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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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**CHALLENGES IN THE PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND
EDUCATION SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS OF BOTSWANA**

**A RESEARCH ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF A MASTERS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this research essay is my own unaided work and that the cited sources have been acknowledged by means of references.

.....

Christina Mwaipopo

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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to the Mwaipopo family for their love and continuous support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- 1. ACRWC**-Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare on the Child
- 2. AIDS** -Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- 3. CTC**- Child to Child
- 4. CGECCD**- Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development
- 5. CRBA**- Child's Rights Based Approach
- 6. ECCE**-Early Childhood Care and Education
- 7. ECD**- Early Childhood Development
- 8. EFA**- Education For All
- 9. ETSSP**-Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan
- 10. HIV**- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- 11. LDTC**- Lobatse Day Care Training Centre
- 12. MOESD**-Ministry of Education & Skills Development
- 13. NDCP** -National Day Care Centre Policy
- 14. NGOs**- Non- Governmental Organisations
- 15. OECD**-Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
- 16. PTA**- Parent Teacher Association
- 17. RAD**- Remote Area Dwellers
- 18. RNPE**- Revised Nation Policy on Education
- 19. UNCRC**-United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 20. UNESCO**-United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
- 21. UNICEF**-United Nations Children's Fund
- 22. UNUDHR**- United Nations Universal Declarations of Human Rights
- 23. VDC**- Village Development Committee
- 24. WWW**- World Wide Web
- 25. YWCA**-Young Women Christian Association

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges in the provision of early childhood care and education services (ECCE) in rural areas of Botswana. The following were the objectives of the study: to examine the standards set by ECCE programmes; to evaluate the benefits for young children of participating in ECCE programmes; and to explore the challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services in the country. The desktop research method was used to gather relevant information for the study using existing sources such as libraries, newspapers, University archives, and published citations.

Findings from the study indicated that the standard of ECCE programmes in rural areas is still very low and characterised by the lack of educational and learning materials, inadequately trained teachers, high child teacher ratio, and poor physical facilities. The findings revealed that children in rural communities benefit from ECCE programmes that are mostly offered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Bokamoso preschool programme. Findings indicated that ECCE services are still largely concentrated in urban areas and accessible to children from more affluent families, inevitably isolating the poor in the rural areas. Challenges in the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana include insufficient funding, shortage of qualified teachers, lack of play and stimulation equipment, language barriers, and lack of balanced meals for the children.

The following recommendations were drawn from the study: the Government of Botswana should assume leadership in the provision of ECCE services by providing sufficient financial and human resources; multicultural education should be infused into teacher education programmes. Lastly, parents should be sensitised on the importance of ECCE and how they can be involved.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) are services for young children involving elements of both physical care and education (Kamerman, 2007). ECCE places emphasis on development of whole child supporting children's health and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development to establish a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO], 2007). Young children are provided with developmental care and formal schooling which prepares them for future success in centres of higher learning.

ECCE programmes can be organised in a variety of forms: including formal, non-formal, and informal settings. For example formal preschools, community based programmes, and home-based family day care. Research findings have shown that good quality ECCE programmes provide a wide range of benefits for children, families, and communities and facilitate children's social, emotional, nutritional, and health development (Maundeni, 2013). Families are provided with the security of knowing that their children are in a safe and nurturing environment ("The Benefits of Consistent ECCE, 2013"). Parents, especially women, are released from child minding so that they can engage in income generating activities. For communities, long lasting benefits such as prevention of child labour, increased intergenerational social mobility, higher female labour market participation, and gender equality are realised ("Early childhood and school ,n.d").

Despite these numerous benefits of ECCE, the provision of service is still very limited, mostly in urban areas, and usually organised on a private basis and thus benefiting children from higher income families. For example, in China, 95% of children in urban areas attend preschool while rural participation is only 50 % ("Educational challenge, n.d"). Whilst in Azerbaijan, kindergarten attendance rate for 5-6 year old children in cities is 35% and 12% in rural areas. In Togo, access to early childhood services in rural areas is only approximately 8 % and 60% in cities (Education International, 2010).

1.1 Historical development of ECCE

This section provides a review of how ECCE emerged in Europe and North America, Africa, and Botswana. For any given society, historically and currently, change is part of the fabric of life. This includes the movement of women into the labour market, globalisation, poverty and HIV and AIDS that have led to the major restructuring of families and communities and stimulated the need for additional family support. A major theme that flows through the history of ECCE is that young children learn differently from older children and thus their schooling must be adapted to the needs of their age group.

Many ECCE programmes are based upon historical models of education created by pioneers such as Pestalozzi, Owen, Froebel, and Montessori. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) encouraged a system of early childhood education that focused on the whole child and advocating for education in order to raise the standard of people's lives. Pestalozzi was among the first to introduce free education for poor and orphaned young children in Switzerland.

Robert Owen (1771-1858) influenced the education of young children in Europe and the United States, building a bridge from the industrial revolution to the post revolution period. Owen's community education ideas in his schools in New Lanark (Scotland) and New Harmony (United States) advocated for free and unstructured play in the education of young children. These practices are still in use today in ECCE centres all over the world.

The first kindergarten programme developed by Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) was widely adopted in Europe and abroad. He emphasised the education of young children as a tool for social reform. Furthermore, he recognised that education begins at infancy and that women, because of their maternal instinct, were naturally suited to be children's first teachers. Froebel started educating women to become Kindergarten teachers and his schools offered the first significant career for women outside the home.

Froebel had a strong influence on Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the founder of the Montessori Method. Like Froebel, Montessori felt that children should be educated early in life but she added new thoughts about early childhood development and education. She believed that learning is developed through interaction with the environment and thus led to her developing a concept of sensory education. Montessori believed that the environment fostered young children's development and thus they should be taught to experience the world by using

their five senses. Like all the other pioneers of ECCE, she advocated for a child-centred approach to learning (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014) which places children at the centre of the learning process by allowing them the freedom to learn at their own pace and establish their own ideas towards learning.

Historically, the roots of ECCE policies and programmes in most of Europe and North America were first established in the 19th century, often drawing on the models of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and the activities of missionaries. Countries started to conceptualise and develop formal arrangements for caring, socialising, and educating young children (UNESCO, 2007). The formalisation of ECCE services was necessitated to address the needs of abandoned and neglected children, to provide an enriching pre-school education for middle-class children, and also to provide a safe and affordable environment for the children of working women (UNESCO, 2007).

Initially, the only institutions involved in ECCE were churches that cared for abandoned and orphaned children. In the mid- 19th century, a variety of institutions were established for the purpose of caring for young children. Some were childcare centres focused on child survival and social protection while others focused on infant schools for the provision of education. Early education nurseries provided learning opportunities for children from affluent families (Bennett, 2011). In the United States early childhood institutions were rooted in two developmental philosophies: day care centres designed to care for the children of working mothers and nursery schools which focused on educational programmes based on the work of Froebel.

The changing societal perspectives on issues such as work, education, and welfare (especially after World War II) made childcare and education no longer a family concern but a public responsibility. European and North American countries began to reconsider the traditional role of early childhood policies and programmes and changed focus to cater for a growing number of women joining the labour market. Increasingly, pre-schools were redesigned to adapt to the needs of working parents and maternal and parental leave policies were developed to accommodate a mother's right to care for her child (UNESCO, 2007). By the end of the 20th century, public nursery schools offered care and education for children from all backgrounds. Currently, ECCE policies in European countries are centred on the need to care for young

children while their parents are at work or studying. They also help children to develop skills and attitudes associated with success in primary schooling (Cochran, 2011)

The incorporation of ECCE in the educational system of developing countries is more recent (around the 1970s). According to Kamerman (2007, p.24), the demand for such programmes in the developing world has been driven by:

- high and continued rising female labour participation rates and the need for childcare while mothers carry out work outside the home.
- the evidence that these programmes lead to enhanced school performance including better school attendance, lower rates of class repetition, lower dropout rates, and stronger literacy and numeracy skills.

Pence and Nsanemang (2008) argued that Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Africa today is a result of three significant forms of heritage: indigenous African, Islamic–Arabic, and Western. In the indigenous African system, children are seen as a gift that should be enjoyed and nurtured by the whole community. Through family traditions and social and community living children begin to learn about life and the world around them. In an African context, children have a responsibility for their own self-education by learning from adults through observation and taking part in ongoing family activities (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008).

Islamic education, through the *madrassa system*, constitutes a long standing system of education throughout Africa which has been in operation longer than the Western educational system (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). Within the *madrassa* system, children as young as 4 years of age, learn the Koran, Islam's holy book. The *madrassa system* was and remains an important agent in socialising Muslims into the Islamic faith and the Muslim way of life (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). During the 1980s and 1990s, East African countries required an entrance examination for children to get into primary school and *the madrassa* programmes prepared Muslim children, mostly from a lower socioeconomic background, for primary education (Faizi, 2008).

Western systems of education arrived in Africa as a product of colonisation. The colonial regimes focused a great deal on finding and exploiting natural resources and little on educational development. At the end of colonial rule, no African colony had more than half of its children with complete elementary education (Fafunwa, 1974 as cited in Pence and

Nsanemang 2008). At independence, mainly around the 1960s, African governments with limited resources gave priority to nation building issues and creating more space for higher education than early education. Since then, the demand for ECCE has not been viewed as significant and its conceptualisation as a legal right has only relatively recently begun to be discussed (Kammerman, 2007). It has been argued that the prevailing belief system in most African cultures, that a woman's place is in the home and therefore the services for children under age three are the responsibility of mothers, has also discouraged government intervention in this sector of education (Kammerman 2007; Maundeni 2013). Before independence and until today, ECCE programmes are based on a variety of Euro–Western pedagogies from Froebel through Montessori, and crèches and nursery schools are found in all African countries.

In Botswana, before independence, women established informal systems of providing custodial care and basic forms of education in their homes for young children. Around the 1960s, as the country embarked on independence, more formal systems of ECCE were established through the efforts of various voluntary organisations such as churches, the Red Cross, and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). ECCE centres in the 1960s were intended for women in town who worked full-time (Mwamwenda, 2014). These first few ECCE facilities were private owned and served the needs of the expatriate community rather than Botswana (Bar-On, 2004; Maunganidze & Tsamaase, 2014). With the passage of time, there was a growing need for more ECCE centres, especially for women participating in employment outside the home. Consequently, in 1980, the National Day Care Centre Policy (NDCCP) was developed. This policy provided guidance in the management, protection, and education of children aged 2 ½ to 6 years (Trivedi & Bhatti 2008; Maundeni, 2013). Since then, the government, through the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), has continued to look for greater integration of ECCE into the education sector.

