CHAPTER 2. EQUITY AND QUALITY AS EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVES

2.1. Introduction

Two decades ago, governments around the world signed the international pledge of Education for All (EFA), first in 1990 at Jomtein, and re-affirmed with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 in Dakar. The EFA Declaration of Education for All declared that access to quality education was the right of every child, and should be 'at the heart of education' (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005:29).

The Dakar Framework for Action identified equity as a requirement for achieving the fundamental goal of quality. On the basis of this Declaration, the goal of achieving universal access with equity and quality of education for all children has become an increasingly important imperative in every nation because of the need to accelerate economic development and further the employability of people after completing their education (UNESCO, 2009; Krätli & Dyer, 2009).

Governments around the world, including Namibia, have acceded to the international pledges of EFA, the MDGs and human rights declarations, which all have a bearing on determining education and other services needed for all their citizens. Much emphasis was placed on the attainment of the MDGs' targets in education because of its pivotal role in national development, and that equity and quality was identified as a precondition for achieving the goal of universal primary access to quality education.

The world leaders agreed to a number of commitments in the form of goals, targets and indicators that promote social development, social justice and human rights in the realisation of EFA. There are eight goals in the 2000 Dakar World Education Forum of MDGs, and Goal 2 and Goal 3 refer specifically to issues of universal primary education and gender parity. The MDG Goal 2 has a target of 'ensuring that, by 2015, primary school age children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling'.

The eight MDGs have been articulated into 20 targets with over 60 indicators. The goals are time-bound and measurable, designed to achieve universal primary education, eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy, etc.

The challenge, however, is how to achieve equity and quality education within the limited resources available in Sub-Saharan African countries in particular (Carr-Hill & Peart, 2005; Danaher, 2002). The study therefore examines progress made towards Goal 2, 'Universal Primary Education', as well as equity and quality in education in responding to the ideological notion of EFA; nomadic communities in particular.

Various studies have discussed the concept of equity and quality in education extensively from various perspectives (Andersson, 1990; Clayton & Williams, 2000; Jencks, 1992; Roemer, 1996). Hutmacher *et al.* (2001) and Lynch and Lodge (2001) (as quoted by Lazaro Moreno Herrera 2007:319) state that the conceptualisation of equity and quality largely demands going beyond a semantic analysis; a discussion of the concepts requires a contextualisation within major frames of social and educational debate - among them social justice. The use of these notions has evolved in different ways over time, depending on the particularities of social and political contexts (UNSECO, 2008; Sayed, 1997).

2.2. Equity in education

A vast body of literature on the concept of 'equity' in education has appeared over the past decade, examining the factors that helped to improve education for all; especially those groups who for various reasons have so far been excluded or are not benefiting from existing education provision. Numerous authors use different concepts of equity, (Berne & Stiefel, 1984; Jimerson, 2004; Sayed, 1997; Rubenstein, *et al.*, 1992; Todd *et al.*, 2001).

Equity is a fundamentally important concept that can be used to describe the fairness and effectiveness of the education systems for any country (Rawls, 1972?). It refers to what is socially just, and attempts to address unequal outcomes (Walzer, 1989; Sayed, 2001).
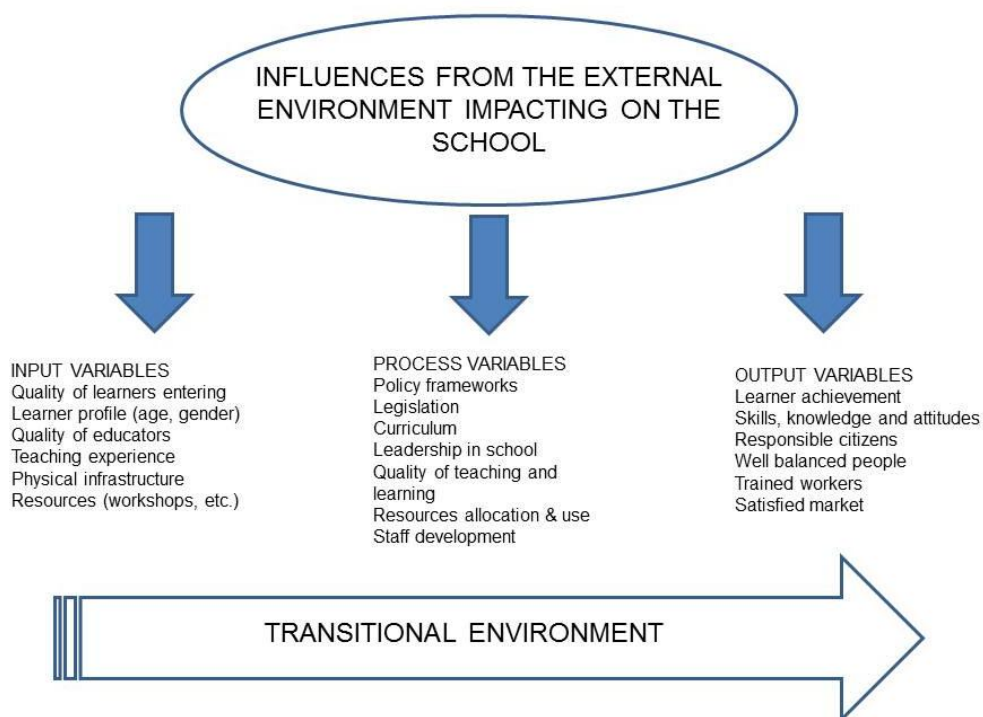
The principle of equity can define the specificity of disparity (Weber, 2002), and advocates of equity may propose a process of differential distribution to achieve the goal.

According to Berne and Stiefel (1984) and Chi and Jasper (1997), the concept of equity is highly complex and multi-dimensional, which tends to take on different meanings in different contexts. Chi and Jasper (1997) define the term 'equity' as a normative concept, and it is a purely empirical question to design a valid and reliable instrument which measures difference or inequalities that may exist between various individuals or groups. Rubenstein, et al (1992), Rubenstein *et al.* (2006) and Nieuwenhuis (2010) conceptualise 'equity' as an application based on the notions of justice, fairness, and equal opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and social economic status. It is related to equal access to the same level of basic resources of services to enable people or citizens to participate in social and political processes (McGrath, 1993; Berne & Stiefel, 1979a, 1984b; UNESCO, 2006).

Furthermore, Arnaud (2001) and Nieuwenhuis (2010), state that the concept of 'equity' is more associated with 'fairness, impartiality, and justice with dimensions that make is possible to consider it as instrument to bring harmony into progressive societies and a means of solving conflicts in some legal cultures.

