

CHAPTER 7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

The main thesis of this study is that physical access to education, important as it is in terms of the Millennium Development Goals, is not enough. Education that is not of an acceptable quality may not serve the purpose or the intent of the MDG, nor of the Education for All movement. In deliberations about education provisioning, quality in education needs to be foregrounded. In the era following the Second World War, the well known actress, Audrey Heburn, became involved with the work of UNICEF and stated:

‘A quality education has the power to transform societies in a single generation, provide children with the protection they need from the hazards of poverty, labour exploitation and disease, and given them the knowledge, skills, and confidence to reach their full potential.’

My study advances the idea that achieving universal quality education for all requires a rethink of equity in education that goes beyond the notion of mere equal of opportunity. As indicated in Chapter 1, this study therefore explored the issue of educational equity and quality in a developing country context by focusing on the case of mobile schools in Namibia. The research question that motivated this study was:

Did the equity and quality in education policies in Namibia that include nomadic people living in the country, achieved their goals?

To be able to answer this question, the researcher had to consider the socio-economic and cultural factors that work against the provisioning of education in certain hard-to-resource areas in Namibia. To guide the researcher in answering the central question, four sub-questions were formulated:

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

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

The research questions also served as an ordering structure for the thesis in the sense that each of the questions posed was first examined from a theoretical perspective, and thereafter studied within the research site. In this chapter, the theory and the research findings will be presented in an integrated manner, using the categories that emerged in the data analysis phase as the basic structure.

7.2. Summary of findings

The Education for All (EFA) movement and the education targets within the MDG have provided an impetus for many developing countries to push for Universal Primary Education (UPE), often with extensive external support. Aside from the rights-based argument for the importance of Universal Primary Education, policy documents have frequently justified the need for investment in primary education by pointing to its poverty alleviating benefits (UNESCO, 2002; UNESCO, 2003).

The World Declaration on Education for All (1990) drew attention to removing educational disparities within countries. The needs of particular groups were highlighted, and nomads and pastoralist groups were specifically mentioned (Article 3). The World Declaration also encouraged 'learning through a variety of delivery system modes' (i.e. mobile school classrooms, distance learning, etc.) and the adoption of 'supplementary alternative programmes' (Article 5). The achievements made by Namibia to move in the direction of achieving the MDG are presented in terms of certain key indicators identified in the study.

7.2.1 *Equity in education*

According to the literature reviewed, the definition of equity is broad and emphasises equity in opportunity and equity in educational outcome (Berne & Stiefel, 2001; Sayed, 1997; Nieuwenhuis, 2010; UNICEF, 2000; UNESCO; Pigozzi, 2004). In education, equity is thus not only a question of opportunities provided in the educational system, but it is also concerned with the actual results of the various educational choices and performances of different groups of learners in the education system (Berne & Stiefel, 1984; Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

In the definition of equity in education lies a concern that children are different along several dimensions, which has an impact on their need for learning and follow-up 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 children. But because children are different, both individually and in the type and amount of resources they require to benefit optimally from education, their individual needs for learning will vary (Hanushek, 2005). What these differences are, and how they may be met by educational policy, are questions that researchers and policymakers need to answer. The World Declaration on Education (UNESCO 2003) defines the principles of equity as:

- An integral part of the school improvement process and applies to all programmes within educational systems.
- Must be viewed as inseparable from quality in the measure of educational excellence.
- A principle which helps an education system to ensure that all children experience the highest levels of academic success possible, economic self-sufficiency, and social mobility.
- A principle that educational environments need to create that honour diversity and respect individualism.

In this study the researcher used the approach of Berne and Stiefel (1984) in analysing the degree to which equity has been achieved in Namibia. The researcher also utilised the Fiske and Ladd (2004) concept of equal opportunity, which shifts the focus solely on the definitions of equity as equal opportunity. The researcher has therefore used their classification of equity as 'horizontal, vertical and equal opportunity' to analyse the provisioning of education to the nomadic Himba and Zemba people. Using this, the researcher found the following:

