

## **CHAPTER 3. EQUITY AND QUALITY: STRATEGIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **3.1. Introduction**

In Chapter 1, the researcher indicated that one of the main aims of this study is to answer the question as to whether the policies related to education equity and quality in Namibia aimed at the nomadic people achieve their goals. Furthermore, whether the creation of mobile school units in the Kunene region have succeeded in moving education provisioning in Namibia closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in terms of access, equity and quality of education. This chapter provides a brief overview of progress made in the provisioning of education for all and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries and in Sub-Saharan African countries in particular with specific reference to Namibia.

The chapter interrogates various policy options and strategies used by African countries like Namibia to provide primary education to all school age children, especially the hard-to-reach communities like the marginalised and nomadic communities. The chapter will also peruse available data and trends in some of Sub-Saharan African's education systems in terms of enrolment and completion rates in responding to the call of EFA and MDG 2, 'Universal Primary Education' by 2015.

The aim of the chapter is also to examine the barriers experienced by African countries like Namibia in working towards attaining MDG 2 and to gain greater understanding of these barriers. The researcher also examines the policy options and strategies employed by developing countries as they strive to achieve 100% universal primary access by 2015; the target set by the MDGs.

Secondly, the chapter also interrogates issues of quality education and equity as they relate to widening access to education for marginalised communities and ensuring that progress made is coupled with strengthening the quality of education provisioning.

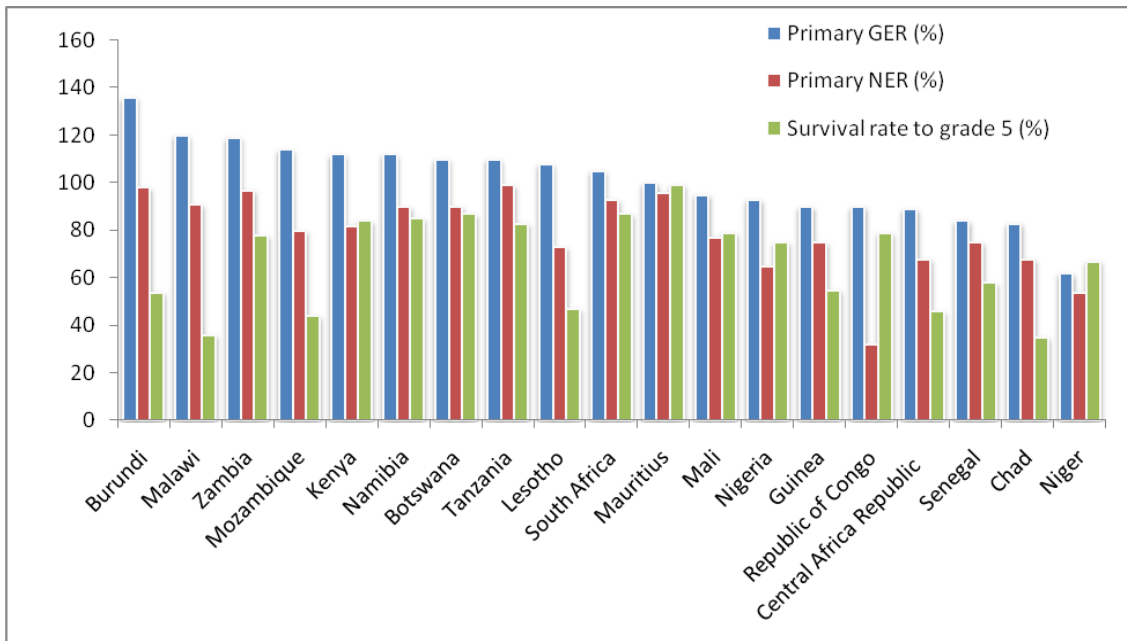
### **3.2. Enrolment and participation rates in sub-Saharan Africa**

Numerous studies and reports (EFA GMR, 2010; UNESCO, 2009a, 2010b; Krätli & Dyer, 2009; Carr-Hill, 2005) reveal that since the adoption of the World Declaration on Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals, Sub-Saharan African countries have made significant progress in the provisioning of primary education. According to available statistics (EFA GMR, 2009; UNESCO, 2009), most of African countries have made vast strides in the provisioning of primary education, as the majority of their primary school age children are now in schools (see Figure 3.1).

However, although progress has been recorded, none of the Sub-Saharan African countries have achieved 100% universal primary education. With only four years to go before the MDG's target date, there is optimism that most of the developing countries, including Sub-Saharan African countries, are on track and are expected to attain 100% universal primary access to education by 2015. According to EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR, 2009), Sub-Saharan African countries like Egypt, Guyana, Mauritius, Malawi, Madagascar, Tanzania, and Zambia are about to attain universal primary education (MDG 2) as they are only less than 5% away. The EFA GMR (2009) indicates that Morocco, South Africa, Rwanda, and Uganda were within the range of 5% to 10% from the target.

In addition, if progress is maintained at the same pace registered between 1991 and 2009, another 15 Sub-Saharan African countries are likely to achieve this target; such as Burundi, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Namibia, Malawi, Senegal, Togo and Swaziland. In contrast, there are seven countries, however, whose primary enrolment rates continue to be very low; ranging from 37% to 58%, and far from the achieving MDG by 2015. According to UNESCO (2009), and the EFA Global Monitoring (2009) reports, if the current trends persist; about 22 African countries will not attain the universal primary education target of 2015. These countries include Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Niger, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo and Mali.

**Figure 3.1 Gross and Net Enrolment and Survival rates (selected African countries)**



Source: 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report

The UNESCO (2009) report emphasises that these countries still find it hard to meet the MDG targets as their primary enrolment and completion rates were less than 60% in 2009, and if the MDGs are to be achieved by 2015, their current pace need to be accelerated. Given the current enrolment rate, it is likely that these countries will not even reach the MDGs before 2030 (UNESCO 2009). The UNESCO (2009) report therefore, states that urgent action is required to speed up interventions and to accelerate the improvement of primary enrolment rates in these countries. International development financial assistance accompanied by policy options, strategies and increased budgetary allocation for the primary education sector will be essential in these countries to enable them to achieve universal primary education by 2015.

In Namibia, for example, access to good quality education has top priority in the Education Policy in Namibia. Figures for the increase in the number of schools, number of learners and qualified teachers are impressive (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Numbers of schools, learners, teachers and support staff**

Region	Schools		Learners		Teachers		Support staff	
	Number		Number	% female	Number	% female	Number	% female
National	1,697		591,356	50.5%	22,072	62.5%	4,212	66.9%
<b>REGION</b>								
Caprivi	100		28,141	48.8%	1,144	54.5%	280	83.9%
Erongo	62		29,259	51.5%	1,087	71.1%	304	62.8%
Hardap	56		20,985	50.4%	786	62.1%	239	67.4%
Karas	49		18,907	51.1%	732	69.4%	199	66.8%
Kavango	323		71,422	48.8%	2,589	45.5%	236	69.9%
Khomas	101		68,678	51.6%	2,713	73.6%	650	56.5%
Kunene	55		18,684	49.9%	695	52.2%	171	67.3%
Ohangwena	239		88,304	51.3%	3,103	60.7%	495	65.7%
Omaheke	41		16,138	50.7%	589	62.1%	111	67.6%
Omusati	274		86,400	50.4%	3,347	66.1%	570	75.4%
Oshana	135		51,586	50.5%	1,970	68.3%	363	71.9%
Oshikoto	192		58,674	50.3%	2,128	61.0%	332	64.5%
Otjozondjupa	70		34,178	50.5%	1,189	64.1%	262	56.1%

Source: EMIS 2010

Namibian official figures claim a gross enrolment rate of 100%, with no significant difference between male and female enrolment (EMIS, 20010). However, there are several problems and a long way to go to fulfil the political aim of good quality education for all Namibian children. There are children who never attend school; there are problems with dropouts, and problems with equity (in terms of regional disparities and quality of education provided).

According to Namibia's Constitution, everyone should be in school until they complete Grade 7 or reach the age of 16. However, this aim is not completely reached as some learners, dropout before they reach Grade 7 (see Table 3.2). About 3% learners drop out before they reach Grade 2. The highest number of dropouts is recorded in Grade 7, i.e. 5%. This shows that the Namibian transition rate to secondary education is low.

