

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, PROBLEM, RATIONALE, RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1. Introduction to the study

Namibia's population consists of 11 major ethnic groups, ranging in lifestyle from pastoralists (livestock herders) and hunter/ food gatherers to commercial and communal farmers, to town and city dwellers. Three quarters of the country's population live in rural areas. During the colonial German and South African occupation, ethnic groupings were heavily influenced by the race classification practiced by these colonial powers. However, even though Western civilisation had an immense influence on the people of Namibia, the natural conservatism of some communities, together with the relative geographic isolation, has contributed greatly towards restricting the diffusion of European culture to them.

For example, in the Western part of Namibia, formerly known as 'Kaokoland', in the Kunene region, live a community known as the Himba and Zemba. They are nomadic pastoralists (livestock herders) and food hunter gatherers who still remain largely untouched by the modern world and continue their semi-nomadic lifestyle. The political struggles of the 20th century have passed them by as they continue to practice their traditional way of life. Due to the Kunene region's relatively sparsely dispersed population of about 75 000 people (2001-2031 Population Census projections) spread across a vast area of more than 150 000 km², the Himba and Zemba had a relatively safe and adequate habitat and could freely roam over the wide pastures of the highlands without feeling the need for a formal, westernised education or formal employment.

The introduction of the ideal of Education for All (EFA 1990) and the new Namibia Government's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) brought about the imperative to provide education to these communities. But how do you serve children of a nomadic community – one that is here today and tomorrow it has moved on to new pastoral or hunting grounds? It also raises questions about the quality of the education to be provided and the need to ensure equity for these marginalised groups.

Since the EFA and MDG declarations, equity and quality in education have emerged as some of the fundamental concerns of education policy-makers, both in the developed and developing nations. Over the past decades, the focus of attention for many policy-makers and education reformers has been to uncover and redress past inequities and disparities in the resources and education opportunities provided to all children from different socio-economic backgrounds (Carroll *et al.*, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1987a, 2002b; Goe, 2002; Hanushek *et al.*, 2004).

Among the most important of these educational resources is the teaching force. Equal access to qualified teachers and quality teaching has been a source of contention in the global debate over opportunity of quality educational in the provision of educational. According to Darling-Hammond (2002), equity and quality are major concerns for social development, especially in less developed countries like Namibia where significant income disparities are often related to ethnicity and location. Darling-Hammond (2002) asserts that education policies, especially those concerning deployment and labour conditions of teachers, can seriously impact on the ways in which education systems promote social justice. In short, clear mechanisms are needed to ensure that qualified teachers reach all learners and schools where they are needed most.

As a response to the Millennium Development Goals, developing countries, and in particular Sub-Saharan Africa, have developed a wide range of education initiatives in an effort to meet the needs of children living in disadvantaged areas, and to break the link between social background and educational achievement. In Sub-Saharan African countries like Namibia the nomadic education programmes were developed and mobile schools were established in North West of Namibia in an attempt to address the educational needs of the children of nomadic groups within a broad framework provided by the Education for All initiative. Mobile schools use tents as classrooms, and teachers accompany the nomadic pastoralists (livestock herders) during their seasonal migrations.

In 2009, there were 45 mobile school units in the Kunene region alone, serving 2 205 learners (an average of 49 learners per unit) with 69 teachers, of whom more than 25% are either under- or unqualified. The 45 mobile schools can be divided into three categories: those that have not moved in the past three to five years, those that move once a year, and those that move more than once a year.

It is within this milieu that this study will explore the concept of the mobile school programme to gain insight into issues of equity and quality in educational provisioning (especially in areas characterised by considerable mobility) in an attempt to support future policy formulation and implementation. The study draws data from various national and international data sets, and is supported by an in-depth qualitative study to generate new insights to the issues of equity and quality in relation to equal education in the context of Namibia, and with specific reference to the Kunene region. This will help to illuminate the complex nature of inequity and disparity in the provision of education, and inform new policy approaches.

The main policy documents that inform this study are the Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children (2000) and the Teaching Staffing Norms Policy (2001). The study seeks to address the question of what the enduring dilemmas and challenges or difficulties are in the implementation of education policies such as the Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children and the Teaching Staffing Norms Policy in areas characterised by disadvantage. In this regard the focus is on the case of the Himba and Zemba communities in terms of equity and quality in educational provisioning.

1.2. Background of Namibia

Namibia, formerly known as South West Africa, is regarded as Africa's last colony. It was first colonised by Germany in 1884, and in 1915 was brought under South African control after the First World War, and became an independent state on 21 March 1990 (Bollig, 1998). Namibia has a total land area of 825 000 square kilometres on the southwest coast of Africa. It is bordered by Angola and Zambia (north), Botswana (east), South Africa (south), and the Atlantic Ocean (west).