- The policies developed in Namibia support the notion of horizontal equity. In other words, equity is based on allocating the same level of resources to all schools, irrespective of their unique needs. This is best illustrated by the Teacher Staffing Norms which prescribe that the provision of teachers will be based on the number of learners and available posts. The policy intent was to approach *horizontal equity* to redress the issue of quality education, enhance learning and teaching, and subsequently the provision of quality education. In practice, however, the best teachers are still retained in urban and semi-urban areas, while rural areas are still faced with unqualified and under-qualified staff. Furthermore, such an approach is problematic and has not been successful, because in practice, an equal number of learners in the class and equal learner expenditure did not yield the intended results as learners enrolled in hard-to-staff schools, and mobile units continue to receive unequal education service in terms of quality (see Chapter 4).
- Despite Namibia's government having enacted various important education equity driven policies and strategies, like the education for all and staffing norms, as a step in furthering the goals of equity, one has to examine the assumption, often implicitly made in some of these policies, that there is an essential conflict between efforts at improving equity and those geared towards improving the quality of education for all (Bacchus 1986). As stated in chapter 2, it is obvious that any efforts in achieving equity in education call for additional resources; whether through the allocation of extra funds, or the reallocation of resources between the different education programmes in education sectors to compensate the differences (vertical equity). The notion of vertical equity underlines the 'weighting' policies that provide additional

resources to schools like mobile units that enrol learners from lower income groups, since these children are generally understood to require greater attention to achieve equal performance (Metzler, 2003:8).

Therefore, if children from nomad and pastoralist communities, such as the Himba and Zemba, are to have similar chances in life, the Namibia government needs to treat them differently. This study, however, found that although the principle of vertical equity has been embedded in Namibian education policy and strategies, this notion has never been implemented for a number of reasons. One of the main reasons is that to achieve vertical equity, affirmative action or 'positive discrimination' has to be applied, but because of the sensitivity surrounding notion, it has been left hanging in what Jansen (2002) calls a 'political symbolism.' This is related to Namibia's history of segregation based on ethnic groups, and the unifying function education has to play without favouring any particular group, irrespective of the of their socio-economic status.

- The notion of *equal education opportunity* is based on the principle that all children should have an equal chance to succeed. However, this does not mean providing the same education for every child, irrespective of their different learning needs, but providing opportunities for every child according to his or her ability (Berne & Stiefel, 1984). The issue of equity in education is not only concerned with the provision and utilisation of educational services, but also with learning outcomes. Curriculum material developed for the instruction of children from different backgrounds should be relevant to their own experience and environment. This obviously brings up the question of what counts as 'official' or 'school' knowledge, as opposed to 'public' or 'community' knowledge and their respective claims for a place in the curriculum. But the important point is that the special needs of various groups, such as the marginalised and the nomads, have to be taken into account if the Namibian education system also hopes to achieve more equitable academic outcomes (*equal education opportunity*) in terms of learner performance (see Chapter 2).

Behrman (1997), states that the concept of equity is based on fairness, and most empirical evidence shows that fairness does not require equal per-learner expenditure. The important message from these studies that can support an argument in another

direction is that unequal distribution of resources can be equitable, or fair, when the variation is based on legitimate differences in learner needs. For instance; higher per-learner allocations for learners receiving special education represents an unequal distribution of resources that is considered equitable. Equally, equitable distribution and/or equal educational opportunities means that per-learner expenditure cannot vary across the country solely because of variations in socio-economic status or geographical allocation, but should be based exclusively on learner characteristics and needs (such as learners' needs for compensatory or special education). Furthermore, equity in education is a principle that opens economic and social opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or social status.

7.2.2 *Quality in education*

There have been many declarations and conferences held around the globe associated with the development and improvement of the quality of education. The United Nations, for example, in 1948, declared that education is a basic human right. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (quoted in Bishop, 1989, p.1).

The Namibian education policies support the notion of quality in education in relation to broadening access, and to ensure that all primary school age children are in school and receive quality education. The policies not only reflect what a society wants in terms of an educated citizenry, but at a deeper level perhaps, shared visions of what it means to be human.

However, quality does not happen just by producing policy and strategies as a result of external pressure. It is not just about changing curricula, teaching and learning strategies, assessment, structures and roles and responsibilities. Nor does it happen just by setting targets and extolling learners or teachers to do better. It requires an understanding of, and respect for, the different meanings and interpretations people bring to initiatives to improve quality, and work towards developing shared meanings

underpinned by cultural norms that will promote sustainable improvement (Prosser, 1999).