**Table 3.2 Dropout/ school leaving rates from 2003 to 2009**

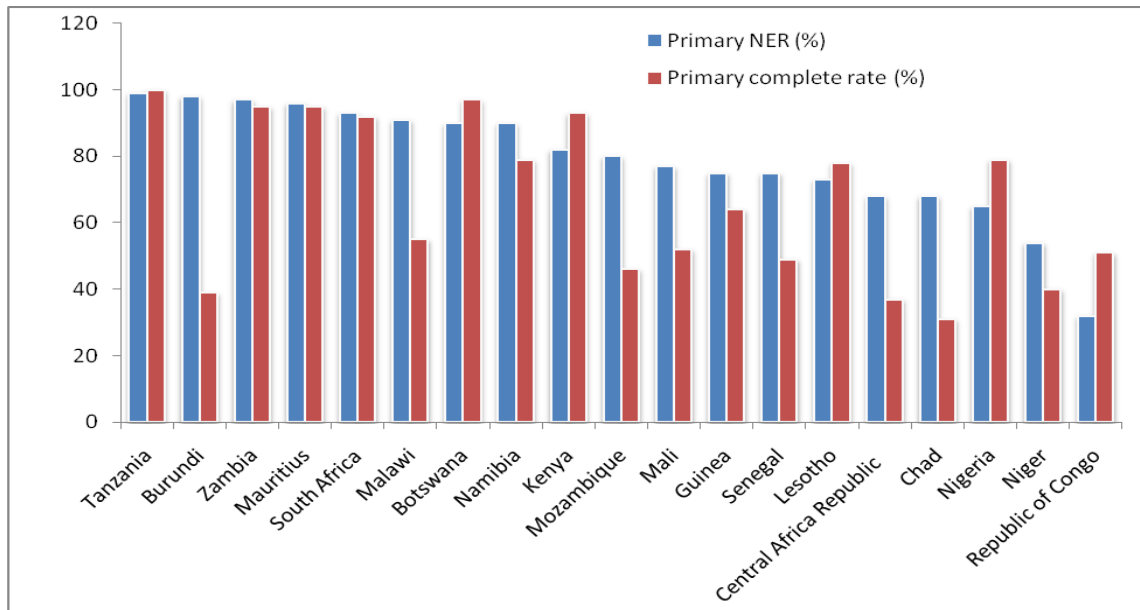
School phase	Grade	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Dropout/School-leaving rates								
Lower Primary	Grade 1	4.8%	3.3%	4.7%	1.9%	4.2%	3.1%	3.1%
	Grade 2	2.9%	1.6%	1.9%	0.0%	1.4%	1.5%	0.9%
	Grade 3	2.5%	2.0%	2.4%	0.6%	1.7%	1.1%	1.2%
	Grade 4	2.0%	2.4%	1.8%	0.8%	1.6%	1.4%	0.7%
Upper Primary	Grade 5	5.2%	4.9%	6.6%	4.0%	5.2%	4.3%	4.0%
	Grade 6	4.3%	4.5%	4.2%	2.6%	4.8%	3.7%	3.3%
	Grade 7	7.5%	7.3%	8.0%	5.0%	6.6%	5.5%	5.3%
Junior Secondary	Grade 8	11.3%	8.7%	10.7%	6.7%	9.5%	8.5%	8.3%
	Grade 9	10.6%	9.0%	10.2%	7.2%	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
	Grade 10	46.6%	43.6%	37.3%	38.2%	24.8%	30.6%	32.6%
Senior Secondary	Grade 11	3.5%	1.9%	0.7%	2.0%	3.0%	-1.3%	2.1%

**Source:** EMIS 2010

At the global level, the aggregate net enrolment rate (NER) for primary education has increased from 84% in 1990 to 98% in 2009; nevertheless, the Sub-Saharan Africa region still lags behind in terms of primary completion rate (EFA GMR, 2010; UNESCO, 2009a, 2010b). Although primary education enrolment rates in some African countries are high, the rate of progress made has not been matched by a proportionate increase in the full cycle of quality primary schooling completion rate. The region continues to lag behind in terms of meeting the international EFA and MDGs targets, due to the enormous challenges the continent is facing in achieving universal primary education.

Figure 3.2 indicates some of the selected Sub-Saharan African countries' primary completion rates, which are lower than primary net enrolment rates, except for Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.

**Figure 3.2 Primary NER and Completion rates for selected African countries (% of relevant age group)**



Source: UNESCO Report 2009

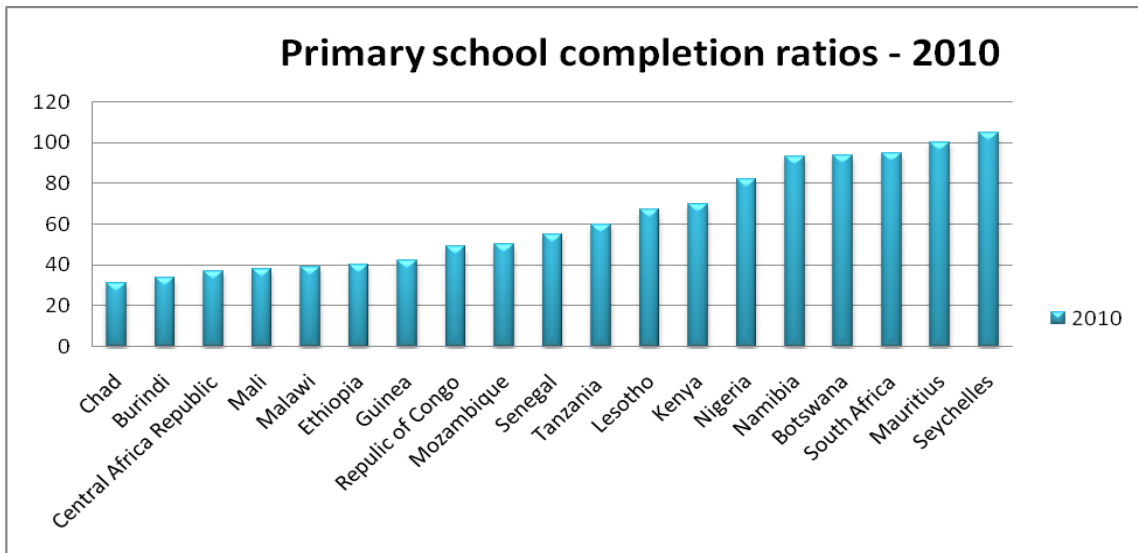
The figure shows that although high enrolment rates of primary education in African countries have been recorded, not all children enrolled complete their primary education cycle (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010). According to the latest figures released in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2010) report, Sub-Saharan Africa countries have the lowest primary completion ratios compared with other continents where over 95% of children complete their primary education.

In Africa as a whole, less than 65% of children complete their primary education. The exceptions are Algeria, Botswana, Egypt, Mauritius, South Africa, and Tunisia who have 90% completion rates (see Table 3.3). The figure illustrates that Namibia is one of the Sub-African countries with high primary enrolment rates, and much has been achieved in terms of universal primary access to schooling which has resulted in a primary education net of 94% of all children aged 7-13 (Grades 1-7), compared with other

African countries, however, only less than 80% of these children complete primary education (EMIS 2009:58, table 31).

Although at an international level, progress on universal primary enrolment rates has been recorded in Sub-Sahara Africa, individual countries' averages suggest that progress remains too slow, as millions of children, especially girls (MDG 3) from poor backgrounds, nomadic pastoralists and rural communities do not have access to primary education. The reasons for this trend can be found in numerous challenges, such as poverty, long distances from schools, high school fees and other costs that discourage school attendance (EFA GMR, 2010; UNESCO, 2009).

