provinces for this purpose.

**Table 3.2 Resource target table based on condition of schools and poverty of communities**

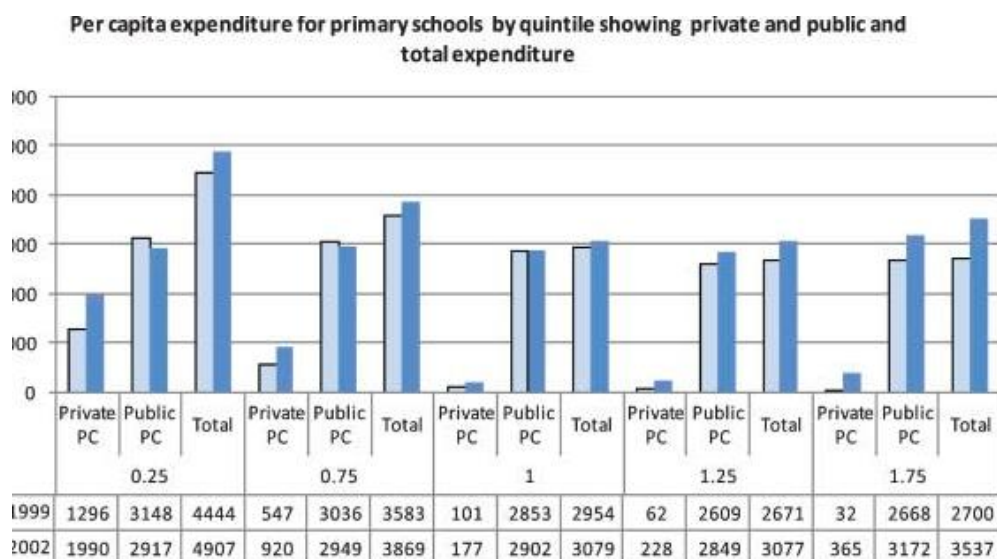


**Figure 2. Resource targeting table based on condition of schools and poverty of communities**

<i>School quintiles, from poorest to least poor</i>	<i>Expenditure allocation</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage of schools</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage of non-personnel and non-capital recurrent expenditure</i>	<i>Per learner expenditure indexed to average of 100</i>
Poorest 20%	35% of the resources	20%	35%	175
Next 20%	25% of the resources	40%	60%	125
Next 20%	20% of the resources	60%	80%	100
Next 20%	15% of the resources	80%	95%	75
Least poor 20%	5% of the resources	100%	100%	25

Source: Source: Motala (2009:194)

Table 3.2 illustrates the expenditure allocation of funds and resources as per quintile, starting from national quintile 1 for the poorest to national quintile 5 for the least poor. Furthermore, Table 3.2 reveals that national quintile 1 receives 35% of the resources allocation, national quintile 2 receives 25%, national quintile 3 get 20%, national quintile 4 receives 15% and national quintile 5, which is the least poor, receives 5% of the resources. While the quintile system was being implemented, legislation devolved powers to school governing bodies (SGB) (Department of Education, 1996), which, according to the South African Schools Act, were mandated to persuade parents to contribute financially to the education of their children through the paying of school fees (Davies, 2004; Department of Education, 1996; Motala, 2009). Figure 3.2 shows the difference in funding between quintiles 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 in the years 1999 and 2002, which explains what impact this had on the funding of the education system.



### Figure 3.2

Source: adapted from Reschovsky (2006)

Figure 3.2 shows that quintile 5 had the highest total expenditure per child per year in 1999 because of the high contribution by the parents (PC). Quintile 1 had the lowest total expenditure per child because the parents contributed less. The left side of this figure reflects conditions in quintile 5 schools (the least poor), and the right side reflects the quintile 1 schools (the poorest schools). Note that government spending (public PC) is now higher in the two poorer quintiles. The implementation of the funding policy had its challenges. Among them was that some of the schools were incorrectly categorised by the government. Next I shall discuss equity and redress in order to understand their meaning in the South African context.

## 3.5 EQUITY AND REDRESS

The historical background of the South African education system gave rise to the implementation of the quintile system in order to address inequalities in education. In principle, the policy on the funding of education was based on equity and redress to offset those inequities. The literature has revealed that the results of the implementation are in contrast with what the policy was envisaged for. In order for us to understand the quintile system we need to have an advanced, robust conceptualisation of equity and redress in an attempt to allocate the relevant conception to the relevant context, in this case the South African context. Next, I provide a conceptualisation of equity, and after that of redress.

### 3.5.1 The concept of Equity

Equity is a complex phenomenon. It is an ambiguous concept (Tella, 2010:13) and its meaning in law is impossible to define (Oleck, 1951). The literature has revealed that equity has a plethora of meanings and its definition or meaning varies according to time and place (Tella, 2010:89). In other words its meaning is fluid. In principle, equity means equality, but due to its political dimension equity is the term used. In this sense equity is, or should be, a living, changing thing, forever adapting itself to new conditions. In its ultimate sense it is a supreme law, acting upon and modifying codes, statutes and case law (Oleck, 1951:25). Oleck further argues that equity is a universal moral principle that supplies the required certainty by basing its decision on principles, rather than on rules, which have the defect of undesirable rigidity. Therefore, it could be concluded that equity is understood based on a particular context.

Oleck (1951:24) offers two principles as preliminary sketch definitions of equity; however, these two principles need not be taken as a definitive description. According to Oleck (1951), equity is that portion of the law which was developed by the English and American courts of chancery to remedy defects in the common law. Secondly, and more important, it is that portion of the law that has been, or may be, enunciated for the purpose of meliorating any harsh or otherwise undesirable effects resulting from the strict application of any particular rule of law. The principal function of equity is making more just the actual effects of any rule of law, not excluding the pre-existing rules of equity itself. The avoidance of the freezing of law into inflexible rules is one of its chief purposes. In other words, conceptualising equity in any country is usually based on the context of that country and is informed by markets. In light of this view, public policy formation is in line with what the markets demand at the international level (Oleck, 1951).

Jones's (2009:11) conception of equity is based on a broad understanding of its usage in various disciplines. He argues that one qualification is needed and writes: "Equity is a normative concept, one which has a long history in religious, cultural, and philosophical traditions and is concerned with equality, fairness and social justice". In order for justice to prevail, Jones (2010) identifies three principles of equity, namely meritocracy, equal life chances and equal concern for peoples' needs. According to him, *meritocracy* is about positions in society; and about distributing rewards in ways that reflect differences in effort and ability, based on fair competition. For *equal life chances* there should be no difference in outcome based on factors for which people cannot be held responsible. Lastly, for *equal concern for people's needs*, some goods or services are matters of necessity and should be distributed proportionally to people's level of needs and nothing else.

In his book *The Principle of Justice*, Rawls (1999) views justice as fairness. To achieve equity in society, there is a need to treat every individual with due regard for his needs and interests. Equity governs the step from the formal identity of all to the specific, substantial individualisation of each one (Clair, cited in Tella, 2010:239). Tella upholds that justice is based on two principles: First, everyone who participates in practice has an equal right to the same freedom as all the others, compatible with an equal right for the rest. Secondly, inequalities are arbitrary unless they are deemed reasonable to the good of all, and on condition

that the position and charges to which they are attached, or from which they might derive, are open to all.

Plato's views on equity underwent changes over time (Tella, 2010:15). At first he saw the ideal system as one in which the law was laid down and implemented by an all-powerful and wise king or governor (Tella, 2010:13). In contemporary society it is difficult to find an all-powerful and wise king or governor. Should such a person exist, it may leave room for abuse of power, since power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely (according to Tella). Therefore Plato later came to consider the rule of law to be the best solution and preferable to the rule of possibly incompetent tyrants. He then considered equity as a deviation from the law, and therefore as a weakness, that is negative. For Plato the law should not consider exceptions, and magistrates had no right to let their personal judgements prevail over the written laws, but had to stick to the law in all cases. For Plato, subjective judgement had no place as far as the law was concerned. Based on Plato's doctrines, his pupil Aristotle developed the idea of "*epieikeia*", in which he conceived equity as the correction and completion of the law, rather than a deviation from or an exception to the law (Tella, 2010:19).

For Aristotle, equity, just as law, is "more just" because it includes special cases that the law does not address. He regarded the virtuous (good) as always a middle term, a point equidistant from the two extremes, which were both perceived as very bad. For him, equity completed the law (Tella, 2010:21). Aristotle advanced his argument by using the example of a foreigner who scales the walls of the city. He argued that, according to Greek law, any foreigner who climbed the city walls was to be sentenced to death as an enemy or a traitor, based on the universality of the law. But, suppose the foreigner did so to protect the city, must he die? To this question Plato's response was 'Yes' on the basis of the law, and 'No' on the basis of equity. Therefore Aristotle preferred arbitration to litigation, arguing that the law should be compassionate and understand human weaknesses. In this light, equity refers to the correction of the law in an attempt to find a middle ground between the extremes.

Thus Aristotle reminds us that

equity calls on us to settle disputes through negotiations and not by way of force, to prefer arbitration to litigation. Equity leads us to be compassionate with the weaknesses of human nature, to think less of law than of man, and less of what laws say than of what they mean. It leads us to consider not so much the actions of the

accused as his intention, not the detail, but the whole, to ask not what a man is now, but rather what he always, or generally is. Equity recommends us to remember benefits rather than affronts, more those benefits received than those bestowed, and to be patient when things go badly (Tella, 2010:21).

Following the different arguments about what equity actually is, Tella (2010:87) posits that a definition of equity can be attempted from the following three perspectives: the historical-spatial perspective, the lexicographic perspective, and the logical scientific perspective.

- **The historical-spatial perspective**

The historical-spatial perspective of equity is underpinned by the notion that the exact meaning of equity has changed over the years. For example, Roman equity was legal in character, whereas Christian equity is ethical in character. Perceptions of equity are also different in different cultures and countries (Tella, 2010:87).

- **The lexicographic perspective**

The lexicographic perspective claims that the meaning of the word ‘equity’ is similar in many languages. It originates from the Sanskrit (an old Indian language) word “*akatuan*”, meaning unity similarity; and from Latin “*aequus*”, meaning equal, straight. The present meaning is something like “equality in treatment”, which leads to justice (Tella, 2010:87).

- **The logical scientific perspective**

In the logical scientific perspective, the concept of equity contains antimony (conflict) and implies friction, for example between the spirit of the law and the letter of the law; between humanity and harshness; and between legal standards and legal rules (Tella, 2010:87). Generally, equity symbolises the difference between law and morality. There are cases where strictly upholding the law has led to unacceptable ethical consequences, particularly where the law should not be binding. The logical scientific perspective of equity upholds that human law should be subordinate to natural law, for example what is fair and just. Equity then should override written laws. However, there is no true opposition or contradiction between law and equity. The two kinds of law are interconnected and can be reconciled (Tella, 2010:90).

Reflecting on the three perspectives that Tella (2010:87) provides, I argue that equity, in all its ramifications, is an essential ingredient for achieving quality education in South Africa. I take

my argument from Rawls (1999) who equates justice with fairness: the principles of justice and what is fair are agreed to initially for example before two teams play a game of cricket they agree to which rules to follow (1999:239). I relate this claim to the quintile system of school funding and argue for a new paradigm of funding based on vertical equity instead of horizontal equity as proposed by Brown (2006) who posits that vertical equity recognises that different groups in society have different starting points in life and therefore require different treatment. In other words, people should receive goods according to their needs (Jones, 2009). Therefore, I argue that schools situated in disadvantaged communities should be adequately funded by the government according to their needs.

The quintile system, in my view, should also consider learner demographics and take into consideration that schools are heterogeneous. In other words, a school might be in an affluent area but many of the learners are from the lower income groups. The quintile system is subsidising the rich schools, and this advantages them in many ways. The quintile system is meant to close the gap but in contrast is doing the opposite. It has been alleged that the state maintains conditions that favour the accumulation of revenue (Fataar, 2010). Excluding the middle class from the public system will be working against the interest of the elites. For example, if Quintile 5 schools are not awarded any funds, the parents will withdraw the children from the system and send them to private schools. Moreover this would be challenging vested interests of the middle class (Jones, 2009; Christie, 2008; Chisholm, 2009). This will also not be helping the poor schools.