Over the years, the demand for ECCE increased and the Day Care Centre Policy fell short of providing a comprehensive guidance on ECCE programmes in the country (Trivedi & Bhatti, 2008; Maundeni, 2013). This necessitated the formulation of an ECCE policy in 2001. The policy attempts to provide a holistic approach to the overall development of a child. For Botswana, in the second decade of the 21st Century, the provision of ECCE is more compelling

given the reported increase in early pregnancies, single parenthood, and households affected by HIV and AIDS (Maunganidze & Tsamaase, 2014).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Over the decades, there have been significant milestones in the provision of ECCE services across the world. The global pre-primary gross enrolment ratio increased from 27% in 1990 to 33% in 1999 and 54% in 2012 (UNESCO, 2015). Despite the numerous improvements in enrolment levels in ECCE services at a global level, poor and rural children are most disadvantaged in terms of access and tend to receive services which are of lower quality than those for urban children (Mtahabwa & Rao, 2010). In many developing countries the education gap between urban and rural areas is still enlarging. For example, in China the enrolment rate in urban areas has been as high as 90% whilst in rural areas as low as 10% (Rao et al., 2004). Children in Tajikistan, Iraq and Yemen are four times more likely to attend ECCE programme if they live in urban areas as oppose to rural areas (El-Kogali & Krafft, 2015; Manji et al., 2015). Participation rate in ECCE services in Kenya is around 75% in urban areas whereas it is only at 25% in rural areas (Manji et al., 2015). In Tunisia, there is 43% point gap between urban (60%) and rural (17%) children attending ECCE (El-Kogali & Krafft, 2015).

The urban -rural gap in pre-primary enrolment is widened by the fact that many countries have yet to expand public provision of pre-primary education and therefore the field of childcare services is left to private providers and individual families (Bennett, 2011; UNESCO, 2015). Private providers gravitate towards marketable and profitable areas and are unlikely to locate to sparsely populated and remote areas (UNESCO, 2015). This is especially true in developing countries where ECCE is still very limited and unequal. In 2010, 57% of young children in developing countries had no access to pre-primary care and education services and, of these, 83% were in sub-Saharan Africa (The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development [CGECCD], 2013).

It has been argued that children from disadvantaged groups stand to gain the most from good quality ECCE services (UNESCO, 2015). However, they are up 10 times less likely to participate in ECCE programmes than those from more affluent areas (UNESCO, 2008; CGECCD, 2013). According to UNESCO (2015), living in rural areas and /or being poor in countries such as Kenya, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Togo, decreases a child's chance of participating in early learning programmes.

In Botswana, according to UNICEF (2007), only 17% of preschool age children at that time had access to ECCE and those were mainly in middle and upper class families. Currently, this rate has increased to only 22% (Kayawe, 2014). The government does not play a direct role in the provision of ECCE programmes (Maundeni, 2013). The responsibility of ECCE provision by and large has been left to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches, communities, and the private sector (Republic of Botswana 2001; Maundeni, 2013). Consequently, such facilities have remained concentrated in urban areas largely as a preserve of rich and middleclass families and inevitably isolating the poor in the rural areas (UNESCO, 2000). Excluding rural children from such services denies them the opportunity to reap the benefits of the system. They are left behind in the development of cognitive skills, language ability, numeracy, psychological and physical health, and social behaviour (“Educational challenge, n.d”).

1.3 Aim of the study

1. This study examines the standards set by ECCE programmes, explores the challenges of provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana and maps forward action to be taken by stakeholders to address these challenges.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

1. To examine the standards set by ECCE programmes.
2. To evaluate the benefits for young children of participating in ECCE programmes.
3. To explore the challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana.
4. To identify action that should be taken by government and other stakeholders to address challenges in the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana.

1.3.2 Research questions

1. What are the standards set by ECCE programmes?
2. What are the benefits for young children of participating in ECCE programmes?

3. What are the challenges affecting the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana?
4. What actions should be taken by government and other related stakeholders to address challenges in the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana?

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will have implications for research, policy, and practice. These are briefly discussed below:

1.4.1 Research implications

The main body of literature on ECD emanates from the West. However, over 90% of children live outside the Western world (Van der Vyver, 2012). Moreover, the main scientific evidence on the impact of early childhood interventions on children's growth and development has been based on models from developed countries. The ECD programmes in developing countries are based on questionable extrapolated evidence from such areas (Penn, 2005 as cited in Pence and Nsanemang 2008). There is an overwhelming paucity of knowledge on Africa's child care patterns and education systems especially at preschool level. Currently, the little available research on ECD has focused on the long term benefits of ECCE for children in urban areas (Temple, 2009) and hardly any attention has been paid to the needs of young children in rural areas.

In Botswana, there is a considerable body of literature on specific groups of children especially those orphaned by AIDS. However, there is inadequate attention to ECCE and scanty research on children aged 0 - 6 years (Maundeni, 2013). Most studies surrounding ECCE issues have focused on the capital city of Gaborone and surrounding areas and cannot be generalised to the society as a whole (Maundeni, 2013). Therefore, the present research may contribute to the inadequate body of knowledge on provision of ECCE in rural areas and highlight the need for more relevant studies in this area. Quality research can assist government, communities, and other stakeholders in providing and improving ECCE services in rural areas.

1.4.2 Policy implications

A national ECCE policy affirms a country's commitment to young children. Most governments around the world have limited ECCE policies and legislation which are mainly declarations of

intent rather than realities(UNESCO, 2007).The few countries that have included ECCE in their basic education programmes do not financially support the implementation of such programmes (UNESCO, 2015).This is especially true in developing countries where there is a lack of national frameworks to coordinate or finance ECCE programmes that comprehensively address the diverse needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable, and disabled children (UNESCO, 2007).

Botswana's ECCE policy of 2001 attempts to 'provide a holistic approach to the developmental needs of a child, in particular their healthy growth and preparation for primary education' (p.5).The policy states that government will continue to provide an enabling environment for the development of ECCE programmes (Republic of Botswana, 2001). The implication is that, the cost of financing such services is in the hands of voluntary organisations, private companies, and individuals. The government's indirect role in the provision of ECCE services adversely affects the quality and access of such services, especially for rural children. This study seeks to draw the attention of policy makers to implications of excluding rural children from ECCE and the need to develop holistic, related policies. A comprehensive ECCE policy will provide the guidance needed to implement programmes for young children in an effective and efficient manner (UNESCO, 2007).

1.4.3 Practice implications

This study will be beneficial to early childhood educators, staff in day care centres, school administrators, and social workers (since they work with young children). It has been argued that, in Africa, the ECCE models used might not be appropriate and thus there is need to develop relevant services that draw on contextual and cultural practices of African peoples (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). UNESCO (2007) states that care must be taken not to simply import models from abroad as early childhood programmes need to be rooted in the children's ethnic and cultural environment .This study will assist professionals to design appropriate models that are relevant to young children living in poor and disadvantaged communities.

1.5 Definition of Terms

- *Early childhood* refers to the period between birth and eight years of life(United Nations Children's Fund[UNICEF],n.d)

- *Early childhood care and education (ECCE)* services programmes range from parenting programmes to pre -primary education that supports children's survival, ,growth, development ,and learning – including health, nutrition, and cognitive, social, physical ,and emotional development – from birth to entry into primary school in formal, informal, and non-formal settings (UNESCO, 2007).
- *Early childhood development (ECD)* relates to a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and caregivers (UNICEF, n.d).
- *Pre -Primary Education* is defined as the initial stage of organised instruction, designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment; that is, to provide a bridge between home and a school-based atmosphere (OECD, 2002).

1.6 Limitations of the study

This research is a literature view and thus the researcher had little control over what data was collected and how it was done. There is scanty research on ECCE in Botswana and the little that exists is based on selected areas in the country, mainly urban environments. Thus the findings could not be used to generalise the situation of ECCE in the country.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature globally, regionally, and locally on the provision of ECCE services. The first section begins by examining the standards set by ECCE programmes. The second section discusses the benefits of ECCE programmes and the challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services. Lastly, the chapter discusses the relevant theories underpinning ECCE.

2.1 Standards of ECCE programmes

Quality ECCE services are determined by a number of standards such as age appropriate curricula, educational material, physical structures, play facilities, sanitation facilities, parental involvement, and many others. In this section, four required standards, namely the curriculum, learning materials, child – teacher ratio, and the physical environment, will be considered.

2.1.1 Curriculum

A comprehensive curriculum addresses the overall development of the child and caters to their age, pace of learning, and individuality. Various early childhood curriculum approaches are used to provide effective ECCE programmes around the world. Some commonly adopted approaches are:

- **Montessori Method.** This emphasises independence, self- directive activities, and the fact that children learn and gain knowledge through reality, play, work, and interaction with the environment. Montessori teachers prepare the classroom environment with materials and activities and it is the children’s interaction with the environment that enables them to learn.
- **Reggio Emilia.** This approach builds upon the interests of the child. The teachers’ roles are to be co- workers and collaborators with the children. Teachers observe the children, listen to their question and stories, try to learn about their interests, and then provide them with opportunities to explore these interests further.
- **Waldorf approach.** This was developed by Rudolf Steiner and is based in the belief that the most meaningful learning is provided using age appropriate content. In Waldorf schools children under the age of 7 learn by engaging in creative play, oral skills (never

written language), stories, and songs (Edwards, 2002). From the age of 7 and above, children are introduced to academic subjects such as writing and mathematics. Teachers serve as guides and organise the classroom environment using simple materials and play things to support and catalyse children's own creative faculties and imagination.

There is no single curriculum approach that can be defined as "best" because learning occurs in different ways and most children learn through a combination of different approaches. Most European countries have a national curriculum for children aged between 3 and 6 years, and some have developed a common curriculum or pedagogical framework for those up to 6 years (in particular, the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom) [International Labour Organization (ILO), 2012]. In the United States programmes that receive state funding are often required to identify a curriculum model that they are implementing (Dodge, 2004).

In comparison, China does not have a national curriculum for ECCE. According to Zhao and Hu (2008), the curriculum and teaching methods in rural areas of China emphasise development of intellectual abilities and are characterised by long, direct teaching sessions with limited hands-on activities for children. The authors argue that the curriculum is more suitable for primary rather than pre-schools. Research findings show that, in Nepal, young children are mixed with grade one students and teachers tend to focus more on the grade one curriculum than a curriculum for younger children (Shrestha, Eastman, & Hayden, 2009). According to Sacks and Ruzzi (2005), class sizes in Japanese preschools are less structured and teacher focused, with children expected to concentrate mostly on academics subjects. Similarly, in Tanzania and Malawi the objective of ECCE is to prepare children for primary school and the mastery of literacy and numeracy skills is emphasised (Mtahabwa & Rao, 2010). Storytelling and play are rarely used to facilitate children's learning. Research findings by Bose, Pedzani, and Monyatsi (2012) agree with those of researchers in other countries, that parents in Botswana view ECCE as a vehicle to impact academic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) in preparation for entry into primary schools.

Some ECCE centres in Africa lack a common syllabus and each institution designs its own (Tashobya, 2012). For example, lack of a defined curriculum in Kenya means that teachers have to make up their own curriculum as they go along (Kisitu, 2009). In Botswana, until 2013, there was no standard prescribed curriculum and as a result, centres used self-made curriculum or adopted curriculum prescribed by other countries (Bose, 2010).

2.1.2 Learning materials

Learning materials stimulate and arouse children's curiosity and interests, and promote their processes of learning through reflection of the familial and cultural experiences of the child (Jalongo et al., 2004). In Canada, it has been reported that there is a general under funding of learning materials resulting in materials being conventional and of doubtful quality (OECD, 2003). Countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Sudan face a common challenge of lack of educational materials in the ECCE sector (Faour et al., 2006). In Mongolia, for a minority group, the Kazaks, preschool and non-formal educational material lacks relevance as it is developed in the Mongolian language which the Kazak children do not speak (Huang, 2005).