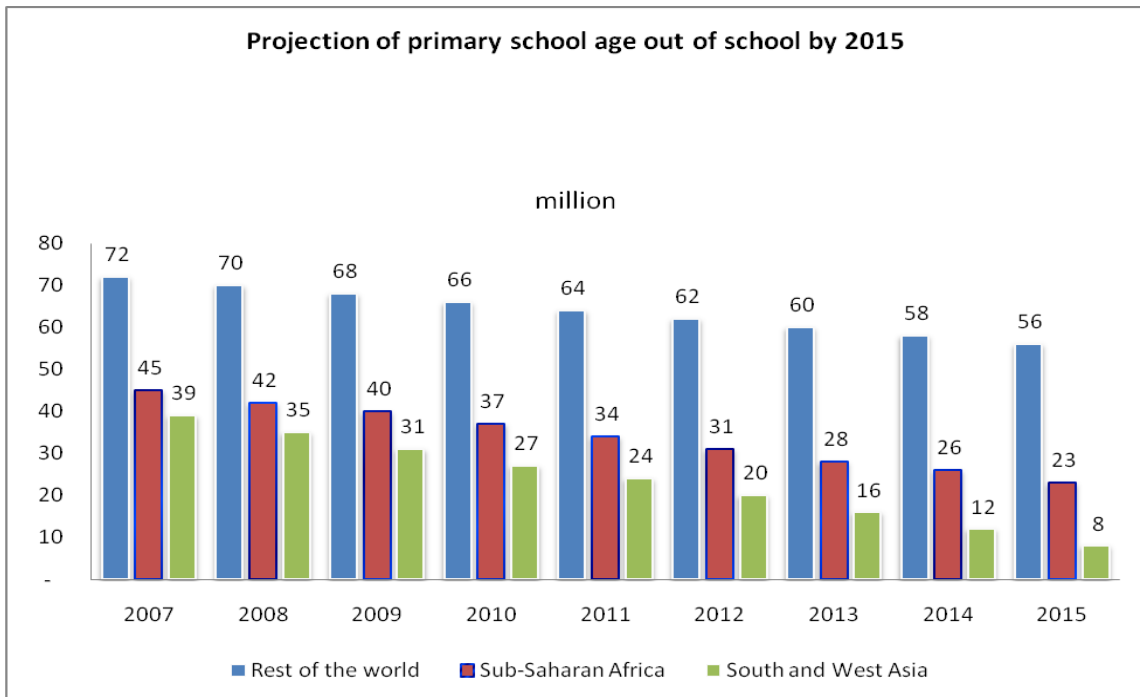
**Figure 3.3 Primary education completion ratios for selected African countries- 2010**



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010

According to 2009 UNESCO estimates, there are still more than 60 million primary school age children not in school worldwide, and nearly half of them are in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2010). The report estimates that the current trends will leave 56 million children out-of-school in 2015, and the rate of progress may be even slowing in some poor developing countries (Figure 3.4). The slowing down may also impact negatively as the international economic recession may result in less financial resources being channelled through donor aid to developing countries.

**Figure 3.4 Primary school age not attending school in the world 2010**



Source: UNESCO Report 2010

Challenge also remain in increasing access for nomads and pastoralists groups, improving the quality of education, and addressing threats to education systems from HIV and AIDS pandemics, natural disasters and civil conflicts; especially in some part of Africa. According to the UNESCO report (2010), failure to meet the education goal on universal primary education by 2015 will reduce the chances of reaching other MDGs. It is generally accepted that achieving universal basic education is the key to achieving other development goals, such as equal access to education accompanied with equity and quality in education.

Until equal access to quality education to all primary school age children has been attained, it will be impossible to build the knowledge necessary to eradicate poverty and hunger (MDG1), combat disease and ensure environmental sustainability (MDG 6 & 7). Equally, African countries' enrolment rates are rising as millions of children enter primary school but dropout before completing their full primary cycle. Some 20 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa drop out each year, and 13% of children entering school in Africa drop out in the first grade (UNESCO, 2010). Based on the current statistical data, the EFA and MDG target of 2015 will remain a dream unless a concerted effort is



made in the Sub-Saharan African countries.

According to official policy statements, Namibia should be moving towards a knowledge-based society and industrial nation by 2030, and in order to reach this goal the quality of education in Namibia will need to be improved. Equity and quality education in the Namibian system is one of the concerns. Many learners in Namibia struggle to master reading, writing and mathematical skills. Research results from a survey conducted by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II, 2005) demonstrates that there are serious gaps in the reading competencies of Namibian learners in upper primary phases, compared with other countries (see Table 3.3).

For Namibia, all 13 educational regions were included, and it was found that the majority of learners did not reach the minimum standards in reading English, based on the criteria as determined by the Namibian reading standard. For example, it was found that at the overall national level, only 16.9% of learners reached the minimum level in reading literacy, and a mere 6,7% reached the desirable level. By minimum level is meant that the Namibian learners will barely survive the next year of schooling; by desirable, it means that they will definitely succeed. These results are worse than in 1995, when the figures were 22.7% and 7,8 % respectively (SACMEQ, 2005).

The reading competence of learners from low socio-economic groups was also much lower than that of learners from high socio-economic groups (SACMEQ, 2005). These findings are in accordance with Mbenzi's (1997) findings, that pupils from poor families, with illiterate parents and with a poor command of English, have greater difficulties in learning to read and write than pupils from a more affluent background. He furthermore claims that the policy of automatic promotion and the preference for English above the mother tongue among many parents add to the problem of pupils reaching higher grades without being able to read and write (Mbenzi, 1997).

The official language policy in Namibia is that learners are taught in their mother tongues up to Grade 3, and from Grade 4 they switch to English as the medium of instruction which then is the official language, and their mother tongue becomes the second language.

### **3.3. Strategies used in attaining MDGs**

Since the World Declaration of Education for All in 1990, and the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, developing countries, especially Sub-Saharan African countries, have developed a range of education policy options and strategies in an effort to expand universal access, address equity and quality of education to all primary school age children by 2015. The majority of African countries, including Namibia, have shown their commitment through policy options, strategies and intervention education programmes, like the mobile school programme and boarding schools, to ensure that all primary school age children enrol and complete their primary education cycle.

To support the notion of universal access to primary education as a crucial condition for socio-economic development of a country, many developing countries have made primary education free and compulsory. For example, since the World Declaration of EFA (1990) and the MDGs (2000), a number of African countries (i.e. Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda) have abolished school fees and this resulted in higher primary enrolment ratios. The main objective was to achieve 100% UPE by 2015. In a number of African countries like Senegal and Gambia for example, the primary school age children NER rose respectively from 48% and 57% in 1995 to 75% and 73% in 2009. A similar trend was experienced in Tanzania where enrolment rates doubled from 48% in 1995 to 98% in 2009. In Namibia, the government developed various strategies to show her commitment towards the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 2 (universal primary education), by ensuring that all primary school age children including nomads and pastoralist children enrol and complete their basic primary education. The Namibian government has shown this commitment through policy options such as 2000 Policy Options for Educational Marginalised Children, or directives and interventions, like free compulsory primary education, and the 1990 Constitution of Namibia. The strategies and interventions include the establishment of mobile school programme, exemption of children from marginalized communities (including Himba and Zemba) from School Development Fund, promotion of measures to improve quality in education and the introduction of nutrition and school feeding programme. These measures had led the improvement of various key indicators in Namibia education sector in recent years, notably, physical access, gross enrolment rate, and net enrolment Rate.

However, although strategies like free primary education in terms of tuition fees, parents and communities in African countries continue to contribute towards items such as compulsory school uniforms, textbooks, parent-teacher associations, and in some cases, temporary teachers' allowance and school buildings. On the basis of this, the researcher is in agreement with the EFA GMR (2010) report, which argues that abolishing school fees has little impact on equal access, and does not reduce the dropout rates if schools (like in Namibia) are still allowed to levy additional school fees, such as building and school activity funds. This results in a substantial increase in the dropout rate; particularly in the schools that enrol children from poor, marginalised, and nomadic pastoralist families.

According to the EFA GMR (2010) report, experience shows that eliminating fees will not much help poor and marginalised families to keep their children in school unless deliberate education policy options and functional strategies targeting schools that enrol children from these groups have been put in place.

Similarly, the significant increase in enrolment rates in the African countries has brought a new set of challenges to these countries. Foremost among these is the demand placed on the treasury for the expansion of existing classrooms, providing sufficient education resources including learning and teaching materials, and employment costs as more teachers need to be trained and employed. Equally, poorly qualified teachers and ill-equipped schools with limited learning and support materials remain familiar scenes in many developing countries' schools, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Namibia.

The 'school under the tree' is still a very common situation in some of African countries, including Namibia. As such, it symbolises the unequal distribution of education facilities/resources among urban and rural schools. For example, in Namibia there are more than 47 000 primary school children who are still taught either under trees or in 'traditional' classrooms (made with sticks and mud), and large proportions of these schools do not have basic services such as toilets, clean water, electricity and communications (MoE EMIS Statistics, 2009a, 2010b).

### 3.4. Equity and quality in the Namibian education system

Namibia obtained its independence in 1990, the same year in which the World Conference on Education for All (WCEDA) was held in Jontein, Thailand. Since obtaining independence, the Namibian government has committed itself to achieving the MDGs by ensuring that all primary school age children are enrolled by 2015, and able to complete a full primary school cycle. The government's commitment towards achievement of equity, quality education and equal access and opportunities to learn is reflected in several policy frameworks and reports such as the Education and Training Sector for Improvement Programme (ETSIP, 2005-2020), Towards Education For All (1993), the Education Act of 2001, Policy Options of Educational Marginalised Children (2000) etc.

