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Teachers' Challenge of Using Own Expenses to Do the Employer's Job in Selected Schools Located in Tshwane West District, Gauteng.

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Abstract: ***Generally, it is expected in any employment that the employer would supply all employees with all the necessary materials and knowledge resources to do their jobs. In the light of this expectation schools are allocated grants according to Norms and Standards for Funding ring-fenced for operations, and also receive learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) in terms of the National Policy earmarked for use in the classrooms for different subjects. Despite the allocation and supply of LTSM, many teachers still use their own expenses to execute their fiduciary duties in the classroom even though the Norms and Standards for Funding and LTSM policy mandates schools to take care of the LTSM items meant for use by teachers in the classroom. The purpose of this paper is to investigate teachers' use of their own expenses to teach in the classroom. Data was drawn through the use of qualitative approaches from selected ten teachers (n=12) employed in schools categorised as quintile one to three. The findings reveal that most teachers use their own money to buy certain materials necessary for teaching in the classroom. I concluded that school budgets which are mandated to cater for LTSM should honour the allocation by buying enough LTSM covering the whole year.***

Keywords: Classroom Resources, Social Justice, Neoliberalism, Accountability, Norms and Standards.

1. INTRODUCTION

After 1994 the education system inherited huge backlogs in terms of infrastructure, uneven funding and deployment of human resources. The inequalities created by apartheid remain a major challenge to the democratic government. The difficulty in redressing the legacy of inequality remains entrenched in the education system because of apartheid spatial planning (Osman & Lemmer, 2004). The location of a school determines its resource endowments. In terms of apartheid logic when a school is located in suburban area (because of the policy of separate development) it is likely to be well resourced. Apartheid government had ensured that education for white in suburban areas is well funded and well resourced, while African education in townships and rural areas was not well funded or even not funded. The discourse

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of this paper is located within this context.

Twenty-seven years later, we still schools without proper buildings, toilets, textbooks, and teachers. For many schools teaching and learning resources utilised in the classroom remain a luxury and a special endowment enjoyed by rich schools. For this reason, I would to frame my argument within the concept of disadvantaged environments- though broad and non-specific it captures the complexity of the debate by infusing deep-seated economic, social, and educational factors. Similar to Callaghan (2001) I argue that disadvantaged environments are the impediments to quality education. Arising from social and economic disadvantage learners are prevented from deriving appropriate benefit from education. Disadvantaged environments are multi-dimensional (Pringle, 2002). While I acknowledge the multidimensionality of disadvantage, my argument mainly focusses on deprivations embracing in-

classroom resources directly linked to teaching and learning. But not that I reduce burgeoning out-of- school resources and the general learning and teaching support material (LTSM) research (Abbate, Hernandez, Krishnaiah, Lavi, MacPhee, Taylor, Tuchman, Zheng, 2018) discourses such as parental involvement (Morsy & Rothstein, 2015), child handicaps (Pringle, 2002), inequality (Raffo, 2011), ICT (OECD, 2016), family disruptions, personal illness, violence, poverty (Broad, 1994; Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004; Raffo, 2006) to be of less importance. But writing for an article I have to narrow my focus to a single phenomenon. Hence, my focus is on teachers' use own money to buy LTSM.

A study on teachers' use of in-classroom resources is important for varying reasons. Firstly, classroom realities- particularly teachers' lack of access to teaching and learning resources- have received little attention from researchers. Secondly, discourse and research conduits have channelled our thinking and attention to learner ill-discipline, school violence, sexual misconduct, bullying, poor academic results, racism, lack of facilities (Robinson, 2018). Most researchers develop interest on certain educational matters as a result of media reports. Other researchers take interests in educational matters after promulgation of government reports and policies. The media constrains the nature and the tone of debates in South Africa by raising issues promoting education preservation and rights as moral good. Such common sense information drives public perceptions away from critical matters (Kallaway, Kruss, Donn & Fataar, 1998).

Civil society groups such as Section 27 and Equal Education effectively put the problem of shortage resources into the limelight. Scientific research rarely tells us about teachers' lack of access to teaching and learning resources. The reality is that teachers teach without a pens, pencils, rubbers, papers, etc especially in schools classified as quintile 1-3, mainly located in rural and townships. This argument did find space in the master narrative propelled by media (Robinson, 2018; Smit, 2018; US Department of Education, 2018; Schwartz, 2016; Chokshi, 2018; Malito, 2018; Dalonova, 2018; Australian Associate

Press, 2017; Figueroa, 2017 and Granata, 2018), exposed by civil society (Veriava, 2018; Stein, 2018) and human rights institutions (Human Rights Commission (HRC), 2014; Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), 2017). However, few South African scientific research (Milligan, Koornhof, Sapire & Tikly, 2018; Phakathi, 2015) address the problem of in-classroom resources specifically the aspect of management and use in the classroom as well as the challenges of supply of learning and teaching support material in public schools. These studies were triggered by Department of Basic Education 's (2018) Draft national policy for the provision and management of learning and teaching support material (LTSM). What these studies did not address is the problem of teachers using own expenses for

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resources vital for teaching.