In Chapter 1, the researcher identified three possible meanings for the concept 'equity' from Berne and Stiefel's (1984) work, i.e. 'horizontal equity, vertical equity, and equal opportunity', and the three principles can be broadly conceptualised to include inputs, outputs, and outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1   Input, process and output variables in education

INFLUENCES FROM THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT IMPACTING ON THE SCHOOL

INPUT VARIABLES
Quality of learners entering
Learner profile (age, gender)
Quality of educators
Teaching experience
Physical infrastructure
Resources (workshops, etc.)

PROCESS VARIABLES
Policy frameworks
Legislation
Curriculum
Leadership in school
Quality of teaching and learning
Resources allocation & use
Staff development

OUTPUT VARIABLES
Learner achievement
Skills, knowledge and attitudes
Responsible citizens
Well balanced people
Trained workers
Satisfied market

TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Source: Nieuwenhuis, 2007

'Horizontal equity' is a principle that focuses on disparities across various groups in access and resources; the analysis of equal educational opportunity relates a region's wealth (measured as regional product per capita) and population density (a proxy for urban/rural location) with the objects of equity. The concept of 'horizontal equity' is the principle that children in similar circumstances must be treated in the same way, and thus receives the same level of support in the allocation of resources; i.e. children from any family background or situation should be treated as equals.

The concept requires that learners who are alike should receive equal shares. This basic principle requires equal expenditure or revenue per learner, so that equals 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. Thus, the definition of the 'equity' requires choosing a set of criteria considered 'relevant' for the definition of 'equals' itself' (Galbiati & Vetova, 2005).

The resulting definition is then that those who are in a relevant sense equal, should be treated equally. As one can imagine, this normative definition will certainly spark disagreement over the selection of 'relevant' variables. However, by defining equals, all individuals possessing the agreed upon qualities must be treated equally if horizontal equity is to be achieved or maintained. The two concepts of horizontal equity and vertical equity can be applied to many policy issues, and generally, horizontal equity represents equal access to public educational services, irrespective of factors such as location, ethnicity, and religion, or social economic status. In other words, equal treatment of equal needs.

In terms of MDG 2, formal education should give all children, including those from marginalised groups, nomadic pastoralist's learners in particular, the tools for life that lead to outcomes that are meaningful where they feel confident in using the knowledge and skills they have acquired. Formal education is about developing behaviour based on positive values, understanding and respect for other people's rights, and culture. This would be in line with EFA objectives and MDGs that children should receive the basic education they need to enrich their lives, expand their opportunities, and participate in society. The quality of the education they receive in terms of what they learn, under what conditions, and the crucial role of teachers, is key (Krätli & Dyer, 2009:14).

The concept of 'vertical equity' recognises that learners are not all the same, and that their starting points, relative to other learners, should be considered in an analysis of equity. In this case, providing additional funds for children who are differently situated, with different levels of resources, should be considered in order to achieve similar results (e.g. school completion) for a particular group of children or a specific region (UNESCO, 2007:24). It is a principle that allows differently situated people to receive appropriately different levels of resources, by taking into account, for example, the higher costs of educating certain learners in order to bring them to a given level of output or achievement.

Some developing countries, for example South Africa, have created a vertical equity mechanism through categorical funding of special needs programmes and weighting of government allocations according to learners needs and the circumstances under which they live (Berne & Stiefel, 1984:7; Create, 2009). The principle of 'vertical equity' means equal access, irrespective of income or financial wealth. It may also refer to the aim of unequal treatment for unequal needs; for example, more resources allocated for teaching children from poor and nomadic families than for those that come from wealthy

or better off families. This is termed 'affirmative action' or 'positive discrimination', and is aimed at overcoming the persistence of disparities between groups and communities (Motala, 2005).

Thus, providing additional resources to those who are most disadvantaged and marginalised is a programmatic response to the need for equity and fairness. It 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 to a given level of output or achievement.

Furthermore, Berne and Stiefel (1984) state that the concept of vertical equity ties input equity to output equity. When inputs are 'adjusted' for the costs of educating various groups of children, as is often done when vertical equity is measured, the adjustment is meant to indicate the amount of additional resources that need (higher costs that are incurred) to bring some learners to a given output levels. It focuses on the treatment of differently situated learners, implicitly assuming that learners require different resources to achieve set levels of performance. Therefore, in some circumstances and for some reasons, it is not only acceptable but also necessary to treat learners differently, because differential treatment based on these characteristics may be necessary to make an education system more equitable. Examples include learners 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. Not all learners have the same educational needs, and funding strategies in developed countries like the USA, and UK have components that generally address learners' individual needs by providing more resources to the regions/districts and local authorities, thus serving learners who might require additional or more intensive services.

The level of additional resources that such learners should receive is often difficult to define, however. The concept of vertical equity would require that schools serving large numbers of disadvantaged learners be allocated more resources than other schools to compensate for these higher deficits. Therefore, if children from different backgrounds were to have similar chances in life, they would have to be treated differently (Hernes, 1974). Quality of results necessitates unequal of provision and resources (Berne &

Stiefel, 1999). The ideal is that the educational career of the individual would be determined by ability and intents, and not, for example by status and place of residence. Hernes (1974) puts it, 'all learners are equally worth, but none of them are alike'. According to Hernes (1974), the concept of 'vertical equity' is a tool aimed at trying to get everyone to the same level, while quality to equal opportunity is about the right to fairness, and the concept mainly ties input variables to output variables.

The principle of 'equal education opportunity', is based on the notion that all children should have an equal chance to succeed, and for there to be equal education opportunity, learners should have access to resources that put them at 'a fair starting line' and 'conditions should be set up to allow the possibility for all to 'succeed' (Berne & Stiefel, 1999). In some cases, equal opportunity is treated as a condition of horizontal equity. Turner (as quoted by Nieuwenhuis, 2005:14) however reminds one 'that equal of opportunity and conditions tend to produce inequality of results.'

Berne and Stiefel (1984a and 1994b) argue 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, 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.

McGrath (1993), in his work on equal education resource distribution in the United States of America, articulates that the 'equalisation of educational opportunity and equalisation of school support means that every child within a state's borders should have equal access to educational facilities, programmes and services.

Berne and Stiefel (1994) try to shift away from an input model of equity, which is resources-oriented to input-outcomes. In the researcher's view, the Berne and Stiefel (1994) conceptual framework covers the core dimensions of equity, including empirical measures that would be useful for a more technical equity analysis while minimising complexity, so that the framework is less burdensome for policymakers and other potential users. From an educational point of view, however, the concept also has some limitations since equitable distribution of education resources alone cannot address or bring social justice.