It has an estimated population of about 2.1 million people (2007), which represents one of the lowest population densities on the African continent, amounting to an average of 1.5 people per km². Three quarters of the population live in rural areas (Bollig, 1998; 2001 National Population and Housing Census; Gordon, 1992).

Prior to independence, Namibia had 11 semi-autonomous political entities with the responsibility, among others, of administering education. Education was divided along racial and ethnic lines, thereby leading to extremely skewed and unequal allocation of

resources for the different ethnic authorities. During the apartheid regime, the majority of black children had to stay out of school or compete for the few places in their designated schools. To further strengthen the inequalities and the apartheid state machinery, only a few, ill-equipped, poorly staffed and under-financed schools were made available for black children.

Before independence, the average teacher to learner ratio was more than 1:55 and 1:45 for primary and secondary levels respectively, especially in the previously disadvantaged regions, compared with less than 30:1 learners for their affluent peers in white schools (Angula, 1990; Mbamba, 1987). The teacher and learner ratios in the post-independence state could have been even higher if all primary school age children in Namibia had access to education opportunities. During the apartheid era the expenditure per pupil was six times more in white schools compared with black schools. Prior to Namibia's independence in 1990, the country experienced forced labour in various forms. The vestiges of this system have resulted in high unemployment, an inadequate skills base, and a large percentage of out-of-school youth (Amukugo, 1993; Angula, 1990; Clegg, 1989).

After independence in 1990, the newly elected democratic government of Namibia inherited this highly fragmented, stratified, and dualist society of education policies and economy. As a result, the issue of disparity, inequity, and unequal educational opportunities immediately became a central challenge for the new nation. The imbalance in the level of education among its citizens was one of the most profound features of the country's history (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993).

Since independence, Namibia introduced various education policies in an effort to improve the provisioning and delivery of education services to all communities, regardless of their geographical location (Van Graan, Pomuti, LeCzel, Liman & Swarts, 2005). Against this background, this study focuses on the complexity of equity, and equal opportunity in terms of education resource allocation in rural areas in the Namibian context, with particular reference to the Kunene Region.

The distribution of human resources was a direct result of former policy decisions that prevented equal access to teacher training institutions, especially in the previously disadvantaged regions. For instance, prior to independence, the two colleges of education established to train black teachers (Ongwediva and Khomasdal/Windhoek) were not allowed to offer the Junior Secondary Training Certificate because they were considered not to have capacity in terms of adequate staff and facilities. They were instead authorised to offer a primary level qualification, known as the Education Certificate Primary (ECP), which required only a grade 10 certificate for entry (Angula, 1990; Ball, 1994; Amukugo, 1993; Clegg, 1989).

The proportion of qualified teachers from ethnic administrations ranged from 5% in the black Administrations to about 70% in the white administration (Angula, 1990). Due to the lack of qualified teachers in ethnic administrations, ECP graduates were deployed to teach at junior secondary level, while primary schools were staffed with teachers having lower or no qualifications at all (Amukugo, 1993). The emphasis on ethnicity was opposed by growing nationalist sentiment, and when Namibia became a unitary nation-state, these policies had to go (Ball, 1994; Amukugo, 1993; Clegg, 1989).

In developing countries, and in Namibia in particular, although the concept of equity as fairness is simple to understand, it has been interpreted in different ways by different studies, government policy documents, and reports (Marope, 2005; Ministry of Education - Toward Education for All, 1993; Education Act no, 16 of 2001, 2000; Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children, 2001; Teaching Staffing Norms, Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme, ETSIP, 2005). A number of commentators and policy documents (2001 Teaching Staffing Norms Policy; ETSIP, 2005) refer to equity in terms of the equalisation of educational services. There is, for example, emerging evidence that the existing policy documents (Teaching Staffing Norms Policy of 2001) and reports (Ministry of Education EMIS reports), as well as existing literature on Namibia's education system (The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit reports 1990a, 2004b; Marope, 2005; Gonzalez, 2004) are interpreting equity as equal spending per learner, and the focus is entirely on education inputs. Education policies, like the teaching staffing norms for example, have interpreted equity as an equal teacher allocation, and equal-base expenditure per learner and among schools. This conceptualisation assumes that the equitable distribution of education resources will enhance learning and teaching and subsequently will naturally lead to the provision of quality education (MEC, 1993).

Such a definition is problematic and cannot be easily extended to equal outputs in view of the fact that an equal number of learners in the class and equal learner expenditure do not automatically guarantee genuine equity, quality, and quality in education. Achieving equity, and equal educational opportunities is not a simple matter of allocating equal education resources per learner, but needs to go beyond this philosophy. It means that the allocation mechanism/approach has to be adjusted to reflect different factors and/or variations in the needs of learners and the cost of purchasing educational resources in different areas or regions. That means that learners with greater needs require greater or additional resources. This theory is also supported by Kantor (1997:285) in that due to unequal community wealth and family income, it is difficult to see how the disparities in achievement between rich and poor children can be overcome without spending more money to equalise educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged learners.