Quality in education can only be assured when all its components are understood from the perspective of the learners themselves, and take into account their individual characteristics, capabilities and goals; as well as being viewed from a local perspective, and reflecting society's unique cultural values, educational priorities and aspirations (UNESCO, 2008).

To relate to the first sub-question, on how the nomadic people in the research group conceptualise the current Namibia education system in terms of its goals and objectives as well as the cultural dimension, the findings of this study generally show that there is overwhelming agreement or recognition about the expansion of access to the provisioning of formal basic primary education. The majority of respondents agree that since independence, there is evidence that access to education has been expanded to primary education age children, as Namibia has more primary school age children in school compared with other SADC member countries, especially when it comes to enrolment rates (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1).

However, it is the quality of the expanded education that is problematic, and which seems to be limited by various factors such as resource constraints, poor quality teachers, social-economic levels, and other factors associated with background and cultural dimensions. The Namibian statistics continue to show that figures for the increase in number of schools, number of qualified teachers and number of learners are impressive (see Chapter 3, Table 3.1). However, there are several problems and a long way to go to fulfil the political aim, which is good quality education for all Namibian children, including those from marginalised, nomad and pastoralist groups.

Added to this, multi-grade teaching in mobile school units is a labour intensive, and requires more planning, and preparation compared to the conventional or mono-grade teaching. This study found, mobile school teachers are not provided with the necessary skills required to manage and teach multi-grade classes in their respective units. Since, multi-grade teaching in mobile school unit; sufficient planning time, and preparation is required and need to be available in order to meet the needs of both learners and teachers. This is because insufficient planning time, preparation, professional development, materials, support can have negative effects on the success of the multi-

grade teaching in terms of equity and quality of education received by Himba and Zemba children.

In terms of cultural dimensions, children play a key role in the survival of the Himba and Zemba society, by either contributing income or taking care of household chores like looking after animals, elderly and young siblings. This research generally found that there is a mismatch between the government school calendar and the pastoralists' household activities (e.g. herding animals, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking, caring for young siblings and migration) resulting in some children not being able to go to school. These barriers weigh most heavily on the poorest, marginalised and nomadic communities. The Himba and Zemba parents think that formal schooling does not prepare their children to be better pastoralists and hunters; rather, it motivates them to go to town to seek jobs which are few, and they do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to manage them. As a Himba parent stated:

Curricula and textbooks are often urban-biased, which content is not particularly relevant to the needs of rural people and hardly focuses on the skills needed for improving pastoralist's livelihood. The margin for adopting the curriculum to fit nomads' pastoralists and local learning needs is often too limited.

The problem of the cultural impact and the political intent to improve the lives of nomad and pastoralist communities through formal education can be illustrated by the fact that most of the education provision is conceived, designed and delivered in the mobile schools, and competes with the generation, distribution and reproduction of pastoral specialisation. In so doing it creates a threat to the livelihood of the pastoral household, particularly the more vulnerable groups such as the Himba and Zemba. Overall, the Himba and Zemba parents see the curriculum, as it is presently designed and delivered in the Namibian mobile school units, as undermining their pastoral way of life. As a group of parents put it:

'Formal education is undermining our young people's sense of identity and belonging to their own ethnic group, their understanding of the pastoral way of life as a life of dignity, and their independence'.

What has come out strongly from this study is that there is a casual link between the culture, expressed both within the school environment and within the wider formal education discourse, and the success of education policies for nomads. This brings the researcher to conclude that the success of policies of formal education among nomads and pastoralists, like Himba and Zemba communities in the north west of Namibia, depends more on a contextual understanding of the nomadic culture than on the adoption of a particular strategy or methodology of curriculum delivery. What was found is that Himba and Zemba parents would like their children to be taught the values, norms and customs of their societies to enable them grow as true members of their society; formal education merely prepares children for modern society. Furthermore, they would like their children to be given knowledge and skills of animal husbandry, and a range of management practices to enable their children to stay connected to their communities and environment (Krätli, 2001). Due to the problem of the delivery mode, this has led to low interest in formal schooling, irregular attendance, and a high dropout rate among children from the nomadic and pastoral communities.

The second sub-research-question sought to discover the extent of the current Namibian education policies and strategies for nomadic people; i.e. the educational goals to broaden access and to ensure equity and quality in education. Namibia has ambitious education policies and strategies for marginalised and nomadic pastoralist groups, responding to mobility, sparse population and remoteness obstacles by introducing various alternative education delivery modes, most commonly mobile and boarding schools.