These policies are oriented mainly to address inequities and disparities inherited from the South African apartheid education system; both through the redistribution and reallocation of education resources to previous disadvantaged and/or underserved regions or communities, and remote schools to expand access to schooling for all primary school age children.

Like other African countries and the rest of the world, the new Namibian Constitution (Article 20), which predated the Jomtein Conference, states clearly that education is a basic human right and should be available to all people residing in Namibia. It also mandates that:

*Primary education shall be compulsory for 10 years between the ages of 6 and 16, and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which education will be provided free of charge.*

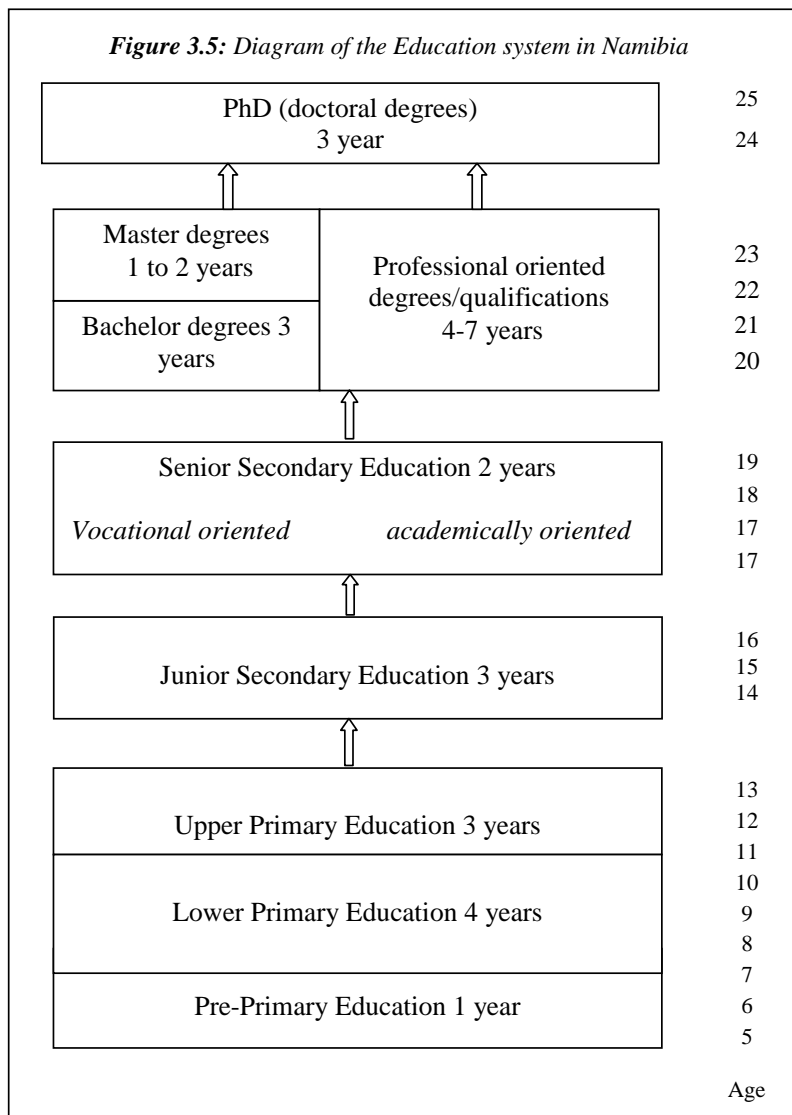
The Constitution goes further to assert that:

*Children shall not be allowed to leave school until they have completed their primary education cycle or have attained the age of sixteen (16) years, whichever is the sooner, save in so far as this may be authorised by Act of Parliament on grounds of health or other considerations pertaining to the public*

*interest (Constitution of the Republic of Namibia Article 20).*

The education system is graphically illustrated in Figure 3.5. The system makes provision for eight years of primary education, followed by five years of secondary education. By implication, it is expected that all learners should at least have access to quality education, and complete, the eight years of primary education to be able to claim that the MDG goal of universal primary education in Namibia.

**Figure 3.5 Diagram of the educational system in Namibia**



Equity and quality are well embodied in the key education policy documents and official reports (Towards Education for All – A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training, 1993; Presidential Commission Report 1999; Education Act, 2001; ETSIP, 2005-2020, etc.) that highlight the expansion of access, attainment of high quality education, and the facilitation of economic growth and competitiveness. The Namibian policy document (Towards Education for All, 1993) emphasises that one of the major hurdles for achieving equity and quality in the Namibian education system is the inequitable distribution of resources among regions/schools, and this is a pre-independence legacy, which will take a long time to rectify.

The policy stipulates that:

*To reduce the inequalities of the past will require affirmative action in the present. It is not sufficient simply to announce that discrimination by race, or religion, or gender is now illegal. The segregation that was introduced in the past was not just a matter of law. It was also a matter of the allocation of resources and of everyday practices (Towards Education for All, 1993:108).*

The Namibian government's efforts in addressing inequities and to address low quality education in the country, and to expand educational opportunities for historically disadvantaged Namibians, should be seen as a manifestation of the promotion of the goals of EFA. The education policy, 'Toward Education for All', an appraisal of the Declarations of the 1990 Jomtien World Conference of Education for All, asserts that education for all is also a goal of the Namibian government. The policy explicitly states that:

*Education for all does not simply mean more schools or more children in school. Nor does it mean that the simply start literacy classes or increase the number of places in programmes for out of school youth. Education for all requires that government to develop about its system of education and training and how it is organise it (MEC, 1993).*

This observation was made as early as 1992, and was indeed a realisation that there was more to EFA than the preoccupation with issues of access and opportunities to a quality education. Since 1990, there has been a shift in the target audience of education from the selected few to providing education for all Namibian citizens. The

policy thrust was to ensure that the type of education provided was broad enough to enable the children, the youth and adults to participate fully in the development of the country. In the education sector policies today are a clear manifestation of a broad view of education for all: provision of early childhood education, focus to those groups who are in underserved areas (i.e. the educationally for marginalised children), paying attention to the quality of education, focus on gender parity and giving attention to HIV and AIDS and its effects.

According to EFA Global Monitoring Report (2008a, 2009b, 2010c), Namibia is likely to attain MDG 2 ('universal primary access') by 2015; however, the country's education system and the society as a whole continue to display one of the widest gaps between rich and poor in the world. The system is still unable to provide minimal quality and equitable education resources to all its primary school age children (Marope, 2005; ETSIP, 2005; MBESC EMIS, 2000-2009; Joint Annual Review, 2004, NEPRU, 2004), especially in the underserved communities like the nomadic Himba and Zemba groups.

Marope (2005), though states that the persistent disparities in developing countries such as Namibia, based on wealth, geographical location, ethnicity and other markers, are some of the major barriers preventing attaining universal primary education by 2015. For example, underserved regions, like the Kunene, which the home of a high number of nomadic pastoralists groups (Himba and Zemba) continue to show that limited school access, low enrolment rates, low attendance, poor learner performance, high failure rates, and low learner achievements mean these communities repeatedly score at the bottom of the national examinations results (Grade 10 and 12 Examination Statistics for Namibia). This is because even though Namibia's school enrolment rates are high compared with other African countries, a persistent 15% of its primary school age children (6-16 official ages) remain out of school (Labour Demographic Survey 2006), and its primary net enrolment and completion rate are not comparable with other African countries.

In the researcher's view, unless special efforts are being made, Namibia will not attain 100% universal primary access with good quality education by 2015. This is because though more than 90% of Namibian children have enrolled in school, less than 80% complete the primary education cycle (see Figure 3.3). Equally, another common reason why these 15% of children are not in school, during the interviews the researcher found that parents are poor, and cannot afford to pay the school development fund charge by all Namibian conventional schools and some mobile school

units. Despite the policy of school-free tuition in primary schools, many Namibian schools continue to charge school fees as a means of raising school development funds for their school activities.

Furthermore, the Namibian Education statistical data (2009) continue to show that there is a lack of adequate learning and teaching materials, physical facilities, sanitation (especially in the former previously disadvantaged areas/regions), and other necessary conditions that facilitate a good learning and teaching environment.