To provide equity and quality education; better teaching and learning in a conducive environment needs to be created; for example, adequately trained teachers, learner-centred methods, appropriate class size, sufficient learning time, appropriate curriculum, and relevant materials are key. In addition, better school environments are needed; for example, basic facilities including water and sanitation, a safe and secure environment, attitudes of respect and tolerance, nutrition and health support and accountable management processes are the ingredients for equity, quality education and social justice.

To underline the concept of social justice, fairness and equity for everyone, special approaches for children from disadvantaged groups, such as nomadic pastoralists who are unable to receive a quality education without special measures and attention to address their needs are needed. Equity and quality in education will mean doing things differently, treating learners differently based on their individual needs, and this necessitates unequal of provision and resource allocation.

Furthermore, there is a need to broaden the traditional viewpoint of the concept of equity, so as to focus on the effective use or deployment of resources with the aim of producing equal results, not equal outputs. In this way, equity may be seen as the prerequisite of quality education, which requires unequal inputs (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005; UNESCO, 2010).

According to the literature (Krätli & Dyer, 2009; Fowler, 1999), if the world, developing countries in particular, would like to achieve vertical equity and quality education, children from parents with different resources (rich and poor) must be treated differently (affirmative action or positive discrimination), but there is always a trade-off between vertical equity, horizontal equity and efficiency. For example, in extending educational services to marginalised and nomadic groups, per capita costs are often very high and the response is usually poor, judging by the retention rates and the learning outcomes among these children compared with their counter-parts in urban and settled areas. Equally, any efforts in promoting equity and quality in education often require additional resources; whether through the allocation of extra funds or the reallocation of resources between the different sectors.

Like Chi & Jasper (1997), Rubenstein, Doering and Moser (1992) conceptualise 'equity' as an application of justice and fairness, often to correct or supplement the common law and to mitigate its deficiencies by providing a policy response or targeted social intervention. In developed nations like in the United States, the concept of equity manifested in the first and second 'waves' of fiscal equity litigation in 1971-1973 and 1990-1994, which assessed interpretations of equal-protection clauses in the states' constitutions (Rebell, 1998). Over the past decade, in the United States for example, many state schools' finance systems have been, and continue to be, challenged in the courts and most of the courts have ruled on the constitutionality of their financing public education laws. The basis for the challenges was the claim that dramatic inequalities in spending per learner meant learners in poor districts and schools were being denied equal educational opportunities; i.e. equal access to education resources.

The lawsuits in education finance can be traced back to the landmark 1954 case of Brown v. the Board of Education where the U.S.A. Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools violate the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. School finance reformers sought to extend this argument to the issue of education funding, arguing that equal protection meant equal distribution of resources on a per-learner basis.

They argue that each learner is entitled to receive the same amount of resources or services, commonly referred as an argument for 'education funding equity' (Jimerson, 2002; Lavigne & Hofmaster, 2000; Rubenstein *et al.*, 1992).

However, according to Nieuwenhuis (2010), treating everyone the same way in terms of funding, does not necessarily mean fairness of treatment. He further reiterates that often equal treatment opportunity is restricted by individual's backgrounds and cultural and circumstances that put children at a disadvantage. To achieve a fair starting line, especially for learners from marginalised groups like the nomadic Himba and Zemba children in Namibia, there must be conditions set up to allow the possibility for all to succeed, which implies differential funding.

The argument is that equalising the starting line by creating opportunity for marginalised groups to participate in education is important, but it might not be enough to put them on an equal footing with the rest of the group because their marginalised position in the society makes them more disadvantaged. In the case of Namibia, for example, since

independence equity driven policies and strategies had to be developed to redress past injustices and inequalities to ensure that the starting line of every Namibian could be equalised.

But even if the starting line is the same, the process variables may remain unequal; especially in rural and remote areas, such as those who have been marginalised in the past. Making education accessible to people like the Himba and Zemba in the north west of Namibia, without attending to issues of upgrading teachers' skill levels or the physical facilities at schools will not mean much in terms of these equity-driven policy initiatives if the result is that they continue to be marginalised. For that reason, some form of compensation or redress or affirmative action is needed to equalise the race itself, as well as addressing their mobile lifestyle.

Fiske and Ladd's (2002) study, 'Financing schools in post apartheid South Africa: Initial steps toward fiscal equity' defines equity as an input measure, like the quantity and quality of educational inputs. This may include variation among regions or provinces in education expenditure per learner, as well as human resources in terms of qualifications and experiences.

Fiske and Ladd (2002) further claim that the equity-driven reform in the South African context has implicitly built on the concept of distributional equity, which clearly focuses on the equal opportunities and quality of education, which the researcher views as similar to the Namibian context. Whatever measures are used, Fiske and Ladd (2002) argue that for some people, distributional equity may be defined with respect to public funds alone; while others define it based on public and privately funded resources.

2.3.   Quality in education

The Dakar Framework for Action (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005:29) – the Quality Imperative, defines 'quality' as a set of desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation). The Declaration identifies quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity; therefore MDG 6 emphasises improving all aspects of the quality of education. The Dakar Framework for Action declares that access to quality education is the right of every child, and should be 'at the heart of education' (EFA Global Monitoring Report,

2005:29).

Quality determines how much, and how well, children learn, and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. Goal 6 of the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) emphasises the need for a stimulating pedagogy. It is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life and determines what happens in the classroom, and subsequently, the quality of the learning outcomes.

Although countries are striving to guarantee all children the right to education, the focus on universal access often overshadows attention to quality (EFA GMR, 2005:4). Yet quality, identified as a key pillar, determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits.

The principle of quality 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. Furthermore, quality is also related to the absence of barriers that prevent smooth implementation and a conducive learning and teaching environment in classrooms; rural areas in particular. According to Arnesson (2001), it is difficult to explain in definitive terms what it means, since it is deeply embedded in a society's value system. Arnesson (2001) refers the notion of quality of education as a principle of 'distributive justice', i.e. that there should be 'fair quality of educational service' for social and economic advancement.

Figure 2.2 is a UNESCO conceptualisation framework for understanding quality education, illustrating the main elements of education systems and how they interact in relation to quality.