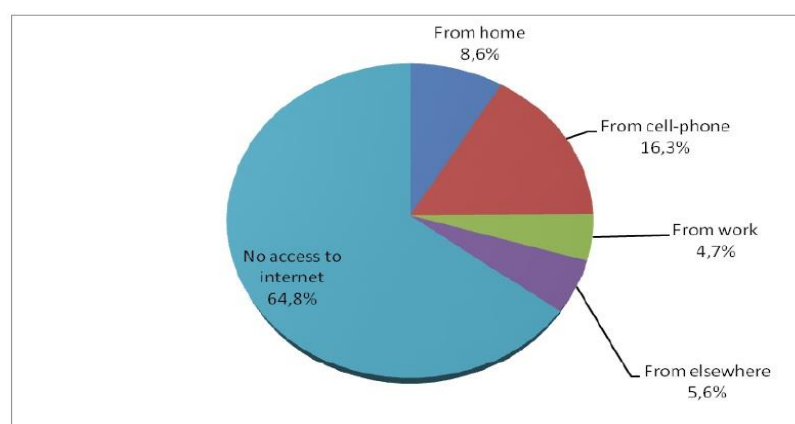
Based on Rawls' (1999) principle of justice, I argue that the quintile system has the potential to achieve or has to some extent achieved equity and redress in terms of distributing resources to South African public schools. For example, there has been a significant improvement in the enrolment of school going age children. In this dimension, South Africa has managed to reach the Millennium Goal targets of 2015 which states that all children of the poor should be at school and have access basic primary education. All states should work towards the fulfilment of this goal. School infrastructure has improved, mud schools are being eliminated and proper schools are built with necessary infrastructure and equipment, more especially in rural areas that were neglected during the apartheid era. For example, many schools have computer labs libraries and some have laboratories. Teacher-learner ratio has improved in some of the schools; in other words, there is some progress. Substantial funding has been allocated to quintile 1 and quintile 2 as the poorest schools. Teaching and learning material is being supplied to schools,

for example, text books, stationery, computers, and reading books. Moreover, the government has also established a feeding scheme in all public schools as a strategy to alleviate poverty.

However, as a result of the improvement in the enrolment of school going age children, there is a problem of overcrowded classrooms, which means that teacher learner ratio is high. In this regard Fataar (1997) raises an important argument, positing that the way in which greater access is planned should be conceptualised and open to question particularly in the light of the constraining economic context. He emphasises that providing citizens access to schooling is a priority and such provision must take into consideration the quality dimension of schooling. The current situation in the country is that poor schools are predominantly in black rural communities which are poor geographical spaces suffering exclusion from economic activities particularly utilisation and management of natural resources. Jones (2009) refers to these geographical areas as poverty traps.

Consequent to the poverty trap, there are still schools with poor infrastructure, without sanitation and electricity and with poorly trained teachers and lack of resources (Fiske and Ladd, 2004; Fataar, 2010; Christie, 2012). There are still learners learning under trees. Although some schools have computer labs, they are not connected to internet; this means that they are still on the wrong side of the digital divide (Lingard & Rizvi, 2010:153). The libraries do not have enough books and other necessary equipment. This is the case at learners' homes. The majority of households do not even have even a computer let alone connection. The few who have computers are not connected and mostly parents do not have skills to help their children at home. The figure below reveals the state of affairs with regard to accessing internet.

**Figure 3.5: Percentage of households who have access to internet, Census 2011**





The above figure shows the percentage of households who have access to internet. A relatively high proportion of households have no access to internet; 64, 8%. The highest percentage of households reported that they access the internet from their cellular phones (Stats SA Census, 2011). This is a reflection of the situation in poor schools with regard to internet connection. Fataar (2010) provided detailed information on backlogs in poor schools.

In the final analysis here I provide pertinent issues for attention with regard to the quintile system. It can be argued that the quintile system has achieved equity and redress to some degree. In other words it has achieved fairness; however, on the other hand unfortunately this has come with the price tag attached. In this regard a question can be asked, at whose expense is fairness achieved? Schools are deracialised, however this does not mean that the poor can just choose to go to an affluent school; not just anyone can qualify, if a learner chooses to go, then it means that the parents must pay out of their pockets to access quality education. In quintile 4 and 5 schools the learners have to contribute if they wish to benefit from the advantages.

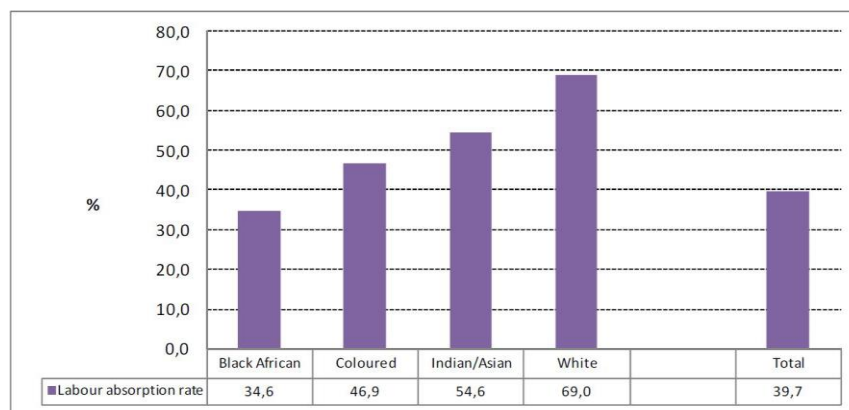
The quintile system allocates more funds to the poor schools and less funding (subsidy) to the rich. This restricts the poor to poor schools if they wish to access more funding. This is evident when the poor is in a fee affluent school, because of the quintile ranking of that school as quintile 5; the poor learner receives the same amount as the rich children. The school fees are prohibitive and low income groups cannot afford them. This means that the poor learner must go back to the poor school where there is more funding from the state. Therefore, the quintile system deprives poor learners of quality education. In essence education has become a commodity.

I argue that quality education is for the rich, those who can pay high school fees. This is evident in learner achievement. Learners from wealthy families because of their home background and social class, come to school with their cultural capital that makes learning easy (Bourdieu cited in Sadovnik, 2000) compared to those from poor backgrounds with poor cultural capital, and this translates to higher achievement. The enriched curriculum opens good life opportunities, and the learners can compete well for job opportunities and are easily absorbed by the job market, and this translates to wage gaps between blacks and white (O’Gorman, 2010; van der Berg, 2007) and reproduction of social class (Chisholm, 2004:16). South Africa adopted fees for a number of reasons including limited public funding available for education, pressures for local control and the argument made by international consultants that fees would keep the



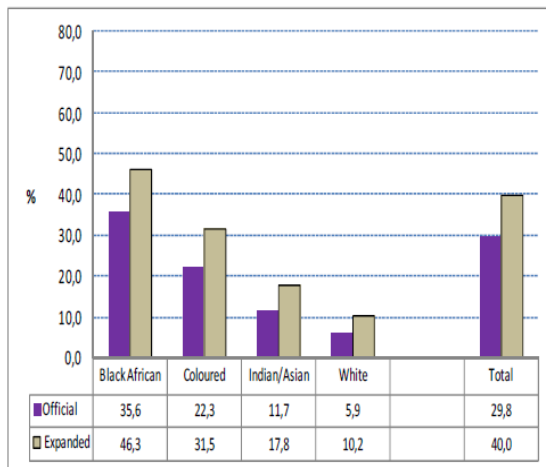
middle class in the public school sector. Fees are charged according to income and this enables parents to select schools on the basis of fees. In this regard fees are equal to quality. This simply means that the children from poor background do not get quality education therefore, not equal life chances (Jones, 2009; van der Berg, 2007) as compared to their counterparts from the wealthy backgrounds. The figure 3.6 below provides an analysis of the labour absorption rate by population group.

**Figure 3.6: Labour absorption rate by population group, Census 2011**



Census (Stats SA, 2011) results shows that employment opportunities among the black African population group are relatively scarce as indicated by the labour absorption rate which measures the percentage of persons aged 15–64 years who were employed. Among black Africans aged 15–64 years, 34, 6% were employed; among the coloured population group aged 15–64 years, 46, 9% were employed; among Indians/Asians aged 15–64 years, 54, 6% were employed; and among the white population group of a similar age group, 69, 0% was employed. A similar pattern is observed in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). Figure 3.7 and figure 3.8 below further illustrate the disparities that the quintile funding system entrenches within the public education system.

**Figure 3.7 Unemployment rate by population group**



**Figure 3.8 Labour force participation rate by population group.**

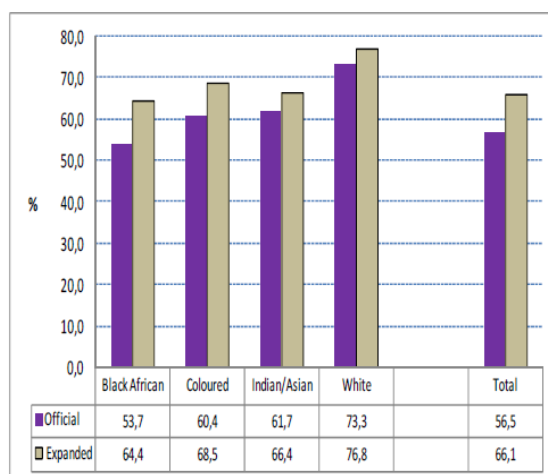
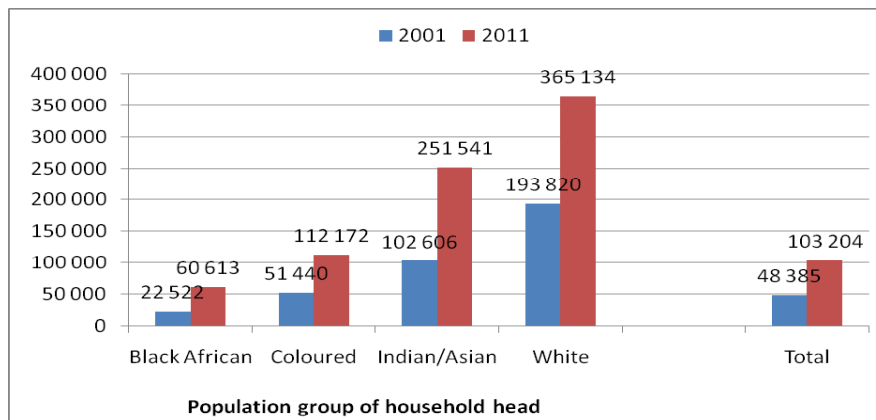


Figure 3.7 shows that the unemployment rate among the black African population group is highest, while among the white population group it is the lowest. In terms of the labour force participation rate (LFPR), the reverse is true. The LFPR among black Africans is lowest while that among the white population group is highest (Figure 3.8). A similar pattern is observed in the QLFS.

Furthermore, figure 3.9 below reflects the significant differences in average annual household income across the different population groups. Black African-headed households were found to have an average annual income of R60 613 in 2011. Coloured-headed households had an average of R112 172 in 2011, while the figure for Indian/ Asian-headed households stood at

R251 541. White-headed households had the highest average household income at R365 134 per annum. A comparison with the figure from 2001 does, however, show a bigger increase for black African-headed households of 169,1% as opposed to an 88,4% increase for white-headed households. Indian/Asian-headed households increased average income by 145,2% while coloured-headed households saw a 118,1% increase.

**Figure 3.9: Average annual household income by population group of household head**



This discussion reveals inequalities or gaps that the quintile system is entrenching within the society as opposed to redress. Hence, it can be argued that the South African education system is a two-tier system. There are schools for the rich and schools for the poor (Davies, 2006). The inequality traps mark out situations where institutions hold the entire distribution stable, because the various dimensions of inequality interact to protect the rich from downward mobility and fail to allow the poor upward mobility (Jones, 2009). Next, I discuss two other perspectives of equity, namely distributional equity and affirmative action.

### 3.5.1.1 Distributional equity

Fiske and Ladd (2002) are of the view that distributive equity focuses attention on how the objects of interest, such as educational inputs are distributed across the population. With regard to distribution of resources, Fiske and Ladd (2002) suggest that distributional equity is most commonly defined in terms of the quantity or quality of educational inputs. However, for some purposes, distributional equity may be defined with respect to public funds alone. Fiske and Ladd further state that in promoting distributional equity, trade-offs must often be

made. However, the challenge with such a move is that if an equitable distribution requires that the resources provided to the top group be brought down to the level of the lower groups, some of the wealthy families may leave the public schooling system for the private as suggested by the international consultants (Chisholm, 2004:16). Thus, equality cannot be fully achieved (Fiske & Ladd, 2002:33). Through the quintile classification of schools the state is maintaining the same order that the poor must remain in poor schools. Hence school fees policy was adopted to advance protect and maintain the middle class.