This seems to contradict the Namibian constitution as well as the Ministry's policy documents, especially the broad policy document 'Towards Education for All, 1993', which demands that:

*To provide education for all, we must expand access to our education system. For that, we need not just have more schools but schools and other education programmes where learning is truly accessible to all Namibians (MEC, 1993:34,103).*

In terms of financing public education, since independence in 1990, the Namibian education and training sector has enjoyed budget priority, with more than 20% of government resources allocation and over 6% of GDP in the 2008/09 financial year going towards education. Expenditure on the education sector rose from N\$600.9 million in 1991/1992 to N\$5.3 billion in 2009/10 financial year. That is a 7.5% annual real increase over this period. The SWAPO-led government has placed a great emphasis on education identifying the sector as a priority area for government action in policy statements from as early as March 1990.

This level of priority has been reflected in the allocations made to the education sector within the national budget. Compared with other developing countries, Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, Namibia has one of the highest allocations to education as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world (UNDP-UN Report, 1998). Like the UNDP-UN (2007) Report, this concern has also been expressed by the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU) (1999a, 2004b) reports on improving Namibia's education system in terms of equitable distribution of education resources.



NEPRU compared Namibia with other African countries, as well as other countries in the world with similar or higher levels of average incomes. The report found that by international standards, Namibia's public expenditure on education is very high, both in relation to the size of the economy and as a proportion of total government spending (NEPRU View Point Report, 1999), and compared with other SADAC countries like Botswana with less than 4% GDP public expenditure on education, and the Republic of South Africa with less than 6% of GDP (UNESCO Education for All, 2000a, 2008b).

As stated earlier, compared with other developing countries, especially in Africa, the Namibian government has expanded education opportunities for the vast majority of primary school age children, and according to its official statistics, the country is on track in achieving universal primary education by 2015 (EMIS, 2009). Most Namibian children are in gender-inclusive schools, and the net enrolment for basic education is above 90%, and the survival rate to Grade 7 in 2008 was more than 80% (Marope, 2005; Namibia 2004 Millennium Development Goal Report, EMIS, 2009). There has also been strong growth in the number of qualified teachers (Grade 12 plus three years of professional training – known as 'Basic Education Teacher Diploma') in the education system - for example, more than 85% of Namibian teachers have now the required professional training (EMIS, 2009; Marope, 2005) as indicated in Table 3.1

Encouraged by the achievements made so far, Namibia is likely to meet the target Net Enrolment Rate of 100% by 2015, provided that the concerns of the low quality of education (as manifested in learning achievements, survival and completion rates) are addressed and resolved. Currently, all the elements of EFA are being addressed within the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP, 2005-2020). Furthermore, the ETSIP programme comprises a range of classroom pedagogical support systems aimed at enhancing various quality improvement initiatives. Since the implementation of ETSIP in 2006, interim monitoring results indicate a positive trend in selected quantitative indicators. Table 3.3 shows that the Namibian education system continues to enrol at the 120% gross enrolment rate.

**Table 3.3 Namibia primary education enrolment rate 2009**

Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios	Gross Enrolment rate		
	2000	2005	2009
Year	2000	2005	2009
Gross enrolment rate	119%	117%	124%
Net enrolment rate: (age 7-13)	80%	80%	81%
Primary promotion rate to secondary (age 7-13)	79%	76%	82%
Repetition rate (age 7-13)	24%	12%	16%
Dropout rate (age 7-17)	4%	5%	4%

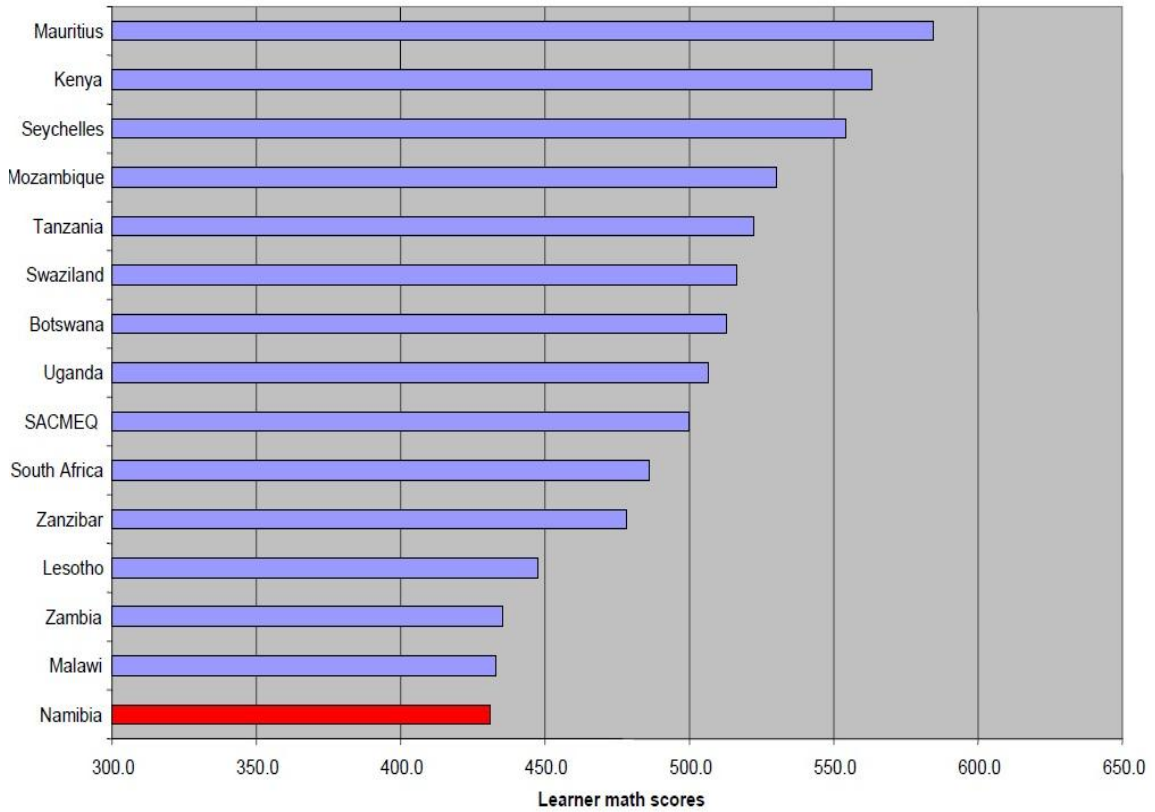
**Source:** Ministry of Education EMIS Reports (EMIS 2000, 2005, 2009)

Although, the majority of developing countries like Namibia have provided, and continue to provide, basic primary education to the great majority of its children and youth, equity and quality in education continue to be a matter of concern. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2005) study found, ‘there has been increasing concern about the equity, and quality of the education that is being provided, in relation to the increasing expenditure on education in African countries’ including Namibia (2005:1).

Most of education systems have not been able to provide quality education to previously disadvantaged or underserved populations and regions (EMIS 2009; EFA GMR, 2009, Collins & Gillies, 2005). According to SACMEQ II (2005), Namibian learners in Grade 6 scored relatively poorly compared with learners from other countries in the region (see Table 3.5 and Figure 3.5). The study tested the pupils in reading and mathematics competence.

In reading, Namibian learners were third from the bottom (Figure 2.3), and in mathematics, at the very bottom (Figure 3.6). In the same study, teacher competence showed that their skills were very poor compared with teachers in most of the neighbouring countries (see Figure 3.7). So, low quality of teacher education, or lack of qualified teachers, might be one reason behind the poor learning outcomes.