Figure 2.2   A framework for understanding education quality
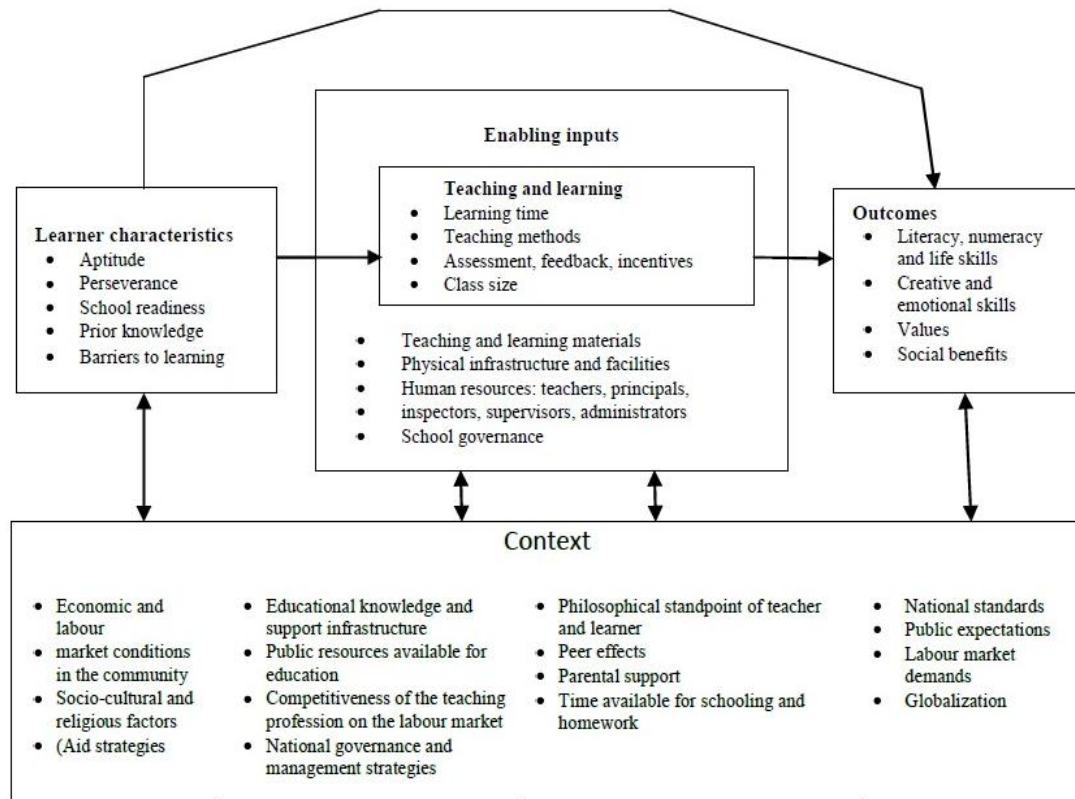
Source: EFA Global Monitoring 2005 Report Summary

This conceptualisation provides an integrated and comprehensive view of learning and demonstrates what constitutes quality education.   The framework allows an understanding of the different variables that can contribute to quality in education, and lays bare the fact that quality of education is seen as surrounding access, teaching and learning processes and outcomes in ways that are influenced both by context and by the range and quality of inputs available.

In his study 'The concept of quality in education', Sayed (1997:26) argues that concept of quality in education is elusive and frequently used, but never clearly defined. He goes on to discuss how its multiple meanings reflect 'different ideological, social and political values' (Sayed, 1997:26).   By critiquing key principle approaches to quality education, Sayed (1997) underlines what he calls the 'value-bases' of any framework for quality in education. Drawing from Berne and Stiefel's (1984) and Bunting's (1993) principles, Sayed (1997) came to the conclusion that 'equity in education does have an

underneath line and that line is defined by the goals and values which underpin the essentially human activity of education'.

The point Sayed (1997) makes is that this should be the starting point for an understanding of the notion of equity in education. Thus, any discussion of quality, or action to improve quality, must be preceded by an understanding of the learning experiences of individual learners. Sayed (1997) also goes further in that definitions of quality are also determined at the country level; countries determine the relationship between their own quality standards and 'internationally accepted' definitions. Therefore, efforts to define quality in education and improve learning must be weighed at the school and classroom level, and involve ongoing, systematic assessment.

The definitions of quality as presented above are consistent with the communiqué issued at UNESCO Ministerial Round Table on Quality Education, that recognises that the principle of quality has became a dynamic concept that has to constantly adapt to unprecedented new challenge and needs as societies evolve (UNESCO, 2008). Education systems today are challenged by the changing character and growing complexity of society; therefore, definitions of quality should not be fixed, but rather evolve as conditions change.

This means that definitions of quality must be open to change and evolution, based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education's challenges. These constantly changing demands and expectations have implications in achieving quality of education for all (UNESCO, 2008). Therefore systems that embrace change through data generation, use and self-assessment, are more likely to offer quality education for all learners (Glasser, 1990).

Added to this, is the usual focus on the ability of the education system and schools to deliver on equity and quality of education, essential knowledge and relevant skills, teacher competence, the curriculum, teaching and learning methodologies, processes in the learning environment, examinations and assessment, management, administrative practises, planning and policy development. These remain key to the education quality debate (UNESCO, 2003). Moreover, to achieve the desired quality, the inputs and process should be of 'quality' in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, excellence and social justice. The quality output can be achieved only if quality is ensured at each level of the educational process (UNESCO, 2003:10).

Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however. According UNICEF (2000) report, quality education includes:

- Quality learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities, including teacher quality support for their tasks in schools;

- Quality environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities are likely to support learners to succeed in schools;

- Quality content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, innumeracy and relevance skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;

- **Q**uality processes through which trained teachers use child or learner-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities represents a key factor in ensuring quality school process;

- Quality outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals and objectives for education and positive participation in society.

These factors allows for an understanding of education as a complex system, embedded in a political, cultural and economic context. Furthermore, the factors take into account the global influences that drive the discussion of quality in education (Motala, 2000; Bernard A 1999; Benoliel, O'Gara and Miske 1999).

2.4. Equity and quality: International perspective

The World Declarations of Education for All (1990) emphasises that to achieve this by 2015, requires, in addition to increased access to quality education, all countries to improve the equity and quality education 'so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieve by all member states (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989; Coleman, 1990; Levin, 2001, UNESCO, 2002).

The ultimate aim of EFA is that primary school age children receive the basic skills they need to enrich their lives, expand their opportunities, and participate in society. The quality of the education they receive in terms of what they learn, under what conditions, and the crucial role teachers play, are keys. Internationally though, to realise Education for All (WCEFA, 1990), it demands a particularly close focus on those groups who, for various reasons, have so far been excluded from existing educational provision. Education is directly implicated in this concern, and it has been given its central place in human and national development (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989).