Namibia is one of the African countries which accommodates the largest concentration of the nomadic people (pastoralists and/or livestock herders, and hunters). These people reside in the west (Kunene region) and east and north east (Omaheke and Otjozondupa regions) parts of the Namibia. Nomadic people are among the most marginalised social groups, and are widely excluded from educational provision, despite the pledges of Education for All (Hans & Kavari, 1997; Fergus & Sørvald, 2004). The phenomenon of movement itself presents many challenges for providers and would-be users of educational services in terms of the notion of Education for All.

Around the world, the provision of education for nomadic people has reflected and been instrumental to particular stances on pastoral development. According to the literature (Mlekwa, 1996; Doornbos & Markakis, 1991; Narman, 1990; Parkipuny, 1994), nomads are the most educationally disadvantaged groups, with a literacy level of less than 5% around the world, as they move from place to place in search of pasture or food. The pastoral and mobile communities have distinct characteristics shaped by different economic, political, social and geographical circumstances. In Namibia the government identified the nomads into two types; namely, the pastoralists or livestock herders (the Himba and Zemba), and food hunter gatherers (the San).

Having realised that the nomadic communities need to be integrated into the nation building initiative, and to provide equal education opportunities for all, in 1997 the nomads' education programme, known as mobile schools (called 'Ondao school') for Himba and Zemba children in the Kunene region was developed (Hans & Kavari, 1997).

This gave rise to the Namibia government launching a nomadic education programme in 1998, and this has led to the introduction of National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children (2000). The primary aim of the policy is to facilitate the realisation of universal primary access to basic education and poverty reduction by 2015.

This was an attempt to provide basic social services to the pastoralists and other mobile communities in the country. In so doing, however, the Namibian government has been evolving policies and practices; many of which the nomadic people see as in conflict with the needs and interests of their communities because they are not based on their socio-economic realities: a long established and cherished cultural heritage, livestock production as a principal means of livelihood, high mobility through constant migration, and the harsh environment characterised by drought, animal rustling, disease, and poor means of communication (Bolling, 1998; Ndjoze-Ojo *et al.*, 2002).

1.3. Rationale for the study

The researcher became interested in the education provisioning to nomadic people for a number of reasons. Firstly, the lack of empirical studies into education provisioning to the nomadic people of Namibia, and moreover, research into the impact and effect of equity and quality education-driven policies and their implementation in post-colonial states like Namibia. Secondly, due to his interest and experience as an education planner, involved in the distribution of national educational resources, policy analysis and the implementation; both at the national and regional levels. Thirdly, the analysis of the education system in Namibia and the sentiments expressed by Marope's (2005) report 'Namibia Human Capital and Knowledge Development for Economic Growth with Equity', and Gonzalez's (2004) 'Equity, efficiency and allocation mechanisms in Namibia primary and secondary education system', and the widely observed discrepancies between a policy's stated aims and its actual effects.

In their observations, they assert that the equity and quality education-driven policies in most of developing nations like Namibia might not be adequate to address the current disparities which are found both inter- and intra-regions; especially educational provision for children from pastoralists and nomadic communities. Furthermore, the study built upon previous research by scholars such as Iijambo (2001) and Ipinge (2001) which noted the intractable problem of the gaps between education the policies' stated aims

and their actual outcomes in the context of Namibia. They observed that in Namibia the quality of education in rural areas is deteriorating and that a decline in access to education for all is experienced; especially in previously disadvantaged communities like the Himba and Zemba.

Another factor which increased his interest to pursue this study of equity and quality in provisioning education among nomads; is what he calls the 'difficulties or problems' of getting the 'empirical evidence' from the current Namibian statistical data (EMIS, 2002-2009), and official report documents (The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit, 2006; Ministry of Education annual reports, 2005-2009) in terms of equity and equal opportunity in rural and hard-to-staff schools; especially education data on nomads and pastoralists groups.

In this regard, it became necessary for him to pursue this enquiry in order to seek insight into the empirical evidence of existing disparities in the Namibian education system, particularly with regards to the nomadic and pastoralists groups in the Kunene region.

1.4. Purpose and objective of the study

The research takes a broad view in an effort to understand the phenomenon of education provisioning to nomadic people and its actual outcomes beyond the classroom perspective, and beyond the limits of its expected results. The study links cultural factors that might explain why the school enrolment and learner performance among nomadic communities, in particular, is lower compared with other regions. Furthermore, it examines and analyses how the policy ideals of equity and quality can be achieved in the districts or regions characterised by disadvantage; especially in the rural schools.