Thirdly, following this lacuna I decided to focus my study on establishing why teachers are using their own money to buy LTSM such as pens and pencils; notebooks and folders; erasers; crayons; glue sticks; dry erase markers; Kleenex and wipes; red pens, etc. This pattern continues despite the fact that the employer, as per the contract of employment, is bound to supply resources for the execution of the job. This problem is taken for granted yet teachers use huge amounts of money from their own pockets. Teachers use their own money to classroom teaching and learning resources despite the Department of Education's Norms and Standards on School Funding's categorisation of all these items in category 4 of the expenditure for schools which prescribes the use of allocations for a wide range of items ranging from pencils to library materials to consumable materials. The Norms and Standards on School Funding devolve the decision to purchase these items to schools. The department did this

to allow schools use money according to local needs. Furthermore, teachers are mandated to participate in the development LTSM budget items and for wider use in the classroom (Gauteng Department of Education, 1999). From existing policy documents, it appears the problem is solved. But the reality is that teachers continue to use their own money to buy learning and teaching support materials.

In the fourth instance, the problem is further exacerbated by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 of 1997 which is silent and leaves this to employers to use their own discretion. What it says with the silence is that employees may pay to do the tasks given to them by their employer despite earning low salaries. The problem is also compounded by silence of teachers' unions which are supposed to protect and advance the rights of employees. With the silence of the law and from the unions, employers may abuse teachers.

2. CONCEPTUALISATION

The architecture

Apartheid spatial planninproblem

The problem of resource shortage in schools can be attributed to previous governments' policies of separate development (British Settlers) and apartheid which historically entrenched privileges on white race first by establishing separate areas of settlement with adequate infrastructure and providing more resources for white schools. Years of administration of education under British colonialism catered for separate cultural identity, and under apartheid, the administration entrenched discrimination resulting into dual medium schools and separate schools for Blacks (Kallaway, 2002).

The notion of separate development, which was introduced by the British settlers was extended by the apartheid government which formerly promulgated race classification through the Population Registration Act of 1950. While this act was divisive, it also gave apartheid government a means to provide for low quality education for blacks by classifying the population into four groups – whites, Indians, Coloureds and Blacks. Each group was designated a separate settlement area(s). White areas were well resourced than other areas occupied by other races. Osman and Lemmer (2004) capture this idea with their concept of apartheid spatial planning which gave life to separate development in residential areas. Bantustan Policy together with Group Areas Act of 1950, and Separate Amenities Policy ensured that there was no racial interaction.

Apartheid was formerly promulgated in education through the Bantu education Act of 1953

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which helped to maintain the structure of racial domination. The Act made education a fundamental pillar of apartheid which was used to socialize Blacks into inferiority. Returning to the idea of shortage of resources in schools, Pam Christie in her seminal work entitled The right to learn. The struggle for education in South Africa, clearly demonstrate
that apartheid is mainly responsible for the current crisis of shortage of LTSM. Christie (2006) argues that apartheid spatial planning ensures that homelands were responsible for their own education and had to fund it from meagre budgets, while Africans in white areas were given meagre funds for the education though funded directly by apartheid government. All in all, apartheid laws were genocide and crime against humanity (Moses, 2010) aimed at destroying Blacks.
The level of destruction of education for Blacks was such that the supply of resources alone cannot complete the transformation process. Therefore, the government needs to level the playing fields
needs to address apartheid spatial planning. Without the latter any efforts to establish an equal society will remain a pipe dream. My argument is that no matter how much funding the government provides for rural and township schools, inequalities will remain. I say this because rural and township schools will still experience deprivation of out-of-school resources which are enjoyed schools in suburban areas - which embodies white privilege. Rural areas and townships (which epitomise deprivation and poverty in general) remain unchanged.
South Africa is a divided nation. Hence Mbeki (1998) argued that South Africa is country of two nations,
"one of this nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographic dispersal. It has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure. This enables to argue that, except for the persistence of gender discrimination against women, all members of this nation have the possibility to exercise their right to equal opportunity, the development opportunities to which the Constitution of 1993 committed our country.
"The second and largest nation of South Africa is black and poor, with worst affected being women in the rural areas, the lack rural population in general and the disabled. This nation lives under conditions of grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure. It has virtually no possibility to exercise what in reality amounts to a theoretical right to equal opportunity, with that right being within this black nation only to the extent that it is equally incapable of realization."
In the light if this assertion, policies on supply of resources need to take into account the divisions. Apartheid has created world class infrastructure for the white race, and created an abysmal infrastructure for Blacks. Hence the government's equity policies are vital in addressing the inequalities.

The Norms and Standards for Funding
Since 1994 the democratic government struggles to reverse the legacy of apartheid- especially the major disparities in the provision of resources for schools. It appears that equitable distribution of resources and pursuing to redress past injustices remain a major challenge for the government (Nyanda, 2014). Nyanda points out that the challenge is compounded by the fact that the government has prioritised the allocation of resources as an important nexus around which social and economic reform would be achieved. Logically what it means is that if equitable distribution of resources can be achieved all social and economic redress would

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be achieved. And given my argument above, regarding apartheid spatial planning, I do not think that achieving equitable distribution of resources would be tantamount to achieving social and economic deprivations. Spatial disparities will trump such a logic.