Towards the close of the 20th century, world leaders from both developed and developing countries met in Dakar, under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), to evaluate progress made in terms of the social, economic and political dimensions of national and international development since the Declaration of Education for All. It became clear from the analysis that EFA developmental targets had remained elusive as some projects and programmes had not yielded the anticipated outcomes. From an international perspective, the world leaders realise that the gap between rich and poor countries continue to widen, not only in terms of getting children through school, but also in terms of what they are actually learning and what quality education they receive.

A comparison of enrolment levels between developed and developing countries shows that whereas all primary age children in developed countries are in school, only 40% are in developing countries, of which more than 50% are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The interactions, awareness and negotiations during the Dakar Education Forum led to the birth of the MDGs to guide the EFA programmes. The World Education Forum (2000) renewed the commitment of EFA, and emphasis was placed on the low participation in formal education of some groups, such as nomadic communities and lower income groups. In countries where nomadic populations are to be found, like Namibia, education to these communities is becoming a focus of the governments, with the

growing awareness that Education for All by 2015 will not be achieved unless prompt efforts are made to ensure expanded access and retention for these groups beyond the reach of the mainstream provisions.

In addition, providing universal access and quality education are some of the six goals in the Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000) and as the 2015 MDG target for universal primary education draws closer, there has been increased policy interest in both developed and less developed countries in general (Murphy *et al.*, 2002; UNESCO, 2002; UNESCO, 2006), and for nomadic groups in particular (Pennells & Ezeomah, 2000; Carr-Hill & Peart, 2005). However, efforts have been made by developing countries, especially in achieving technical compliance with the MDG 2, and by 2015 most of the developing countries will be close to attaining 100% school age attendance, but this does not automatically translate into achieving equity or quality education. According to Jansen (2001a), Fiske and Ladd (2002), much of the inequities and inequalities persisting in developing countries in particular are mainly related to the governments' inability to offer the equity and quality of education promised.

Jansen's (2002) argues that in developing countries like South Africa, policy is largely 'political symbolism' in that the new state has over-invested in policy formulation at the expense of practical implementation. Jansen's (2002) claim is that politicians do not always invent policy in order to change practice, but policy often represents a search for legitimacy.

According to Jansen (2001b), the explanation that is usually given for the gap between intended policy and outcomes is the lack of resources, the legacy of inequity created by the previous regime, and the lack of human capacity to translate policy into practice. It is highly likely that this may be similar to the Namibia situation. However, it is Jansen's (2001b) contention that due to a lack of clear direction and explanation between education policy intention and practice in post-colonial states, failure is commonly attributed to the lack of resources, the legacy of inequity and the lack of capacity to translate the policy intent into practical reality.

Similar to Jansen (2001), Argyris and Schon (1974) note that effective implementation rests on the belief that people are designers of action in order to achieve intended consequences, and to monitor them to learn whether their actions are effective. Argyris and Schon's (1974) assumption is that human behaviour does not occur by chance or

instinct, it is guided by theories of action, which are vehicles for explanation, and prediction.

Galvin and Fauske (2000:43) similarly argue that what is important in policy development is attention to practical implementation, but this does not occur as policy makers as deductive thinkers do not consider the practical conditions in which the policy is to be implemented. Galvin and Fauske (2000) assert that policy makers do not take into account the context of policy implementation. In short, policymakers are often guided by theory that might not hold true in certain contexts of implementation, and do not take into account the theories behind their practices.

The EFA means not only having access to schooling but also having quality of education for all children in respect of their social-economic background or circumstances, ethnic origins and geographical location. There are linkages between equity access and quality education; therefore a lot more must be done in order to ensure that all children around the globe have equal access to sound quality primary education (Hanushek, 2000). On the basis of this, ministries and departments of education worldwide are supportive of this interpretation of the EFA notion in its wider sense. On the other hand, education policy makers and educational planners in developing countries where nomadic people reside, are, however, faced with the enormous challenge of making this commitment a reality.

One challenges is how to make significant progress in promoting equity and extending education services to meet the learning needs of nomadic pastoralists' and hunters' children with limited resources.

In terms of policy development, there have been a number of controversies from the discussion of 'equity' and 'quality' in the field of education. Various concepts are often invoked by policy analysts, policy-makers, and scholars in order to justify or critique resource allocation to different levels of the education system. As stated earlier, equity and quality are major policy concerns in both developed and developing countries. However, there are significant differences among nations with respect to definitions and issues of equity and quality.

The current debates on equity and quality concepts among scholars and researchers reveals disagreement and confusion about what those concepts really mean and what they involve in terms of goals and results (Nieuwenhuis, 2010; Stiefel, 1999; Ball, 1994; Cohen, 1999). The principles of equity and quality debates have often privileged 'input' rather than 'results/outcomes.' Policy-makers and implementers seem to be interested in the allocation of money and the outcomes measured by exit level examinations, but too little emphasis or interest is placed on the processes within education. Typical is the storm that is created after the release of the results of such national examinations.

According to Ken Boston, an erstwhile director of public education in New South Wales, and most recently the chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England, chronically underperforming schools should be closed and their principals or teachers sacked (The Australian, 2009). Similar comments have been made in South Africa on the release of the Grade 12 results on a yearly basis since 2003, but it seems to demonstrate a type of duality in the thinking of policy makers and it may be at the root of the failure of education systems. It would appear that policy makers and administrators see their role as providers of funding and the custodians of outcomes, without engaging in the processes needed to obtain the type of outcomes desired.

The fact is that what constitutes equity or quality in one country may be considered mediocrity in another. Until policy-makers and researchers arrive at consensus on the level of achievement that one can expect from the education systems, we will continue not knowing whether the educational systems/schools are offering equal opportunities and a quality education to all learners (Hadderman, 1990). It is apparent that the ability of each country to reach the goals of equity and quality in education depends upon whether the resourcing mechanisms of public education are designed to promote equity, and quality in education (Hadderman, 1990).

Underlying the concept of equity is the notion of 'fairness'. Often one talk about the public education system operate fairly, and one considers the equitable distribution of education resources as a mechanism for providing a fair basic standard of living for all people. But inevitably, as Fowler (1999) and Nieuwenhuis (2010) assert, perceptions about what is 'fair' are enfolded in one's own value judgments and beliefs.