Equally, the study examines the distribution of human resources, their relationship to educational equity and quality, and the attributes of teacher labour markets that might lead to the poor learning and teaching; learners enrolled in low-income schools being most likely to have unqualified or less-qualified teachers. In doing this, the study set out to establish whether the emerging trends support the theory of policy symbolism (Jansen, 2001; Lankford *et al.*, 2003). This theory holds that policies in developing countries are more symbolic in terms of eradicating the injustices of the past and give

voice to a new set of aspirations, rather than being aimed at searching for solutions to these injustices at the implementation level.

This research study is situated in the tradition of policy implementation studies and seeks to understand the relationship between policy and practice in the context of education policy or reform. The study sketches the views and opinions of those who are responsible for the implementation of policies, with the aim of articulating the complexity of the communities' educational needs. By exploring these, the researcher gained insight into affected communities' understanding, experiences and challenges during the implementation of education policies like the Teaching Staffing Norms Policy (2001), the Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children (2000), and how they deal with the challenges and complexity of equity, quality and equal opportunity in rural areas, especially among nomadic communities.

The researcher attempts to establish to whether the equity and quality education-driven policies succeeded in addressing their intended purpose, in terms of the provisioning of education, equal education resources, human resources, and all necessary conditions that facilitate a good learning and teaching environment. The study seeks to reveal whether Education for All, as an ideological notion, reflects the values that facilitate or contradict those of nomadic groups, like Himba and Zemba in Namibia.

In the study it is argued that the value positions underlying the notion of equity and quality in education need to be articulated and further refined to reflect existing and exclusive hegemonies. To this end the study is aimed at identifying the weaknesses and strengths of provisioning education among nomadic communities in relation to the mobile school programme in the Kunene region, and other factors behind these weaknesses and strengths. Furthermore, the study explores the extent to which the Namibian mobile school education programme plays a crucial role in ensuring equity and quality of education among nomadic pastoralist groups.

1.5. Problem statement and research question

From the background and rationale offered, it is evident that there are two prevalent concerns in the Namibian education system today. The first is the problem of an equitable distribution of education resources, including human resources, among schools and regions. The second is the need to create equity, and for all children to

acquire education of the same quality, regardless of their socio-economic-status or the geographical location of the community.

The government of Namibia is a signatory to many international and regional human rights agreements, asserting equity policies and non-discriminatory policies in education, and it has initiated a series of policies and reforms in the education sector with the aim of promoting equal education opportunities that contribute to the successful achievement of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals (Angula & Grant-Lewis, 1997; Iijambo, 2001; Mbamba, 1987; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Fullan *et al.*, 1992a, 2001b; Sayed & Jansen, 2001; Jansen, 2001; World Bank, 2006).

Despite pledges of Education for All, countries around the world where pastoralists and hunters are found, these groups are among the most marginalised social groups and are widely excluded from educational provision (Mlekwa, 1996; Hogg, 1992).

The phenomenon of movement of these groups itself presents many challenges for both educational service providers and by users around the world. In developing countries like Namibia, attempts have been made to address these problems by creating policy frameworks aimed at facilitating the equitable distribution of adequate educational resources, as well as promoting equal education opportunity in rural areas; especially among nomadic communities. The challenge, however, is two fold: how to equalise the starting line, and secondly, how to ensure equitable provisioning if certain groups are in greater need of resources than others. If learners are from socio-economic backgrounds that make the provisioning of even rudimentary education complex and challenging, then it is possible that they may require a greater investment of resources to secure an equitable system.

If one only gives preference to equity targets, in terms of numbers without consideration to other factors such as quality, then equal education opportunities as well as quality education are at risk. Equally, if preference has to be given to learners with specific and individual different needs, then equity and quality targets may be jeopardised. The question therefore remains: how do we balance equity, and equal education opportunity between urban and rural schools with different needs and circumstances? This fundamental question is the subject of substantial research, debate and analysis among scholars both in developed and developing countries, as will be shown in Chapter 2.

Although one of the key elements of Namibia's education policy has been the promotion of equitable access to education for all, great inequalities, in terms of education resources, still exist and persist between children from urban and rural areas, children from different geographical locations, and those from different cultural groups (The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit, 2006). Other problems and constraints on educational development in these communities include long distances which must be covered to and from school, many teachers not being prepared to work in the remote and/or pastoral areas, or unqualified or under-qualified teachers with only a partial secondary school education and without a professional teacher qualification, and the general negative attitude of the community towards schooling as a whole (Kasunga, 1994).

On the basis of these challenges, African governments, like Namibia continue to experience difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified teachers in the districts/regions and schools characterised by disadvantaged and hard-to-staff schools, as well as other negative aspects impacting on education provisioning such as socio-economic, political and cultural factors.

Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals, that set an agenda for education provisioning, are not blind to socio-cultural factors at a local level that may not be supportive of education, thus creating tensions in the equitable and equal provisioning of education. But tensions between local priorities, goals and objectives and national or global ideals are not always consciously taken into account when setting goals, thus raising the question: how do we ensure equity and quality education across regions/districts and among communities? The central research question that guides this study therefore is:

Considering the socio-economic and cultural factors that work against the provisioning of education in Namibia, did the policies related to equity and quality education, and aimed at the nomadic people, achieve their goals?