However, it appears that the government has taken the challenge of spatial planning in prioritising the allocation of resources in its educational redress programmes (Maile, 2008) through the National Norms and Standards for Funding. The Norms and Standards for Funding were developed in terms of section 35 of the South African School Act (SASA) No.84 of 1996, which provided for the Minister of Education to determine norms and minimum standards for funding of public schools. Furthermore, SASA enjoins the state to fund schools in an equitable manner. The Norms and Standards for Funding provides for cash transfers to schools according to poverty levels and ranking in the province. Nyanda (2014) points out that the process of ranking is a provincial prerogative guided by, firstly, the physical condition of the school; and secondly, the level of poverty of the community within which the school is located. These two factors are weighted equally to create apoverty index – Resource Targeting Table – which is popularly known quintiles.

Table 1: Resource targeting scale

Quintile	Poverty ranking	Allocation	Per learner allocation (Scale)
1	Poorest 20%	35% of resources	1.75
2	20%	25%	1.25
3	20%	20%	1.00
4	20%	15%	0.75
5	Least poor20%	5%	0.25

Accordingly, schools would receive an allocation per learner that is based on their quintile ranking, which would be multiplied by the number of learners in the school based on their quintile ranking. The funding mechanism ensures that the poorest schools with largest number of learners in their annual headcount receive the largest allocation. In addition, the Norms and Standards for Funding also allocated resources for purchasing of LTSM, and provided for schools to pay for items such as utility bills as well as minor emergency repairs to school infrastructure.

The Norms and Standards for Funding categorises of all LTSM classroom items in category 4 of the expenditure for schools which prescribes the use of allocations for a wide range of items ranging from pencils to library materials to consumable materials. It also devolves the decision to purchase these items to schools. The department did this to allow schools use money according to local needs.

Categories of resources

In this paper I argue for teacher consumables listed in the third column. Private resources are most found in suburban schools though some are accessed by quintile 1-3 schools. Resources in the secondand the fourth columns are mainly supplied to all schools.

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Table 2: List LTSM resources

Private resources	LTSM	Teacher consumables	Classroom Resources
Tutors Counsellor s Coaches Security Cleaners Remedial classes Sports excursions Cooperate partnerships	Stationery Textbooks Teaching aids Apparatus Graded readers Teacher guides Workbook s	Pens Pencils Noteboo ks Folders Erasers Crayons Gluestick s Dry erase markers Kleenex Wipes Red pens	Wall charts Alphabet friezes Flashcards Audio-visual aidseLTSM Data/Wi fi Maps Globes Skeletons Maths instruments Consumable materials for arts, homeeconomics, science and geography labs Scientific calculators

Teacher participation the development of school budgets

Teachers are mandated to participate in the development LTSM budget items and for wider use in the classroom (Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), 1999). In terms of GDE teachers are encouraged to produce supplementary LTSM for use in the classroom. While this is done to encourage innovativeness and improvisation to meet local needs, without provision of basic LTSM such as pens, etc it becomes unfair on teacher. Innovativeness and improvisation may work on situations where unique circumstances of the teaching environment cannot be well articulated by generic LTSM aimed for use in the entire country. The Departments' policy (GDE, 1999) promotes innovativeness. Hence it declared that:

"Teacher produced materials are a valuable supplementary resource in any classroom, but do not reduce the need for professionally produced materials."

Teacher participation is also extended to the development of material published in the mass market. There are many roles for teachers such as researching, writing, reviewing, and piloting materials. Participation in material development creates a sense of ownership and enhances teachers' professional autonomy. However, autonomy is a debateable concept in this context because teachers have no control over the curriculum. In fact, everything is given- starting from lesson plans to textbooks to be utilised in the classroom.

Locating LTSM discourse within national and global debates

Across the world education systems experience a crisis of learning (The World Bank, 2018) despite a remarkable increase in enrolments and completion rates. The problem is that children progress from one grade to another graduate from school without the expected competence. The learning crisis is evident in both developed and less developed countries. International benchmark tests have repeatedly demonstrated this problem. Assessment of

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lower grade children in literacy and numeracy revealed that some children have reading capacity of children in lower grades than those sampled. For example, children in grade six have reading ability lower that grade six. The Annual National Assessments (ANAs) in South Africa also reveal a similar trend (Spaull, 2014). Following this revelation pathological analytical reports appeared, but failed to provide reasons why such a dismal performance. Writing for civil society group, Section 27, Veriava (2018) and Stein (2018) identified the department of education's failure to supply textbooks to schools as a major problem contributing to the learning crisis. Mbokazi (2014) identified human resources as a contributory factor while De Clercq and Shalem (2014) attributed teachers' knowledge to the learning crisis. Burgeoning research has pointed fingers at the inadequacy of LTSM in schools but fails to acknowledge that while resources are supplied (at least on management records) teachers continue to buy learning and teaching resources at their own expenses.