In his article, 'Social justice in education revisited', Nieuwenhuis (2010) argues that less wealthier developed countries and developing countries are unable to afford to implement what international conventions and treaties require them to do; especially the ideals of EFA and universal primary education by 2015. Nieuwenhuis (2010:277) strengthens his argument by quoting Christie (2009):

Developing countries may not have the economic resources or political will to provide the type of quality education for all envisaged by the international agenda written in the conference rooms of Paris or Washington. But even if developing countries had the resources and political will, cultural beliefs and practices may militate against the right to quality education or protection against discrimination.

Added to this, universal schooling accompanied by quality, equity and accessibility could be a single big move towards attaining future prosperity of every nation. Education should be provided in such a manner that ensures children can benefit from it, so that they can realise their potential and aspirations (Sayed, 1997; UNESCO, 2000).

2.5. Equity and quality education: Developing country perspective

Since the enunciation and implementation of the 2000 Dakar framework of action, substantial progress has been noted globally in terms of the achievement of universal primary education and gender parity in education towards the realisation of the cardinal goals of the EFA movement. This is despite the fact that there are challenges. In education, much work has been done to quantify progress in the 2000-2008 period, and to assess prospects for the years leading up to 2015.

Developing countries, Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, have made progress in terms of increased access to primary education opportunities; especially among those social groups traditionally excluded from the mainstream (UNESCO, 2006). In addition, based on international pressure arising out of the need to increase human capital and the commitments made by the UN member countries, including Namibia, it has rekindled the need and thinking to reach out to the groups and communities such as nomads who have traditionally be marginalised from access and quality education.

Since the launch of MDGs in 2000, many UN member countries around the world have put in place a number of educational policies, such as Universal Primary Education for all (UPE) plans and programmes, addressing the problem of equity and quality in the provisioning of primary and secondary schooling. These efforts have brought some positive outcomes in terms of increased access to primary education. The 2009 Education for All Global Monitoring (GM) Report, 'Overcoming disparity: why governance matters', shows that progress has been made towards universal primary education and gender parity, with sharp enrolment increases in Sub-Sahara Africa and South Asia in particular. According to the EFA GM report (2009), some developing counties' plans and programmes have yielded positive results as more primary school age children in developing nations have been go to school, and the majority were able to read and write their names, and are better informed as a result of the EFA plan and programmes.

In terms of education provision among nomad groups, attempts have been made to respond to their educational needs and aspirations.

Programmes, such as mobile schools catering for primary age children of nomadic communities, are found in some parts of the world. Examples where such programmes are found include Algeria (Blanguernon, 1954), Nigeria (Udoh, 1982) and Namibia (NAMAS, 2004). In the Namibian case, tents are used as classrooms. These classrooms are intended to follow nomadic communities during their seasonal migration. As a result of these initiatives, a remarkable increase in enrolment rates has been registered in many regions. The bad news is that globally, the world is not on course for achieving the international development target of universal education by 2015. The EFA GM (2009) report indicates that to date, none of the MDGs targets for the year 2015 have been met.

According to Table 2.1 (p44), Sub-Saharan Africa has made the most progress since the inception of the MDG targets, with an 18% increase in the primary NER from 58% in 2000 to 76% in 2008. In contrast, developed countries have almost reached universal primary education of 100%; however, their primary NER slightly declined from 98% in 1991 to 96% in 2008.

In general, however, these statistics show that most of the developed and some developing countries are likely to attain nearly all the MDGs by 2015. The exceptions are Sub-Sahara Africa, Southern and Western Asia (GMR 2006a, 2008b,2009c; Krätli, 2001; Anderson, 2002; ADEA, 2005a, 2006b).

**Table 2.1 Primary Net Enrolment Rate per region – 1991-2008**

Region	Percentage of primary school completion rate		
	1991	2000	2008
CIS: Europe	81	88	93
CIS: Asia	88	92	94
Eastern Asia	98	99	94
South Eastern Asia	98	94	95
Southern Asia	72	80	90
Western Asia	80	85	88
Northern Africa	83	91	95
Sub-Saharan Africa	54	58	76
Latin America	87	94	95
Developing regions	80	83	88
Developed regions	98	87	96

Source: UN MDG Report 2008

In terms of equity and quality in education, Sub-Saharan African learners continue to perform below the mean on international assessment tests in mathematics and English, dropout rates continue to increase, and learners are not able to perform at the grade level expected. Evidence can be drawn from the SACMEQ II (2005) study involving 15 countries in South and Eastern Africa which reveals that education quality has declined in Grade 6 literacy achievement scores, with the most significant differences occurring in Malawi, Namibia and Zambia (Figure 2.3). The SACMEQ II (2005) study found that fewer than 25% of Grade 6 learners reached the 'desirable' level of reading literacy in Lesotho, South Africa, Zanzibar and Uganda, with less than 10% in, Malawi, Namibia,

and Zambia.

Figure 2.3   Learner reading scores by country
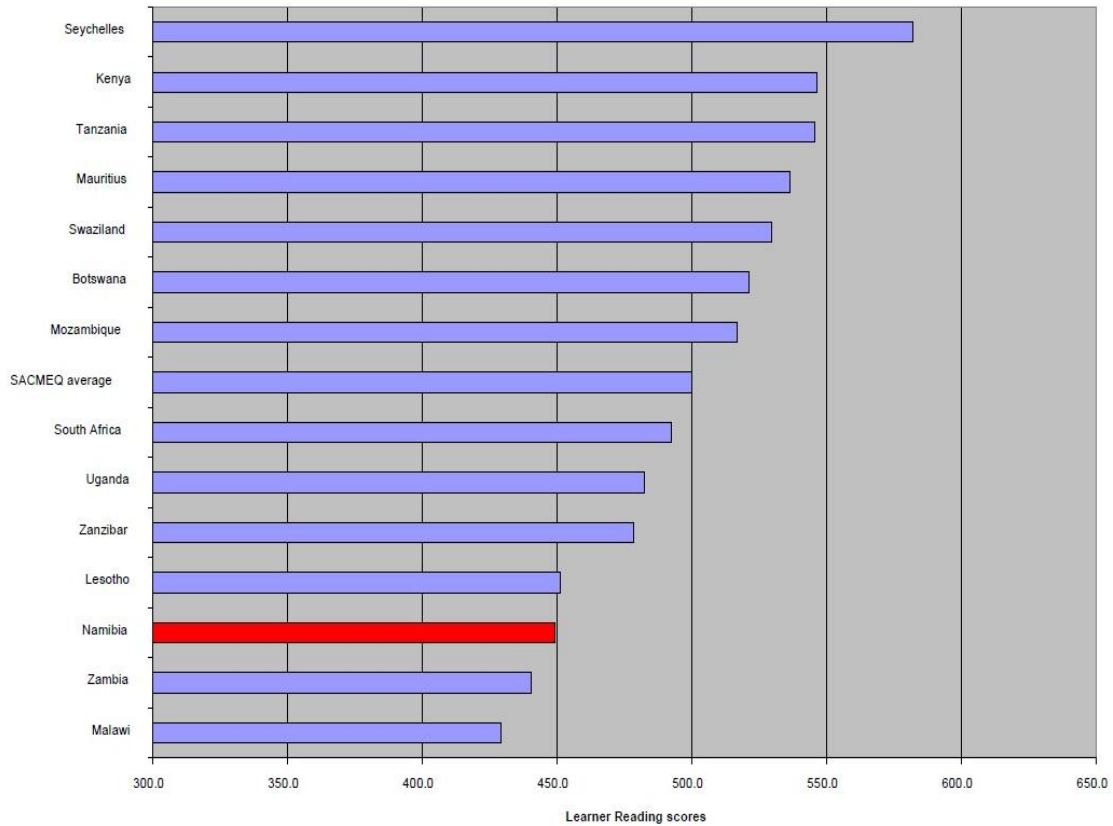
Source: SACMEQ II 2005