### **3.5.1.2 Affirmative action**

According to Van Wyk (2004) affirmative action defines racial and gender justice in terms of the distribution of the privileged positions among groups. Van Wyk in saying this was referring to Higher Education Institutions. This argument could be related to funding inequalities of public schools that have been inherited from apartheid and still exist in post 1994 South Africa. Fiske and Ladd (2002) refer to affirmative action as redress, and the vertical equity approach. They argue that this approach might be the suitable one for South Africa, given the grossly unequal funding in education which was deliberately distorted. Critics of affirmative action claim that it is reverse racist discrimination (Van Wyk, 2004). Van Wyk (2004) is against this claim, arguing that race conscious corrective action does not give disadvantaged communities 'special treatment'. Rather, it corrects historical injustices that were perpetrated against disadvantaged communities and not the privileged ones (Van Wyk, 2004:46).

### **3.5.2 The concept of Redress**

With regard to 'redress', Fiske and Ladd (2002:102-112) point out three strategies for equity, namely: equity, redress and adequacy. They (Fiske and Ladd) posit that redress explicitly recognises inequities of the past and calls for what in the U.S. is known as affirmative action to offset those inequities. Barnes (2005:2) states that the use of term redress can range from 'rectifying a wrong' to 'reparation' to 'restoring of quality' to 'empowerment'. As argued by Barnes, redress in South Africa can be explained on monetary terms. Barnes' argument is based on the research conducted in funding of historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) post-apartheid. Redress with regard to the quintile funding system is also based on funding of public schools to offset inequities. Given the deep inequalities in the South African education system

characterised by gross unequal patterns of schooling, the idea would be to direct additional resources to previously disadvantaged schools and communities in order to level the playing fields. I could liken redress as discussed by Fiske and Ladd (2002) with what Brown (2006) refers to as the ‘vertical equity approach’. In this regard, I am of the view that equity needs to be addressed within the framework of redress or the vertical equity approach. Nevertheless, this is not an easy approach, given its complexities, which will not be discussed at this stage. Such complexities will rather be discussed in the following chapter.

Roithamyr (2003:393-394) states that the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has set forth specific criteria to define basic education. Furthermore, the General Comment 13 to the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) specifies that the government must provide education that exhibits four features: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability. It is therefore pertinent to interrogate if the quintile system advances these four features within this framework. Roithamyr explains these features as follows:

- ***Availability***

Functioning education institutions should be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the state party, for example there should be suitable buildings, sanitation, safe drinking water, trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries, and teaching materials.

- ***Accessibility***

Accessibility refers to three overlapping dimensions. Firstly, the principle of non-discrimination is applicable. Secondly, education must be physically accessible both in terms of geographic distance and physical safety when travelling. Thirdly, education must be economically accessible, that is to say, it must be affordable to all, and primary education should be free to all (Roithamyr, 2003).

- ***Non-discrimination***

In terms of the non-discriminatory feature of accessibility, education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discriminating any of the prohibited grounds (Roithamyr, 2003).

- ***Physical accessibility***

Education has to be within physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location (e.g. neighbourhood school) or via modern technology (e.g. access to a distance learning programme) (Roithamyr, 2003).

- ***Economic accessibility:***

Education has to be affordable to all. This form of accessibility is subject to the differential wording of article 13(2) relating to primary education which shall be made available ‘free to all’. State parties are required to progressively introduce free-secondary and higher education (Roithamyr, 2003).

- ***Acceptability***

Acceptability refers to the form and substance of education, including that curricula and teaching methods have to be acceptable (e.g. relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality) (Roithamyr, 2003).

- ***Adaptability***

Education has to be flexible so that it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings. However, some of the aspects are still difficult for the government to confront due to some challenges that have already been discussed in this chapter. These 4-As features will be linked to redress in order to examine the effectiveness of the quintile system or its potential in eliminating disparities in education. This will be done with the use of conceptual analysis and questioning (Roithamyr, 2003).

### **3.6 FUNDING OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Having outlined the historical background in funding of education in South Africa, the new government sent a clear message of departure from apartheid policies by adopting legislation based on constitutional principles such as equity, redress, and non-racialism (Amsterdam, 2006:26). Therefore, South Africa’s public education resources have increased significantly.

Education spending has increased to 7, 3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1993 and 1994 compared with 5, and 8% in 1987/88 to address inequalities. .

It should be noted that there has been some significant improvement in the public schooling system as perceived by learners (Van der Berg, 2007). Amongst the improvements that are worth mentioning in education is the school feeding scheme, through which learners are getting breakfast and lunch at school. Also, there is a supply of text books for each learner; more classrooms have been built although there is still a shortage; teacher-learner ratio has improved at some of the previously disadvantaged schools, and some schools are equipped with computers and connection to internet. There has been some significant improvement in learner enrolment (Van der Berg, 2007) which proves that South Africa has managed to meet the millennium goal objective for 2015 that aimed at enrolling all children of the poor. This also shows the government's commitment to fulfilling the constitution. However, the system is still experiencing some challenges, which will be discussed in the next chapter

### **3.6.1 Fee Schools**

Through the establishment of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA), the government centralized power to the school communities through establishment of School Governing Bodies. Section 39(1) of SASA authorized schools to charge school fees when a majority of parents attending the school budget meeting adopts a resolution to do so. In addition parents are given discretion over how much to charge.

According to Section 39 (2), SGBs are authorized to determine both the amount of fees to be charged and specific equitable criteria to exempt those parents who cannot afford to pay fees. This has led to significant disparities within the public schooling system. Because of the socio-economic conditions of different communities, different amounts of fees are charged at schools. The schools in the townships charge fifty rand per annum compared to the wealthy schools which charge nine hundred rand per child per month. Roithamyr (2006:386) posits that the SASA 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). It further encourages all parents particularly those who have good incomes to increase their own direct financial and other

contribution to the quality of their children's education in public schools. Parents from poor communities contribute low fees (Davies, 2004:117).

**Table 3.10: Fees charged and fees paid (2001)**

<b>Material system</b>	<b>Fee charged per learner</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Fee paid per learner IES</b>
<b>Q1</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Q2</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Q3</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Q4</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Q5</b>	<b>2494</b>	<b>1720</b>	<b>986</b>

SE= Systemic Evaluation IEC= Income and Expenditure Survey

Adapted from Davies (2004)

Table 3.10 above shows the difference amongst schools on the payment of school fees. Fees charged per learner increases with quintile level. The learners in Lower Quintile schools pay low fees compared to the learners in high quintile levels.

Roithamyr (2003) is against the levying of school fees, arguing that it is in conflict with section 9 of the South African Constitution of 1996, and thus, it violates the constitutional right of the child to basic education. Brown (2006) concurs with Roithamyr (2003) on this notion, arguing that the government policy is promoting class; the overt racialism of apartheid is replaced with overt class domination. In contrast, Fleisch and Woolman (2004) argue compellingly that the policy and legislative framework as applied does not support a link between school fees and pervasive systemic failures, release resources for distribution from wealthy to poorer schools in the service of adequacy, and that if fees were eliminated, this would remove R3.5 billion from the public schooling system.



### **3.6.2 No-Fee Schools**

Despite the fact that improvement has been achieved regarding access of previously disadvantaged through the establishment of the NNSSF, significant disparities still exist within the public schooling system (Reschovsky, 2006). As has been explained in section 39(1) of the South African Schools Act regarding levying school fees through payment of school fees, can put a burden on poor parents as they cannot afford to pay fees which serve as supplement to resources from the government (Roithamyr, 2003). Thus, Roithamyr suggests that school fees be eliminated as she claims that this violates section 9 of the constitution which states that everyone has a right to basic education and she further claims that school fees entrench inequalities in the schooling system. In support of this view, Brown (2006:509) argues that overt racism in the form of Apartheid laws has been replaced by covert racism and class domination in the form of school fees.

In order to effect the elimination of disparities the government declared quintile 1 and 2 school as no fee schools. This means that learners of these schools will not pay school fees. The government is directing more resources to poor schools. However, this does not translate into access to quality education as schools of the poor are still overcrowded.

### **3.6.3 Independent Schools**

Section 29(3) of the Bill of Rights contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1997 states clearly the intention of the state to make it possible for independent educational institutions to exist and to provide for their possible subsidization by the state (Roos, 2004:126). Although section 39 (3) provides this, the intention was not to establish privatization of public schools. Roos (2004) notes that there is no provision in law in South Africa for converting a public school into an independent school. Furthermore, subsidies are not meant to be made available to private education institutions for profit.

### **3.6.4 Public education markets in the South African context**

I now provide a discussion on public education markets and the model of public exchange. As has been discussed a change in the South African political climate has been achieved, which resulted in a negotiated political settlement. This transition took place at a time of economic

meltdown in the world and an emerging of the hegemonic global markets and neoliberal policies. This climate forced countries, developed and developing, to make structural adjustments, which means that states need to cut costs on social responsibility and align their policies with market demands. To illustrate this I concentrate below on the model of public exchange in order to understand how globalization impacts on the quintile funding system of education.

In a study by Marlow (2000:90) done in California, the author mentions that there is overspending in public schools, but that does not translate to good performance. According to Marlow's model of public exchange, there should be more consultation with parents and voters at school district level. Policy-makers should deal directly with teachers and parents, school boards and Parent Teachers Association (PTAs). In essence Marlow proposes a backward-mapping approach (Fataar, 2010:54). Given the formation of the state in a capitalist world, financial constraints of the state coupled with neoliberal policies how does backward-mapping approach materialise in policy formulation? It would be working against the will of the rich as the government would have no option but to give more funds to the poor in order to equalise. The government cannot fund schools adequately, given the deep inequalities that are heavily entrenched. Moreover, the middle class would leave the public schooling system for private schooling.

Marlow (2000) also argues that parents will go as far as buying a home near a certain school, if they feel that the school offers quality education. However in South Africa, due to the high unemployment rate and low economic growth, most poor people cannot choose to live near such schools (Marlow, 2000; Yamauchi, 2010). I argue that in South Africa most decisions are made at national or provincial level, where markets and financial considerations are more important than the votes of the poor. The state is concerned about accumulation of surplus (Fataar, 2010) from big business to fund education, housing, health and welfare; therefore the opinions of big business weigh heavily. It is for this reason that education has to fulfil the requirements of the market. Therefore a consideration of funding requires a consideration of the nature of the state which carries the obligation of providing education.

The majority of the voters are poor and in order to get their votes the government promises them equal education. In the case of South Africa, the quintile system means that there is better funding for the poor schools; this means that more funds are distributed to the poor schools.

The government uses their monopolistic powers to gain the votes of the poor. Nevertheless this has not led to equal education, those in richer schools still get a better education. Therefore the government has to strike a balance between the rich and the poor. According to this model of public exchange framework (Marlow, 2000), parents and voters signal their policy preferences pertaining to education policy. Policy-makers have to attract the poor while at the same maintaining a sound relationship with the rich as has been discussed in section 3.3.1 of this thesis. Hence, public education policies have to deal with a range of values which policy-makers have to assemble, organise and order them in such a way as to render them more or less consistent (Lingard & Rizvi, 2010:72). Underscored in Lingard & Rizvi's (2010) statement is the notion that policy-making involves trade-offs - privileging some values over others.

As discussed in section 3.2 the historical inequalities in education led to the implementation of the quintile system. Indeed, much progress has been achieved in the redistribution of resources to disadvantaged schools (Reschovsky, 2006; van der Berg, 2007) while on the other hand managed to keep the middle class within the public education system (see Fataar, 2010; van der Berg, 2007; Christie, 2008; Davies, 2004; Roos, 2006). Quintile 1 and quintile 2 have been declared no fee schools and more funding is directed to these quintile schools, while on the other hand the SASA is allowing some of the schools of the middle class to charge fees in order to supplement the government subsidy. This led to a two-tier system within the public education system, of rich and the poor schools. In this regard it can be argued that policy-makers enhanced their monopoly powers.

This discussion underlines the importance of taking a historical approach to understand how globalization might affect policy process (Lingard & Rizvi, 2010:48). This point is well exemplified in respect of the post-apartheid aspirations of placing South Africa in a global market space. Hence, the education policy is expected to play a role in achieving these aspirations. In this regard I argue that neglecting the history of inequalities in the education system will necessarily reduce the veracity and quality of the education policy analysis we carry out. Hence, in an attempt to understand the quintile funding system for addressing imbalances in education it is crucial to understand the constitutive meanings of equity and redress. In the next section I shall briefly discuss the constitutive meanings of equity and redress in South African context.