Data from international benchmark tests and ANAs leave us many questions. The results offer a snapshot of student performance from output perspective, but do not tell us about input factors. They do not tell us how education systems got to the point where they are. How they got there remains a mystery. They are silent on cause and effect. In the absence of such vital information we are left with speculative responses. Of importance, research must tell us what successful systems are doing. From

Schleicher (2018) we learn that high performing education systems prioritize education by investing in the future of citizens, belief that every student should learn, do not compromise standards, ensure that the quality of teachers is at the same level as the quality of schools. Schleicher's idea of building world class schools of the twenty first century requires governments to take seriously any inadequacy affecting learning in the classroom. Shortage of LTSM throws learning deeper into a crisis.

Research evidence supports the central role of LTSM in improving student performance (Department for International Development, 2018). Resources are predictors of school performance. Visser, Juan and Feza (2017) using multiple regression analyses to determine factors influencing learners' performance established that resources have a significant influence on student performance. They argue that South Africa as a high ranking emerging economy with ambitions to improve the quality of education and outcomes, and to address socio-economic challenges need to take into account the supply of enough resources to schools. Without such a consideration the ideals enshrined in the National Development Plan (NDP) would not be realised. The same conclusion is made in Porubcanova and Pasternakova (2018), Neethling (2018), Harrison (2008), Mupa and Chinooneka (2015) study whichprovide scientific analysis of disadvantaged environments and argue that disadvantaged environments have a negative influence on the performance of students.

The danger of depriving teachers LTSM resources is far too serious. Weale (2016) shows that teachers in deprived schools are likely to degenerate to a level of incompetence. Weale compared teachers in rural and urban schools and found that teachers in deprived environments seem to lack competence in using twenty-first century methods of teaching and seem to lack knowledge on the fourth industrial revolution. They remain stuck in the past and are not ready to embrace the new digital revolution. Similar to Weale, Yorulmaz, Cokcaliskan and Onal (2017) in their study based on empirical research argue that without resources teachers are likely to less innovative. Providing teachers with resources can assist in providing them with support (Wolfenden, 2018). In fact, Saavedra (2018) argue that provision

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of LTSM is best support for teachers and ensures that all teachers are effective, and increasesteacher confidence.

Theories: The path to problem explanation and resolution

Centralization/Decentralization

In terms of the National Policy for the Provision and Management of Learning and Teaching Support Material, the Department of Basic Education adopted a centralised approach for cataloguing and ordering; and decentralised approach for development of educational materials and allows schools to purchase their won materials. Without wasting time on discussions about centralization I will deal with decentralization because the problem under investigation falls under it. The National Policy for the Provision and Management of Learning and Teaching Support Material allows schools to buy category 4 materials for use by teachers in the classroom. In terms of policy schools are obligated to buy supplementary LTSM required for teaching of different subjects in the school. Therefore, it is assumed that schools will engage teachers in the acquisition of these materials. On paper teacher are supplied with materials they need for their subjects. Observing the implementation of LTSM policy, Nyanda (2014) argues that schools experience problems of procurement and delivery of LTSM, variations in costs and monitoring problems.

While decentralization may have been lauded as appropriate for implementation at schools, variations in the implementation of LTSM policy can cause a problem because as some schools may choose not

to buy the supplementary materials required for teaching. Schools in rural areas and townships have many competing needs, but to sacrifice classroom materials is bad decision making. Teaching is the core business of education. OECD (2018) in its report entitled, Responsive school systems: Connecting Facilities, Sectors and Programmes for Student Success, argues that for schools to promote student success they need to respond to the needs of their local environment, particularly classroom needs. OECD advocates for efficiency in the use of LTSM and concluded that:

"providing adequate facilities and materials where they are necessary condition for teachers to realise their full pedagogical potential and create effective learning environments with their students"

Research needs to inform us how schools develop their budgets and how they implement it. Mashaba (2015) in his doctoral study, set out to investigate the role of teachers in the development of school budgets, established that teachers play a minimum role in the budgeting process. According to Mashaba, teachers' role is done through their representative in the School Governing Body (SGB) or through their Heads of Department. In that way teachers' participation is limited and ineffective.

Accountability

According to UNESCO (2017) accountability means being able to act when something is wrong in decisions, processes, and utilization. Allowing harmful practices in the education system, departments or schools directly affects the quality of the education system and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Accountability is a means of achieving success of students in the classroom. When we allow wrong decisions, processes and utilization of scarce resource we are killing the education of our children. If resources are

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purchased through public funds and do get to be used for other purposes other than teaching and learning it is wrong and the culprits must be reported.

South Africa has a problem of corruption. Corruption Watch (2016) indicates that South Africa has significant of corruption. As such the country is perceived as highly corrupt. In many incidents, educational institutions experience abuses of public resources or abuse of public power for personal gain. As part of on-going campaign in 2015 Corruption Watch conducted ten investigations into allegations of corruption in schools. In all the ten cases the school principal was found to be the main culprit involved in corruption activities. Principals are involved in abuse of school funds for personal gain.