It can be seen from Figure 2.3, Malawi, Namibian and Zambia learners scored relatively poorly in reading, and half a standard deviation below the SACMEQ average. They had about the same level of achievement as the Lesotho learners and were slightly better than the learners from Zambia and Malawi. Although no clear cause could be identified in the study, inequity (poverty in terms of household income) and poor quality educational services (lack of physical facilities, materials and human resources) appear to have befallen the three worst-affected countries (Malawi, Namibia and Zambia).

The three regions (Sub-Sahara Africa, Southern and Western Asia) will be hard pressed to meet the goal of universal primary access and quality education, because translating principles into practice pose immense challenges, and the current record is mixed. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006a, 2008b, 2009c) and Krätli and Dyer (2009), 14 African countries, of which many are in Northern Africa, have the potential to reach MDG 2. Unfortunately, increased enrolment in some of these countries has not translated into completion rate or equal access opportunities to a quality education.

In countries, like Namibia, most primary school age children, especially in rural and/or nomadic communities (i.e. San, Himba and Zemba), do not have access to schooling and sound quality primary education. The 2001 Namibian Population Census (2001) reveals that there were more 25 000 primary age children who did not attend school, and over 10 000 who had left school early. It is these communities that need to be reached by access to schooling and quality education if EFA goals and MDGs targets are going to be met. Furthermore, by international comparison, Sub-Saharan African countries continue to spend less on primary education; on average $167 per child per year in primary education, compared with the global average of $1 000, and more than $5 000 in the United State and Western Europe (UNECOSOC, 2010).

Equally, despite positive progress made globally, the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2005a, 2006b, 2009c) emphasis that due to the growth of many developing nations, many of them in Sub-Sahara Africa and South Asia, they will not be able to achieve MDG 2 - Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. Although some countries are approaching universal enrolment rates, the 2009 Global Monitoring Report shows that there were about 77 million children of primary age, with one-third of this age group in Sub-Sahara Africa, that are still out of school due to financial, social or physical barriers including HIV/AIDS and conflict.

The GMR (2006) states that 47 out of 163 countries in the world had reached, or were approaching UPE, and an additional 20 countries were estimated to be 'on track' to achieve UPE by 2015. Huge challenges remain with 44 countries, 23 of which are in Sub-Sahara Africa, and are not likely to achieve the goal of UPE by 2015. Furthermore, ongoing challenges to the MDGs presented by growing disparity between and within countries, and the challenges faced by conflict-affected and fragile countries, have been exacerbated by the current global economic crisis. This matter is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Furthermore, there still remains much to be done; particularly with regards to delivering on the promise of equity and quality of education for all, and its potential to transform the lives of individuals, families, communities and nations; nomads and lower-incomes groups in particular. In most instances, the Education for All and the education-related MDG 2, 3 and 4 will not be met by 2015 without dramatically stepped up efforts (BEAP, 2009). Policies are required to expand access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), improve quality education, and scale up youth and adult literacy programmes. More strategic partnerships are needed between developing countries, NGOs, the UN system, governments, communities and learners so that education is strategically linked with other social issues such as child protection.

2.6. Equity and quality education to nomadic groups in a developing country context

The section discusses the policies related to equity and quality education as they pertain to nomadic people living in a developing country where socio-economic and cultural factors work against the provisioning of education. This section explores the main issues and arguments found in the work of Carr-Hill and Peart (2005) that assess the provisioning of education to nomads and the challenges posed by these groups on education systems like Namibia.

This section also discusses various aspects of equity and quality in the education offered to nomadic children, and how formal schooling responds to these particular groups and the cultural values that might contradict those of the nomadic groups. It also highlight some of the progress made by the Namibian government regarding the equity and quality in education geared toward nomadic groups (specifically the Himba and Zemba people) in responding to the World Declaration of Education for All by 2015.

Since the World Declaration of EFA and MDGs, the question of equity and quality education for children of nomadic communities has become more pertinent than ever before. The common problem is the disparity in enrolments of children from marginalised and/or nomadic groups, despite heavy investment and efforts in the part of education systems by developing countries, in particular.

Over the past two decades there has been growing awareness of the need to make significant progress in extending services to nomadic communities. In 1998, the Namibian government, for example, recognised that equity in education for all could not be achieved without improving quality. Equally; the government identified that equity in education is driven by the requirements of making schooling available to all its citizens, in pursuit of ideological aims that find expression in national policies and the endorsement of the international aim of Education for All, and the MDG (Carr-Hill, (2005). Nomadic communities, however, do not fit easily into the plans and strategies of government, and thus present some of the most interesting, complex and challenging demands to the state in determining the nature and aim of educational provisioning suited to the goals of national development (Krätli, 2001).

In the literature, nomads and pastoralist communities are variously defined, but broadly speaking, they are ethnic or socio-economic groups who constantly travel or migrate in large or small groups in search of a means of livelihood within a community, country or across international boundaries. Equally, nomads and pastoralists, like the Himba and Zemba in Namibia, reflect a lifestyle based upon the maintenance of herds of animals that depend mainly on natural vegetation for their food/survival. Providing quality education to nomadic and pastoralist groups entails immense challenges which go well beyond the immediate and obvious problems of logistics - how do you reach communities that are always on the move and live in sparsely populated and climatically extreme areas?