### 3.7 CONSTITUTIVE MEANINGS OF EQUITY AND REDRESS

The literature review has enabled me to understand how complex it is to understand the meaning of concepts. It has been revealed that concepts carry different meanings according to their contexts. In the literature I have also discovered recurring concepts and realized that although they might seem to have the same meaning, in actual fact their meanings are highly contested. The extracted constitutive meanings from a literature are then used to help me examine by means of conceptual analysis, the quintile system for the funding of education. I do this in order to identify the key features from the literature of each of the afore-mentioned constitutive meanings of equity and redress. I believe these features will help me to scrutinize the Quintile system in order to establish to what extent the quintile funding strategy accommodates each of the constitutive meanings of equity and redress.

- Fairness
- Equality
- Social justice
- Distributive justice
- Affirmative action

The features above represent meanings that can be associated with equity and redress. It can be argued that the meanings of equity and redress in this way provide constitutive meanings of the concepts “equity and redress”. Put differently, equity and redress can be understood by these meanings. However, I will focus on three of the constitutive meanings, that is, *fairness*, *equality* and *social justice*. As Harvey (1990:29) notes that where there are a large number of constitutive meanings, it is not necessary to critically analyse each of them, the rationale being that they are closely related to the theoretical model of education funding. Furthermore, these constitutive meanings are interrelated, and will be critically analysed in the next chapter. Hence, distributive equity and affirmative action will not be discussed in this section as they have already been discussed in point 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

### 3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has revealed that the quintile, equity and redress are complex phenomena. It is clear that equity as a concept has a myriad of interpretations. Through the use of conceptual

analysis I showed how the quintile system as a distributive mechanism of funds played itself out on equity and redress. This is not only evident in the different conceptions of equity, but also in the different understandings of the quintile, equity and redress. The discussion on conceptual analysis has helped to show that equity has no definable meaning. This suggests that because of poor understanding of these concepts, equity and redress have to be explored comprehensively. It is also evident that these concepts cannot be compacted into a particular perspective. The meaning of these concepts needs to be contextualized in order to achieve “justice.”

The meanings of quintile, equity and redress were discussed in Chapter Three. It is evident that an insight to these meanings provides an understanding of the transformative potential of the quintile system in the funding of education. Even though there are signs of favouring the vertical equity approach amongst researchers, we need to guard against a radical shift from the reality / pragmatic approach to the ideal model. I also linked funding to the economic growth of the country, arguing that if the economic growth is very low and there are high levels of unemployment that lead to poverty, then this means that equity is an elusive goal to attain and redress is a complex phenomenon to deal with, thus the quintile system needs to be explored and reviewed to find out if it is an appropriate strategy for funding of education in South Africa. I believe that in order for us to understand the dynamics behind funding of education we need to engage in a robust debate as to why these inequalities are persistent.

Hence, I am of the view that justice won't be done if the historical background of inequalities in education is not explored to get an understanding of how these inequalities persist; starting from pre-colonial times, colonial education, Bantu education under apartheid as well as the People's Education for People's Power. In this chapter literature has also revealed how politics played a role in the funding of education. Although the NNSSF policy was established to eliminate the inequalities, the truth is these inequalities are persistent, the schools of previously disadvantaged communities are still poor and the gap between the poor schools and the rich is widening further.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE QUINTILE SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Central to South Africa's transformation to an equitable system of education in a democratic society is the establishment of a high quality, equitable and democratic education system (Motala, 2009:185). As Adams (2006) argues, the history of South African funding of education in apartheid, which has already been discussed in Chapter One, reveals how apartheid policies were transformed over time to accommodate critique from inside and outside South Africa. In an attempt to eliminate disparities in the funding of education, the quintile system was established. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the quintile system ranks schools from NQ 1 to NQ 5; yet, literature reveals that the quintile system seems to entrench inequalities within the education system instead of addressing them. The quintile system is meant to address inequities using equity and redress as the compass. In the light of this discussion I argue, given the constraining economic context that the way in which equity and redress is currently conceptualized is open to questioning. De Clercq (1997) warns that the educational restructuring policy frameworks, as they have been formulated, are unlikely to fulfil their promised intention of bringing about greater development, equity, participation and redress. Unless caution is exercised these policies are in danger of creating conditions that may further enable the privileged to consolidate their advantage of opportunities while making it more difficult for the disadvantaged to achieve their own educational aspirations and needs.

In this chapter the analysis of the quintile system by making a link between policy and practice is presented. There is a discussion of the constitutive meanings of equity and redress utilizing conceptual analysis as a method. It is hoped that the analysis will help us to gain a deeper understanding of the implications of the quintile funding system of schools in South Africa; help to identify gaps in the current practice of the quintile system; and provide a framework that will guide future discourse on the quintile policy.

#### **4.2 DOES THE QUINTILE SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM ACHIEVE EQUITY AND REDRESS?**

Although great strides have been achieved towards racial equity in terms of state per capita expenditure per learner, more contentious is the issue of redress in terms of differential allocation of education resources. Given the enormous inequalities in state expenditure under apartheid, achieving equity in resource allocation to schools may be a daunting task. In this section there is a critical analysis on how far the quintile system has achieved equity and redress, and hence the extent of pro-poor funding.

According to Roithamyr (2003:395) International Law supports the claim that the state must provide access to basic education for those who cannot pay fees. There is for example, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which South Africa has signed and ratified. The Charter requires government to provide free and compulsory basic education. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which South Africa has signed and ratified, also requires the government to make primary education compulsory, available, and free to all. Article 26 of the UDHR, which is not binding, but it is regarded as customary international law by many, also demands that '[e]ducation shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages (Roithamyr, 2003).

The Freedom Charter of the Africa National Congress endorsed in 1956 states that Education shall be free and compulsory to all. The South African Constitution of 1996 Section 29 (1) states that everyone has a right to basic education. This is also enshrined in the South African Schools Act of 1996 as well as the National Norms and Standards School Funding policy of 1999 (DoE,2000). South Africa has signed and ratified the international instruments, the contents of the freedom charter and finally committed itself to transforming education through the SASA and the NNSSF.

Roithamyr (2003:396) posits that 'it is important to note that the 1996 constitution does not contain an express commitment to provide free education for all. Roithamyr further contends that the current version of the constitution does not contain the word "free". In an early draft of the constitution in 1991, the South African Law Commission (SALC) included the provision that everyone had the right to free education up to the end of primary school, however in its final draft the SALC omitted the reference to free education, to include only the right to basic

education and equal access to educational institutions. The question that arises from this argument is why the word 'free' is omitted from the South African Constitution? In answering this question it should be noted that South Africa is a capitalist state. Furthermore, Fataar (2010) states that "the state as a modern state faces a chronic deficit of legitimacy; therefore recourse to the legitimating potential of symbolic action becomes an important strategy. The fact that the word 'free' was omitted simply means that the government and the policy makers knew that the state would not be able to afford free education considering the socio-economic status at that time. Making education free to all will not work, at the same time the government has no money but depends on the accumulation of revenue. Therefore the revenue generated by ex-model C schools which can accumulate to an amount of about 2,5billion (Sunday Time, January, 2012) should be considered. It is within this context that we need to understand that the government has to maintain the good relationship with the middle class so that they can remain in the public education system and not send their children to private schools (Christie, 2008; Fataar, 2010). Moreover, the revenue that is generated from the model c schools lessens the burden of financing these schools; instead it makes it possible to direct more funds to the poor.

I contend that the above illustrates the fact that although the constitution is a legally binding document that protects the interests of a country's citizens and surpasses all policies, it nevertheless has inherent weaknesses that characterize the political sphere. Thus, it is from that reason that, in most cases, it tries to maintain a certain political ideology that most often favours the rich and powerful elite of the society (Unterhalter *et al.*, 1992:22). Chisholm cited in Mamatu (2009) seems to agree with this view, citing that "education is particularly equipped both in maintaining the existing social order and also to promote capricious kinds of changes or mobility". Thus education policies such as SASA and the NNSSF serve this purpose, which means they are not neutral instruments. They also reflect the weaknesses of policies and the constitution. They are promoting democratic methods of school governance and education provisioning that favours the previously disadvantaged groups while concomitantly protecting the middle class and the top elite of the society. The legislation opposes discrimination by race, colour, or creed on the one hand while it promulgates discrimination by social class on the other hand (Brown, 2006:509).

During apartheid funding of education was based on race and ethnicity but in the post-apartheid era despite the fact that more funds are allocated to the poor the middle class is advancing in



terms of quality education. Brown (2006:509) argues that an “overt racism in the form of apartheid laws has been replaced by covert racism in the form of school fees”. Brown (2006) further states that although education is a basic need entrenched in the constitution, it is rapidly becoming inaccessible for the poor in South Africa and in other parts of the world (see O’Gorman, 2010:526), and it is viewed as a “powerful tool that can work against the negative effects of poverty and underdevelopment” because the gap between the rich and the poor continue to widen. In view of this, another point that can be raised is the issue of model of public exchange (Marlow, 2000:90).

A model of public exchange provides the framework on how the voters and policy makers exchange with one another within school districts. According to this model, voters and parents signal preferences to policy makers in ways that include dealing with teachers, principals, school boards and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), as well as voting politicians with compatible views (Marlow, 2000:90). Hence, within the South African context, the government protects the middle class for leaving public education system for private. It has been the middle class who are influential in policy-making and decision making. Now that South Africa has become a democratic state, in section 3.3.2 the state as a concept has been extensively discussed in order to understand how the state operates, hopefully the phenomenon of the model of public exchange which has also been discussed in section 3.6.4 of this dissertation. Based on this argument I seek to take this argument further in understanding why the quintile funding seem not to deliver or transform education funding as envisaged by policy makers? Thus, in the following section I will discuss the constitutive meanings of equity and redress within the framework of the quintile funding system.

### **4.3 CONSTITUTIVE MEANINGS OF EQUITY AND REDRESS**

In this section I examine the quintile system with reference to the constitutive meanings of fairness, equality as well as social justice as discussed in Chapter Three. The extracted constitutive meanings from the literature are then used to help me examine by means of conceptual analysis, the quintile system for the funding of education. I do this in order to identify the key features from the literature of each of the afore-mentioned constitutive meanings of equity and redress. I believe that these features will help me to scrutinize the Quintile system in order to establish to what extent the quintile funding strategy accommodates

each of the constitutive meanings of equity and redress. I will first discuss fairness, followed by equality and lastly social justice.

#### 4.3.1 Fairness

According (Dobie, Arthur & Jones, 2010) fairness is the quality of making judgements free from discrimination. It is the quality of being reasonable, right and just. It is the state of being fair or free from bias or injustice, even-handedness with everybody being treated the same, obeying the same rules, having the same chances, and same opportunities (Dobie *et al.*, 2010). Fairness is linked to the idea of equality, being equal, with equal rights no matter what your background or race.

Jones (2010:9-11) says that we should recognise that people are different, and should be treated according to their needs rather than in exactly the same way. It is not fair to treat people in the same way if one person is less deserving than another. Here the emphasis is on equal outcomes which are underpinned by recognition that people are different and moreover that they are at different starting points. I am of the view that peoples' needs should be considered, and that they should be given what is due. Historical inequalities should be considered in order to restore the human dignity of those who were marginalised and harmed, or deliberately excluded. Jones suggests three principles of equity which are *equal life chances*, *equal concern for people's need and meritocracy*. With regard to equal life chances Jones states that there should be no difference in outcome based on factors for which people cannot be held responsible. With regard to equal concern for people's needs, he states that some goods or services are matters of necessity and should be distributed proportionally to people's level of need.

Lastly, with regard to meritocracy Jones states that positions in society and rewards should be distributed to reflect differences in effort and ability, based on fair competition. Jones (2010:8) argues that these principles play different roles in relation to each other, but are mutually supportive. I argue that the quintile system is violating all three principles. How? The quintile system is meant to equalise funding, and address inequities, however it is in fact entrenching inequalities, the causal factor being the misclassification of schools based on proximity. In other words the quintile system disguises inequalities in education. It is for this reason that I argue that the quintile system ignores learner's needs. Moreover, exempting parents from paying school fees does not close the gap, as the poor learner is funded by the same amount

as the learners from rich families and as such this is discriminating against the learner. In this sense the quintile system is violating the constitution.