Analysis of Corruption Watch (2016) report reveals that corruption occurs across all the provinces. The table below shows that Gauteng province has the highest prevalence of corruption hovering at 37%. Gauteng province is followed by Kwa-Zulu natal with 12%.The third prevalence, 11% is recorded in Northwest. Mpumalanga and Northern Cape have the lowest prevalence of corruption dangling at 4%and 3% respectively.

Neoliberalism

Teachers' problem of lack of (supplementary) LTSM can be understood through neoliberalism. It is equated with radical free market principles such as minimizing the role of government, emphasizing privatization, trade and capital market liberalization, and deregulation (Stiglitz, 2006). Proponents of these principles (Friedman, 1962; Hayek, 1960) advocate for a limited role of government in the economy. Friedman argues that the government must refrain from meddling with markets. He
proposes that the government's primary role is to preserve law and order, to enforce private contracts, and foster competitive markets. Uninterrupted development of the market economy is an illusion. The recent global crisis (economic recession of 2008) has demonstrated that the notion of free markets cannot survive of its own. The steps taken to correct the 2008 market failure re-endorsed the Keynesian economic principle of bail-out or capitalization (Lombardi, 2014). Without going into details about these principles, commonly known as the Washington consensus, I conclude that neoliberalism have been largely criticized in the developing world as major cause of economic problems.

Despite the criticism across the world by Keynesian school of thought, in South Africa neoliberalism is, in a subtle hegemonic manner, mutating the democratic government's policy environment. The President imposed (Glaser, 2010) a policy of Growth, Employment and Redistribution popularly known as GEAR, which is similar to the Washington consensus. As a result of GEAR, educational services were outsourced from private companies, public spending was reduced through the principle of strict fiscal discipline- which brought stringent, inflexible and uncertainties to the government finances (Maile, 2008). The reduction of a sizable number of public servants through a policy of redeploymentwas another consequence of GEAR.

To get LTSM schools have to wait for the procurement process-which is mundane, complex and time- consuming- to be completed. GEAR introduced a macroeconomic framework characterised by increased bureaucratic processes involving the flow of information about requisitions from local government to provincial and then to national through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) (Maile, 2008). In terms of MTEF schools have to set clear objectives (Development Plans) which are sent to the District. The District then collects

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the plans from schools and develops a consolidated District Plan – which is sent to the province. The provincial government also develop a provincial plan which is filtered in the national department's plan. MTEF is a primary tool for a multi-year planning approach to fiscal management. The National Department of Finance (the Treasury) co-ordinates inputs and compilations of requests in the education sector. It does this through co-operation of provincial treasuries. Hence, the variations in provincial spending.

MTEF allows for intervention (involvement) of the private sector to provide goods and services in education (Maile, 2008). Privatisation of education services is the issue of contention here. The incarnation of privatization in education has roots in the White Paper on Education and Training, Constitution Act No.108 of 1996, the National Development Plan and the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996, and got amplified life through the Norms and Standards for Funding. All these documents open the role of private companies in the provision of educational services through invitations for partnerships, and buying of educational products. For this reason, the provision of LTSM is outsourced. Outsourcing has many problems. Because the service is external, the Department has no control on delivery time. Hence, there are delays and failure to supply textbooks. The services are often provided with inflated prices. The quality of products is not up to standard. These variations affect general quality of schooling. As revealed by Corruption Watch (2016) commodifying education services through partnership with business has increased corruption as principals appoint service providers that are friends or would give them kickbacks.

Neoliberalism represents, as Ramphele (2017:69) puts it, "the biggest betrayal of our democracy". Ramphele's (2017) invective emerges from a deeper analysis of the government's failure to transform education and the selling of education to capital resulting into failure to transform the legacy of apartheid. Similar to Ramphele, Bundy in his (2014) diatribe entitled, Short-changed? South Africa since apartheid, argued that the African National Congress (ANC) was outmanoeuvred, duped and its leaders were guilty of betrayal. Bundy shows that ANC leaders lacked requisite progressive ideas and strategies to counter neoliberal ideas pushed by local business in education. Naomi Klein (2007) in her study transitions in different nations of the world, arrived at the same conclusion with regards to South Africa's transition. She concluded that the 1994 settlement was a sell-out- an idea well explained in details by Jeffery (2009). In same vein, Terreblanche (2012) analysing what went wrong during transformation, argues that transformation entrenched inequalities through policy limitations and restrictions. What these studies on South Africa's transformation tell us with regards to the supply of LTSM is that the government has limited powers in terms of the law. The law was crafted to favour and protect the domination of whites. Therefore, the supply of LTSM remains a political problem thatrequires a political solution or policy reconfiguration.