This study found that there are positive results from government efforts, especially when it comes to broadening primary education access to nomadic pastoralist communities. One of the notable strategies is the provisioning of boarding facilities in an effort to enable children from nomadic and pastoralist groups to have access to education. This study, however, found that boarding facilities have little impact on the studied groups because the Himba and Zemba parents do not like the idea of boarding schools, i.e. giving custody of their children, especially the younger ones, to people (teachers) they do not know, to whom they are not related, and whose moral integrity they sometimes doubt (Krätli, 2001).

This concern is about more than the physical separation of children from their families, and includes the loss of their labour in the household economy. This has led to a poor response from Himba and Zemba children, and resulted in non-nomadic children filling

up these spaces. Furthermore, this study found that there are areas that require further research to answer many outstanding questions regarding provisioning of boarding facilities for children from marginalised and nomads groups. Do boarding schools serve their purpose well? Do they succeed in giving equal access opportunities and quality education to the nomadic children? To what extent do these schools alienate the children from their culture and their way of life?

Policy makers and education implementers also need to consider the possibility that the poorer utilisation of educational facilities by these groups might be due to a variety of underlying factors - cultural, economic and educational. These are some of factors that organisational structures in education might have failed to take fully into consideration. It cannot be assumed that this results simply from the lack of appreciation of the value of education by these groups.

In terms of physical access, as stated earlier, the respondents confirmed that there is an improvement in the provision of education for the Himba and Zemba communities. The evidence shows that inequity and disparity continue to persist in the Namibia education system, despite the positive efforts made in this regard. The various sources of disparities would normally have to be tackled together, since they are usually closely inter-linked. The education policy instruments related to equity and quality for marginalised and nomad groups should go beyond the school classrooms to address issues like socio-economic status, poverty in general, learner's different needs, and poor home backgrounds.

In conclusion, this study found that what has taken place in the Namibian education system, in terms of resource allocation between regions and schools, is not sufficiently differentiated in terms of resource allocation between regions and schools, including mobile schools. What it does attempt to do is to equalise and standardise the provision of education resources, despite highly unequal regions, schools and learners with different needs, and differing social circumstances.

The third fundamental question to be answered is whether the current policy mechanisms have succeeded in achieving equity and quality of education for the nomadic pastoralist Himba and Zemba people in the north west of Namibia. Since independence, as stated in the first sub-research-question, Namibia has developed ambitious education policies and long-term strategies like 'Vision 2030', and the

keywords are access, equity and good quality. Vision 2030 is a broad framework for accelerating growth and social equity and improving quality of life. Vision 2030 sets an ambitious goal for Namibia to become a high-income, knowledge-based society with a good quality of life for all. It wants to make Namibia comparable with the developed world.

The current policy strategies have made some impact in the provisioning of equal access to all primary school age children; however, equalising efforts do not make a significant impact on the differential distribution of teachers, based on the different needs. This research considered the effect of Namibia's three key education policies' drivers of equity and quality: the Standard Teaching Staffing Norms 2001, the Educationally Marginalised Children Policy of 2000, and Education for All 'White Paper' (1993). The three key education policies' primary goals and objectives are to promote equity and quality across regions and equal ratios of learners to educators across schools. Namibia has utilised a concept of distributional equity, focusing only on the equalisation of resources model.

In the scrutiny of teaching staffing norms policy, it is clear that there are two main streams of objectives converging in this document: first, to unify learner and teacher ratios of one teacher to 35 learners for primary and one teacher for 30 learners in secondary at all schools across the country. The second, to eliminate the inherited imbalances in service delivery by promoting equal education opportunities among regions and schools; particularly to address the issue of inequitable distribution of educators across the country by re-allocating teachers according to teacher: learner norms.

The evidence shows that the policy in question is mainly driven by budgetary constraints, without consideration of other important factors. For example, the terms 'teacher distribution' used in the policy include school principals and heads of departments, who are often not in the classroom all the time. The study argues that staffing norms only redistribute 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 (see Chapter 3).

