

Chapter 64

Parental/Guardian Subsidization of Extra Tuition and the Marginalization of the Poor in Zimbabwe: Social Exclusion in Education Sector in Zimbabwe

David Makwerere

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8517-4672>

Bindura University of Science Education, Zimbabwe

Donwell Dube

Lupane State University, Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

This chapter focused on the issues of social exclusion in the education sector in Zimbabwe. The primary focus was on the primary and secondary school education systems in the country. Using the lenses of the social exclusion concepts, the chapter looked at how the inequalities are informed by a chain of historical developments including colonialism, the effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1990s, and the effects of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, as well as the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment acts. The chapter submits that the children in urban high-density areas, farming, and rural areas are victims of structural inequalities that have led to social exclusion in the education sector. There is the need for the Government of Zimbabwe to address these inequalities as a matter of urgency.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The quality of education in Zimbabwe, both primary and secondary, has continued to deteriorate since the turn of the century. Many public funded or government-funded schools are struggling to provide enough resources and to motivate the teachers in order to provide a decent education to all citizens. The economic challenges that the country has been experiencing ever since the year 2000 have been the major reason as to why government and public schools are struggling to sustain quality education for ordinary citizens. Against this background, the country has witnessed an exponential growth of privately-owned schools that charge exorbitant tuition fees that are beyond the reach of many ordinary Zimbabweans. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 places focus on quality education for all children. One of the biggest threats to quality education in the Global South are the growing inequalities between the few political and economic elites and the majority of ordinary citizens who are struggling to make ends meet. In a newspaper article by Dzobo (2014), it was estimated that about one million pupils were likely to drop out of school owing to economic challenges that the country is going through. A former Youth minister in the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) Government, Francis Nhema was quoted by Moyo (2014) as saying about 300 000 pupils drop out of school every year. Although the former minister gave a much more conservative number, the fact remains that a disturbingly high number of pupils are dropping out of school every year in Zimbabwe. Another issue of concern is that of extra lessons which are held outside normal school hours. Parents have to pay extra fees for extra weekend and holiday tutorials to the same teachers who teach their children during the school term.

The central thesis in this chapter is on the nature and patterns of exclusion on the basis of affordability and availability of education services. This chapter engages with the question of institutionalized marginalization where the state has failed to provide decent and affordable education to the ordinary citizenry and where the teachers have to charge more for a public good that they are already paid for by the government as their employer. The arguments presented in the chapter also take cognisance of the fact that these developments in Zimbabwe are against the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals in general and more specifically SDG 4. A key target is to achieve universal primary and secondary education for all children. The chapter will, therefore, address the following objectives;

- Examine the role of the Government of Zimbabwe in the provision of Primary and Secondary Education and to analyze shortcomings leading to the rise of weekend and holiday lessons;
- Analyze the extent to which the extra fees required for extra lessons are a source of social exclusion
- Propose policy alternatives for the funding of primary and secondary education in order to satisfy the needs of less privileged and poor.

Vulnerability and Public Education in Zimbabwe

In previous years, the Government of Zimbabwe used to run the Basic Education Assistance Model (BEAM) which was aimed at assisting the less privileged in the Zimbabwean society. However, the BEAM facility has since collapsed owing to non-payment and lack of funding by the government. This removed the only social security mechanism for the poor in the education sector. Although some Non-Governmental Organisations such as Plan International and World Vision have continued to assist some vulnerable groups, they cannot cope with the massive numbers. This leaves a lot of children struggling to get a decent education.

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