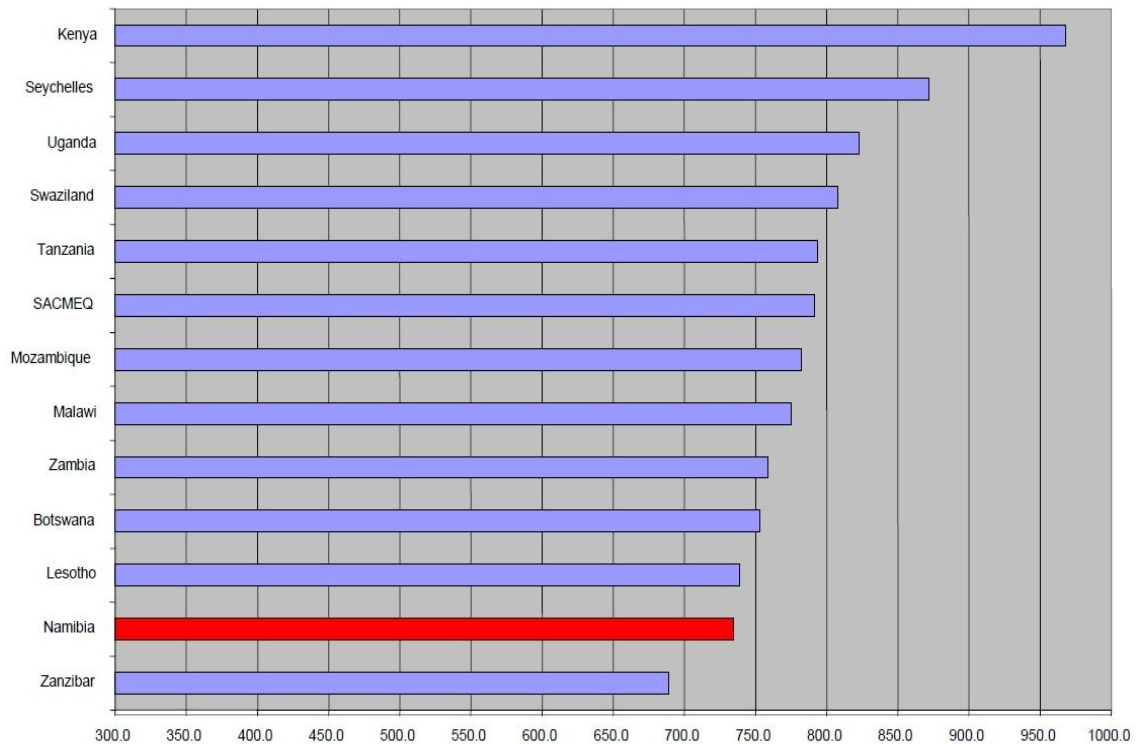
**Figure 3.6 Learner mathematics scores by country**



Sources: SACMEQ II 2005

Namibia policies are geared towards equity and quality education in terms of the competencies teachers and their learners have to demonstrate. It is therefore worrisome to note that there has not only been a decline in the competence of learners, but also that the competence of teachers, especially in mathematics, is very low compared with other SACMEQ member countries (SACMEQ II, 2005).

**Figure 3.7 Teacher mathematics scores by country**



Sources: SACMEQ II 2005

Figure 3.7 depicting that the Namibian reading teachers scored below the SACMEQ average for reading teachers and this is not a healthy situation given that the Namibia's public expenditure on education is very high, compared with other SACMEQ member countries. Furthermore, there were extremely large variations between regions (see Table 3.5), with the northern regions of the country showing the lowest scores. The poorest results were measured in Kunene, Ohangwena, Caprivi and Omusati, where 4.3% reached the minimum level and only 1.1 % and 0.5 % reached the desirable level of mastery.

**Table 3.4 Means and sampling errors for the reading and mathematics test scores of learners with all items (SACMEQ I and SACMEQ II)**

Region	Learner performance on all items					
	SACMEQ I		SACMEQ II			
	Reading		Reading		Mathematics	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Caprivi	430.9	2.76	417.3	4.71	405.2	4.03
Erongo	545.7	28.69	527.5	24.22	494.4	21.23
Hardap	512.3	21.79	518.7	20.27	499.0	17.89
Karas	519.8	21.86	510.4	19.49	482.7	18.33
Kavango	448.3	5.13	431.5	4.99	419.0	4.95
Khomas	585.5	22.14	567.0	18.77	530.5	19.06
Kunene	455.6	6.04	448.2	13.29	445.4	14.17
Ohangwena	444.2	3.65	416.9	3.69	398.8	2.65
Omahake	450.3	19.04	434.4	8.23	426.4	5.16
Omusati	440.1	3.10	424.0	3.91	410.0	3.82
Oshikoto	460.3	43.51	428.3	13.38	420.0	13.51
Otjozondjupa	509.9	34.97	468.9	21.39	458.8	17.04
Oshana	451.2	8.10	429.9	7.68	402.4	6.79
Namibia	472.9	4.65	449.0	3.12	431.1	2.93

Sources: SACMEQ II, 2005

Other northern regions were almost as bad. The learners in the capital region of Khomas, on the other hand, have the highest scores with as many as 63.7% of the learners reaching the minimum level, and 35.3% the desirable level of mastery. The largest number of learners is in the north; about 2/3 of the population in Namibia live in the northern regions.

Note should also be taken that the SACMEQ study was conducted in the Namibia conventional schools; mobile schools were excluded for a variety of reasons. One reason could be that the study targeted Grade 6 learners and there are few mobile school units who go up to that grade. If Grade 6 learners of mobile school units were included in the study, the Namibia scores would be worse, because mobile school learners' performance and achievement regularly score at the bottom of the regional and national examinations results (Namibia National Examinations Results, 2008).

Primary completion rates and transitions to secondary school still remain low, which hampers the achievement of 100% universal primary completion rates. If this trend is allowed to continue then there is a fear that developing countries, like Namibia, have little hope of meeting EFA goals in terms of providing access to quality education, eliminating gender bias and other disparities, and achieving relevant and measurable learning outcomes. Compared with other countries, Namibian education continues to show a high number of under and/or overage children enrolled in the system (Gross Enrolment Rate of over 100%).

In terms of the effect of education expenditure on learners' performance, much research in this regard has not yet provided us with a clear understanding of where governments can most effectively invest their educational resources. It is, however, a well-documented fact that education finances affect learners' ability to succeed academically (The US Department of Education Report, 2000; McGrath, 1993; Hansen, 2001; Jimerson, 2002). In the USA, for example, learners in under-funded school districts routinely score lower on standardised tests than learners in well-funded districts; regardless of their family socioeconomic status. A longitudinal study of 40 000 learners by the US Department of Education (2000) found that:

*Learners attending poor schools, even those learners who come from wealthy or middle class families, still score, on average, 2 grade levels lower in mathematics and 4 grade levels lower in reading than do learners in wealthy schools.*

Some scholars (Hanushek, 1996; Hansen, 2001; McGrath, 1993) argue that fiscal inequities of this sort would not matter, because the effects of poverty and family background outweigh anything that schools can do. But experience and a growing body of research reveals that all children can achieve high levels of performance when all the

right combination of tools and strategies are employed (Hansen, 2001; McGrath, 1993; Collins & Gillies, 2005; Mbamba, 1987). These include high expectations and clear standards that are applied to all learners, taking into account different needs and conditions.

Hansen (2001) examines the empirical evidence about factors of financing education that affect learners' ability to succeed academically. In his conclusion, he draws attention to education policy makers and implementers that:

*Children from poor communities/families and children who are taught by unqualified and under qualified teachers need more expensive education services, requiring policy-makers either to adjust education finance formulas to take these additional costs into account or to fund special compensatory programmes (Hansen, 2001).*

liyambo (2001:11), quoting Zvobgo (1997:40) who examined uneven resource distribution among communities in post-colonial Zimbabwe, holds a similar view and concludes that educational disparities during the colonial period in the new independence nations were based on race, but the current inequities and inequalities are rooted in the class structure of society and the unequal distribution of resources among communities and regions.

liyambo (2001:11) extends the argument that the current disparities in the new developing nations like Namibia are the products of the 'new elite, consisting of a small group of people who joined the former oppressors and created a class based on economic status, income or affordability'. These are what he called the groups enjoying the privileges of the best-equipped schools, which the 'poor' or disadvantaged communities cannot afford. These kinds of 'unacceptable' national and global education disparities continue to undermine governments' efforts to achieve international development goals by 2015.

For this reason, social, inter- and intra-community disparities may well be evident for many years to come in most of developing nations like Namibia, even beyond 2015, unless special programmes are developed that respond to the marginalised, nomads and pastoralists' particular needs.

For example, 20 years after independence, Namibia is still typified by racially segregated residential divisions which were inherited from apartheid, and this contributes partly to the current regional disparities. Second, but equally important, is that the majority of underserved and/or previously disadvantaged children (mainly from black families and nomadic groups) continue to reside in townships, harsh environment conditions, or the rural areas that were part of the apartheid system. The overwhelming majority of children from nomadic groups in particular, continue to attend schools with 'inferior' facilities (like tent classrooms) and poorly trained teachers, with poor quality of instruction and inadequate supplies of teaching and learning materials (Mbamba, 1987:43).

In terms of provisioning teachers, there is general consensus in literature that with many factors influencing quality education, well trained or qualified teachers are now recognised as the critical factor. According to the literature, there is a strong link between teacher qualifications and experience, and learner performance and/or achievement, as well as quality of education (Anderson, 2002; ADEA, 2005; Craig *et al.*, 1998). To address challenges posed by EFA in terms of equity and quality of education, African countries, like Namibia, need to rationalise the recruitment and deployment of teachers, especially between urban and rural areas, and address the narrowing of regional and national learner teacher ratios.