In measuring the effect and impact of this policy on the Namibian education system, especially at mobile school level, it is clear the intended goals and objectives have had a smaller impact in addressing persisting disparities of equity and quality in education in terms of provisioning human resources, especially in the previously disadvantaged regions like Kunene where nomads pastoralist groups are to be found. The intended aim was not to differentiate the distribution of human resources, but rather the equalisation and standardisation of resource allocation between and within regions. What it does rather, is promote equalisation and standardisation of education resources despite highly unequal regions, schools and learners with different needs and social circumstances. This study found that the intended aims of the teacher staffing norms policy in equalising the allocation of teachers among schools does not necessarily result in equalising educational outcomes. Equally, equalising the allocation of teachers among schools is not enough, especially in mobile school units, as there are numerous factors that need to be considered, like social economic and cultural dimensions which hamper the policy implementation.

The second key policy document is *educationally marginalised children policy*, aimed at addressing bottlenecks and obstacles that prevent primary school age children from marginalised and nomad communities to attend formal basic education. The study generally found that the policy's intended objective has been partly achieved in terms of expanding access to nomadic pastoralist groups, but the quality of education that these children receive is a matter of concern. This study found that expanding the provision of schooling to nomadic Himba and Zemba children does not translate into quality schooling. The study found that education enrolments and attainment in Namibia are significantly influenced by disparities in the distribution of resources such as qualified teachers, teacher-learner ratios, and access to basic services such as water, electricity and communication, especially in mobile schools.

The third key policy document is the 1993 White Paper, known as 'Toward education for all' which embodies the principle of redressing imbalance between regions and within regions, using per capita expenditure. The policy state that, 'to reduce (redress) the inequalities of the past will require affirmative action in the processes' (Ibid:108). The policy continues to emphasise that to achieve equity, there is a need to pursue policies that treat different groups of children in different ways. Virtually all equity and quality enhancement efforts outlined in this policy will be in vain unless the Namibian government develops implementation strategies and plan to support this endeavour.

From a policy perspective, it is clear that the limited success of these key three equity driven policy documents' notion of 'redress[ing] imbalance in order to achieve equity and quality in education has not been achieved. What this study found is that since these key policy documents have been enacted, their impact has not been significant, especially when it comes to equity and quality education among those who are most disadvantaged. It is clear that the real issue is the resource allocation. For example, since independence in 1990, the Namibian government continues to allocate its education resources on an incremental basis, instead of allocating resources based on the learners' different needs. What is missing in the Namibian education system is an equalisation mechanism or strategy that can address the current disparities between schools, especially in mobile school units because of their different needs. Currently, the Namibian government only employs horizontal equity, contrary to the policy of toward education for all's broad goals (access, equity, quality democracy).

In terms of quality, as has been shown; Namibian learners continue to perform poorly in international comparisons of learner reading competency and mathematics. The World Bank study conducted by Marope (2005) on 'Human Capital and Knowledge Development for Economic Growth with Equity' argues that the current Namibian education polices and strategies would not deliver on the expectation of Vision 2030, particularly in terms of quality, equity, relevance and responsiveness to HIV and AIDS (Chapter 3).

According to the World Bank study, in substantive terms, Namibia is much further from attaining the MDGs and EFA goals than it seems (Marope, 2005). A high proportion of children enrol and complete primary education, but the majority of them do not have the foundation skills and competencies they should have acquired. A SACMEQ III survey of student reading skills and mathematics also confirmed these findings. The UNESCO study also found that two thirds of Grade 6 Namibian learners could not read with any level of competency. Only 7.6% of Grade 6 learners had the desirable level of reading skills, while 25.9% had minimum reading skills (UNESCO, 2001). The findings of this study tend to reaffirm these findings of persisting disparities in the Namibian education system in terms of equity and quality, especially among the nomadic pastoralist Himba and Zemba peoples.

It became visibly clear in this study that the current Namibia mobile education programme has not, and probably may not close the existing gap with the nomadic population in terms of equity, and quality education in the foreseeable future. The

challenges posed by the provisioning education to children from nomadic populations in developing countries like Namibia cannot be dealt with as part of the national education programme. Including nomads in EFA requires a dedicated framework with a specific focus and a specific set of competencies.