The study further attempts to answer the following subsidiary questions:

- How do the nomadic people in the research group conceptualise education (its goals and objectives, as well as the cultural dimension)?

- To what extent does education provisioning to nomadic people visualise their educational goals to broadening access and to ensure equity and quality?
- How effective are the current policy instruments in achieving equity and quality of education for nomadic people?
- What policy options could be considered to address shortcomings in equity and quality in education for nomadic people?

1.6. The conceptual framework for the study

This research uses the concept of equity and quality which includes the notions of equitable distributions of resources and differential retribution to poor and low income groups. The study draws on the policy development framework developed by scholars such as Benne and Stiefel (1984), Ball and Cohen (1999), Jansen (2001), Sayed and Jansen (2001), Furhrman (1988), Cohen and Hill (2001), Argyris and Schon 1974), and draws from the sociology of education policy approach which seeks to understand the complex interplay between policy ideals of equity and quality, policy intention, policy implementation, and policy outcome/effect.

It notes that often there is disjuncture between intention and practice (Jansen, 2001), and a gap between intention and outcome (Sayed, 1999; Sayed & Jansen, 2001). The study uses this framework to examine how the Educationally Marginalised Children Policy (2000) and the Teaching Staffing Norms Policy (2001) traverse from the centre to the periphery/school level (Molale, 2004) and are mediated (Ball & Cohen, 1999) from the stage of formulation to implementation to outcomes.

For the purpose of this research, the key relevant policies are those pertaining to education, and specially the Educationally Marginalised Children and Teaching Staffing Norms frameworks in the context of Namibia. The intention of the education policies, like the Teaching Staffing Norms, is to redress past inequity among the regions through the equitable distribution of education resources, human resources in particular. The Teaching Staffing Norms Policy conceptualised that the equal distribution of human resources (educators) will result in the provision of quality education. While the intention of this and other policies is laudable, critical examination is required of the

implication of such policies to understand its effects and outcomes. This is important, as much of the writing focuses on the intention of the policies and asserts their good intention without examining their effects and impact.

Equally, the understanding of the complex and dynamic interplay between intention, implementation and outcome, are important to understand the implementation of the new education policies in the post-independence Namibia. At a conceptual level, the study intends to show the need to go beyond existing approaches when exploring equity and quality in educational provision, and to look at in a broader perspective.

The concepts of equity and quality in education have been linked to a number of different factors. As Berne and Stiefel (1984:24) and Chi and Jasper (1997:26) put it, there is no single concept of equity or quality as both terms are used for different purposes. In this regard, Berne and Stiefel (1984) state that both concepts are highly complex and a multidimensional phenomena, which tend to have different meanings in different contexts. Furthermore, Berne and Stiefel (1984:24) and Chi and Jasper (1997:26) assert that both terms can be defined very differently, depending upon the context, thus creating great complexity when interpreting equity for policy and implementation. In education, the concepts are often defined as 'equity in opportunities and quality educational outcome' (Chi & Jasper, 1997:26).

Chi and Jasper (1997) also posit that often equity and quality are used interchangeably, although they are not the same. They describe the term 'equity' as a normative concept, and it is a purely empirical question to design a valid and reliable instrument which measures any differences or inequalities that may exist between various individuals or groups. Rubenstein *et al.* (2006), conceptualise 'equity' as an 'application based on the notions of justice, fairness, and equal opportunities concepts' regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and social economic status. It is related to equal access of the same level of basic resources or services to enable people or citizens to participate in social and political processes, (McGrath, 1993; Berne & Stiefel, 1979a, 1984b; UNESCO, 2006).

In terms of 'quality', it refers to equitable conditions or circumstances within the school or classroom that promote or enhance quality learning for all learners. It includes the provision of curricula, learning materials, facilities, teachers and instructional experiences that enable learners to achieve high standards. Equity also relates to the

absence of barriers that prevent smooth implementation of conducive learning and teaching environments in classrooms, and in rural areas in particular. As such it is difficult to explain in definitive terms what it means, since it is deeply embedded in a society's value system (McGrath, 1993).

Berne and Stiefel (1984) underline three technical approaches in measuring equity and quality in education in terms of resource allocation - horizontal equity, vertical equity, and equal opportunity, and they posit that the three principles can be broadly conceptualised to include inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The 'horizontal equity' requires that learners who are alike should receive equal shares. This basic principle requires equal expenditure or revenue per learner so that they are treated equally. It is clear from both a physiological and psychological perspective that this approach is simplistic as individuals are not equal in all senses, and it does not provide for learners with special educational needs.