In addition, EFA goals cannot be fully achieved in an environment where teachers are not adequately trained and are poorly paid, and where decisions are made by politicians and non-professionals. It is even worse when parents do not have an opportunity to discuss with the government issues pertaining to the education of their children.

In Namibia, for example, there is empirical evidence that teachers in rural and remote areas have lower qualifications, and consequently learner performance differs greatly across schools both within and between regions (EMIS, 2009; NEPRU, 2004). More than 90% of primary school teachers in urban areas have either a higher diploma or a bachelor's degree in education; while only about 70% of teachers in rural areas or previous disadvantaged regions like Kunene have obtained either a Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) (see Table 3.6). Due to the imbalance of human resources, the salary of teachers at the upper level category (qualified) can attain 4.8 times the lowest salary level category (unqualified). It should be pointed out that Namibian teachers are paid according to qualifications, rather than performance or amount of work. A cynic would be thankful that not all Namibia teachers are qualified because a



well-qualified teaching force could simply not be funded under the present salary structure.

**Table 3.5 Total number of teachers**

Total number of teachers all phases	2000	2005	2009
Total number of teachers	91%	89%	98%
Qualified	88%	94%	96%
Unqualified	12%	6%	4%
<b>Primary phase</b>			
Total number of Primary teachers	94%	93%	99%
Qualified	85%	92%	96%
Unqualified	15%	8%	4%
<b>Secondary phase</b>			
Total number of secondary teachers	88%	84%	94%
Qualified	93%	97%	98%
Unqualified	7%	3%	2%

Source: EMIS 2000, 2005 - 2009

Table 3.5 indicates that on average though, 95% of the urban secondary teachers have had formal training with two or more years of tertiary qualifications (EMIS 2009). In the researcher's view, for all children to benefit from universal access and good primary quality education, they must have access to qualified teachers. However, the six northern regions (Kavango, Kunene, Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana, and Oshikoto), still have relatively high numbers of under-qualified teachers at both primary and secondary level; these teachers have qualifications equivalent to Grade 12, or Grade 12 plus one to two years' tertiary education.

However, a great deal of controversy continues to exist over the role qualified, experienced teachers and higher salaries play in enhancing learner performance and pass rates (Hanushek, 1989). Hanushek (1986, 1989, 1996) emphasis that the positive impact of qualified, and/or experienced teachers is a multidimensional concept that typically includes indicators such as learner/teacher ratios, instructional spending per learner, teacher qualifications and experience, and teacher salaries, as well as the conditions of teaching and learning environment. In some cases for example, higher teacher salaries may be viewed as a proxy for teacher quality because higher salaries generally attract higher qualified and experienced teachers. In his studies, Hanushek (1986a, 1989b, 1996c) however, argues that each of these indicators alone has little impact on learner performance and/or achievement. Hanushek (1996) finds no clear and consistent relationship between variables such as learner/teacher ratios, teacher qualification and experience, higher salaries and learner performance.

Fiske and Ladd (2004:106) in their study, Financing schools in post apartheid South Africa: Initial steps toward fiscal equity, contribute to the same subject by arguing that policy-makers and implementers either do not fully understand the difference between the above indicators, learner-teacher qualifications and experience, learner-teacher ratios and class size, for example. In Namibia, this observation is seen in the Namibian staffing norms policy of 2001, which are mainly driven by overall budgetary constraints without consideration of various factors. This is because the term ‘teacher’ used in the policy includes school principals and head of departments, though not all (teachers) are in the classroom all of the time.

The argument here is that the current 2001 Namibian staffing norms policy used by the Ministry of Education only redistributes quantities (number of teachers) but not quality (qualification and experience) and therefore, schools and regions endowed with better qualified and experienced teachers will continue to get a much higher per capita allocation in an effort to improve learners’ performance. In the researcher’s view, these measures do not address the inequity that exists within regions and between schools.

### **3.5. Provisioning education for nomads in Namibia**

Namibia is home to the largest concentration of the nomads, traditional livestock herders (Himba and Zemba) and food hunters (San) in the world (Ondao Mobile Report, 2004; Nkinyangi, 2002; Mlekwa, 1996). According to the literature, nomadic groups in

Africa alone constitute about 6% of the total population, and are to be found in at least 20 African countries, including Namibia (Mlekwa, 1996; Nkinyangi, 2002).

In many of these countries efforts have been made to bring education services close to marginalised, nomads and underserved communities. However, statistical data continue to show that provision of education in some African countries has failed to reach all primary school age children from these communities for a number of reasons. One is that nomadic pastoralists live in rural and often isolated areas; they move from place to place in search of pasture and food, as a result they are the most educationally disadvantaged group with a literacy level of less than 20%. These are precisely the groups of people who not only receive fewer years of formal education, but also tend to receive a lower quality learning experience through having less qualified or inexperienced teachers, attending schools with inferior infrastructure and fewer learning materials, and inadequate basic services such as clean water, electricity and sanitation.

Their livelihoods are vulnerable due to the cumulative impact of globalisation and this has been overwhelming, so much so that nomads all over the world, including Namibia, are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain their livelihood. Where they can, nomads and pastoralists may be turning to formal education as a means to ensure their future.

However, formal educational providers all over the world find it very hard to accommodate them because they present multiple challenges to the notion of Education for All. Moreover, the provision of educational services might have failed because it has not been based on the nomads' socioeconomic realities, such as 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.

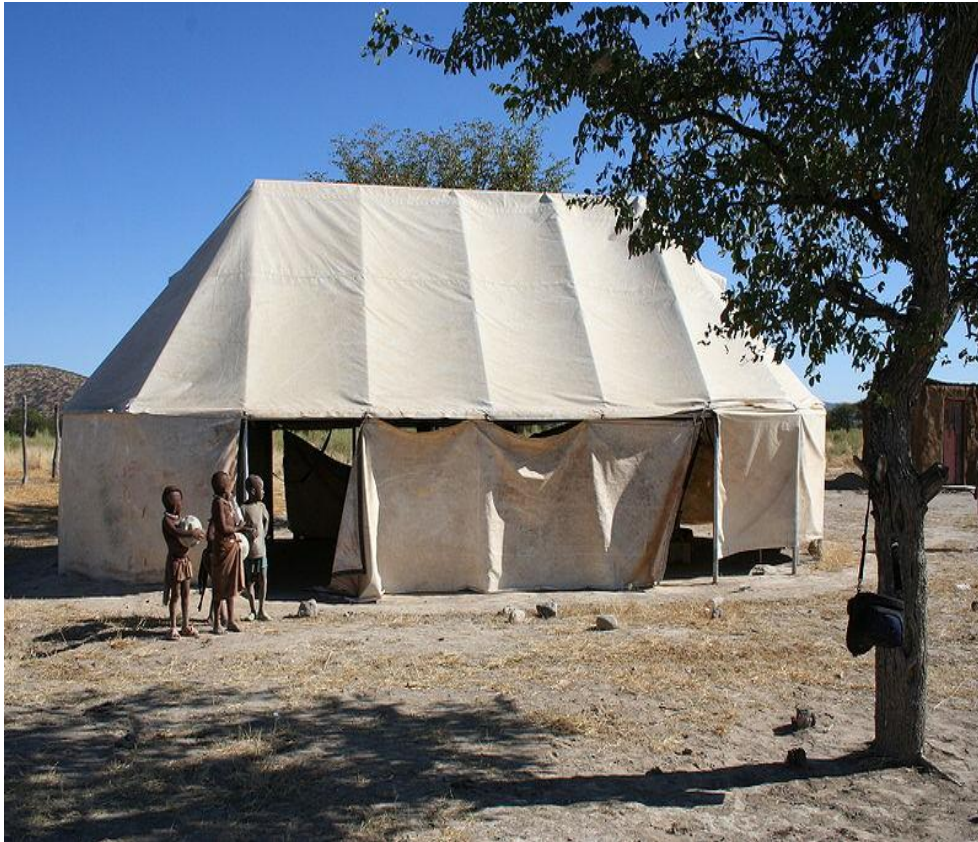
The diversity of nomads and pastoralists groups presents multiple challenges, including the variety of their contexts and the varied attitudes of parents toward formal education/schooling – for example, in herding situations, boys and not girls are kept away from schools. Also, expectations of education and schooling vary according to specific groups and circumstances. Namibian nomads and pastoralists (known as the Himba, Zemba and San), by culture and occupation are always on the move. It is the climate that dictates and determines when they are, and when they need to move. The mobility of these communities makes any effective use of conventional school difficult.