In many developing countries, such as Botswana and Kenya, learning materials are often very costly and thus are erroneously stored out of reach of children for fear of being spoiled (Bar-On, 2004; Kisitu, 2009; Olubunmi, 2015). Consequently, work books and blackboards play a central role in children's learning (Faour et al., 2006; Kisitu, 2009). Bar-On (2004) noted, that in Botswana, rural and peri-urban ECCE centres have drastically insufficient writing materials which constrains engagement in creative activities. Children are forced to learn in the abstract (using their imagination and not real objects) and so are deprived of the opportunity of developing ideas and concepts that would help them to understand and make sense of the world around them (Kisitu, 2009). Lack of adequate learning materials also makes classes dull and drab with children unusually silent and unable to interact with peers through play (Olumuyiwa, Taibat, & Dagunduro, 2011). For example, in Botswana, a study revealed that one village ECCE centre had only the picture of the president of the country as an adjunct to teaching and learning (Bar-On, 2004).

2.1.3 Child -teacher ratio

Child teacher ratio is one of the most important quality indicators for ECCE centres. Quality programmes of this nature have more teachers per child to ensure that children receive enough attention to assist them in learning (Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2002). The child teacher ratio varies from country to country. In France the average is 25 children per class with one teacher (Boocock, 1995). In rural China the child teacher ratio is as low as 1:44. Whilst in Nigeria child- teacher ratios are around 37 children per teacher and in Kenya and Botswana it is as high as 100 children per teacher (Bar-On, 2004; Nganga, 2009).

There are also wide discrepancies in child- teacher ratio between private and public pre-primary schools. For example, in Costa Rica and Tanzania, child- teacher ratio in public schools is double that in public schools (UNESCO, 2007). The situation is not necessarily better in private institutions because in many countries the ECCE sector is dominated by private entities where profit maximisation is their main concern. As such, employing more teachers to maintain a reasonable child- teacher ratio is not beneficial to them (Sooter, 2013). A study in the United States showed that profit making ECCE centres had less- favourable ratios than independent for-profit, religiously affiliated, and other non-profit centres (Saluja et al., 2002).

Research findings indicate that high child -teacher ratios reduce ECCE programmes from child development into child minding initiatives (Moyo, Wadesango, & Kurebwa, 2012). In the result such ratios affect methods of learning as most, being interactions in the classroom, are initiated and controlled by teachers with children being ignored and/or silenced (Kisitu, 2009; Mtahabwa & Rao, 2010).

2.1.4 Physical environment

The physical environment comprises both inside and outside facilities. The quality of the physical environment has been linked to positive outcomes that enhance children's learning and development (Berris & Miller, 2011). According to Beach and Friendly (2005), in Canada the physical environment and design of ECCE spaces for children have not been a high priority compared to staffing and financing. Their findings indicated that some Canadian ECCE facilities either temporarily shared space with classes intended to be used by older children or in low cost accommodation areas such as church basements.

The poor facilities in Canada represent the current condition of many ECCE facilities around the world, especially in developing countries. The government of Kenya does not assist in the construction of learning facilities and thus a number of ECCE centres do not have permanent buildings (Nganga, 2009). Many such centres in Uganda are privately owned and priority is, therefore, given to making money rather than providing adequate space for children's learning needs (Kisitu, 2009).

There are some centres that are hazardous, putting the safety and health of children at risk. For example, some ECCE centres in South Africa lack proper security to prevent children from wandering away from their learning environment (Atmore, Niekerk & Ashely- Copper, 2012). In Botswana, according to the findings of Bar-On (2004), one centre had a damaged roof, bat excrement on the floor, and a goat's carcass in the playground. Such environments put children's health at risk.

Play is an important aspect in the enhancement of children's physical and health development. Nsamenang (2012) argued that, in the African context, it is uncommon for adults to engage in play with very young children and so curricula used in many ECCE centres is more focused on academic accomplishments than play. In some countries, such as Uganda and Kenya, centres without playground equipment are forced to make their own, using sisal material to make swings and old fabrics and plastic sheets to make footballs and jump ropes (Kisitu, 2009; Nganga, 2009). Olubunmi (2015) noted that in Nigeria ECCE centres do not have enough space for outdoor play and children are forced to share a playground with older children from primary schools. These are designed for older children and thus inappropriate for younger children. Bar-On (2004) noted that in Botswana, most community and local authority centres outdoor equipment was broken whilst the Village Development Committee (VDC) centres had no equipment at all.

In summary, Van der Vyver (2012) states that the real situation of rural ECCE centres in South Africa and other rural schools in Africa (Kisitu, 2009; Nganga, 2009; Mtahabwa & Rao, 2010) is that of shortage of stimulating programmes and resources and overfull centres with high child teacher ratios. For young children to reap the benefits of ECCE programmes, African governments should be prepared to invest resources in their design and execution.

2.2 Benefits of ECCE programmes

There are multiple ways in which ECCE programmes can directly and indirectly benefit children, both in the short and long term. Children's physical, mental, psychological, language, and social abilities are shaped by their experiences during their early years. Heckman (2000) stated that cognitive ability is formed relatively early in life and becomes less malleable as

children age, hence the need for early childhood intervention. Some of the benefits of ECCE services are discussed below.

2.2.1 Cognitive and language development

High quality ECCE programmes provide developmentally appropriate curricula which enable children to develop specific cognitive skills at appropriate ages along a developmental continuum (“Early Childhood Education”, n.d). Young children’s cognitive development is enhanced through various activities such as manipulation of objects, recognition and identification of colours, and solving simple addition and subtraction problems(“The benefits of ECCE”,2013).Language development occurs as children engage in frequent, age appropriate conversations through activities such as daily group discussions, songs, and reading aloud (“Early Childhood Education”, n.d).

2.2.2 Social and emotional development

ECCE programmes enhance emotional development, social abilities, and competencies (Heckman, 2000; UNESCO, 2007; Burger, 2010).Children’s emotional development is facilitated as they learn about feelings and emotions , adjusting to spending time away from their families, and developing their independence and self-help skills(Maundeni 2013).In classrooms, children mix with other children and adults and learn how to care for others, how to behave respectfully, how to share, and methods of working out disagreements (Swadener ,2000; Maundeni, 2013).In addition, through children’s daily interactions ,educators and parents have been able to notice and detect children with special needs or disabilities. Consequently, they are able to initiate early intervention for such children (Burger, 2010; Maundeni, 2013).

2.2.3 School readiness

Participation in ECCE programmes has been shown to improve children's school readiness. Quality ECCE better prepare children for primary school and also help to reduce delayed enrolment , dropout rates and grade repetition, and increased school completion and achievement (UNESCO, 2007; Global Partnership for Education, 2015).For example, studies in Bangladesh, Argentina and Nepal have shown that children who participate in high quality pre-school programmes possessed improved literacy and numerical skills and demonstrated significant gains in cognitive development which enhanced their school readiness and

increased enrolment and progression through primary school(UNESCO, 2011). Heckman (2000) stated that early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success, just as early failure breeds later failure. ECCE programmes act as preventive measures for future disadvantages and have been proposed as a way of “heading off” learning deficits before they occur, thus ultimately, reducing the cost of education and care for both households and governments.

2.2.4 Provision of care and support

ECCE programmes can complement the care and education that young children receive at home, in their families, and in their communities (UNESCO, 2007). Large numbers of ECCE facilities are female headed (Bose, 2008) hence, to some extent, providing the role model of a mother figure for some children who have none at home. ECCE programmes also compensate for young children’s negative experiences as a result of conflict within the family or from emotional deprivation (UNESCO, 2007) . They provide a stable and safe environment to promote physiological, emotional, and social well-being for children whose lives have been shattered by unstable environments (Tashoby, 2012).

2.2.5 Equality

Interventions during the early years of life can compensate for social and gender inequalities that exist prior to primary school entry (UNESCO, 2007). Children from vulnerable and disadvantaged families, especially the rural poor; are given an opportunity to develop in the same way as children from privileged families (Burger, 2010).Studies in Nepal, Jamaica, Egypt, and Guinea consistently found that most disadvantaged children benefit from ECCE programmes (UNESCO, 2007).

Pre -primary education closes the gender gap in education which otherwise creates a vicious cycle of women with lower education and lower propensity to place their children in ECCE programmes (Habibov, 2012).It is common practice in some societies for priority to be given to boys over girls in access to basic care (UNESCO, 2007). Girls are kept at home to serve as childcare providers for their younger siblings (UNESCO, 2007).ECCE programmes provide opportunities to reduce stereotypes about traditional gender roles and to foster gender equality at an age when young children are developing an understanding of identity, empathy, tolerance, and morality (UNESCO, 2007). Furthermore, having younger siblings enrolled in

pre-primary education can influence parents' views on the importance of school, encouraging enrolment of older children in the education system (Martinez, Naudeau, & Pereira, 2012). It has also been argued that ECCE programmes enable women to participate in the labour market thus contributing to an increase in women's independence and status in the family and society (Education International, 2000; Habibov, 2012). For example, the study by Martinez et al. (2012) in Mozambique showed that caregivers were relieved of over 15 hours of childcare duties per week while the children attended preschool.

2.2.6 Escape from poverty and poor health

Poverty gives young children an early disadvantage at the most critical time in their lives. Rokosa (2011) states that children from low income families enter school an average of 12 to 14 months behind their peers from higher-income families. According to Habibov (2012), poverty is the one of the main obstacles for ECCE attendance in the Central Asia region. Education creates opportunity to escape poverty and is an important indicator of children's future income (UNESCO, 2007; Rokosa, 2011). Research findings have shown that high quality ECCE programmes raise academic performance and give children the skills and tools to be successful and later enjoy higher income level (Rokosa, 2011).

Poverty triggers other forms of disadvantage such as poor health care. ECCE programmes provide the opportunity to avail health services to children such as immunisations, thus reducing infant and child mortality (UNESCO, 2007; Friedman -Krauss & Bernett, 2013). Through the provision of safe drinking water and proper sanitation in ECCE facilities, studies in Mozambique revealed a reduction in diarrhoea and skin problems amongst young children (Martinez et al., 2009).

2.3 Challenges in the provision of ECCE services

Despite the numerous benefits of ECCE, this education sector still faces many challenges. These include lack of national and international support, accessibility and poor quality of services, insufficient funding, and others. The following section considers some of the challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services.

2.3.1 Lack of provision for young children in international and national frameworks

Education as a right is expressed in various international instruments. Article 11 of the Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) states that every child has a right to an education and that states parties should provide free and compulsory basic education. Furthermore, article 28 of the UNCRC states that all children have the right to primary education. These international treaties do not make provision for, or specific reference to young children (UNESCO, 2007) and are silent on governments' responsibility to provide quality ECCE services (Maundeni, 2013).

Research findings show that ECCE services which bring most benefits to children and their families are found in countries with national ECCE policies and regulations which enforce the provision of these services (Boocock, 1995). Few countries have established national frameworks for providing care and education for young children especially below the age of three (UNESCO, 2000). Mostly, its European countries who have statutory access to pre-school for all children from age three (Spotlight, 2012). Countries such as Denmark, Estonia, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and Norway, guarantee a legal right to ECCE to children as soon after birth (Akvile, Arlette, Marie-Pascale, & Olga, 2014).