I agree with Brown (2006) that the Quintile system is treating people the same with regard to distribution of resources and this advances the previously advantaged groups, in terms of horizontal equity (Brown, 2006). This is putting a learner from a poor background in a disadvantaged position. The fact that the classification of the school is based on geographical space also disadvantages some of the schools as this classification does not necessarily reflect the demographics of the learners and some schools are getting less funds from the government than they deserve. For example, most of the schools in rural areas belong to quintile 1. Because of their geographical space they are the ones that still learn under trees and they continue to be marginalised as in the apartheid era. For these learners the future is bleak, due to lack of exposure. They may not enjoy equal job opportunities later in life. Also, their needs are not met as they should because there is a high teacher-learner ratio, and insufficient and poor resources which translate to poor education.

#### **4.3.2 Equality**

Equality is described in similar terms with fairness (Dobie *et al.*, 2010:11) argue. According to them equality also means that everyone treated the same regardless of their circumstances, rich or poor (Dobie *et al.*, 2010:11). Equality is related to terms such as equal rights, equal chances, and equal opportunities. The language of equality happens to generate particular types of example, discussion about economic inequality, regional inequality, gender inequality, educational experiences.

While the Quintile system aimed to equalise in principle, in practise it tends to be in contrast with the constitution in the sense that it discriminates between learners and is advancing the rich. Put differently, the quintile classification tends to aggravate inequalities in education. The system has developed into a two-tier system of rich and poor schools. I argue that while schools are deracialised, they have nevertheless advanced the middle class aspirations which include the black middle class (Chisholm, 2004; Fataar, 2010).

Jones (2009) identified three principles of equity: equal life chances, equal concern for the needs of people and meritocracy. Pertaining to equality, I argue that the quintile system has

violated the principle of equal life chances. My contention is based on the fact that the quintile funding system ignores learner demographics, and all learners are expected to perform at the same level. Because of the contexts of the schools, schools of the poor are performing poorly compared to their counterparts. Schools in poor communities have overcrowded classrooms and poor resources both human and material, and this poses a challenge to teachers as they are unable to give individual attention to learners, unlike their counterparts from the rich environments where schools' governing bodies through charging high school fees and vigorous fundraising can employ more teachers to lessen teacher-learner ratio. This is also evident with regard to job opportunities. The white learners have a greater advantage in the job market because of their skills and background (Stats SA, 2011). The second principle relates to the sorts of goods and services that people are said to need, for example, a basic education referred to as socio-economic needs (Khoza, 2007).

Related to equity are basic human needs. The needs of the poor school and learners are ignored by the quintile system in the sense that even if the poor learner attends a rich school, the funding categorises the learner at the same level as children from a wealthy family. This means that the learner is not given what is due to him or her in order to bring the learner to the level of his counterparts. The governments' obligation to fund education of all its citizens is entrenched in the Constitution. According to the third principle of meritocracy Jones (2009) suggests that positions and rewards should be distributed to reflect differences in effort and ability based on fair competition. I argue again that this principle is violated by the quintile system. This principle calls for a fair competition and merit. Given the disparities in the funding of education, how do we expect learners to compete equally and show merit?

Because of learners' background, it is clear that those from the wealthy family are more advantaged than the rest. For example, knowledge is being overwhelmed by technology and the internet, of which learners from poor families do not benefit. In this regard, learners from rich backgrounds are well advanced in technology and this puts them at an advantage to compete at higher levels in the job market. Besides, because of social connections in the family, such learners are given an advantage. Such observation has been remarked by Bourdieu (1986:20) cited in Fataar (2012). In Bourdieu's own words, "educational system maintains a pre-existing social order [which] is the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital". This explains the fact that more job opportunities are often made available to

the privileged few due to their exposure. In other words, the quintile system arguably maintains inequalities in another fashion.

### **4.3.3 Social justice**

There is no definite single apparent definition of social justice; however, the literature suggests that contemporary notions of social justice coexist with expressions of human rights, fairness and equality (Dobie, Arthur & Jones, 2010:103). Dobie, *et al.* (2010:103) writes: “the literature on social justice and education exists in a complex space that focuses on the development of society and the role of education in creating just social structures”. Gale cited in Dobie (2010:103) argues that social justice should value a positive regard for group differences and include democratic processes based on the participation of various social groups. I concur with Dobie in this regard. To me social justice means to do what is right to a person, treating each person with dignity each person deserve, in other words social justice is a moral value. I liken this with what Rawls (2009) refers to as ‘equality principle’. The equality principle requires the rearrangement of goods to be guided by considerations of opportunity and by the differences that arise from individual circumstances, which are beyond the control of the individual and cannot be accounted for (Jones, 2009). Hence, I argue that the quintile system violates the three principles of equity as discussed by Jones (2009).

Given the injustices in education prior to 1994, the quintile system has not distributed resources according to needs of the society. The criterion utilised by the quintile system based on the geographical space of the school to classify schools; ignores individual learner demographics. Therefore social justice is not being done to the poor learners instead, privileged learners from wealthy and the middle class background. Evans in Dobie states that social justice in its origin was about treating equals equally and only equals as full citizens. Initially these equals are from the wealthy (see also Oleck, 1951).

## **4.4 FUNDING AND REDRESS**

Barnes (2005:210) posits that the meaning of redress in use at any one time ranged from “rectifying a wrong” to “reparation” to “restoring equality” to “empowerment”. Barnes argues that redress became a blanket code word for these issues, but the term had very different

implications at different times for different people in South Africa in this case, pertaining to funding of public schools.

In the previous chapters the reason for the implementation of the NNSSF and the quintile system were discussed. In this section their effectiveness will be discussed. Redress is one of the key aims of the funding of education. The aim is to address disparities. However it is worth to note that we need to understand redress within the context of hegemonic policies, influenced by neoliberal system.

South Africa entered the transition period in 1994. This was a time of economic meltdown and recession and neo-liberal policies which required structural adjustments. In order to give effect to education transition the government has to consider a macro-economic plan or economic growth, thus the establishment of the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) was established with the hope that it would accelerate economic growth which would benefit the transformation of education. Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) was established after RDP with a similar hope to that of RDP. However, GEAR also failed (Fataar, 2010).

The government democratized education through the establishment of SGBs which devolved powers to parents. It is not my intention to repeat what the content of SASA section (25) entails, but to emphasize in order to understand the contradictions that funding imposes at implemental level. Thus, Van Wyk (2004) is concerned that redress is not sufficiently explained in the policy document instead, redress has been used interchangeable with equity. I am of the view that the NNSSF policy does not explain in details the issue on redress. However, Fataar (2010:2011) has explained why redress has not been explained. Hence, I find Tomasevski 4-A's cited by Roithamyr (2003) useful in understanding redress. The 4As are availability, accessibility, adaptability and acceptability. In the next section I shall discuss the 4As in an attempt to understand redress with reference to the Quintile funding system. .

#### **4.4.1 Accessibility**

Roithamyr (2003:393) states that the United Nations Committee on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights has set forth specific to define basic education. General Comment13 to the International Convention on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) specify that the government must provide education that exhibits the following four features: availability,

accessibility, availability and adaptability. According to Roithamyr accessibility has three overlapping dimensions: non-discrimination, physical accessibility and economic accessibility. With regard to non-discrimination, Roithamyr (2003:385) states that section 39 (2) of SASA of 1996 granted authority to School Governing Bodies to determine both the amount of fees to be charged and specific equitable criteria to exempt those parents who are unable to pay fees.

***Non-discriminatory:*** Although discrimination is prohibited in education, I argue that, in South Africa discrimination in the South African schools continues to be practiced. For example, ex model C schools continue to discriminate using different techniques like language tests and high school fees, which exclude and deprive learners from poor communities' access to quality education (Dolby, 2001). It is true that "price sensitive" parents can be exempted from paying school fees, however, I contend that the fact that certain learners are exempted leads to them being classified as "poor and needy" and they may be subject to further discriminatory practices.

Education has to be ***economically accessible***, has to be affordable to all. However, this dimension is subject to the wording of article 13 (2) in relation to primary, secondary and higher education, which states that primary education shall be "free". States are required to progressively introduce free secondary and higher education (Roithamyr, 2003: 394). I argue that education in South Africa is not economically accessible. According to Brown (2006:515) ex model C school have "technically" ceased to exist with the passing of SASA in 1996, most with minor conditions still operate as they did before. To illuminate this argument Roithamyr (2003:385) states that section 39(1) of SASA of 1996 authorises schools to charge school fees when a majority of parents attending the school budget meeting adopts a resolution to do so, above that parents are given discretion over how much to charge. Fees vary considerably, depending on factors such as class size, facilities, and the quality of teaching offered and most are prohibitive for the poor (Brown, 2006:515).

Although schools are deracialised, economically, education is not accessible to all. On the one hand, I find that the South African constitution guarantees everyone the right to basic education and, on the other hand, schools are encouraged to charge fees. To some extent, such fees appear as a barrier to quality education for the majority of learners (South African Human Rights Commission, 2004; Roithamyr, 2003; Brown, 2006). With regard to physical access, Fiske and

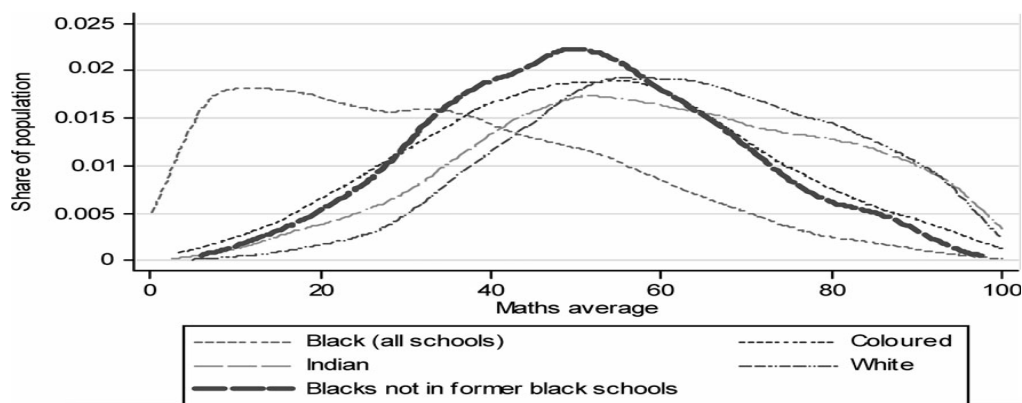


Ladd (2004) and Reschovsky (2006) argue that the government has made some significant strides in improving the education system. For example, over the decades, provision of schooling has expanded, enrolments have increased to internationally respectable levels, and teacher qualifications have improved (Christie, 2012:9). However, administrative structures and practices have had to engage with historical patterns of spatial production, which shows a stubborn resistance to change (Christie, 2012). This resistance is revealed by patterns of performance on tests that continue to mirror former apartheid departments. The quintile funding maintains the order of inequality in the education system, which translates to job opportunities for black children, as opposed to their counterparts as discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.

Roithamy (2003) posits that the Constitutional Court has a particular obligation to provide housing for those who cannot afford to buy their own houses. Likewise it must provide access to medical care for all. Based on this argument, Roithamy posits that the Constitutional Court is likely to read section (29) (1) (a) of the South African constitution as guaranteed. Although the South African education has improved in terms of learner enrolment in schools, this however translates into overcrowded classes, especially in poor schools. Fataar (1997), argues that expansion in schools has led to a new challenge, namely the qualitative dimension of schooling. Equal access will have to be taken into consideration that means the quality and type of schooling provided. Furthermore, providing schooling of poor quality could contribute to existing patterns of inequality in schooling in South Africa (Fataar, 1997:80). In other words, this simply means that children have accessed education physically, but in terms of quality education, they are denied access. A contributing factor to this is the high teacher-learner ratio, which makes quality education almost impossible.

Davies (2004:120) is of the view that schools charging fees are performing well in terms of results in mathematics and literacy. This is because these schools can afford to hire more staff and offer specialist programmes to help learners with learning deficit. Davies (2004) further posits that the effect of these programmes should not be underestimated. Van den Berg cited in Davies (2004:120) has done a significant analysis of the extent to which specialist programmes translate into output, and has inter-alia generated the figure 3.11 in an attempt to elicit how enduring apartheid legacy of educational inequalities play themselves out in learner performance amongst racial groups in post-apartheid era. Van der Berg uses the figure 3.11 to elucidate the situation.