The last research sub-question was whether there are policy options that could be considered to address shortcomings in equity and quality in education among nomadic pastoralist groups. Drawing from general findings and from participants' views, policy option strategies are needed that can provide flexibility in terms of education delivery mode, compatible with nomad pastoralist peoples' way of life and their aspirations. The findings, supported by previous works of authors such as Kratli (2001), Bishop (1989), Arero (2005), Kasunga (1994) and others, show that provision of education for nomad and pastoralist groups should be flexible, multi-faceted and focused enough to target specific structural problems such as social and economic marginalisation, the lack of political representation, and must interact successfully with the new challenges brought about by globalization.

Mere expansion of formal education provision, based on a model of what works in urban situations, is not enough to ensure equity and quality education for all primary school age children, especially those from nomadic and pastoralist groups. Limited provision of static schooling, or projects which have focused on getting nomadic children to adapt to the formal system, have failed in some cases. Appropriate modifications, such as adjusting the school calendar to ensure appropriate timing, or adapting the curriculum to ensure its relevance and accommodating children from different backgrounds are necessary.

It is clear that to eradicate enduring historical inequalities, additional resources should be provided to schools that fail to meet the resource input norms; even after applying normative financing. This can only be done if normative per capita financing and a fair and transparent funding formula have been developed. This will enable schools like the mobile school units to acquire resources that meet the unique needs of the learners they serve.

Revised staffing norms and agreed quality and learning targets should be used as a basis to develop strategies and procedures on how to implement new norms. The revised norms should be comprehensive enough to include the holistic provisioning of educational resource inputs: classrooms and other physical facilities, textbooks and instructional materials, appropriate curricula, qualified and competent teachers, other professional cadre, etc.; and processes such as school management, accountability measures, pedagogy, system assessment and others that are required to achieve set quality and learning targets. Procedures should be developed for enforcing the norms.

Added to this, if equity and quality in education among nomadic pastoralist groups are to be achieved, then policy makers and implementers have to be prepared to be more flexible in the kind of practices and organisational structures which they develop in order to provide education, especially for these marginalised groups. In doing this they would need to take into consideration more fully the lifestyles and constraints which these groups face in their efforts to send their children to school. Indeed there are administrators who are increasingly aware of the importance of such flexibility in their efforts to achieve equity; not only in the provision but also in the utilisation of educational services. But these are far too few in number.

7.3. Findings related to the culture/education interface

On the basis of the data presented for this case study of mobile schools in the Kunene region, and the analysis thereof, it is important to include the following observations regarding the culture/education interface:

- Economic and development thinking of the Himba and Zemba are not aligned with that of Western or modernised communities. The popular educational discourse that informs UNESCO, the World Bank and other agencies does not resonate with the realities of people dependent on a subsistence economy. Wealth is not found in education, but in the number of cattle that one owns.
- The harsh realities of community life resulted in the Himba and Zemba people adopting a survival mode of existence, aimed at satisfying the basic needs of its members. Taking care of cattle and livestock is a first priority

and therefore the clan needs to move anytime when it is needed to find better grazing for their animals. A permanent settlement, as is understood in western terms, does not exist and mobile schools have evolved where some now need to take care of the children who use the tent as a dormitory.

- Children's first responsibility is towards the family and the herding of livestock, and this is not regarded as child labour in the nomadic pastoralist Himba and Zemba society.
- Early marriage of the girl child is encouraged in their culture, and once married, the girl child exits schooling, due to early pregnancy; thus limiting her literacy.
- Parents do not appreciate the value of modern education but tend to regard education as an externality, and simply rotate their children so that the teacher will have some children to teach and can get a salary.
- The culture and the curriculum prescribed often stand in direct opposition. For example, aspects related to hygiene and sex education cannot be taught at school as it is prohibited by their culture, and teachers of Himba origin simply ignore those aspects of the curriculum.
- The Himba and Zemba parents are aware of the importance of formal schooling as it provides the literacy needed in modern times; nevertheless they strongly believe that the content of the curriculum is too foreign for the pastoralists.
- It teaches the value of sitting in offices behind desks, rather than the value of the land and animals.
- The cultural demands and the need for mother tongue instruction as legislated necessitate that only a member of the Himba and Zemba culture may teach Himba and Zemba children. Given the low levels of education

attained by the majority of the group, teachers are recruited from local people with only a Grade 10 or 12.