In contrast, the Government of Nigeria, through the National Policy on Education, encourages private efforts in the provision of ECCE. This has resulted in problems surrounding standards and regulation of ECCE institutions (Sooter, 2013). Moreover, service providers such as educators and administrators, are sometimes not adequately trained to take up the challenge of caring for and rearing of young children (Olumuyiwa et al., 2011). Children are therefore attended by personnel with low levels of knowledge and skills in a critical stage of the child's development (Olumuyiwa et al., 2011).

The Government of Zimbabwe has a state policy on ECCE. However its involvement in the implementation of ECCE programmes is very low (Moyo et al., 2012). Furthermore, the policy is difficult to interpret and thus not beneficial to the implementers (Moyo et al., 2012). In Botswana, the absence of a national framework to guide the structure and content of early childhood curricula and instruction (Maunganidze & Tsamaase, 2014) has resulted in a very diverse and fragmented ECCE sector.

2.3.2 Lack of access to ECCE services

Many countries around the globe struggle to improve access to ECCE services especially for children from marginalised communities in rural areas. There are some exceptions such as France, Belgium, and Italy where ECCE services are accessible to all children regardless of their economic background (Kamerma 2000; Neuman 2005). These countries provide full coverage to ECCE programmes through the provision of public funded preschools (Kamerma, 2000). Many other countries, struggle to improve access in rural areas where it is logistically complicated and expensive to provide such services (Neuman, 2005). Rural areas are sparsely populated and often have limited access to developmentally salient resources, like health care, libraries, and child care. Furthermore, over the last few decades, many talented young people have migrated to urban and suburban areas for higher quality jobs making it more difficult for rural parents to provide children with an enriching ECCE experience (Miller & Votruba-Drzal, 2013).

Rural environments also pose challenges for children receiving educational services. The long distances between school and home deter parents from allowing their children to participate in such services (Nganga, 2009; Weiss & Correa, 1996). For example, in Egypt parents fear for the safety and security of their children travelling long distances to reach kindergarten facilities (Neugebauer, 2008). In Botswana, Tshireletso (2001) noted that Basarwa children are disadvantaged in school because the geographical environment provides little educational experience to what they learn in school. Currently, the situation has not changed as indicated by the 2015 Human Rights reports that Basarwa continue to be geographically isolated and have limited access to education (“2015 Human Rights Reports: Botswana.”).

2.3.3 Funding constraints

Funding supports the provision of and access to ECCE services. One way to assess the level of importance a government places on ECCE services is through the role it plays in planning, funding, and providing for such services (Faour et al., 2006). European countries, such as France, Italy, Sweden, and Belgium, provide free or heavily subsidised preschool education to nearly all three and four-year olds (Sacks & Ruzzi, 2005; Kamerma, 2000, Urban, 2009). The governments of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Norway take much of the responsibility for ECCE by providing subsidised programmes with legal entitlement which guarantees a place for each child (Akville, et al., 2014). In contrast, countries such as Ireland, Cyprus,

Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, young children are considered the responsibility of parents and private self-funding is prominent (Akville, et al., 2014). In China funding for ECCE is limited and comprises around 1.28% (Zhao & Hu, 2008) of the education budget, the bulk providing sufficient public resources for ECCE facilities in urban rather than rural areas. In the Caribbean region, the health aspects of ECCE are funded by government, while the developmental and educational aspects have been left to NGOs (Charles, 2012).

In many developing countries financial support is minimal or absent and ECCE funding depends on the private sector (Kholowa & Rose, 2007; Nganga, 2009; Tashobya, 2012). Most developing countries allocate less than 1% of their total education budget to early childhood programmes and current EFA report states that sub-Saharan countries spend on average 0.3% (UNESCO, 2000; UNESCO, 2015). In countries, such as Botswana and South Africa, the vast proportion of ECCE funding is from parents fees (Atmore et al., 2012; Bose, 2008). Moreover, the Government of Botswana has argued that it already spends a large amount on primary and secondary education and therefore cannot afford to allocate more to ECCE programmes (Maundeni 2013). Since pre-primary education is neither free nor compulsory (Dillard, 2009; Nganga, 2009), in a place where people are poor, they are unlikely to access any service for which they have to pay (Penn, 2008).

2.3.4 Poor stakeholder relationships

Normally, ECCE services are provided by different stakeholders such as private individuals, communities, companies, and volunteers. In countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Botswana, provision of ECCE services is based on the partnership of different stakeholders. The relationship amongst the different stakeholders affects the quality of, and access to, ECCE programmes. According to Tashobya (2012), in Uganda, there is a weak or non-existent partnership between the different stakeholders in terms of financing, technical ability, skills sharing, advocacy initiatives, and cross-sharing of experiences. Such absence of strong partnerships has worked against the provision of and access to ECCE services. Maunganidze and Tsamaase (2014) noted that, in Botswana, there is a lack of congruence of interests between privately owned and public and international institutions. As in Uganda, this has had an impact on the quantity and quality of ECCE services.

2.3.5 Gender disparity in provision of ECCE services

It has been argued that having a gender mix among the workforce in the provision of ECCE services has positive effects on children's development (Urban, 2009). A balance of both men and women in ECCE supports greater flexibility in the gender role expectations of young children (Piburn, 2010). There is, internationally, a scarcity of men in the ECCE sector. In Europe, men working in ECCE varies across countries, from being non-existent in Hungary and Spain to slightly more in the Netherlands (Urban, 2009). In the United States, only 2% of the ECCE workforce is male (Flynn, 2014) whilst in Trinidad and Tobago male teachers are almost non-existent in preschools (Abdul-Majied & Seenath, 2015). Research findings by Bose (2008, 2010) and Mwamwenda (2014) in Botswana echo similar findings that a majority of ECCE centres are female headed with a teacher population of 98% female and only 2% male.

Research studies have shown that there are several factors that have contributed to the relatively low numbers of male teachers in ECCE. These include societal perceptions that the provision of ECCE is a woman's job. Low wages associated with the teaching profession in general (Farquhar, 2006; Larisa, 2012; Flynn, 2014; Abdul-Majied & Seenath, 2015) further exacerbate the situation. Men tend to be the primary income earners in their families and low salaries make it difficult for them to seek employment in the early childhood sector (Farquhar, 2006; Abdul-Majied and Seenath, 2015). Wilkins and Gamble (2012) noted that it may not be the salary structure that deters men from entering the ECCE profession but rather their fear of child abuse accusations. For example, consoling a young girl child with hugs by a male teacher may be wrongly interpreted. Abdul-Majied and Seenath (2015) stated that there is a limit to the type of care that male ECCE teachers can provide to young girls and they are normally faced with the challenge of gaining the trust of community members before being accepted in this position. Farquhar (2006) argue that there is no evidence to support the fact that male childcare teachers are all potential child abusers or that female teachers are less likely to be abusive than their male counterparts. Woltring (2012) suggests that there is a need for thoroughly screening both males and females in the recruitment and selection process for ECCE jobs and suggests applications should be made by letter and by word of mouth. She further recommends that male teachers should not work alone with children to avoid being an easy target for false accusations.

2.3.6 Unqualified work force and low compensation

A qualified work force is critical in increasing the quantity and quality of ECCE services. Research findings show that teachers with higher levels of education are more likely to implement appropriate practices in delivery of ECCE services than teachers with lower levels of education (Faour et al., 2006). The strength of ECCE systems in many European countries is that persons working with children aged three to six hold relevant qualifications, a vast majority at tertiary level (Urban, 2009). In Sweden a large proportion of ECCE staff have university degrees in early childhood development and pedagogy or equivalent bachelor's degrees with specialised training in early childhood development (Sacks & Ruzzi, 2005). ECCE teachers in France have the same training, civil service status, and salaries as primary school teachers (Boocock, 1995; Sacks & Ruzzi, 2005).

In comparison, teachers in rural areas of China lack the relevant qualifications and have very limited formal training in child development (Zhao & Hu, 2008; "Educational Challenge", n.d). Without professional qualifications teachers often cannot qualify for social welfare guarantees such as government pensions, medical insurance, and housing allowances (Zhao & Hu, 2008; Hu & Roberts, 2013). Consequently, this sector of the education system is very unattractive for teachers.

A study by Shrestha et al. (2009) showed that government ECCE centres in Nepal were run by facilitators with an educational attainment of eighth grade or more which was not adequate to meet the children's physical, social, emotional, and mental needs. According to Moyo et al. (2012), ECCE teachers in Zimbabwe are unqualified and lack the basic skills in ECCE syllabus interpretation resorting to formal teaching. In Botswana, the study findings by Bose (2008), revealed that a majority of early childhood teachers had no formal training in ECCE due to the fact that there is a lack of relevant training centres for this cadre of teachers. Bose, Pedzani and Monyatsi (2012), also noted that Botswana has few centres that offer certificate programmes for infant and day care service providers with a limited number of ECCE teachers trained by the University of Botswana.

Poor remuneration in the ECCE sector also plays a significant role in the quality of services offered to young children. In China, teachers in rural areas are normally poorly remunerated and lack the confidence associated with receipt of monthly wages because most parents cannot afford to pay ECCE fees on a regular basis (Hu & Roberts, 2013). According to Sooter (2013)

job insecurity and low wages are associated with teaching in ECCE institutions in Nigeria. In Zimbabwe, remuneration for teachers has been in the form of allowances from the government ('Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe'). These allowances are very low and thus ECCE programmes attract only para – professionals who are underqualified for these programmes (Moyo et al., 2012; 'Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe')

In developing countries, the problem of low wages is exacerbated by the fact that rural areas are isolated and have limited options for public services. For example, in the absence of public transportation in rural areas, teachers are forced to provide their own transportation. A majority of rural schools in sub-Saharan Africa have inadequate learning resources, lack water and electricity, have unhygienic toilet facilities, and provide poor quality staff housing (Buckler, 2011). Such teaching environments compounded by poor compensation, drives teachers away from the profession, subjecting young children to a multitude of inexperienced care givers (Jalongo et al., 2004). Furthermore, in countries such as Ghana and Sudan, ECCE educators suffer from public prejudice about the essence, relevance, status, and levels of teachers involved in the profession (Faour et al., 2006; Abdulai, 2014). Society views them as child minders and not educators.

2.3.7 Lack of public awareness and home support

Parents are children's first educators. Parental involvement for children from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds can be a key protective factor that enables children to be mentally and emotionally resilient in the face of challenges (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Unfortunately, the importance of ECCE has not caught the full attention of many societies due to the lack of awareness among parents, staff, and school management about the importance of parental involvement in ECCE services (Weiss & Correa, 1996).

Miller and Votruba - Drzal (2013) stated that children's early achievements are influenced by, firstly, cognitive stimulation in the home through the provision of books and toys and the teaching of numbers. Secondly, parenting quality characterised by high levels of warmth, consistency, and responsiveness from parents towards their children is important. Lastly, parents' beliefs and expectations regarding child rearing and education are highly significant. European countries have made an effort in their childcare policies to encourage parental involvement in ECCE. (Cochran, 2011). In Sweden, there are agreements in workplaces that allow parents to attend preschool during the first few weeks of their child's enrolment

(Cochran, 2011). Furthermore, similarly to Italy, parents are allowed a seat on preschool governing boards. The Head Start programme, which is one of the largest ECCE programmes in the United States includes the involvement of parents through a wide range of activities such as parenting skills, family literacy, home visits, parent leadership opportunities, and health care services with the aim that, as parents are involved in these activities, they are more likely be positively involved in their children's learning (Quadri, 2012).