The principle of 'vertical equity' allows children and/or learners with different situations to receive appropriately different levels of education services by taking into account the higher costs of educating certain learners in order to bring them up to a given level of output or achievement. Therefore, in some circumstances and for some reasons, it is not only acceptable but also necessary to treat children or learners differently. Examples include those with learning disabilities and learners from marginalised or economically disadvantaged groups. Berne and Stiefel's (1984) definition of vertical equity, as the appropriately unequal treatment of the unequal, is a more difficult concept to operationalise than the approach of horizontal equity.

The concept of 'equal opportunity' in resource allocation requires that central and provinces/regional government resources are distributed among schools in such a way that all learners have a fair chance to succeed. According to Berne and Stiefel (1984), the amount of educational resources and services provided to learners should not be based on what they called 'illegitimate' characteristics such as race, gender, socio-economic status, or geographical location, but rather by variations in learners' educational needs. One could then argue, like Berne and Stiefel (1984a,1994b) that provision of equal educational opportunity focuses on the relationship between per-learner revenues and region/district or learner characteristics that might be considered 'compensatory' for the purposes of decisions of resources allocation. This principle is also commonly referred to as 'fiscal neutrality' if disparities across regions or schools exist, and it is important to determine whether these differences are due to 'illegitimate'

factors (such as differences in local wealth) or other factors, such as differences in local preferences for education.

1.7. Quality in education

Quality in education is similarly a complex term to come to grips with regarding the realities and challenges faced by the developing countries, especially when it comes to education for all primary school age children. Viewed from the global perspective, there is a vast body of literature that addresses the concept of quality education, with definitions adjusted to different purposes, contexts and stakeholders (UNESCO, 2008:1).

The 2005 EFA Global Monitoring Report underscores this point by noting that, despite a growing consensus about the importance of quality, however, there is much less agreement on what the concept means in practice (EFA GMR, 2005:5). The Dakar Framework of Action (2000) nevertheless uses two principles to characterise most attempts to define the quality of education. The first is recognised and measurable learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. The second emphasises the role of education in promoting commonly shared values, and creative and emotional development.

The measures to attain the required quality are suggested as follows:

- Learners who are healthy, well nourished and motivated.
- Adequate facilities and learning material.
- A relevant curriculum and linking it with the social and economic life of local and national communities.
- Conducive environment that encourages learning.
- Clear definition of learning outcomes.

- A clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.
- Participatory governance and management.
- Respect for culture and engaging local communities.

These comprehensive principles and inclusive view are reflected in the dimensions of education quality, as identified by UNICEF (2000) and UNESCO (Pigozzi 2004); both of which directly address the fundamental goal of education articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In this approach, the right of every individual to a quality education can only be assured when its components are understood from the perspective of the learners themselves, and take into account their individual characteristics, capabilities and goals (Pigozzi, 2004). In reviewing the literature on quality in education, the researcher concurs with the UNESCO (2008:3) statement that:

Definitions of quality education should not be viewed as either prescriptive or static. As societies evolve, so do notions of how education can best adapt to unprecedented new challenges and needs. International dialogue on quality education has led to general agreement that the concept will continue to evolve as education systems transform in response to these needs and to their commitment to fulfil the right of a quality education to all.

Added to this; Berne and Stiefel (1984:24) and Chi and Jasper (1997:26) assert that there is no single definition that can cover the present and future educational goals of all societies. The term 'quality' has become a dynamic concept that has constantly to adapt to a world whose societies are undergoing profound social and economic transformation (UNESCO, 2008).

Drawing on these arguments and ideas, this study's framework is one that seeks to understand the disjuncture between what is intended and what has occurred in practice. In this particular case it took a broad view in an effort to understand the challenges of education provision for pastoralist children and mobile communities and the ideological notion of Education for All. In so doing, it sought to advance an empirically grounded account of the dynamic interplay between policy intention and practice, enriching the

current analysis and debate surrounding equity, quality and equal education opportunities in the rural communities. These concepts are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.8. Research methodology

Based on the research question, the researcher chose a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory research design with typical ethnographic elements. He decided that the best way of gaining insight into the research question was to spend time with the nomadic people to understand the complexities that the education department had to contend with.

By approaching the research in this manner, it helped him to understand how the nomad pastoralist Himba and Zemba communities experience the Namibia government's efforts of promoting equitable access to good quality schooling through the provision of mobile schools. According to Creswell (1998), qualitative research is a multi-method approach which involves data collection, and an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter. It attempts to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to the phenomenon being investigated. Creswell (1998:15) further states that:

Qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding based on a distinct methodological tradition of enquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of information and conducts the study in a natural setting.