- The Himba and Zemba communities, whose main focus is animal production as their source of income in dry land conditions, allow their children to attend school, but this has three direct and indirect negative effects:
 - Firstly, the clan/household - the production team has to be split in a way that is functional for school attendance but not for the running of a family enterprise.
 - Secondly, herd management and livestock mobility patterns have to be modified in ways that impact on their productivity, and ultimately on the reliability of the production system.
 - Thirdly, some, but not all, the children in the family will be enrolled in school, as this will prevent them from being part of the production team (Krätli, 2008). This limits the chances of success of both formal education and animal production, and to make matters worse, when children don't succeed through schooling they often become equally hard to employ in the livestock economy because they have not been part of the livestock production team (Arero, 2005).

7.4. Contribution of this study to knowledge production

The study has tried to respond to the main research question as to whether Namibian policies related to equity and quality in education that include monadic pastoralist people living in the country have achieved their goals. This study aimed to clarify the specific application of equity in quality in education in the Namibian context. In doing so, it contributed to the body of knowledge about equity in developing countries which share similar circumstances.

This research study found that the Namibian education policies have partly achieved the goal of access to basic primary education, as most of its primary school age learners are in school. The study also found that the objective of equalisation and standardisation of education resources partly has been achieved, especially among conventional government schools. There has been significant improvement in the equalisation to learner: teacher ratios across government schools, especially visible in

previous disadvantaged regions and schools.

However, learners in rural and remote schools or hard-to-staff schools, including mobile units, have not benefited much from such equalisation and continue to attend schools with learner: teacher ratios of 45.1 and above. The study agrees with Hanushek (1997) and Case and Deaton (1999) that high learner: teacher ratios, coupled with socio-economic disadvantages, are likely to erode equity and affect quality learning negatively.

The study found, however, that policies in Namibia are developed with the notion of education for all, and guidelines are designed for sedentary groups, although implementation occurs in different contexts. Implementation of policies has to be achieved in conditions that are not conducive to policy implementation (i.e. poorly trained and/or unqualified teachers; high learner-teacher ratios; insufficient textbooks, learning and teaching materials and resources; poor physical facilities, etc.). The researcher concluded that the design of education policies in Namibia does not take into account the context of its implementation. The implementation process is characterised by the above-mentioned challenges, including the problems of policy coherence which affect the implementation process.

Added to this, the current Namibian education policies that are aimed at nomadic groups like 'Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children' and 'Toward Education for All' have little to offer in terms of policy changes specifically formulated for Namibia's marginalised and pastoralists' children. These policies do not go far enough to sufficiently address the unique and different needs of children in the arid areas, over and above those faced by the sector as a whole. Nomads and pastoralists are expected to conform in order to access quality educational services. However, treating the regions like Kunene, and its nomadic people that live there, as if they are the same as the rest of the country, is not an effective way of addressing decades-old disparities of inequity in education.

Furthermore, it appears that there is a lack of understanding in Namibian policy circles of the realities of equity and quality education in nomads and pastoralist arid areas, partly because data on these groups is scarce. The relative reluctance apparent in Namibian education policy and practices to address the specific challenges of equity and quality educational service provision for nomads and pastoralists is also related to

Namibia's past and current national ethos of de-emphasising differences and promoting conformity, and the Namibian government's agenda with respect to pastoralism.

In terms of the notion of *equity and quality* in education, these principles have to be addressed in totality. Nomad pastoralist parents, community members and leaders interviewed want their children to be educated, contrary to prevalent beliefs that they are not interested in formal education. Their hope, however, is that culturally appropriate and alternative education for their children would address the poor performance and dropout problems prevalent in the mobile school units. However, these groups want assurance that the alternatives to education delivery modes like mobile schooling will bring their children to the same academic standards as the other non-nomadic groups in the modern global world.

Quality education output can be achieved only if quality is ensured at each level of the educational process; from standards, learning enrolment, teacher training, and learner: teacher ratio, adequate learning and teaching materials and other conditions that provide a conducive environment for learners and teachers.

In terms of finance, a number of studies (IIEP, 2005; Ibrahim, 2004; Kratli, 2001) have cited that mobile schools by nature are expensive to resource and manage. For example, although capital construction and materials costs are minimal, the level of effort, operational costs like transport and human resources are higher in the long run. In Namibia, for example, the Ondao Mobile School is the largest school in the country with more than 2 105 learners dispersed over 45 mobile units in the Kunene region, and is one of the most expensive schools in the country. Yet learner/teacher ratios are considerably lower than the national average.