In contrast, Abdulai (2014) argued that, in Ghana, the lack of parental involvement is as a result of lack of public education on the relevance of ECCE in the education system.

Tashobya(2012) argued that lack of parental involvement in Uganda is due to the fact that most of the educated, especially in rural areas, do not have any ECCE training and therefore deem it irrelevant for their children since they were able to successfully study at primary, secondary, and University levels without it. In most African countries children from low-income families are raised in environments where parental involvement in their education is either minimal or absent (Ngwaru,2014). Research findings in Zimbabwe and Kenya indicated that parents were preoccupied with poverty and socioeconomic activities and thus lacked the understanding of their importance in their children's education(Ngwaru,2014).

2.3.8 Lack of proper infrastructure

Infrastructure includes both physical (premises, outdoor spaces) and nonphysical(planning, administration, training , monitoring , evaluation, and data collection).Government funding helps to ensure that ECCE programmes stay within specific limits and do not fall below an agreed standard of quality. In developing countries ECCE centres based in rural areas often have poor infrastructure which lacks appropriate facilities and equipment(Education International, 2010).Many ECCE facilities function without basic infrastructure such as running water, access to electricity and suitable sanitation(Swadener, 2000; Gardiner, 2008).The lack of proper infrastructure and appropriate structures like buildings and play centres, force parents who would like to see their children in school (especially in the rural areas) to struggle to put up staffroom blocks, classrooms, and toilets (Tashobya, 2012).Poor infrastructure at ECCE facilities presents significant health and safety risks to young children attending these facilities.

2.4 Gaps in the literature review

There is a growing body of research about young children and their families, particularly from the United States and Europe (Kisitu, 2009). However, research on ECCE in Africa is still relatively limited. For example, in the study of the status of the ECCE programme in Gaborone, Bose et al. (2007) utilised literature from beyond the African Continent. Similarly, this literature review has relied more on literature that originates from Western countries.

2.5 Theoretical framework

The study adopts the Human Capital Theory and the Child Rights Based Approach which advocate for the importance and benefit of early childhood interventions such as ECCE programmes.

2.5.1 Human capital theory

The original idea of human capital dates back to Adam Smith in the 18th century and was considerably developed in the mid-20th century through the work of Theodore Schultz and Howard Becker. Human capital corresponds to any stock of knowledge or characteristics the worker has (either innate or acquired) that contributes to his or her productivity. Human capital theory is about the economic productivity of individuals and the situations in which it might be maximised (Penn, 2009).

The theory rests on the assumption that formal education is instrumental in improving individual productivity. Education or training elevates the level of productivity of a person by imparting useful knowledge and skills and thus raising the person's future income by increasing their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1964 cited in Xiao, 2002). Furthermore, investment in education improves an individual's occupational status and opportunities (Mazise, 2011). Proponents of human capital theory argue that investment in the productive capacity of individuals produces the greatest payoff when made early in the individuals' life (Kilburn & Karoly, 2008). For example, substantial evidence has shown that children from disadvantaged environments are more likely to commit crime, have out-of-wedlock births, and drop out of the school system (Heckman & Masterov, 2007). Hence early interventions can correct the effects

of adverse environments and reverse some of the harm caused by disadvantage (Heckman & Masterov, 2007).

2.5.1.1 Application of the theory to the study

Human capital theory assumes that human beings are a bundle of resources and when well invested like any other form of capital produce great returns (Lightfoot-Rueda, Peach & Leask, 2016). The return on human capital investments bring larger investments when made early in life rather than later (Kilburn & Karoly, 2008). Therefore, the theory advocates for investment in early childhood because it brings greater returns than any other stage of education (Penn, 2011). Human capital theory argues that development is an ongoing process which builds up from one period to another and thus early experiences or interventions lay a foundation for ongoing development. Research evidence suggests that individuals who master competencies at an early age can more easily learn additional skills at later stages. Thus quality ECCE programmes provide young children with an educational foundation for successful learning, making later learning more positive. Therefore, there is likely to be an increase in equity of educational outcomes and a lowering of the costs for society in terms of lost talent and public spending on welfare, health, and justice (Campbell-Barr & Nygard, 2014). Research provide evidence that public investment in ECCE can produce economic returns equal to roughly ten times its costs(Barnett & Nores, 2015). Examples of economic benefits are decreased costs of public education (due to reductions in grade repetition and need for special education), decreased health care costs, and decreased social and economic inequalities (Barnett & Nores, 2015).

2.5.1.2 Limitations of human capital theory

The human capital theory argues that early childhood interventions such as ECCE programmes are beneficial and cost effective for disadvantaged children. However, the problem is that most ECCE programmes, especially in southern Africa (Penn, 2008), are private or self-funded. It is children of more affluent parents who have access to such facilities while those from impoverished families tend to access poor facilities or to have no access at all(Penn, 2008). Therefore human capital, in terms of ECCE, increases the gaps in social inequality. It is because of these limitations that the study also considered the Child Rights Based Approach

2.5.2 Child rights based approach

Education as a human right has been constitutionally recognised since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This has since been affirmed in numerous human rights treaties such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Craissati & King, 2007).

The UNCRC recognises the rights of children and young people and sets out how these are to be promoted and protected. For example, Article 24 (right to health), Articles 28 and 29 (right to education) and Article 31 (right to play and recreation). The guiding principles of the Convention include:

- **Non- discrimination (Article 2):** all rights apply to all children without any exception of race, religion or ability.
- **The child's best interest (Article 3):** the primary concern in all actions dealing with any child should be his or her best interest (bearing in mind that, at times, the best interests of significant others impact significantly on those of the children for whom they are responsible).
- **The rights to life, survival and development (Article 6):** the right of the child to life is inherent and governments should ensure that all children survive and develop in a healthy manner.
- **Respect for the views of the child (Article 12):** The child has the right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting him or her (depending on the age and level of understanding of the child).

The above bracketed statements indicate the complexity of the Child Rights Based Approach (CRBA) and the need for an eclectic approach by social workers as advocates for the best interests of the child. The approach is based on a developmental framework that identifies, supports, and evaluates children's needs through reference to their rights under the UNCRC. The CRBA recognises that children are complete human beings and subjects of their own rights. This approach urges and empowers rights holders to demand their rights. Young children as rights bearers are entitled to have access to basic services such as education and

health and to actively participate in their own lives (Penn, 2008). This approach recognises that ECCE lays a solid foundation for development of a child's personality, talents, and mental and physical ability (Wilson, 2004).

2.5.2.1 Application of theory to the study

The children's right paradigm position children as right-holders. The CRBA recognises that young children have rights which are alienable. Children are not just recognised as able to but also as entitled to be engaged in the construction of their own lives whilst working with adults to ensure that their right to express their views and influence their own lives is respected (Emerson & Lundy, 2012). Children can be shaped to meet society's needs by appropriate educational instruction and other developmental or corrective interventions such as ECCE programmes. Education and care play a paramount role in the development of a child and having access to ECCE services is a right. This approach advocates that every child, including the most marginalised, should have the opportunity to access ECCE (Muñoz, 2012). The right to education is an empowerment right that helps to lift economically and socially marginalised people (adults and children) out of poverty by providing them with the ability to participate fully in their communities (Wilkinson, 2016). It views ECCE intervention, not as something that is done to young children in the hope of (re)shaping their future, but a collaborative venture with them (Penn, 2009). It emphasises participatory processes at various levels with children, parents, and the wider community (Penn, 2009). The CRBA moves beyond simply giving access rights to young children but seeks to target the underlying the roots to barriers to education.

2.5.2.2 Limitations of the child rights based approach

It assumes that children's rights are upheld everywhere. According to Penn (2008), roughly 60% of the world's children are denied their basic right to services such as education and health. Thus many children are being denied the right to ECCE. The approach also does not take account of cultural differences that exist in many countries. For example, in western societies child rearing practices are geared toward autonomy and self-determination (Bar-On, 2004). In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa the focus is more on social networks and kinship than individualism. This demonstrates that some cultures emphasise the importance of family and community rather than children's individual rights.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has attempted to review literature that focuses on the objectives of the study namely to: examine the standards set by ECCE programmes; to evaluate the benefits for young children of participating in such programmes; and to explore the challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services in the country. In general the literature has shown that young children in rural areas learn in poor environments with little educational material and playground equipment. They are being left in the hands of unqualified teachers who focus more on formal learning than learning through play. Existing literature has shown that ECCE programmes can facilitate children's cognitive, language, social, and emotional development, however, most young children in rural communities in Botswana and other developing countries have limited access to such services. This is because, firstly, ECCE is dominated by the private sector that focuses on profit maximisation rather than providing quality services or expanding access to poor communities. Secondly, most governments, especially those in developing countries, provide minimal or no financial support to implementation of ECCE programmes. Lastly, a majority of parents lack awareness of the importance of ECCE programmes and thus do not see the benefit of enrolling their children in such programmes (if indeed they exist).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study aims to describe challenges in the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana. Four research questions guided the assessment of the situation.

1. What are the standards set by ECCE programmes?
2. What are the benefits for young children of participating in ECCE programmes?
3. What are the challenges affecting the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana?
4. What actions should be taken by government and other related stakeholders to address challenges in the provision of ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana?

The decision concerning the identified research questions was made after a general preliminary research on ECCE was done to find out what research has already been done and what literature already exists. This chapter provides approaches that the study adopted to gather relevant information to answer the questions identified above.

3.1 Research strategy

The desktop research method was used to gather relevant information for the study. Desktop research refers to the approach that seeks facts or information about a specific topic using existing sources such as libraries, the internet, newspapers, and university archives and publications.

3.2 Data collection methods

During the collection of secondary data, the following methods were adopted because of their appropriateness to the study.

3.2.1 Document review

This is a method of data collection that involves the reviewing of existing documents. Documentary review provides background information on the subject and insight into a topic. The research essay is on early childhood education and care therefore the document review focused on two specific policies: Botswana's Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE), 1994, and the ECCE policy of 2001. The objective was to obtain an understanding of the existing framework that guides the implementation of ECCE programmes in Botswana.

Disadvantages of documentary review

Some of the information regarding the policies was very general and non-specific which did not provide the necessary details required by the research. Most was also somewhat dated.

3.2.2 Web research

This involved the use of the internet to search for relevant studies through the use of search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo. The web search was useful in gaining access to the most current information since studies normally take months (or years) before being published and can be outdated by the time they are accessed. Furthermore, the web search helped to acquire documents on the World Wide Web (WWW) and the use of grey literature such as unpublished work and personal web papers relevant to the study.

Disadvantages of the web search

There is a great deal of information that can be overwhelming and time consuming to explore. There is a lack of apparatus to authenticate the validity of such information. However, it may be validated through the institutions under whose authority it was gathered. For example, information gathered from UNESCO website can be relied upon because it is an internationally recognised organisation and thus attributed with the authenticity.

3.2.3 Data base

The data base involved the use of scholarly journals, professional articles, abstracts, and reviews from the University of Botswana library online database. This database was used because the information was legitimate and topic focused which enhanced its relevance.