The rationale for choosing a qualitative approach is based on Creswell's (1998) definition and the nature and the underlying purpose and objective of this study. By employing a qualitative design, it enabled the researcher to obtain a more holistic picture and in-depth understanding of challenges faced by a nomadic community (i.e. the Himba and Zemba in Namibia) in terms of education provisioning, as well as equity and quality in education. The method provided the researcher with a much more comprehensive perspective by focusing on the reality of the nomadic community, their behaviour in naturally occurring settings, and the total context affecting them in the Kunene region.

Observing the actual behaviour of individuals in their natural setting enabled the researcher to gain a much deeper and richer understanding of the behaviour for those specific groups. Within the time limits of my study, he spent sufficient time with nomadic community members to develop an insight into their cultural beliefs and way of life, and to observe how the education system responds to their needs.

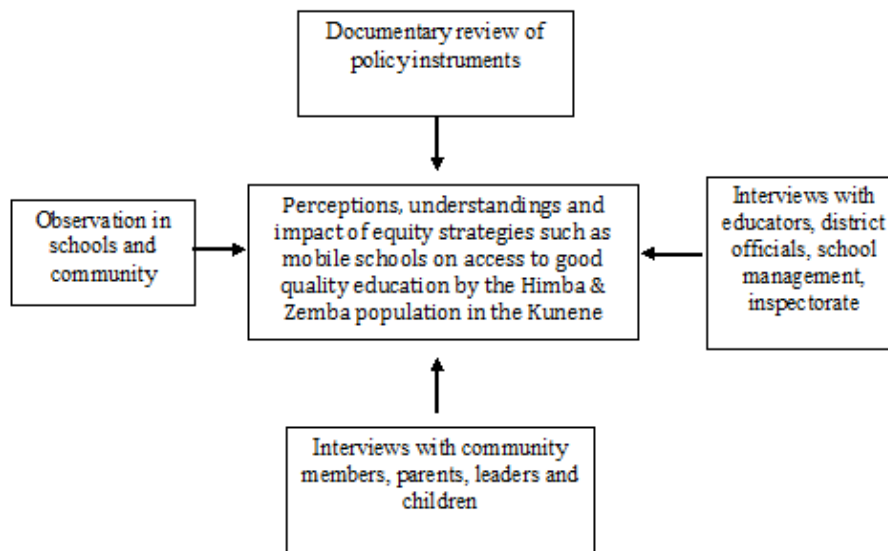
The researcher talked to the various role players (teachers, learners, parents, community leaders, and regional education officials) to gain an in-depth understanding into the way they perceive education and their expectations about formal education. This enabled him to contrast these experiences with the intended policy and to be able to form an understanding of how aspects pertaining to equity and quality in education are addressed. Blumer (as quoted by Fraenkel *et al.*, 1993:409) asserts that qualitative methods permit the research study to meet all the basic requirements of an empirical science: to confront the social world being studied, raising abstract questions about this world, discovering relations between categories of data, and formulating theories about these relations.

Equally, a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to study an intact cultural group (Himba and Zemba) in a natural setting over a specific period of time. He witnessed the movement of schools, the daily lives of nomadic parents and children, the teaching practice of educators, the challenges faced by management of the school, and the diverse needs of the various people involved with education. From his experience he attempted to answer fundamental questions common to studies on policy intention and practice; namely, how, why and with what effects are policies implemented.

The focus is placed on 'how' educators and the Himba and Zemba communities perceive the concept of equity and quality in education through the provisioning of the mobile schooling system in relation to the notion of education for all. In order to conduct investigations on these aspects, his research strategy was interpretive to answer the question of how equity and equal opportunity in education could be achieved for nomadic people living in rural areas where social-economic and cultural factors work against the provisioning of education could be answered.

The following figure shows the framework of the research approach and the data gathering methods.

Figure 1.1 Research design



Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the research design, the data collection, and the data analysis. The research attempted to develop a sound understanding of the Himba and Zemba culture to determine how it supports or hinders education. He has also gone to great lengths to interview all parties involved with the provisioning of education to these communities in an attempt to come to terms with the diverse challenges faced in managing classrooms spread over a great distance. This study therefore reports on the observations, experiences and data obtained, in relation to what the literature suggests in terms of the various aspects to be discussed.

1.9. Limitations of the study

The study confines itself to equity and quality in education for a specific group of nomadic children living in the Kunene region of Namibia. Although it is possible that some of their experiences and challenges resonate with the experiences and challenges of other nomadic groups, these possible relationships are not inferred or explored. Although I spent an extended period of time visiting the mobile school units, I did not, due to distance, cover all 45 mobile school units.

I spent time with seven mobile schools, and then focused on four mobile school units where I obtained in-depth, rich data. From the interviews with mobile school management, these seven units were fairly representative of all mobile school units. Educators, management, inspectors, community members, parents and leaders formed part of the study. The data obtained and findings reached apply to those mobile school units and may not be representative of all mobile schools or nomadic people of Namibia, or those beyond its borders. However, the degree to which the findings may corroborate other studies will enhance its applicability to other similar environments.