Social justice

What we are dealing is problem located within discrimination, and deprivation. What is happening with regards to resources is that some teachers receive LTSM and others do not receive anything. There is unequal treatment of employees. It is unfair for employees employed by the same employer under same employment conditions to be treated in a discriminatory manner. This is a complex problem paradoxically linked to the standard of working conditions. It is an inequality problem reflecting wider societal divisions intractable

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in education. Putting the problem under microscope, what comes out is an issue of distribution of resources with some historical traction. I introduced that latter in sections above to address epistemological concerns about my study. Continuing with the same thread of the arguments raised earlier, I selected social justice as a relevant theory to explain and suggest pathways to a resolution.

A reflection on the current state of freedom in South Africa and in the education system leaves one with one big question: are South Africans free? Hamilton (2014) asks the same question ten years after 1994. He argues that despite South Africa's successful transition to democracy and lauded Constitution, freedom for the majority of Blacks is elusive. He raises this argument after making a scientific reflection on the living standards of the population, and concluded that poverty (for our argument it will mean deprivation) is rampant among Blacks and that makes them unfree. Conversely, freedom for whites is seriously impaired by insecurity and relative reduction in resources required for maintenance of apartheid privileges. Consequently, democracy does not work for both races. The imbalance is brought by distribution. For the balance to be maintained there is a need for justice.

To establish a just society, we need social justice. Rawls (1999) in his seminal work entitled, A Theory of Justice, justice is first the virtue of social institutions. Justice denies the loss of freedom for some. It does not allow that the advantages of some outweigh the privileges of others, and vice versa. For a just society liberty of all must be settled before a claim of justice (Mill, 2018). The choice of social justice is informed by the basic structure of the South African society. In other words, I looked at the distribution of fundamental rights and duties that causes advantages of one group and disadvantages of another group. My argumentis based on Rawls (1999:53) second principle:

"Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all".

This principle applies in the approximation and distribution of resources. Rawls (1958) argue that the fundamental idea of justice considers circumstances and conditions of people in the basic structure of the society. For this reason, for Rawls using this notion of social justice requires fairness as a framework to assemble and to look at the distribution of fundamental rights and duties essentially to remove arbitrary distinctions and establish a proper balance of competing claims.

Deepening the theory, Sen (1990) points out that social justice must not undermine a human being's agency to take charge and initiate change in the lives. Sen's (2009) interpolation in the social justice discourse invokes the capability approach which focuses on human lives and not just resources people have. He proposes a fundamental shift in the focus of attention from the means of living to actual opportunities a person has. This is a continuation of the thesis well-articulated in his (2000) treatise entitled, Development as freedom. It can be argued from Sen's (2000) treatise that the failure to distribute LTSM is a capability deprivation, a deprivation that intrinsically means denial to grow teachers' ability to teach. Such a deprivation is a violation of teachers' rights. Without immersing the reader into details about social justice I would like to sum up by saying that social justice means giving people what is due to them, burdens of shortage should be equitably shared (Andre & Velasquez,2018).

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3. RESEARCH STRATEGY

I used qualitative approaches to collect data from quintile 1-3 schools located in Tshwane West District. The schools were selected according their physical condition and the level of poverty of the community within which they are located. These criteria are also used by provincial departments in categorising the schools for the purpose of funding in terms of the Norms and Standards for Funding. Therefore the reasons for selection of schools were consistent with national policy and the rationale for the study. From the listed quintile 1-3 schools of Tshwane West District I selected three schools in Soshanguve. I then proceeded to purposive sampling strategy to select ten teachers to form a sample. I interviewed teachers using focus group technique in which I thematised the open-ended questions (Babbie, 2008; Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014) to allow for individual depth on teachers' use of own expenses buying LTSM. I brought the teachers together at a venue convenient and accessible to all. The participants did not have to use their transport as I collected them at an agreed assembly point. Because they were away from their schools they were comfortable talking to each other and debated issues robustly. Each member was given a chance to talk, and some participants questioned some responses. I identified the differences which could have escalated into boiling points through a moderation strategy advocated by de Vos, Strydom, Fouche', Delport (2012). The debate got heated on open-ended questions which allowed participants to raise what-ever opinion they have about teachers' use of own costs to buy LTSM. I assumed the role of a facilitator in which I ruled out digressions and blatant negative views about certain organizations. Prior to the discussion I developed questions (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche', Delport, 2012) under the themes identified below to avoid digressions and maintain the focus of the discussion. Data collected was analysed using the seven steps of Hermeneutics.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented according to hermeneutic scientific steps of data analysis which requires the presentation to organised into themes and maintaining ethical principle of anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. The themes were time when teacher resources are available, the burden of costs for teacher resources, teacher intensions in buying teaching resources, awareness of LTSM law and policy, practical experiences of LTSM policy application**.** The responses are presented in codes given to the participants suchteacher 1-10 without giving the actual names to protect them.