They live in a sparsely populated, harsh environment where such conditions and the remoteness are some of the challenges that present technical obstacles to the provisioning of formal education. The nomadic life-style, and in particular the scattered, low density distribution of pastoral population, and their varying degrees of mobility, makes assuring access to quality education more expensive, as well as difficult to organise and manage.

According to Krätli and Dyer (2009), governments, especially those that accommodate a large number of nomadic populations like Namibia, started various initiatives such as mobile schools and boarding facilities, but with the exception of Iran, there is often a poor response from the targeted recipients.

Nomadic people, by nature, are migratory while the orientation of formal education in all countries requires stability such as full time attendance of school. Any effort to accommodate migratory patterns will increase costs and limit access to education for nomadic children. In addition, these children are also a source of labour in the family. Daily schooling (Monday-Friday) every week, according to Krätli and Dyer (2009:14), conflicts with mobility patterns for nomadic people that herd their livestock in dry areas and whose main source of wealth is their livestock.

Although basic education is 'free' and compulsory for all children in most of developing countries, including Namibia, the norms dictate that if nomad children are to access formal and quality education this can only be realised if they give up their way of life and settle permanently in villages (Krätli & Dyer, 2006). But nomadic clans are 'closed communities', locked into their own traditions, and opposed to any change or push for innovation.

Based on the above, in some instances nomadic clans are seen as very conservative, primitive groups; slow to embrace the new national society, in historical settings in which 'the rest of their respective country cannot wait for them to develop. Nomadic people are sometimes labelled as an evolutionary 'cul de sac', environmentally destructive, economically irrational, and culturally backward (Krätli, 2000; Dyer 2005, as quoted by Anderson, 1999). In other words, they have been seen as being primitive, and driven more by cultural factors than as people with the potential to contribute to the economic development of any country.

Holland (1990:109), in a study of the nomadic Maasai community (Kenya), concluded that 'parents see no value in education and no good coming out of it'. Holland (1990) says education was perceived as a threat to the immediate viability of pastoralism as it removed labour from their children which might affect their production processes and threatened the age grade system, which was seen as the pillar of Maasai society. This is true not just for Kenya, but also for other developing countries where nomadic people are found, including Namibia (Krätli, 2000; Tahir, 1997; Dyer & Choksi, 1997).

In terms of teacher provision, some developing countries are not on track to fulfil their EFA commitments, as teacher provisioning present technical obstacles to equity and quality of education for all. One of the enormous challenges facing developing nations, especially African countries, is to ensure that every classroom has a trained teacher

who turns up every day to teach. The fact is that the EFA goals cannot be achieved in an environment where teachers are not adequately trained, or do not turn up to teach. Equity and quality in provisioning of education for all can only be achieved if all teachers are properly trained and all necessary conditions that facilitate a good learning and teaching environment have been provided.

Huneshek (2000) argues that improving teacher quality is an important key in improving learners' performance and quality education. The challenge of provision of teachers, however, becomes bigger in the face of the effects of HIV/AIDS on the education sector around the world, especially in developing countries. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is causing an unprecedented strain on education resources in developing countries, Africa in particular. It has led to a serious erosion of parents' commitment to support formal education, teachers' availability, and regular commitment to attend school, as well as children participation.

Resources that would have been otherwise devoted to education currently go to treating teachers, parents and children. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is generating shortages and absenteeism on the part of both teachers and pupils never witnessed before. To address the problem of HIV/AIDS, a community and school-based HIV/AIDS education programme should be mounted to promote prevention, behaviour change and life skills. Equally, current education reforms around the globe should address the issue of HIV/AIDS and emerging trends brought about by globalisation.

2.7.   Conclusion

In the literature there is a general consensus that the equity principle is a social term, rather than an economic one, and it is defined in relation to the inequities or inequalities in the distribution of wealth or resources (McGrath, 1993; Coleman, 1990; Hutmacher *et al.*, 2001; Gewirtz, 2004). Gewirtz (2004) states that equity and quality in education are thus not only questions of opportunities provided in the educational system, but are also concerned with the actual results of the various educational choices and performances of different groups of learners and learners through the educational system.

Hanushek (2005) asserts that when defining equity in education, it is important to be aware that beneficiaries (learners) differ along several dimensions, and this has an impact on their needs for learning and their performance in the educational system. If

all were alike, equity in education would simply be a question of providing an equal distribution of educational resources to all schools and learners. But because learners and communities are different, both individually, and in the type and amount of resources they need from their family and environment which they bring with them into the classroom, their individual needs for training will vary.

The challenge to the users of the concept of horizontal and vertical equity is how to identify learners/children who are equal or alike. What these differences are, and how they may be reduced by educational policy, are questions that policymakers and researchers are still trying to answer. The question they ask is, to what extent is the educational system constructed in order to provide equal access to quality education and a fair learning environment for all groups of children from different backgrounds? Differences in personal or family resources may affect the learners or the learners' perceptions of the educational system, and the need for information. These differences open a range of discussions when analysing equity and quality in education.

In terms of EFA and MDGs, it must be acknowledged that significant measurable progress has been accomplished in many aspects; such as increased enrolment and expansion of free primary education in many developing countries. However, despite progress made globally in terms of the achievement of universal primary education, migrants and nomads continue to be among the most marginalised social groups, and continue to be widely excluded from educational quality provision, despite pledges of Education For All (Krätli, 2000; Dyer, 2005; Holland, 1990).

According to Krätli (2000), Dyer (2005) and Holland (1990), there are a sizable number of developed and developing countries that are making sound progress towards UPE. However, some African countries will be unable to meet the MDGs target date of 2015 unless special efforts are made now to mobilise the financial resources and the global political will to make good on these key development pledges.

Furthermore, nomadic groups continue to be a significant population worldwide, showing little sign of disappearing, and in some parts of the world they are actually expanding (Krätli, 2001; Dyer 2005). On the basis of this growth, it is clear that the problem of equity and quality in education for nomadic groups is not going to go away, and it will continue to be one of the major challenges facing education systems around the globe. The movement of these groups poses multi-dimensional challenges to

national and international policies, especially when it comes to equity and quality. This is because children from nomadic groups require a special education programme, where instruction is flexible, adaptable and compatible with the nomadic lifestyle.

Narman (1990) points out, with reference to the Kenyan experience, that planning for quality education in favour of pastoralists is not only a matter of building schools – consideration must be given to the special problems of promoting equity and providing quality education to minority groups, and these are ethical issues. What Narman (1990) means is that education for marginalised groups and nomads should be flexible, multi-faced and focused enough to target specific structural problems such as social and economic marginalisation, lack of political representation, and interacting successfully with the new challenges raised by globalisation.