Disadvantages of the data base

Some of the scholarly journals in the University of Botswana database require payment for access. Some published information was outdated because it normally takes months or years to publish research and thus information may not necessarily be current. However, it is still relevant as a backdrop to the present situation and the future needs of the educational system (and the children) of Botswana.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyses findings of the literature review on ECCE services in rural areas of Botswana by examining the standards set by ECCE programmes; the benefits for young children of participating in such programmes; and the challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services. It also articulates how theory is applicable to findings.

4.1 Standards set by ECCE programmes

Features of high quality ECCE programmes include developmentally appropriate curriculum, low child- teacher ratio, strong parental involvement, adequate learning materials, and acceptable physical structures, amid others. As discussed below, the ECCE policy (2001) lays down some of the minimum standards required for ECCE centres in order to provide quality services.

4.1.1 Curriculum

The ECCE policy states that curriculum activities in pre-primary centres should be based on a framework designed by the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation. In November 2013, the Pre-Primary Curriculum Framework was adopted. The framework has been developed for 3 to 6 years old. Children and those under three have been excluded. This system of exclusivity is not unique to Botswana. In many countries early childhood programming is split into two systems of childcare and early education: childcare is for children under three and early education for those over three. Moss (2012) argues that the split in the system is because childcare is viewed as a private responsibility of parents whilst early education is seen as a public good to be funded by government. A split system results in responsibility for services being divided between different ministries which results in a fragmentation of services and a lack of coherence for children and families (Bennett, 2011). However, there are a few exceptions to this split systems approach with some countries integrating childcare and early education. For example, the Nordic countries have a universal entitlement to ECCE services from at least 12 months of age (Moss 2012).

The purpose of the Pre-Primary Curriculum framework is to provide early childhood practitioners in various settings, including home schooling, by parents and other caregivers,

with guidance as they design early childhood programme to support children's holistic development and readiness for primary school (Republic of Botswana, 2013). Currently, ECCE curricula in the country differ extensively in term of comprehensiveness, quality, and relevance (Republic of Botswana, 2013). Maunganidze and Tsamaase (2014) shared similar findings that the absence of a national curriculum has created a very diverse and fragmented ECCE sector, resulting in ECCE centres adapting curricula from other countries such as South Africa (Bose, 2010). Curricula are usually socially constructed and thus reflect the value systems in which they operate (Maunganidze & Tsamaase, 2014). Thus the use of curricula from other countries may not reflect the cultural environment in which young children in Botswana learn. It has also been argued that the curricula used in some centres is slanted towards exclusionary and elite systems as they focus on preparing young children for English medium primary schools (Maunganidze & Tsamaase, 2014). This implies that those who are unable to continue to English medium schools are disadvantaged. Human capital theory argues that such exclusiveness in terms of curricula and the ECCE system being privately funded and thus only available to affluent families encourages further social inequality.

4.1.2 Child –teacher ratio

The policy states that a centre should have separate care rooms or classes for children under 4 and over 4 years. Classes with children under 4 should have a maximum of 25 children and a maximum of 30 children of ages 4-6 years. Classes should have a minimum of one qualified teacher and one teaching assistant. Child – teacher ratio gives a quantitative indication of the frequency of contact between teachers and children. It is argued that low child- teacher ratio enables teachers to develop more effective and meaningful relationships with children.

Through these relationships critical behaviours such as language use, emotional tone and warmth, responsiveness and sensitivity are developed (National Research Council, 2012).

Bar-On (2004) and Bose (2010) noted that ECCE teachers in Botswana single handedly manage large classes with as many as 100 children per single class and with no teaching assistance. Overcrowding in classrooms for young children results in maladaptive behaviour such as aggressiveness and possessiveness towards the teacher (“Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Zimbabwe”). Furthermore, it hinders teachers' ability to give

individual learning support and therefore deny children the individualised care and attention which is essential for their overall development.

4.1.3 Learning materials

The policy indicates that centres should ensure adequate supplies of developmental and educational materials. Some of the listed materials include books, puzzles, paintings, music, and indigenous play materials. Learning materials need to focus on child-centred interactions (UNESCO, 2015) to enhance social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Similarly, the child rights approach argues for educational materials which advocate for child centred learning.

Bar-On (2004) stated that rural and peri- urban centres in Botswana had insufficient writing materials. Moreover, in some centres educational materials were stored out of the reach of children to preserve their pristine condition. Other available play materials were used only under strict supervision. These findings are similar to those in other developing countries such as Uganda and Nigeria (Kisitu, 2009; Olubunmi, 2015). Insufficient learning materials create an environment encouraging formal learning through the use of blackboards, forcing children to learn from the abstract and not from what they can see and touch(Faour et.al ,2008 Kisitu, 2009) and limiting their cognitive development. Teaching and learning materials help teachers to effectively transfer content to learners which ensure that they are adequately prepared for pre-primary schooling (Onyango, 2014). Thus with insufficient learning materials, children are not well prepare for pre-primary schooling which defeats the purpose of ECCE programmes.

4.1.4 Physical environment

In terms of the physical environment, both inside and outside ECCE facilities, the policy states that: centres should have 1.5 square metres indoor floor space for purposes of educational activities, playing, eating, and resting; adequate lighting, ventilation, clean water, and washing facilities; sufficient age and size appropriate furniture; and an outdoor play area large enough for the number of children in the centre to safely run about.

The physical environment (both inside and outside ECCE facilities) should enhance children's learning and development (Berris & Miller, 2011).Research findings by Bar-On (2004), indicated that more than half the centres run by VDCs and NGOs in Botswana have inadequate physical facilities and most of the community and local authority centres have damaged outdoor

equipment which limits the development of their motor skills through activities such as running and jumping. This also affects their cognitive, social, and emotional development as it is through outdoor play that children learn how to express themselves and how to cooperate and play together (Pica, 2008).

Research by Bose (2010) on ECCE programmes in Botswana revealed that some of the centres operated in compromised and unsafe environments and used adult sized heavy furniture and toilets(or pit latrines).It has been argued that unsuitable classroom furniture causes children to develop poor posture as well as weakened muscles (Kisitu, 2009).It is difficult for teachers or caregivers to be able to constantly monitor each child and thus the school environment should be safe and free from any potentially hazardous situations such as those described above.

One of the principles guiding the child rights approach is the centrality of their best interests. This principle has been echoed in section 5 of the Botswana Children's Act of 2009. Maunganidze and Tsamaase (2014) argued that the current ECCE system in Botswana does not represent the best interests of the country's children. This is because most centres are predominantly privately owned and in the business of selling their services to those who can afford them and not necessarily with an agenda of providing a public service for the care and development of young children.

4.2 Benefits of participating in ECCE programmes for young children

The benefits of high quality ECCE programmes for young children include social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. NGOs in Botswana play an important role in the education of young children. One of these organisations is the Bokamoso preschool programme which has benefited young children, especially those from the San community. Bokamoso, like other NGOs depends on donor funding and such resources are often insufficient to meet the needs of these organisations. Hence the need for greater financial commitment from the government to support their efforts. The following are some of the ways in which the Bokamoso programme has contributed to children's development (Johnson, Agbenyiga, & Bahemaka, 2013):

- It utilises a holistic approach that emphasises creative play, storytelling, arts and crafts, and exchange of information about the natural and social environment. The

holistic approach takes into consideration the development of the whole child including physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. It is a child centred method that draws from the child rights approach on the need to respect children as complete human beings and the subject of their own rights.

- The programme has developed a curriculum and materials used in preschools to include San culture, traditions, and life style. The use of culturally relevant educational materials establishes a bridge between the children's community life and their formal education (Nguluka, 2010). This is important for the continuity of successful learning because the educational materials incorporate the children's background, knowledge, and experiences.
- Classes are provided in the children's mother tongue, San languages. This provides a basis for the child's ability to learn and stimulates learning by providing continuity of learning between home and school. The use of their mother tongue also plays a role in development of the child's identity, self-esteem, and cultural pride (Nkosana, 2014).
- The preschools are led by trained teachers from the concerned communities .The use of local trained teachers further improves the quality of services to young children as the teachers are already familiar with their cultural and social environment.
- The parents are involved extensively in the programmes and encouraged to share their traditional practices and cultural norms to form a basis for building the community ECCE programmes(Nguluka, 2010).Research findings indicate that parental involvement enhances a child's early literacy level and future academic achievement (Wiles, 2007; Burton, 2013).Parental involvement creates a connection between home and school thus reinforcing and extending children's school activities at home.

The child rights approach emphasises a participatory relationship between children, parents, staff, and the wider community (Penn, 2009).The Bokamoso programme has incorporated this approach through the collaboration and cooperation of children, teachers, parents, local people, and development workers. The preschools are community owned and parents and community members are trained to provide culturally relevant ECCE programmes (Nguluka, 2010). In the result the Bokamoso programme has benefited the children and all stakeholders.

Tirisanyo Catholic Commission (TCC) is another organisation that has developed preschools in Kgalagadi District in the south of the country. The TCC has helped Basarwa children to adapt to

schooling, integrate with other children, learn about hygiene, and prepare for entry into primary school (Chapman, Emert, & Coyne, 2003).

Child- to- Child's Little Teacher Programme in Botswana began in 1979 in primary government schools as an initiative to provide informal preschool education for young children while enhancing the educational experience of older children as "little teachers" at primary level. The objective of the programme is to help young children, especially in rural areas, through easy transition into primary schools. Primary school children are taught about health, nutrition, and child development by the Child-to-Child (CTC) teachers. They, in turn, utilise this knowledge to teach young children (pre-schoolers). The CTC programme has made a positive difference in preparing young children for primary schooling (Pridmore & Stephens, 2000) as research findings show that those involved in the CTC programme adapt faster and better to school than those who are not recipients of these programmes(Nsamenang, 2012).

The development of ECCE programmes has contributed to raising the status of women and promoted their empowerment in Botswana (Trivedi & Bhatti, 2008; Maundeni, 2013). This has indirectly benefited children as ECCE programmes give women relief from the burden of childcare and an opportunity to participate in economic activities (Trived & Bhatti, 2008). According to UNICEF (2007), children from high income families are more likely to attend formal childcare centres than children from low income families. Therefore, as women become active participants in economic activities, the more disposable income they have, and the higher the likelihood of them being able to access quality education for their children (Maundeni, 2013).

Research in Botswana on the ECCE sector is still very scanty and thus there could be further benefits of ECCE services in rural areas than have yet emerged. Research findings in other parts of the world have indicated that these programmes create opportunities for children to escape from poverty and attendant poor nutrition (UNESCO, 2007). Poverty and child malnutrition are major problems facing young children in Botswana. In 2011, UNICEF (2011) indicated that more than 40% of children in the country (mainly from rural areas), and aged 3-4 years are facing the highest levels of poverty whilst child malnutrition under the age of 5 was reported at 29 % (stunting), 11% underweight and 6 % (wasting) [World Bank, 2011]. Research findings show that education creates an opportunity to escape from poverty and ECCE centres are important gatekeepers in providing children with nutritional meals (UNESCO, 2007; Moalosi,

2012).Increasing access to ECCE for children in rural areas would help to reduce these disadvantages.