The researcher would like to make it clear that this study does not attempt to focus on the issue of policy failure, but rather on the relationship between what was intended to be policy, and what is in fact being implemented. Therefore this study first determines and analyses the concept of equity and equal education opportunity, with reference to education policies in Namibia. It focuses on the originators' perceptions and intentions, in terms of the ideological notion of Education for All. He accepts that these policies may not be typical of other developing countries, but they do speak to the need to achieve the ideals of EFA and the MDGs.

The potential of researcher bias is acknowledged. Measures were taken to minimise these (such as member checking and the use of reflexivity). The researcher was also guided by his supervisor to discuss the observations and what was gleaned from interviews – this enhances the integrity and trustworthiness of the study.

1.10. Significance of the study

This research study will contribute to the larger body of knowledge in many ways. First, it will provide the Namibian government, and governments elsewhere in the world where the nomadic people are found, with empirical evidence about the phenomenon and challenges of education provision to these groups and its actual outcomes beyond the classroom perspective in terms of ideological notion of Education for All.

The research findings will contribute to the debate and discussion concerning equity and equal education opportunity in the rural areas in educational provision in the larger context of education systems in developing nations with circumstances similar to those in Namibia. It is expected to provide a useful platform for analysing the progress made by the developing nations in terms of equity and equal education opportunity in

response to the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals.

It attempts to examine the concept of equity and quality in relationship to the broader social context and cultural factors in a developing nation. The study may not provide answers or solutions to the problems and difficulties that are identified, but will at least add to the debate surrounding the knowledge base on the complexity of equity and quality in relation to equal education opportunities in rural areas, especially among nomadic communities in a developing country context, such as Namibia.

The study should provoke discussion in terms of Education for All as an ideological notion, and the value positions underlying this notion, which in the researcher's view, need to be articulated and further studied. The findings of this study will also serve as a call, especially to developing nations like Namibia, to increase their commitment to the issue of the equitable distribution of education resources among learners in rural areas, nomadic communities in particular, which is one of the critical challenges facing most of the developing countries.

Furthermore, it is expected to provide an in-depth assessment and debate about what is known and what is not known about the challenges and complexity of education for pastoralist children and other mobile communities, especially in a developing country context. The findings of this study are expected to highlight areas that require further research; areas that may not usually surface in discussions of official documents or existing in empirical research.

In addition, the researcher familiarised himself with the latest developments about the concept and the complexity of equity in the public education, especially among nomadic communities, to be acquainted with the assumptions, theories and findings obtained by previous research in order not to duplicate efforts.

1.11. Organisation of the chapters

The chapters in this dissertation are organised as follows:

Chapter 1: Gives a brief introduction to the study, the background to Namibia, the rationale and purpose for doing the study. Furthermore, the problem statement and research questions are stated, as is the conceptual framework of the study and the methodology approach used in the study. The chapter explains the limitations in the research process and the significance of the inquiry.

Chapter 2: Equity and quality as educational imperatives are discussed. The chapter explores the literature on the provisioning of education in terms of equity and quality in education, and specifically addresses a developing country context.

It is an attempt to provide a theoretical based on which the main research question could be explored. Both the international and national literature relevant to provision of education for nomadic pastoralist groups is reviewed. Furthermore, the chapter explores the concepts of equity and quality from an international perspective, provisioning education for nomadic groups in a developing country in relation to universal primary access by 2015 - the goal set by Millennium Development Goals.

Chapter 3: Equity and quality: achievements and strategies. This chapter presents a brief overview of progress made in the provisioning of education for all and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Sub-Saharan African countries, in particular Namibia. It highlights strategies and policies developed by Namibia in realisation of EFA and MDGs targets, recapitulates the concept of equity and quality, as well as the provisioning of education for nomads and pastoralists children in Namibia.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology explains in detail the design and methodology used in the study. It describes how the researcher went about selecting the key participants, the development of appropriate instruments, and clarifies why an ethnographic research approach was employed in this study. Furthermore, it includes concerns about validity, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 5: The Himba and Zemba people. The chapter explores the Himba and Zemba culture, traditions and lifestyle, explains the impact of formal education among Himba and Zemba communities and their cultural diversity, as well as features that make the provisioning education difficult among these groups.

Chapter 6: Provisioning of education for the Himba and Zemba. This chapter discusses the development of the mobile school movement and presents key study findings in terms of the provisioning of education for Himba and Zemba communities in both pre- and post independent Namibia. Furthermore, the chapter critically examines the mobile school concept, which was established by the Namibian government with financial assistance from the Namibian Association of Norway (NAMAS), and its impact on Himba and Zemba communities.

The chapter highlights the weaknesses and strengths of the mobile school programmes during, and post NAMAS financial assistance.

Chapter 7: Findings and recommendations. This chapter presents a brief summary of empirical findings and recommendations for possible future research.