**Figure 3.11:** Density Curves for Higher Grade Maths by Race, 2003. Source: Servaas van der Berg, 2007.

The figure 3.11 above illustrates the results in Higher Grade Mathematics by race group. This also means that those schools where as a consequence of a particular fee level, additional school staff can be appointed or existing staff retained as a result of augmentation by means of private funding. Performance in one of the key subjects is achieved at a higher rate than poor school where by a minimal amount of school fees is paid or not paid at all as parents are financially challenged. However, on the other hand the government has implemented an exemption policy for parents whose children are at fee school. According to their financial condition these parents can either be partially exempted or fully exempted.

Despite the availability of exemptions, evidence indicates that school fees create barriers to access for some families, and perpetuate systemic inequalities in the allocation of funding among learners (Roithamyr, 2003:391). Roithamyr further states that a report on school financing, issued by the Department of Education to the Minister in February 2003, indicates that fees may create problems with equality and access. In contrast, Fleisch and Woolman contend against this, arguing that the school fees are not a barrier to accessing education. Advancing their argument they explain the constitutionality of school fees and stating that it also contributes to parents to take ownership of their children's education and restore or maintain their dignity. I agree with Fleisch and Woolman that school fees might not be the barrier in some instances as some of the schools are no-fee status schools but the reality is, children from the poor are denied access to quality education from free schools as their parents cannot afford to pay their children's fees. As noted in section 3.5.1 of this dissertation, it is clearly illustrated how labour absorption is amongst the population. Moreover, given the

historical inequalities, disenfranchised majority, 80% of the land belongs to white minority whereas in proportion of race they are about 10%, this explains the true reflection of status quo.

I argue that even if this clause of exemption is justified on the other hand it discriminates the poor amongst the rich. Thus, Brown (2006:509) is against the levying of school fees and refers to this as overt racism in the form of apartheid laws which have been replaced by covert racism and class domination in the form of school fees (see also Chisholm,2009). Children of the poor are being discriminated in either ways both by teachers or other learners and this has a negative impact in terms of their learning. Vally cited in Brown (2006:509) writes:

The long shadow of apartheid ideology ...continues to cast its Stygian gloom, no longer through racially explicit policies, but by proxy: high school fees, exclusionary language and admission policies, and other transparent manoeuvres such as “crowding out” black learners by bussing-in white learners from outside the feeder area (Brown, 2006:509).

The above statement shows that injustices are still perpetuated in the post-Apartheid era. The Quintile system is entrenching the inequalities that are inherited from apartheid regime. I argue that education has to be within the physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location (e.g. neighbourhood school) or via modern technology (e.g. access to a distance learning programme). Education has to be accessible to all, especially the vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds (Roithamyr, 2003:394).

#### **4.4.2 Availability**

According to Roithamyr (2003:393) availability refers to functioning educational institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the state party. Report of the public hearing (2006:10) states that availability of education refers to what must be physically in place before the right to education is accessed. It refers to necessary resources that must be available in order that the right to basic education can be accessed. It also refers to what the government must physically provide in order that education can take place. These include: legislation of ensuring compulsory education, physical infrastructure of schools, provisioning of teachers, the supply of teaching materials and aids. To be extracted

from this definition is state's obligation to ensure the availability of free primary education, which requires the state to provide the necessary resources for ensuring basic infrastructure of schools, is maintained. I argue, with regard to the quintile system seemingly this vision is not fulfilled.

Fiske and Ladd (2004) posit that, although the government has made an improvement in education, their findings are that there are still schools, for example in the Easter Cape, that still do not have the basic facilities, school buildings are without electricity, running water and sanitation and there are still learners learning under trees or in mud buildings. Fiske and Ladd (2004) also note that the provision of computers laboratories and libraries is insufficient in rural areas. In this regard I contend that in terms of the Constitution, the State must provide the facilities mentioned above, and if these are not available, the right to basic education as guaranteed by the Constitution, loses its significance as a human right.

#### **4.4.3 Acceptability**

This feature refers to the form and substances of education, including curricular and teaching methods have to be acceptable, for example, relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality (Roithamyr, 2003:394). According to Dakar Framework all children have the "right to basic education at whatever level is considered "basic". The framework emphasizes further that "quality is at the heart of education" and that quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs". This framework, to which South Africa is a signatory, therefore implies that the term 'basic education' should not be confused with "low" quality education or an "inadequate" standard of education. The quintile system allocates learners according to class and probably to race. This argument emanates from the fact that although schools are deracialised, most probably learners who are accessing schooling at ex model c schools are those from middle class. Even though they accessed these schools on the principle of affordability by parents their culture and language is not considered instead they have to conform to the values and morals of the white society (Brown, 2006). This results in that those learners find it difficult to excel in their studies as compared to their counterparts, as has been highlighted in section 4.2.1 of this dissertation. The SASA has created contradictions in the transformation of education. Hence, the remnants of the apartheid system are still visible and operational within the system.

#### **4.4.4 Adaptability**

Education has to be flexible so that it can adapt to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings (Roithamyr, 2003:394). In this regard the language issue was raised due to our history but is an important issue that needs attention, as it impacts on the availability, accessibility and adaptability of the education system delivering quality education (South African Human Rights Commission, 2004:3). The quintile system through its criterion on classification of schools seems to systematically exclude learners from poor background. According to feature of adaptability of education as argued above the although in the foundation phase learners learn in their mother tongue in higher levels they need to conform to other language which poses a challenge in terms of understanding the curriculum. Constitutionally South Africa has eleven official languages this includes indigenous languages. Moreover, the quintile system seems not to be flexible as it does not fund learners according to their needs. For example, a learner from poor background in a wealthy school, the learner receives the same amount of subsidy as the one from wealthy family. Hence, I argue that the quintile system does not eliminate disparities instead it advantages the rich and wealthy to maintain their hegemonic status. Hence, disparities in learner outcomes coupled with unequal job opportunities are the outcomes of the quintile system. Indigenous languages culture of learners from poor background is ignored (Brown, 2006:514; Fataar, 2010:211). In the following section I shall discuss the ineffectiveness of the quintile system.

#### **4.5 INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUINTILE SYSTEM**

In the following section I will discuss how ineffective is the quintile system in addressing inequities in the funding of education. In previous chapter an extensive discussion on what the quintile system is and how it has been implemented. It will be improper to repeat myself. Nevertheless, it is important to review its implication in relation to what it has been envisaged. The central question arises. Is the quintile system an effective pro-poor mechanism? In answering this question, Kanjee and Chudgar (2009) have conducted extensive research on the effectiveness of the quintile system. Table 1 below extrapolate how the initial national table of targets for the school allocates funding per national quintile.

Table 1: National table of targets for school allocation (2006-2008)

<b>Table 1: National table of targets for the school allocation (2006–2008)</b>				
		<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>NQ1</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>R703</b>	<b>R738</b>	<b>R775</b>
<b>NQ2</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>R645</b>	<b>R677</b>	<b>R711</b>
<b>NQ3</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>R527</b>	<b>R554</b>	<b>R581</b>
<b>NQ4</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>R352</b>	<b>R369</b>	<b>R388</b>
<b>NQ5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>R117</b>	<b>R123</b>	<b>R129</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>R469</b>	<b>R492</b>	<b>R517</b>
<b>Adequacy benchmark</b>		<b>R527</b>	<b>R554</b>	<b>R581</b>
<i>Source: DoE, 2006</i>				

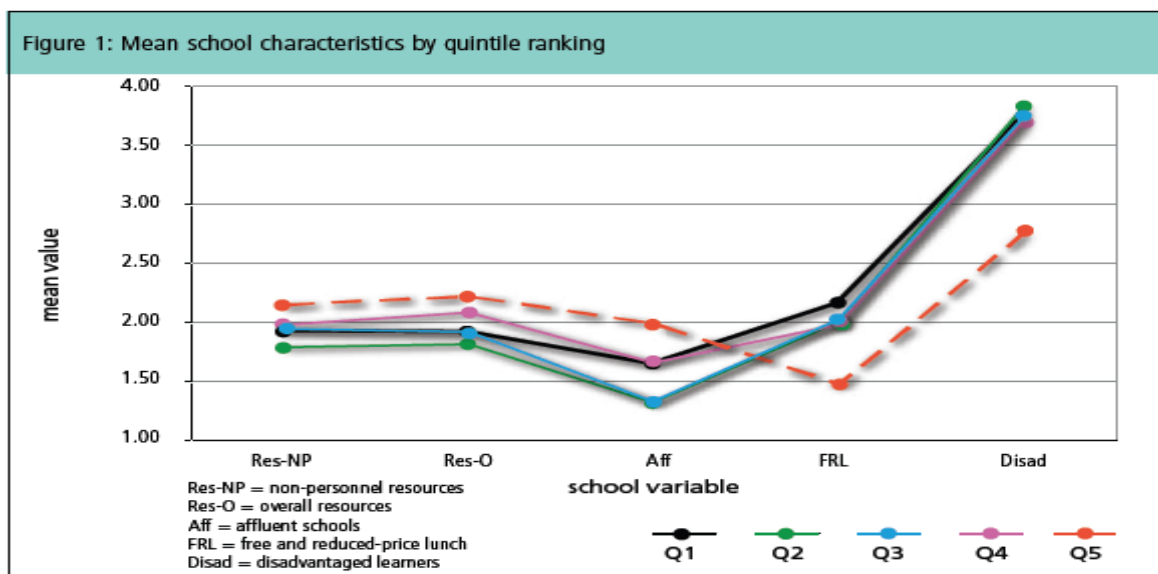
The quintile system is a key policy change that has been implemented in the post-apartheid South Africa, which commits the government to redress imbalances and redistribute resources in order to address past disparities in the education sector. This formula required school to be categorised according to poverty scores of the community and the geographic area in which the school is allocated which assigns the school to quintile rank NQ1 for the poorest school to NQ5 the least poor school. This was a pre-determined formula that governs the amount of funding the school receives. Ironically, this is the exact strategy used by the apartheid government on the unequal funding of schools based on race and ethnicity. Yamauchi (2011:146-147) refer to this as spatial factor determine quality education one accesses.

In view of the above he identified two factors determining school quality in post-apartheid South Africa: First, the legacy of apartheid imposes historical constraints on the spatial distribution of income and population groups. He further states that good schools were located in selected areas and this maintained inter racial diversity in access to good education as well as socio-economic homogeneity within neighbourhood. Secondly, even the mobility of population was unrestricted after the abolition of apartheid, household level financial constraints coupled with the imperfect credit market often prevents the poor from moving into those well off areas that have better educational opportunities. Thus, the opportunity for better education is geographically correlated with land price.

Amita Chutgar and Anil Kamjee in their report state that although the intention of the policy has been amended, there has been great dissatisfaction with the quintile ranking system. Critics argue that the policy misclassified schools giving them incorrect quintile scores, and thus,

similarly poor learners are found in schools with different quintiles since the poverty score are based exclusively on the geographical area in which the school is located (HSRC, 2006; Davies, 2004:116). Other critic is that this approach ignores the diverse nature of households and the composition of the school's learners (HSRC, 2006).

**Figure 3.12:** Mean school characteristics by quintile ranking



(HSRC, 2006)

Through an extensive analysis of data Amita and Kamjee observed that for every school background variable analysed, schools in quintile 5 are better off than schools in Quintile 1. This means that the schools in Quintile 1 receiving more funding support than schools in Quintile 5 are worse off in terms of school resources and school composition compares to schools in Quintile 2. This report goes further that in terms of overall resources and non-personnel resources, schools in quintile 2 and quintile 3, which receive less money, are as well off as, than schools in Q1. The report also revealed that Data on school resources and composition revealed that those in higher quintiles 2 and 3 may have resources needs as high as or even higher than in Quintile 1. This means that the quintile ranking is misidentifying currently in Q2-Q4.