Time when teacher resources are available

It seems that teachers do not agree as to when they receive their teaching resources. When asked the question when they receive their teaching resources, some participants stated that the time is irregular depending on when schools receive their grants or when the internal purchasing process is completed. Other teachers do not regard waiting for completion of procurement process as necessary. They buy for themselves without waiting. Hence they said:
Teacher 2 said: "I can't wait for the school to buy me a pen or pencil. These are cheap and easy to accesses. They are sold in most retail stores".
Teacher 10 said: "Waiting for the school takes a long time. The principal has to go through procedures to acquire consumable stuff such as ruler, etc. Moreover, when it is time for

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marking I cannot afford to wait for a longer time for a red pen. I just buy it from shop nearby".
Teacher 6 said: "We have CAPS enforcing strict timelines for teaching through Annual Teaching plans, waiting for some resources will make me fall behind and for that I will run into trouble with my HOD".
Teacher 8 said: "I have no option but to buy for my red pens. I do not think that the school is obliged
to provide me with these items. They are easily obtainable from the shops".
Teacher 6 said: "Some of these items are demanded in certain times of the year. During tests we need
red pens for marking. At critical times when I do not have it I borrow from learners".
Teacher 5 said: "Borrowing from learners is a problem. Some teachers forget to return the pens, and that causes a domino effect whereby a learner without a pen steals from another learner until a sizable number of learners have a problem of not having pens when they are supplied by the department".

The burden of costs for teacher resources
I gave the list of items listed in column 3 of table 2 indicated above. When I ask them how much they spend on buying these items, the answers reveal variations in pricing or amounts spent. What was notable was that the amount was high as they spent considerable amount to acquire these resources. The questions did not require an estimation of the total amount the spent. I reserved this for quantitative section of the entire study- which will be reported later in another paper. Various responses I received were as follows:
Teacher 10 said: "I spent less than twenty rands for a pen or pencil".
Teacher 2 said: "To obtain all of this I need at least more than hundred rands".
Teacher 5 complained that; "For me that is too much. It opens a huge gap in my budget. I will rather borrow from learners".
Teacher 7 agreed that: "Sometimes it is difficult to get all these things required for teaching. To buy allthese items I need a substantial amount of money".
Teacher 3 said: "I buy these items on a quarterly basis. Although I do not record the actual amount of money I use for these items, I feel the pain when I cannot buy things for my children when I have spent money for my job"

Teacher intensions in buying teaching resources
I also asked them why they buy these materials. Their intensions revealed a very interesting trend from which I inferred that these teachers are committed to their jobs, they cananything to provide the education of their learners.
Teacher 6 said: "I do what I need for my learners. I want to make sure that what I am able to get for my teaching I get".
Teacher 8 said: "Sometimes it is the attitude that determines one's readiness to sacrifice for children.I took teaching as a calling. Buying these things is sacrifice worth making".
Teacher 3 said: "I cannot wait for somebody to make me a better teacher. I want to give quality teaching. So I innovate and improvise all the time. For that reason, no department or school can know about my creativity".
Teacher 2 said: "I buy these materials to improve my classroom teaching".

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Awareness of LTSM law and policy

I asked them whether they are aware of LTSM policy which enjoins the department and schools to provide the items in the list. It seems teachers are not aware of the policy, and that they consumable resources are the responsibility of the school. The debate got heated when one participant charged unions of negligence. What I could decipher from that was that unions were taking for granted this issue. It appears union members were ignorant about this problem as they also buy these materials for themselves. I took the inferences from the statements below:

Teacher 6 said: "The law does not compel the employer to buy these things for us. They are small items. Anybody can afford that".

Teacher 8 said: "Our union representative also buys for himself. So it is a major issue".

Teacher 9 said: "But I think the Department is duty bound to supply with these items as equipment to execute our duties. As it is it means that when you are hired you have to bring your own equipment".

Teacher 10 argued that: "Yah! That is a problem. The laws are silent on this matter. That why ourunions are powerless."

Teacher 10 also said: "I think our unions are ignorant. Bringing own equipment is unfair. I wonder why they are quite"

Teacher 6 argued that: "Now you are being unfair. Do you mean that our unions should fight for this? Come on there are more pressing issues to worry".

Teacher 10 countered by saying that: "No I think some of us think that I cannot buy equipment to do my job. I insist that it is unfair labour practice".

Teacher 9 supported teacher 10 by saying that: "I know that in private companies employees are required to buy their own equipment especially those hired as consultants. But that is a different category of employment. We are not consultants. We are entitled to receive these items from the department".

Practical experiences of LTSM policy application

I also asked them whether they have bothered asking the principals or enquiring about the supply of these materials. The answers reveal that some teachers do ask their principals. Those who are aware of the need to be supplied with these materials raised the fact that they only receive them once, mostly in the first quarter, but receive nothing during the course of the year. Then that's when they start to buy for themselves. This finding is consistent with finding above regarding the time for teachers to receive LTSM. It appears it is irregular as evidenced in the following statements:

Teacher 10 said: "I tried to speak to my HOD and principal about this matter. They told me that the school does not have enough money to buy as they are a no-fee school".

Teacher 4 said: "At our school we only get a little supply at the beginning of the year. And we often run out these items towards the end of the quarter. During the curse of the year it becomes astruggle".

Teacher 6 said: "At our school we are not aware that the school is obligated to supply us with these items. I do not think that these items are catered for in the budget".

Teacher 10 said: "We are not asked for inputs in the budget. Instead our HODs and principals are the ones to decide".