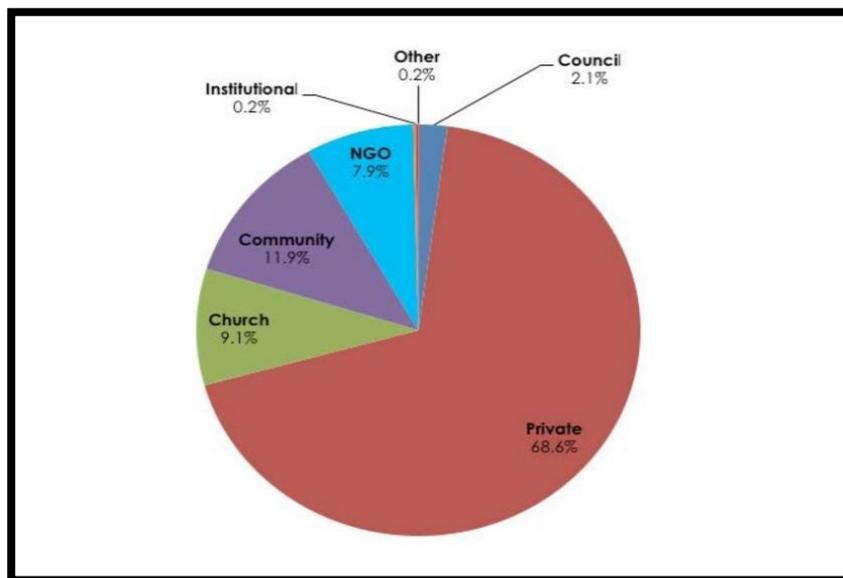
4.3 Challenges that affect the provision of ECCE services

The challenges of ECCE provision in rural areas of Botswana with regard to insufficient funding, poorly trained teachers, and lack of parental involvement are similar to the findings in other parts of the world (as discussed in chapter 3).Moreover, in Botswana the issue of language barriers is of concern. The following section considers these challenges.

4.3.1 Lack of government support and funding

Government provides very limited funding for the ECCE sector. It does not have a dedicated budget but is financed through the primary education sector (Oussoren, 2001; Republic of Botswana, 2015). Maundeni (2013) argued that the lack of financial support from government is due to the fact that it already spends a great deal on primary and secondary education and on the needs of other public sectors such as health. Figure 4.1 below shows that the provision of ECCE in Botswana is still predominantly a private initiative (68.6%). This means that the burden of financing such programmes falls upon parents.

Figure 4.1 Percentage of Pre- Primary Schools by School Ownership-2013. Source: Statistics Botswana, 2015: Pre & Primary Education 2013

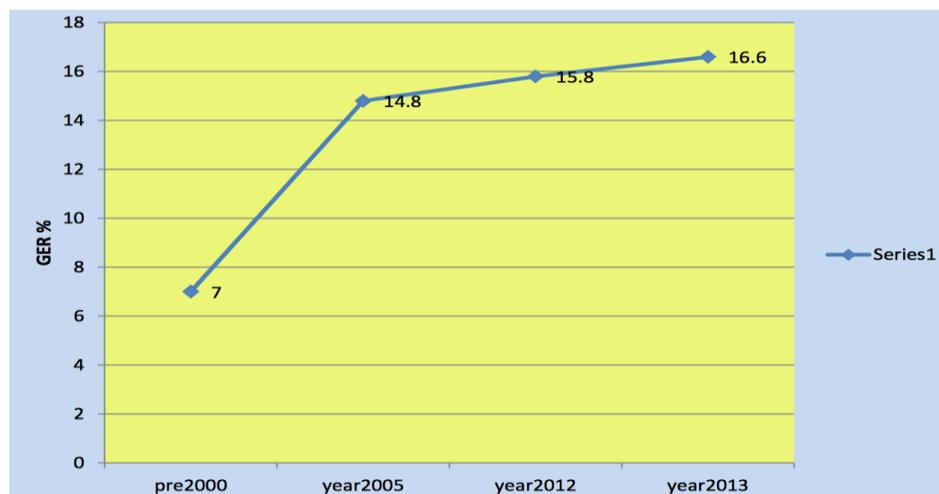


Most families in rural areas cannot afford high fees for such programmes and, as such, the home still remains an alternative venue for ECCE provision (UNESCO, 2000). Centres operated by VDCs and NGOs are grossly under financed since the sector has limited funding (Bar-On, 2004; Republic of Botswana 2015), thus failing to adhere to the stipulated regulations and standards in the ECCE policy (Bose, 2008; Maundeni 2013). The situation is not unique to Botswana as the current EFA report shows that pre -primary education has a low share of education budgets around the world (at a median of only 4.9%) with sub-Saharan Africa spending an average of 0.3% on the sector (UNESCO, 2015). Maundeni (2013) argues that there is a need to provide affordable and subsidised ECCE facilities in Botswana in order to increase access for children from poor families and for those living in remote areas. Increasing government expenditure towards ECCE services would ensure equal distribution of resources such as teachers and learning materials to schools in disadvantaged communities.

4.3.2 Lack of access to ECCE services

Children in remote areas of Botswana have limited or no access to ECCE programmes due to the general geographic, socio-economic, and cultural conditions of these areas (Oussoren, 2001). Rural areas continue to be affected by a high incidence of poverty as most economic activities and government spending is in urban areas (Moepeng & Tisdell, 2006). Development programmes in rural areas tend to be major budget targets during periods of economic downturn (Moepeng & Tisdell, 2006). Hence access to ECCE is still far below the Education for All (EFA) targets as indicated below (UNESCO, 2015).

Figure 4.2 shows trends of gross enrolment ratio (GER) of pre-school age (3-years) over time in comparison with international target and sub-Saharan Africa GER



Note: EFA Target= 80%; Sub- Saharan Average=25.5%

Sources: MoESD Basic Education Unit, 2013; Regional Bureau of Education in Africa, 2012

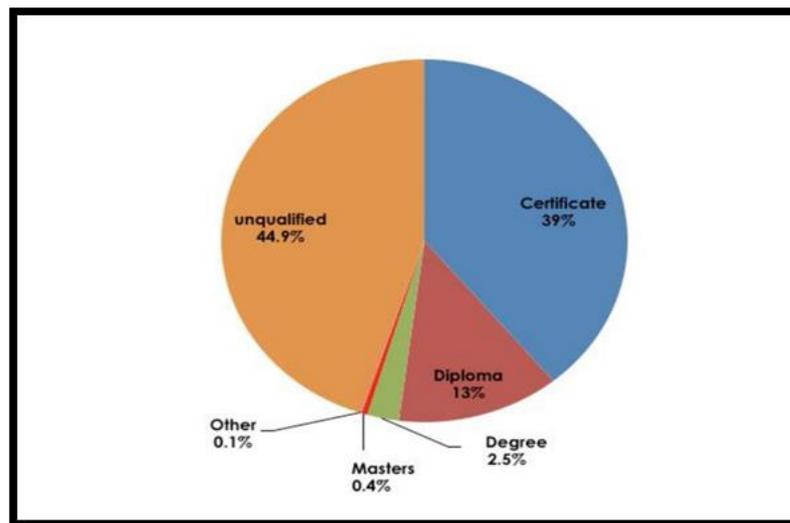
The EFA enrolment target rate for preschool is 80%. However, in Botswana, only 22% of children have access to such services (Kayawe, 2014). Low access in Botswana is similar to that of many developing countries especially for children from marginalised communities in rural areas (Neuman, 2005). Child rights proponents argue that education is a right and that every child, including the most marginalised, should have the opportunity to access ECCE services (Muñoz, 2012). Research findings indicate that the rural poor have the most to gain from quality ECCE services and achieving equitable access to them can reduce social inequality (UNESCO, 2015).

Another challenge is that some populations in the country are not officially recognised as Remote Area Dwellers (RAD). RAD refers to people or communities which are not recognised as villages as they fall outside the scope and coverage of social service provision (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, n.d). They are characterised by lack of economic well-being and as being poverty stricken with little or no access to educational resources. Due to the remoteness of these areas, they miss out on NGO initiatives to set up ECCE centres. For example, in 1994 TCC attempts to open a preschool in Ngwatle were halted by the District Council because this area was not officially recognised as a settlement (Oussoren, 2001). Kayawe (2014) argued that ECCE programmes in Botswana still remain exclusive to the affluent and to children in urban areas. The issue of access in rural and remote areas might improve in the near future given the recent efforts by government to introduce 115 reception classes in primary schools, with priority being given to schools in such areas (UNESCO, 2015).

4.3.3 Lack of trained and qualified teachers

Teachers are key in increasing quality ECCE services. Trained and qualified teachers are ideally informed about child development and appropriate practices and teaching strategies for use with young children (Bose, 2008). Figure 4.3, based on data collected in the 2013 census, and indicates that about 44.9% of pre-primary teachers in Botswana is untrained.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of Pre-Primary Teachers by Qualifications-2013. Source Statistics Botswana, 2015: Pre & Primary Education, 2013



Poorly trained teachers lack knowledge of appropriate practices and teaching strategies and thus are unable to deliver quality services. Lack of training in ECCE pedagogy often results in teacher-centred approaches that focus more on children's academic development than on other areas such as physical development. For example, in Zimbabwe lack of basic skills in ECCE syllabus interpretation has forced teachers to resort to formal teaching instead of the recommended child/play centred learning (Moyo et al., 2012). The human capital theory argues that, to ensure that ECCE programmes translate into future higher tangible economic returns, there is need to provide quality services and qualified and trained teachers are paramount to the quality process

The Lobatse Day Care Training Centre (LDTC) is the only facility in the country that offers certificate programmes. To enter, a candidate must be at least 18 years of age, have a minimum of a year's experience in day care, and have completed junior secondary school. The training programme follows mainly the Montessori approach. Currently, LDTC fails to meet the demand for qualified ECCE teachers in the country (Bose, 2008; ECCE Policy, 2001). The use of the Montessori Method requires careful interpretation of its intricacies and adaptation to different environments and target groups (Bar-On, 2004). However, most trainers and students do not meet these standards. High quality ECCE provision requires teachers to be trained in general education as well as specific early childhood training (UNESCO, 2015). Many ECCE

teachers in remote areas have no junior certificate qualification and, as such, do not meet the entry criteria (such as for LDTC) for training further in formal institutions. Consequently, young children are left in the hands of untrained teachers and thus inadequately prepared for future learning.

There is also Bokamoso in-service training under the Kuru Development Trust (KDT) in Ghanzi. The Bokamoso Programme is at present, the only independent in-service training programme for preschool teachers in Botswana. The programme focuses on rural community schools that have limited financial support. Over the years Bokamoso has assisted in training teachers from San communities in Mababe and Boteti in Ngamiland; Hambukushu communities of Etsha; and teachers from the Kgalagadi District, Karakubis, Charles hill, Serowe, and Sefare (le Roux, 2002). The KDT is not registered as a teacher training institution therefore certificates are not accredited by the MoESD. Oussoren (2001) argued that MoESD does not recognise or support the teacher training initiatives for RAD thus exacerbating the problem of a shortage of qualified teachers.

While staff turnover is cited in many countries as a factor in various ECCE centres in rural areas, it has been an acute problem in rural Botswana. Some areas in the country, such as Ghanzi, are considered to be extremely remote and that nothing can be done there. The appointment of teachers to such remote areas is considered to be a curse. Hence teachers locate to such areas with negative attitudes which affect their job performance and that of the children they are meant to educate. It often becomes very difficult to recruit qualified teachers for posts in such areas resulting in high staff turnover which affects children's learning outcomes.