These groups are scattered all over Namibia, especially in the eastern, far northern and western regions. In addition, often they are never stable; hardly could one see a group of pastoralists staying for more than five months at a stretch because of frequent changes in weather, except those who have abandoned a nomadic life for a settled life in village or town (i.e. Opuwo, Tsumkwe and other towns and villages). The emergence of nomadic education as an important sub-system of the formal educational system in many African countries, including Namibia, is the direct consequence of these countries' commitment to equalising educational opportunities for all social groups, irrespective of ethnic or geographical origins, gender, or social class.

To fulfil the EFA, the Namibian government realised that the nomad groups need to be integrated into the nation building initiative; hence the idea of providing special education to nomadic communities, the pastoralists groups in particular, if universal primary education was to be attained by 2015. In 1997, the Namibian government recognised the need to provide equal education opportunities for all nomadic pastoralists groups, and the education programme known as the 'Ondao mobile programme' for Himba and Zemba children in the Kunene region was developed and implemented in 1998. This was followed by the Nyaye-Nyaye programme for the children from the San communities in the Tsumkwe district, Otjozondjupa region, 10 years later.

The primary aim of the mobile school and Nyaye-Nyaye programmes is to take education to nomadic and pastoralist children, wherever they resided. Mobile school units are primary schools designed for nomads who are constantly on the move, looking for pastures for their livestock. The schools move with these communities to make sure that the children are educated in any circumstances or geographical location. The mobile school units use tents as classrooms and follow the nomadic communities during their seasonal migrations. The Namibian government trains teachers to address the needs of these nomadic pastoralist learners in integrated classes.

**Figure 3.8** Example of a tented classroom

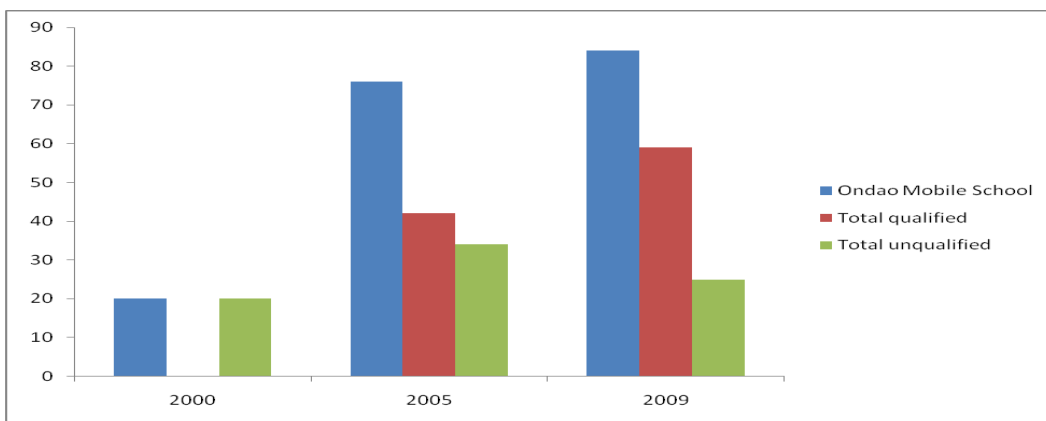


### *3.5.1 Multi-grade teaching*

The majority of mobile school units use a multi-grade teaching approach, where one teacher is responsible for more than one grade. The aim is to address teacher shortages and space, especially in rural and hard to reach areas where the enrolments for two or more grades are too low to justify an additional teacher. It should be noted that multi-grade teaching is not only used in mobile school units, but also practiced in many Namibian conventional schools across the country in the sparsely populated rural areas. Multi-grade teaching has attracted attention in the developing country including Namibia, because of its potential to increase physical access of primary school rates, by bringing the education closer to the community; and encourage more children, especially from nomads and pastoralist communities, into school. Furthermore, in conventional schools, multi-grade teaching as a response to uneven learners' enrolment. For example, a school with a two and a half grade entry may have to combine two different grade levels to make up class sizes.

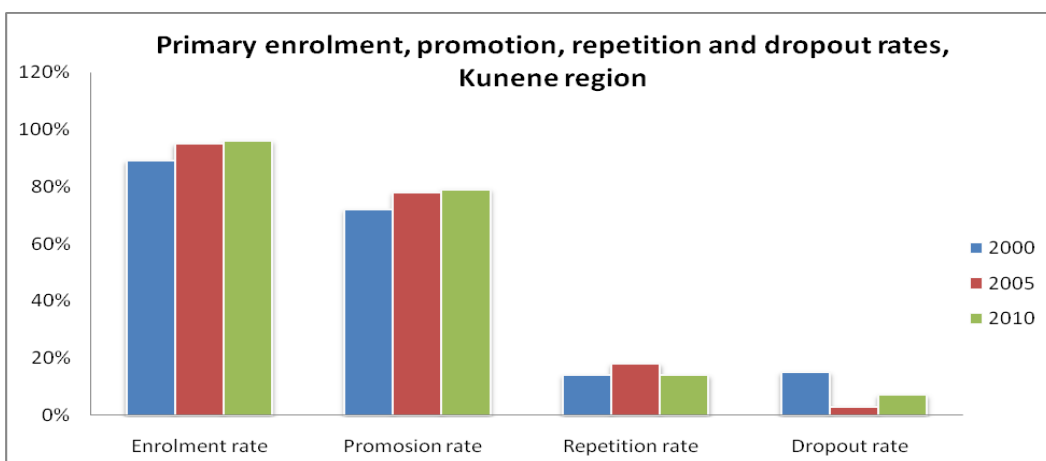
Multi-grade teaching is used as a cost effective measure to expand access to nomads and under-served areas, minimising the use of available teachers and classroom space. At the time of this study (2010), there were 84 mobile school teachers, teaching in 45 mobile school units, with a total enrolment of 2102. Only 30% of mobile school teachers were qualified at the time of this study, while the rest were under or unqualified (see Figure 3.9). Figure 3.10 also indicates enrolment, promotion, repetition and dropout rates for Kunene region over the past three years.

**Figure 3.9 Total number of mobile school teachers**



Source: EMIS 2009

**Figure 3.10 Primary enrolment rate for Kunene region (Grade 1-7)**



Source: EMIS 2009

Note should be taken that the estimates of number of nomadic and pastoralist children not in school worldwide (including Namibia) are difficult to obtain because of the invisibility of these communities within the national aggregated education statistics. In Namibia, for example, the Ministry of Education collects educational data (namely, 15<sup>th</sup> Day Statistic and Annual Education Census) once a year, but only includes nomadic children who are enrolled in schools - not those who are not attending or have dropped out of the mobile school programme.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

The chapter studied the progress and achievements made by the developing countries, Sub-Saharan African countries in particular, towards the realisation of EFA and MDGs targets of 2015 in relation to equity and quality in education. It noted that due to various policy options and education programmes, a number of African countries, including Namibia, have made great strides in improving primary education enrolment rates.

Yet, there are signs that the strategies and efforts made so far appear to be unable to enrol all primary school age children by 2015, the target set by EFA and MDGs. A complementary education programme adopted, such as mobile schools, requires government's extra effort and commitment, backed by a strategic vision and policy options, as well as the support of other key stakeholders, including development partners. As there are only four years to go to reach EFA and the MDGs target year, special measures need to be put in place to enrol and retain children from marginalised, nomadic and pastoral communalities.

Research findings like SACMEQ II (2005) show that attempts to promote equity and quality in education for marginalised and nomadic groups face an uphill battle. Evidence from some African countries, like Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania and Uganda, show that complementary basic education programmes (such as mobile schools and boarding school hostels) can be used to address some of problems facing education systems in reaching children who would otherwise not be reached by the current formal education systems.

Nevertheless, Packer and Aggio (2005) underscore the fact that for a country to improve primary enrolment rates and retain all eligible primary school age children in schools, it requires much more than high enrolment or intake rates, attaining full regular attendance, and completion rate of the primary cycle. This is what they describe as, the true test of MDGs, especially goal 2 (Packer & Aggio, 2005).

In Chapter 5 and 6 the researcher provides a picture of the educational provisioning to the nomadic Himba and Zemba people, with the aim of determining the degree to which equity and quality of education for these communities have been achieved. He critically assesses the current provisioning in order to reveal the gains and shortfalls in the mobile school unit method.