In 2008, the NAMAS financial assistance to the Namibia mobile school programme came to an end and the mobile school units were taken over by the Ministry of Education. The study found that the financial and logistical implications of the mobile schools are totally different from those of conventional schools, and the Ministry has not made sufficient arrangements to carry on with the costs incurred by the mobile schools. Some of these factors that were integral to the success of the project involved the availability of good condition vehicles to regularly visit and supervise the mobile school units, the availability of radio contact with the units, and decision-making structures (in the form of a steering committee) close to the beneficiaries to expedite decisions

regarding the management of units (e.g. the appointment of educators, opening of new mobile school units or the closing of units).

At the time of this research, there was only one vehicle used by five Ondao Mobile School Managers (1 Principal and 4 Head of Departments), none of the units had basic facilities like toilets, telephone, electricity and water. Added to this, it is more or less impossible to maintain any Government services in the Kunene region without a reliable source of transport. It is impossible to provide education to the community at Otjinungwa, for example, about 300 kilometres from Opuwo, the capital city of Kunene region, unless there is a reliable form of transport which can freight food, fuel and school books, learning and teaching materials to the mobile units and which can allow the teachers to travel to Opuwo to cash their pay and to attend training sessions.

7.5. Conclusion

Education is an essential human right that every child is entitled to. It is crucial to society that every child has the developmental skills that are taught through education. This assists individuals in paving the way to a successful future. It is society's responsibility to ensure that children have access to quality education in respect of race, gender, social class, etc. The importance of education is clear to people all over the world. Without education, one can't use the knowledge of each individual's potential to maximum use.

It is obvious that an illiterate human being will most likely not be able to use his or her maximum intelligence till he or she is educated. The training of a child's mind is not complete without an education. Through an education, one is enabled to receive information from the outside world. One learns the past history and all the information regarding the present. A good example is that without an education, one is like a closed book, and with an education one finds one can open a book with several readers and views from the outside world (Kratli & Dyer, 2009).

In the researcher's view, it is the dominance of the schooling-based system and national curriculum that contribute to the persistence of poor records of ensuring that marginalised and pastoralists can access good quality education where ever they are. Both the structure and the culture of the schooling-based system have so far offered education as an alternative to pastoralism and have been locked into the 'classroom'

model of teaching (Kratli, 2010). For children in pastoralism, schooling-based provision raises an unnecessary barrier to learning as it does not match their lifestyle of mobility.

The message coming loud and clear from the nomad pastoralist Himba and Zemba themselves is a demand for a formal education – in the sense of equal status with school education – capable of complementing pastoralism and adding further opportunities to the pastoral livelihood, rather than trying to replace it altogether or undermining it by virtue of its fundamental requirements. At the moment there is no service supply to match this kind of demand.

Educational provision for nomads and pastoralist groups must be oriented towards animal keeping (veterinary) which is the major economic activity, as well as a symbol of social status in the pastoral and mobile communities. In this regard, there is a need to design an educational package and an educational process catering for these communities: theoretical and mainly practical training in animal husbandry, improved grazing methods, and better veterinary services, as well as the special needs of livestock keepers (Ndagala, 1994; Prime Minister and First Vice-President's Office, 1990). Teachers involved should receive special training to enable them to understand pastoral livelihoods, resource tenure and management procedures, as well as the pastoral indigenous knowledge (Drabner, 1991, quoted by Mlkwa 1996).

Changes in policy and practice are essential if education is to reduce poverty in nomads and pastoralist groups in Namibia. Those formulating educational policies in Namibia need to do the following:

- Re-evaluate their agendas concerning pastoralism in order to put into action the Namibian government's commitment to recognise pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood, in realisation of the National Vision 2030 of a knowledge-based society and industrial nation by 2030.
- Acknowledge and face up to the special challenges of promoting equity and improving quality basic education to pastoralist areas and/or population.
- Be aware of the reality of the situation in which policies are being implemented.

From this study, one can learn that there is a need for more research related to policy development and practice for nomadic pastoralist groups in particular. Furthermore, one can learn that there is a need to do more research on a large scale related to policy and practice in order to gain more insight about the issues related to the persisting inequity and disparity in education among marginalised and nomad and pastoralist groups, as well as to generalise the outcomes.