In terms of proportions of affluent children, schools in Quintile 1 are slightly above the national average. Schools in Q4 are no better and slightly above the national average in terms of proportion of learners from disadvantaged families, or requiring free and reduced-price lunch, although they receive much less funding than schools in Q1 where the proportion of affluent

learners is slightly above the national average. Schools in Q2 which receive less financial support than those in Q1 are shown to have far fewer overall and non-personnel resources. Schools in Q1 report higher percentage of non- personnel resources compared with schools in Q2 or 3 and even Q4 (33% vs. 21-29%). In terms of proportion of the disadvantaged learners, they find that 81% of Q1 schools have more than 50% of such learners with 87% and 84%, respectively, compared to the less well funded Q2 and Q3 schools. In terms of affluent learners, approximately 12% of Q1 schools report that more than 50% of their learners are from privileged families compared with between 4% and 10% reported by Q2-Q4 schools. For the free reduced price lunch variable, a higher proportion of schools in Q1 and Q2 report that no learners require free lunch compared with schools in Q3 and Q4. Forty four percent of schools in Q2 have no learner requiring free and reduced price lunch compared to 24% of Q4 schools.

The study by Anita and Kanjee has proven that the quintile system is ineffective. The schools that are mostly disadvantaged are assigned to middle quintiles. Their needs are as great as or greater than those in Q1 but according to the current financial formula they receive less financial support. Schools in Q3 receive R193 less than those in Q1. In terms of learner population the findings are that the Q2 schools, which receive less money than those in Q1, serve a great proportion of disadvantaged learners and have fewer affluent learners than their Q1 counterparts. This point to the urgent need for the regular reclassification of schools to ensure that those in greater need are allocated into the correct quintile rank and thus qualify to receive sufficient levels of funding to meet their specific needs (HSRC, 2006).

#### **4.6 CHALLENGES OF THE QUINTILE SYSTEM**

During the implementation of the quintile system it has been observed that schools are experiencing problems. Now that schools ranking is based on poverty level of the surrounding community, the following are challenges that were found common from the research by Griese *et al.* (2010:35-38):

- Concerns regarding accuracy of ranking,
- Different ranking of schools serving the same community,
- The fact that the ranking system only considers the physical location of the school and does not take into account learner demographics,

- The clustering of schools with vastly different resources into the same quintile, and
- Lack of consultation in the ranking process.

#### 4.7 SUMMARY

It can be concluded that the quintile system within the South African context is an inappropriate funding formula. In this chapter I have outlined the quintile system within the framework of the National Norms and Standards School Funding policy. The Quintile as a funding strategy has been discussed. The Quintile system is a strategy to eliminate disparities. A question has been raised: Does the Quintile system achieve equity and redress? In order to answer this question the constitutive meanings of concepts 'equity and redress' was discussed. As noted in Chapter Two, the conceptual analysis and questioning methods were employed for this study. Thus, conceptual analysis has been also utilised to analyse equity and redress. These are also linked to their constitutive meanings, namely: fairness, equality and social justice (Dobie et al, 2010).

For equity, three key principles were identified by Jones (2010). These are: equal life chances, meritocracy, and equal concern for people's needs. Redress as a concept has been discussed and analysed. The 4-As by Tomasevski were linked to redress and discussed with an attempt to understand the quintile system in South African context. I have linked the 4-As to redress in order to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of redressing. I found the 4-As will help in analysing redress and ascertain if it has been achieved through the Quintile system. The 4As developed by Tomasevski are availability, accessibility, adaptability, and acceptability.

With regard to availability I have argued that education in South Africa is not available to all, but to those who can afford, especially quality education. The school buildings are not enough as there are still learners who are learning under tree and deplorable mud structures which are a threat to safety of learners. Other schools especially the schools that are in poor communities are still experiencing overcrowded classes due to shortage of space. This has been a trend from apartheid regime.

Pertaining to accessibility, I argue that education in South Africa is unaffordable and not accessible. The key reason is on school fees. The contradictions from the legislation like SASA



as well as the NNSF and the quintile system were discussed which helped in revealing the gaps within the policy. Accessibility here has three overlapping factors, that is, (1) non-discriminatory, (2) physical access, and (3) economical access. All these have been extensively discussed in this chapter. I have tried to unpack how accessibility prohibits access within the framework of the three overlapping factors. Economically, school fees are a major factor in denying access to quality education and facilities. Physical accessibility, I argued that learners can access schools physically, enrolment has improved since but on the other hand some learners do not access quality education due to overcrowded classes, unaffordability of parents and lack of human resources. Lastly, I argued that, with regard to the non-discriminatory aspect of Accessibility, literature has revealed that learners are discriminated in many ways. For example, some learners are discriminated through language tests for admission purposes, and others are discriminated through prohibitive non-standardised school fees.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided an analysis and critique of the quintile system of funding of public schools in South Africa. In the chapter I demonstrated how the post-apartheid legal framework for school fees and funding permits public schools to charge school fees. The main concern with a system that permits schools to charge school fees, albeit with an exemption policy in place for those parents who cannot afford, is that such a system fails to facilitate adequate access to basic education for poor learners. The results of the analysis presented in Chapter Four show that the funding of education in South Africa is a complex phenomenon. In this chapter, I intend to determine the extent to which the quintile system has achieved its objectives. Though significant improvements have been achieved in the funding of education in post-apartheid era, inequalities are still persistent. This being the final chapter, it is necessary to recapitulate the salient points that the quintile system has in terms of its successes as well as its limitations or gaps. This is done by summarising the research topic, highlighting the key findings, and making recommendations.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC**

The funding of schools by the government plays an important role in an effort to redress the imbalances caused by calculated discriminatory policies that governed apartheid system. To achieve the transformation agenda in education, the new government developed the National Norms and Standards School Funding policy (NNSSF) in order to eliminate disparities in public schools. The NNSSF regulate the funding of public schools in South Africa.

Of key importance to this study is the quintile funding system. This system calls for all Provincial Education Department (PEDs) of the nine provinces to categorise all public schools into five quintiles. This has to be done according to a specific criterion, that is, the poverty level of the community, the geographical area in which the school is located and the literacy level of the community. The purpose of my study is to examine the implementation of the quintile system and its implications on the funding of public schools in particular in addressing

inequities through redress and equity. The quintile system has a direct influence on the funding of public schools. Of particular importance are the inevitable tensions at the operational level resulting not only from the dichotomy between conception and execution, but since the original policy vision itself becomes diluted to the extent that it no longer provides solutions for the realities it was designed to address (Vally & Spree, 1998 cited in Mamatu, 2008).

An in-depth outline of the research method and methodology that my study employed, to meet the scientific requirements for social science research, was discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Three examined the quintile system on the funding of education in South African public schools. This necessitated the discussion of the theoretical framework which helps to understand the effectiveness or the appropriateness of this formula. Tomasevski's (2006) 4As model has four basic features which the government can use to measure the fulfilment of basic education for its citizens, that is, availability, accessibility, adaptability, and acceptability was discussed. These components, in the context of my study, form the core of the funding of public schools.

Chapter Three of my study entails a literature study of the quintile funding system, and highlighted the historical background of the funding of education in South Africa. Inequities in education were discussed with reference to pertinent aspects of the quintile system. Aspects of SASA (1996) devolved powers to SGBs and mandated them to charge school fees in order to supplement resources from the state (Brown, 2006; Roithamyr, 2006; Roos, 2004). The perceived tension between policy and legislation, in particular the quintile system with reference to equity and redress and the Constitution, the Bill of Rights as well as the relevant section of the SASA gave rise to my research question which is 'to what extent does the quintile funding system achieve equity and redress'? The summary of the findings are provided below.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

I summarise the findings of my study in relation to the three objectives of the study, namely: 1) To describe the nature of the quintile system of funding; 2) To understand the reasons for its implementation; and, 3) To analyse how it was implemented. My intention in doing this was to highlight what has been achieved so far concerning the implementation of quintiles and what are the gaps that made it difficult to fulfil its envisaged intent.

The first objective of this study was to describe the nature of the quintile school funding system. The analysis of the quintile system presented in Chapter Four shows that the quintile funding system is a funding strategy enshrined in the National Norms and Standards School Funding policy established in 1999 and was implemented in 2000. Its aim was to offset imbalances in the South African education system that was inherited from the apartheid era. In order to make this vision a reality, it was crucial that legislation that would govern the education system need to be in place. Prior to the implementation of this legislation the South African Constitution of 1996 was established as the supreme law of the country that provided the framework for the governance of education.

Concerning why the quintile system was implemented, my study found that the quintile system is a strategy used to distribute resources. The historical background that led to the implementation of the quintile funding system has been discussed in section 3.2 of this thesis. It is not my intention to repeat the rationale behind its implementation. However, it is worth noting that its implementation was a mammoth task for the government, given the space and time in which it was implemented. Here I wish to highlight issues that had to be done as a priority in order to create a conducive environment for the implementation.

Firstly, the government in post 1994 had to eliminate 19 racially segregated education departments into one national department and nine provincial education departments (Jansen, 2003). Secondly, schools were deracialised which means that all schools were open to all racial groups. For this to take effect legislation has to be put in place to govern education. The legal framework that formed the basis in which education should be governed had to be put in place.

The international instruments, for example the Education for All (EFA) campaign, have set a framework in which all countries could address education and provide access to all, poor or rich. According to EFA 'everyone has a right to basic education'. It is within this framework that the South African Constitution of 1996 section 9 states that 'everyone has a right to basic education'. Hence the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the National Norms and Standards School Funding policy with the quintile system as a mechanism to distribute resources to public schools in South Africa were established. It was within this framework that the funding of public schools was structured in an attempt to offset inequalities in education.

It is worth noting that in establishing these legislations the government has made great achievements in education. This is observed, for example, through the increased learner enrolment, supply of learning and teaching materials, new built schools, computer labs at schools, libraries, and the school nutrition scheme that caters for about 15 million children (Van der Berg, 2007). However, having said this, much more still needs to be done. For example, the 'right' to basic education seem to have a price tag attached. In order for one to access quality education one will have to pay high school fees. Hence, it can be argued that the quintile system has created a two-tier system in public schooling system, which can be perceived as schools for the rich with quality education on the one hand, and schools for the poor with poor education on the other.

Tomasevski (2006) highlights four basic features of basic education, which according to international instrument compels the government to grant free and compulsory education. These include accessibility, adaptability, availability, and acceptability. The South African Constitution guarantees basic education from the age 7 to 15 years of school going age. On **accessibility** I found that education is not accessible to all in terms of quality. The government made some significant strides in terms of the improved enrolment in schools, but this does not translate to quality education as many classrooms are still overcrowded in poor communities. Thus, teacher learner ratio is very high which makes it impossible for the teacher to attend to individual needs of the learners. This is demonstrated by learning outcomes or results of learners. For example, learners in poor schools are performing very weak compared to their white counterparts. This is also revealed by statistics for Grade Three, Grade Six and Grade Twelve results.

Because of the high school fees, there is not equal **affordability** in education. That is to say, many learners cannot afford to pay their fees as their parents are financially challenged. In order for one to access quality education it means one must pay, and this means that education has been commoditised. The South African Constitution and SASSA prohibits discrimination, however, I find out that as much that there is an exemption policy to help those parents that are financially challenged, on the other hand these learners are discriminated against as not being able to afford school fees, either by teachers or other learners. The ex-model C schools are accepting a minimal number of poor learners as they try to avoid losing school fee income from potential parents.

With regard to *adaptability*, it has been legislated that the previously disadvantaged learners can be admitted in previously predominantly white schools. However, the findings are that their culture is not accommodated (Brown, 2006:514). Instead, there seem to be a culture of assimilation. One example would be that they are not taught in their mother tongue, and this makes it difficult to understand the content. Instead, these learners are expected to adopt the values and aspirations of the white learners and institution (Brown, 2006:514).

In terms of *availability*, I found that education is not available to all. Amongst the previously disadvantaged poor communities there are not enough schools. This is more evident in rural areas where the majority of population is black African. There are still learners learning under trees, and there are mud schools that are hazardous to the life of the learners. In addition, there are still learners who travel long distances for schooling. Fataar (2010) provides a picture of the situation in all provinces.

As for *acceptability*, I found that although many of the schools are de-racialised, the language issue is still dominant and controversial. Indian, coloured and black learners are moving to previously predominant white schools. The challenge is that these learners are faced with tremendous challenges of being discriminated against and the language of teaching is foreign. Generally speaking, it can be deduced that equity and redress are unattainable in this country, given the historical background of deep inequalities and low economic growth. I argue, based on this discussion above, equity can be understood and defined in line with Aristotle's definition in section 3.4.1 (Tella, 2010).

Furthermore, there is the quintile system is characterised by problem of monitoring, commitment and accountability. This finding corroborates World Bank Report (2004) which highlights that there is a lack of robust monitoring, commitment and accountability on the side of officials which leads to failure. Jones (2009) argues that equity is central development and yet seems to be low on the policy agenda in many countries. He argues that this is due to lack of political will. According to him tackling inequities often requires working against the interest of national elites and challenging vested interests or dominant ideologies.