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4. DISCUSSION

In the study it was found that teachers receive LTSM very late in the year and at irregular intervals. It appears that problem can be attributed to the waiting time for completion of the procurement which is far too long. The bureaucracy of procurement has been extended since the adoption of GEAR with its stringent fiscal policy framework for the delivery of social services (Nicolaou, 2001). In a similar vein, Maile (2008) assessed GEAR amidst the claims of success by Treasury that educational services have improved with more learner enrolments and roll-out of infrastructure. On the contrary Maile (2008) found that GEAR slowed down the delivery of services by increasing the responsibilities of national, provincial and local government. In other words, as I have noted earlier in the conceptualization, the bureaucracy was increased – which means that the needs of schools take longer to be addressed. In fact, the process takes three years in terms of the MTEF. Although category 4 LTSM is done at school level, schools still have to follow procurement regulations. School based procurement also takes long. As result teachers have to wait for a long time, and with time running they end up buying for themselves. I conclusion I can say that teachers do not receive LTSM in time

due to organisational inefficiencies. The concern is more with administrative process and rules embedded in organizational structures (Motala, 2001)

Teachers do spend substantial amounts in buying LTSM though not quantified. Across the world the problem of teachers spending their own money is already pummelled in the public discourse through media reports (Smit, 2018; US Department of Education, 2018; Schwartz, 2016; Chokshi, 2018; Malito, 2018; Dalonova, 2018; Australian Associate Press, 2017; Figueroa, 2017 and Granata, 2018). In South Africa the problem is still hidden with less visible incubation. Hence, there are not studies quantifying teacher spending on LTSM. However, the findings confirm the existence of the problem and demonstrates that teachers are suffering immensely.

Therefore, teacher spending is a problem that needs to be investigated. The situation may even be worse considering our economic climate and escalating retail prices since the increase in value Added Tax (VAT). To aggravate matters teachers' working conditions are poor. Many teachers are already overburdened. On a positive note, one can conclude that, despite poor working conditions teachers are prepared to use monies from their salaries to buy LTSM materials for teaching and learning. They are loyal to the profession and they love their learners.

It seems teachers are not aware of the policy, employment rights enshrined in the labour laws. Teacher unions are taking for granted this issue. This finding departs from the general understanding that the teaching profession is highly unionised (Mhlongo, 2016). In his empirical investigation, Mhlongo (2016) discovered a majority of teachers are affiliates of recognized unions. They use unions to advance their labour rights. It appears that teachers may be aware of general labour laws but not policies regulating the distribution of LTSM. Teachers' knowledge of labour laws arises from the years of struggle in which unions were part of the broader struggle against apartheid. With the advent of democracy that labour vibrancy was continued. And the new democratic government produced labour protection policies highly regulating the labour market to the dissatisfaction of many (Rautenbach, 1999). Unfortunately, teachers' trade unions have lost track of bread and butter issues of

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teaching, and LTSM deficiencies are matters that slipped their attention.
In the study I also found that some teachers in some schools do ask their principals about LTSM- which means that there is communication between principals and teachers. However, their communication is limited to enquiries about LTSM. Studies on the relationship between teachers and principals reveal a pattern of conflict and animosity. Since the rise of trade unionism the principals' relationship with teachers is cautious given the militancy of unions inherited from the years of liberation in which principals were equated with apartheid masters. Teachers very often use unions in contested issues. However, this issue of teachers' uses of their own to buy LTSM has eluded unions. Hence, the silence and lack of protest about the use of own funds to buy LTSM. This is an indictment against unions which are supposed to protect workers from employer exploitation and deprivations. Post- apartheid trade unions have in the past targeted government policies on employment conditions (Ballard, Habib & Valodia, 2006). This problem would have drawn the attention of unions. Union militancy was diluted by co-determination and co-option of union leaders into government positions and structures (Adler,2000).

5. CONCLUSION

The study raised an issue taken for granted, yet problematic as it saps through teachers' meagre salaries. As full time employees of the department of education teachers should not be treated as consultants who are supposed to bring their own equipment to work. As full time employees' teachers are entitled to receive all teaching and learning resources to enable them to execute their tasks without shortages. The problem is compounded by silence in the existing educator employment laws and the union ignorance/negligence. The silence and ignorance may be derived from the understanding that the Norms and Standards for Funding of schools provide for the supply of supplementary resources which included resource items debated for in this article. However, the prevailing practice is that teachers rarely receive supplementary resources for varying reasons. Looking at the bigger picture it appears schools experience acute shortage of resources bigger than small things such as supplementary items. Consequently, to demand supply of these supplementary resources will be unreasonable to many. That perspective feeds on abuse of teachers' labour rights. The decentralization of provision of resources brings variations the supply of supplementary resources for teachers. What is required is a strict monitoring of school budget especially on school allocation for funds for supplementary items. Otherwise schools will sacrifice these items because of the perception of regarding the supplementary resources as less important. To make this issue a union issue, teachers needs to start engaging their unions about their labour rights and question why should they buy resources that they use in the classroom.

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