On how the quintile system is being implemented, the quintile system provides that all Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) were mandated to rank all schools according to three criteria, namely geographical area in which the school is located; income and poverty level of

the community in which the school is situated; and, the literacy level of the community of the school (DoE, 2000). Poverty level forms the basis on which the school were ranked. According to quintile system schools were to be ranked from National Quintile 1 for the poorest school to National Quintile 5 for the least poor schools. Quintile 3 was regarded as a bench mark. Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 are classified as the poorest schools, whereas Quintile 4 and Quintile 5 as the least poor schools. Schools that are classified as Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 were declared as 'No fee schools' and they received more funding from the government as well as Quintile 3, 4, and 5 received government subsidy albeit their parents capability of paying school fees and raise funds which generate huge revenue. Owing to the complexities of the implementation of the quintile system, the policy had to be revised. For example, it was reviewed in 2006. Although the government achieved and managed to put these legislations in place it should be noted that there were challenges that made it difficult to implement these legislations smoothly. The implications of these findings are many and varied. First, school fees represent a high percentage of income for revenue for certain schools. However, schools that were misclassified are disadvantaged because the subsidy they receive does not match their needs. The criterion on the classification of schools is based on geographical area and is causing major problems to misclassified schools. The quintile system failed to understand that schools are not homogenous.

The declaration of Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 schools as 'No fee schools' in 2006 was an attempt to effect pro-poor funding; parents tend to misinterpret the no fee as not to make any financial contribution to the school. This strategy has disadvantaged the schools. Principals are faced with a problem of being unable to run the school effectively because the funding from the government at times is inadequate to finance all the needs of the school. On the ranking of schools according to quintiles, I found that there is lack of accuracy, and schools have been misclassified. This is due to the criterion used in classifying the schools.

For example, the school can be classified as quintile five because of its affluent neighbourhood and the proximity. The formula ignores learner demographics, therefore funding does not follow the learner. Thus, the quintile system is disguising inequalities in schools. The school can also be in an affluent area with learners from the affluent families being in the majority, but within that school there are learners from the poor background, the funding does not follow the learner, instead, the parents can be exempted from paying school fees if the parent has

applied from exemption. This can be partial or full exemption depending on the income of the household.

Although The National Norms and Standards School Funding policy is the policy established to eliminate disparities, with the aim for equity and redress, I found that what the purpose for which the policy was envisaged for is in fact not being attained. Instead, the inequities are being entrenched. Within the public school system we have rich schools and poor schools. The system has produced a two tier system which includes schools in suburbs that display 'First World' opulence, where parents contribute vast sums of money to the school in order to maintain costly sporting facilities and extensive media centres. The system also includes schools that serve rural communities that are desperately poor, and where parents are mostly illiterate. Private contribution, vigorous fund raising by parents from the wealthy communities, sponsors from corporates are some of the causal factors. Parents in the rich schools can employ more staff members that are specialists in certain learning areas which the poor on the other hand do not have that capacity. This results in vast disparities of learner achievements.

To summarise the discussion above given the time and space in which South Africa became a democratic state, it can be concluded that the quintile system in South African context should be understood in the following terms. In a discussion in section 3.3 of this dissertation it has been highlighted that South Africa was declared as a democratic state after the inception of a democratically elected government. It has been discussed that in order for us to gain a deeper understanding of the quintile system, we need to conceptualise democracy as well as state. Therefore, concepts of a democratic state need to be scrutinised as to what they mean in South African context. Here we are dealing with two concepts, that is, 'democracy' and 'state'.

In terms of *democracy* the quintile system should be understood according to Plato's, Aristotle's and Schumpeter's terms conception of democracy as discussed in section 3.3.1. With regard to *state* the quintile system should be understood according to Fataar's (2010) conception of state as discussed in section 3.3.2. With regard to equity and redress, the quintile system should be understood according to Plato cited in Tella (2010) conception of equity as discussed in section 3.5. I would like to highlight that given South Africa's historical background as a polarised society, the quintile system has failed to bring about social cohesion. This is because schools that were predominantly black are still predominantly black; and schools that were predominantly white are still predominantly white.



#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings presented in section 5.3 some recommendations have been made. First: Government should undertake constant review of the classification of schools. As there are so many factors that are contributing to misclassification, one being the constant mobility of parents from place to place due to developments.

Second, the issue of geographical location should be examined; as it has been found that in quintile five you do get learners from the poor background. In these cases the funding must follow the child. Demographics of the learner should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, criteria on categorisation should constantly be reviewed, taking into consideration that schools are not homogenous.

In order for the implementation of the policy at grassroots level to be effective, there should be a robust monitoring, accountability and responsibility on the side of the education officials as well as teachers at school level. Proximity and neighbourhood should not be considered as the criteria for the school as this leads in disadvantaging that particular school in terms of funding they receive. The building should not attract funding but the learner.

#### **5.5 REFLECTIONS ON MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE STUDY**

Now that I have come to a conclusion of my study it has come to my understanding that a brief reflection on the journey through my study needs to be done. In doing this, I hope to highlight some pertinent issues that each researcher might encounter throughout the journey of his or her study. However, this does not mean that this is one size fits all approach or experience. Some researchers might experience something different from my experience as we are unique individuals. Hence, to mention but a few, I will focus on factors that profoundly affected my thinking. These include choosing a research topic that is researchable, a research methodology and methods, academic writing, finding my voice, academic interaction. For me conducting this study has been a challenging journey but informative and has played an enormous contribution in developing my way of thinking.

### **5.5.1 The research topic**

At the initial stages of writing a proposal I experienced a problem in following the procedure on the lay out of the proposal. As I was in search of information on writing a proposal I happen to get confused as I was gathering information from those who have already gone through this proposal. I realised that I am confusing myself with lot of information and I realised that I need to focus to what my supervisor advises me to do.

Choosing a topic has been a challenge for me, in the sense that I had an interest in more than one topic as it seems they are all of great importance and are researchable. Finally I have chosen the topic on the implications of the quintile funding system in South African public schools. My experience has intrigued my interest on this topic. Having a topic is not enough, but I need to identify a problem that is worth researching. The challenge was on how to phrase the problem so that it can make sense.

While in this process I realised guideline by Bak useful. She mentioned that writing a thesis can be a daunting task. She mentioned that one needs to select a research topic for the study one should ask if the topic is researchable. And one should keep in mind that the audience is academics. This scared me as I know that these are people who have a vast knowledge in this field. This therefore means that this is not an ordinary writing, but a scientific one which is a challenge for me.

### **5.5.2 Challenges with the choice of an appropriate methodology**

Choosing or selecting a research methodology was a great challenge for me. It was difficult for me to understand the difference between methodology and methods as I assumed that these have the same meaning. But through a discussion between myself and my supervisor I managed to understand and distinguishing the difference between the research methods and research methodology which was an enormous task for me. From studying literature I found that researchers are making a distinction between ‘research methods’ and ‘research methodology’, and they use these concepts differently. I have also encountered a difficulty in understanding a research design as I tend to confuse it with research method. At some stage through literature study I realised that in Philosophy of Education, the concept of “research methodology” is a particular framework of thinking it differs from “research methods” which involves a specific

technique for gathering evidence. This helped me in choosing an appropriate research methodology and research methods.

My interest was on analysing the quintile school funding system. Through my experience I find this to be an interesting area for research and realised that there was a need for an in-depth understanding of this funding system and its implications for the funding of public schools in post-apartheid era. I was attracted by Qualitative research methodology since it is most popularity and relevancy to policy research studies. Given the historical imbalances in South African education, I was interested in finding the meanings of equity and redress in the South African context. Hence, I was interested in understanding what the strategy was all about and of what significance will it make to our country context. I realised that in order for me to achieve this I need to choose conceptual analysis and the questioning methods as my research methods for this study. Conceptual analysis of equity and redress and linked these concepts to constitutive meanings. With the hope that this will help in limiting ambiguity of the concept of equity and redress and gain an understanding of them within the South African context.

### **5.5.3 Challenges with regard to academic writing**

When I started writing this thesis I find it difficult in understanding this phenomenon of academic writing. It took me time to grasp it, although even now I am still in a becoming stage. I believe that I still need more learning. As I was advised by my supervisor and other lecturers in the Department that I need to look at other authors and learn their style of writing academically, but even then it took me time to understand. My fear was to avoid plagiarism in many ways. My supervisor advised to write on what a literature review is and its purpose, I had to write about three pages on this. Through this exercise I realised how important it is to understand how to conduct your literature review, and selecting the appropriate literature that is relevant to your study.

When writing I used to write as I used to write assignments, I did not understand academic writing style which I think even now I am still struggling with. Mouton (2007) cited in Jacobs (2009:84) states that academic writing does not come naturally, it is an acquired skill. My supervisor used to say I must not write like a robot. He tried to explain it to me and also advised me to read my work. It made sense to me when I read my work and realised errors I made within my writing. While I practice this exercise I realised that it is working as I could find

some errors within my writing. What also helps is to give your piece of writing to other person to read. The comments from your colleagues also help in your development in writing and understanding of your work. Prof Bak explained to our group how difficult it is to grasp the skill on academic writing. She explained that even to other scholars academic writing is a challenge and how most scholars have taken decades to become proficient at an academic style of writing.

#### **5.5.4 Finalising the study**

It has been a long journey. At some stage, I thought I was not going to finish in time because I kept engaging myself with a bulk of written literature, which resulted in making changes to my writing. Such a process delayed me, and led to the fact I could not put closure to this research at the time I wanted. After consulting a few colleagues and friends, it became clear that I was faced with a challenge, which required a new method of study and writing that would not distract or delay my writing process. In other words, I needed to focus on my academics and be watchful of time-thieves because, although research is an on-going project, writing a thesis is a process that needs to be brought to closure.

#### **5.5.5 The privilege of meeting academics**

During this course it has been a privilege for me to be exposed to seminars organised by the Department. I had met academics from abroad who presented relevant papers on policy developments and other aspects in education. This broadened my understanding in education in terms of policies that governs education. To mention but a few, for example, Prof Lingard, who is lecturing in the University of Queensland in the United States of America (USA), visited our department in October, 2012. I had a privilege of listening to his lecture on policies in education.

Interaction with academics helped me to grow in terms of understanding the academic space and that in order for us to challenge the anomalies in our societies and within governance we need to do that scientifically, that is through research. This interaction has helped me in understanding how the states operates and how neoliberal policies impact on education policies and what role the education plays in terms of economic growth of any country. As much that

education plays an important role in social development, why then it is unequally provided in the world. This helped me to think more critically.

## **5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Several conclusions on the implications of the quintile system can be drawn. The National Norms and Standards School Funding policy and the quintile system have been welcomed mainly because it seeks to address past inequalities in education. This funding formula adopted a pro-poor strategy on directing more resources to the poor communities.

Although a significant improvement has been achieved it is worth noting that disparities within the system are persistent. The new funding formula for public schools seems to be entrenching inequalities instead of eliminating. Deep inequalities deliberately created by apartheid system imposed a huge challenge to the new government which constrained the government in achieving its goals. Given these challenges, equity is an elusive goal.

Because of the pressure experienced by the government from the opposition parties, the South African Schools Act of 1996 devolved powers to the SGBs. This legislation authorised SGBs to charge school fees in order to supplement government subsidy. Moreover schools and SGBs are to develop their own admission policy, language policy as well as to encourage parents to make financial contribute to the school. This move has far reaching implications for schools serving the poor. Considering the high unemployment rate, of which most families rely on social grants for survival. In 2006 the Education Amendment Act replaced the provincial quintiles and quintiles 1 and 2 were declared no fee schools. This means that these schools cannot charge compulsory school fees (Review of National Policies, 2008:151). However, this also had negative implications on the understanding of parents as they perceive that they do not have to make any financial contribution to the school. This makes it difficult for the principal to run the school effectively.

Clearly, it can be concluded in this study that apparent disparities or gap exist between the intended vision of the policy and the actual implementation and delivery thereof resulting in tensions at the school operational level. It can also be articulated that given socio-economic status of the country, the government had to rely extensively on symbolic policy rather than substantive policy. The government is aware that there are not enough resources to address

imbalances and achieving equity is an elusive goal. Moreover, Motala (2009) is of the view that one of the major challenge facing South Africa is that of policy implementation which makes education transformation difficult.

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