ECCE policy demands that teachers be qualified. However, the MoESD does not provide them with ECCE qualifications. Other programmes that train primary school teachers have taken the responsibility of offering ECCE courses both at diploma and degree level (Bose, 2010). Teachers' education, ongoing support, and training are crucial for introducing changes in the ECCE sector in rural areas. Furthermore, teachers' professional qualifications influence the quality of classroom interaction more than the physical environment (UNESCO, 2015).

4.3.4 Language barriers

The two official languages in Botswana are English and Setswana and they are the only media of instruction in the education system. In VDC centres, Setswana is the official language;

however, in some centres English is also used. Bar-On (2004) noted that, in villages where ECCE programmes were conducted in a language other than the children's home language, parents refused to send their children to school.

Molosiwa (2009) argued that the current education system in Botswana is not inclusive of all cultural and ethnic minority groups. The education curriculum, including the current ECCE policy, does not make provision for linguistic minorities. Many teachers from mainstream Setswana speaking groups refrain from serving in ethnic minority areas because of language and cultural barriers (Molosiwa, 2009). The teachers serving in such areas carry cultural and personal attitudes which do not support child learning (Tshireletso, 2001).

The cultural and ethnic barrier is indicative of negative relations between teachers and learners or teachers and parents of young children. Children are unable to express themselves and teachers are unable to communicate with children. As a result, young children suffer adversely when taught in a language other than their mother tongue (Oussoren, 2001). They are negatively affected in primary schools as they are the ones with the highest failure and dropout rates (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2006 as cited in Molosiwa, 2009). Furthermore parents, especially in remote areas, do not send their children to school because of the insensitivity of the school culture and curriculum (Bar-On, 2004).

Participation in ECCE programmes enhances children's language development as they engage in conversation with peers and teachers through play, song, and reading. The use of childrens' home language or mother tongue is important as it provides continuity of learning between home and school. In addition, it facilitates parents and caretakers to be part of the children's learning. The lack of a national language and multicultural policy in Botswana means that minority ethnic children who are in dire need of ECCE are excluded from such programmes.

4.3.5 Lack of parental involvement

Parental involvement refers to parents' use and investment of resources in their children and may include activities such as discussions about school and help with homework (Trivedi, Mberengwa, & Tsamaase, 2012). According to the authors, Botswana is perceived as an oral society which promotes talking rather than reading. They added that most Batswana children grow up in homes which have no reading materials and where little writing occurs.

Parents are children's first educators and play a crucial role in their children's perceptions of and approach to learning. Research findings indicate that parental involvement has a considerable impact on a child's early and future academic achievement (Wiles, 2007; Burton, 2013). There is a clear need in Botswana to sensitise parents on the importance of ECCE and their involvement in their children's education.

4.3.6 Nutritional challenges

Good nutrition in a child's early years lays an important foundation for future health and well-being (Moalosi, 2012). ECCE centres are important gatekeepers in providing children with nutritious meals (Moalosi, 2012). The ECCE policy (2001) states that centres that operate up to 5½ hours a day should offer at least a snack or formula and centres that operate for more than 5 ½ hours a day should give children at least one cooked meal. Furthermore, the policy stipulates that children should be provided with nutritious meals according to their needs and in the quantity they require.

According to Bar-On (2004), many VDC and some peri-urban NGO centres provide little food and not according to children's needs. This is mainly due to insufficient funds. A study carried out in Tlokweng, an urban village (adjacent to the capital city of Gaborone), revealed that most ECCE centres provide insufficient meals without the recommended nutrients such as iron, calcium, carbohydrates, and protein. The situation is much worse in remote areas where children in some ECCE are not provided with any food or the food provided is poorly prepared (Oussoren, 2001). Poor nutrition affects children's cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional development which impacts their readiness for school and their success in school and lifetime learning (Jukes, 2007).

4.4 Summary

The current report by UNESCO (2015) indicated that ECCE services in Botswana are still largely concentrated in urban areas and accessible to children from affluent families, inevitably isolating the poor in the rural areas. Furthermore, ECCE initiatives such as the implementation of a pre-primary curriculum and workshops and training for teachers, were implemented at the end of the EFA period between 2012 and 2014. As a result, there is no empirical information to suggest that ECCE enrolment increased after such initiatives. Most of the benefits for children

in rural communities are as a result of efforts by NGOs such as Bokamoso. Some of the challenges affecting the provision of ECCE services are insufficient funding, poorly trained teachers, and language barriers.

It is important to note that research in Botswana on the ECCE sector is scanty and outdated, especially regarding preschools in rural areas. The available research has focused mainly on preschools in Gaborone and adjacent villages such as Tlokweng. The methodologies used have been restricted to a specific area. Thus the findings cannot be generalised to the country as a whole.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises what was discussed in previous chapters. It also provides recommendations for action that should be taken by government and other stakeholders to improve the delivery of ECCE services to young children in rural areas of Botswana.

5.1 Summary and conclusion

The study revealed that there is a slight increase in participation in early child care and education in Botswana from 17% in 2007 to 22% in 2014 (UNICEF, 2007; Kayawe, 2014). However, this figure is low as compared to the Education for All (EFA) target of 80% enrolment. Responsibility for ECCE provision has, by and large, been taken by the private sector, NGOs, and communities. Based on the 2013 statistics the private sector owns 68.6% of preschools whilst NGOs and communities are responsible for 11.9% and 7.9% respectively. Through the efforts of NGOs such as Bokamoso and its preschool programmes, children in rural communities are given the opportunity to receive quality services characterised by trained and qualified teachers and well-developed culturally relevant curricula. The role of government is mainly to provide an enabling environment for other service providers to offer such services. The government's indirect role and lack of commitment to universal provision of pre-primary education (Maundeni, 2013), has contributed to issues of limited access, financial constraints, and an untrained workforce in the sector. The lack of a national language policy also hinders the participation of children from ethnic minorities in such programmes. Since children are the future of the nation, there is need to prioritise ECCE in Botswana. The recent 115 pilot reception classes introduced in primary schools around the country demonstrates government's willingness to improve accessibility of ECCE programmes for marginalised children in rural and remote areas. However, this does not necessarily guarantee the quality of such services.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the discussion the following recommendations are made:

5.2.1 Government

The ECCE sector is faced with low financial and human resources and no dedicated budget. Currently there are no government pre-schools ('Education For All 2015 National Review Report: Botswana') and the provision of ECCE services has predominantly been through the efforts of the private sector with 68% ownership of pre-primary schools in 2013 (Statistics Botswana, 2015). Private providers are unlikely to set up their operations in rural and remote areas with sparse population, poor infrastructure such as roads, water, and electricity, and where the communities are unable to afford school fees. Government, in partnership with the MoESD, needs to assume leadership in the provision of ECCE services in the country. To improve access in such areas, government should take responsibility for creating an enabling environment by providing infrastructure and sharing costs with private initiators through the availability of subsidies. Furthermore, to improve accessibility, the government should increase grants to civil society organisations and offer community halls or other government buildings which are not being utilised for these organisations to utilise in this regard.

Increasing accessibility to ECCE services does not necessarily guarantee quality services. Trained teachers enhance quality and currently there are low numbers of qualified teachers in the country. In the budget for 2016/2017, the MoESD has the largest share totalling P 10.64 billion. However, previously and currently there is no dedicated budget for the ECCE sector. Clearly, there is a need for increased political will and commitment by government to allocate dedicated resources to finance and train human resources in this sector. Botswana's investment in education is one of the highest in Africa yet its learners' achievements are poor ("Issues and Challenges-Other MDGs, n.d"). For example, there has been a consistent decline in Junior Certificate examination results for the past 5 years and for the year 2015 there was a 67% failure rate (Motlhabane, 2016). Research findings have indicated that quality ECCE programmes help to reduce grade repetition and increase school completion and achievement. The government should refocus its strategy on addressing the education crisis in the country and confronting issues at grass roots levels, such as early childhood, through serious commitment to pre-primary education.

5.2.2 Teachers

Language is the key instrument for communication in the classroom. Research findings indicate that the use of mother tongue plays a significant role in development of the child's identity, self-esteem, and involvement in cultural practices(Johnson et al., 2013; Nkosana, 2014).One of the greatest constraints in Botswana with regard to mother longue instruction in ECCE is the lack of policy to support such languages and a shortage of teachers fluent in these languages, especially for minority groups such as the San ,the Kalanga, and the Mbukushu (“Issues and Challenges – Other MDGs .n.d”) .Wagner (2006) stated that San children who speak Khoisan, are disadvantaged very early in schools because they are forced to learn difficult languages such as English and Setswana. Heckman (2000) argued that early learning failure or disadvantage breeds later failure. Molosiwa (2009) noted that teachers' preparation to address the linguistic needs of ethnic minority students in Botswana is inadequate. One of the practical methods of overcoming language and cultural barriers as utilised by the Bokamaos preschool programme is to train teachers from local communities who are familiar with mother tongue languages and the social environments of the children. On a broader level, the following are some of the ways in which the education system in Botswana becomes more inclusive of all cultural groups (Wagner, 2006; Molosiwa, 2009):

- Multicultural education in the form of language courses should be infused into teacher education programmes.
- Prospective teachers should be afforded cultural training to gain better understanding of different cultural groups.
- Government should hire permanent translators and parents as teacher aides to address language barriers in preschools as it already does in some primary schools (‘Education For All 2015 National Review Report: Botswana’).
- There should be revision of the language policy (as it currently recognises only Setswana and English as official languages of instruction) so as to create a multicultural and multilingual education system.

5.2.3 Parents

Research findings indicate that parents are children's first educators and enhance children's future academic learning (Burton, 2013). Mannathoko and Mangope (2013) noted that the 1993 report on education stated that one of the reasons that Botswana's private schools surpass government schools is active parent participation. Trivedi, Mberengwa, & Tsamaase (2012) argued that Botswana is perceived as an oral society which promotes talking in preference to reading and therefore most Botswana children grow up in homes which have no reading materials and where little writing takes place. The Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) stated that there is a need to educate parents and communities on the necessity for and importance of ECCE through seminars, training programmes, campaigns, and similar initiatives. Based on Joyce Epstein's framework the following are the different ways parental involvement can be encouraged and strengthened in the country (Davis, 2000; Epstein & Salinas, 2004):

- **Parenting:** Assist families with parenting skills and helping them to establish home environments to support children's growth and learning. Positive parental skills can be imparted through workshops and training. Home visits can provide parents the opportunity to share concerns on domestic situations which might affect their children's learning. This can also create a collaborative relationship with other government ministries such as health or social services to ensure that families and children receive all the help needed to guarantee future successful learning.
- **Volunteering:** Recruit and organise parents as volunteers to assist children at school especially during school events or career days. This will assist in creating an opportunity for parents to be seen as positive role models in their children's lives and also mobilising communities to be involved. Parents who are actively involved are also more likely to encourage other parents to become involved in their children's education.
- **Decision making:** Giving parents' opportunities to participate in school decisions and governance through organisations such as PTAs (Parent- Teacher Association). Parents are more supportive of school efforts and initiatives when included in the decision making process.

- **Collaboration with the community:** There is a need for identifying and integrating community resources to strengthen school programmes and children's learning and development. The Bokamoso preschool is a good example of this initiative where parents are encouraged to share their traditional and cultural practices with the children and educational materials used emanate from the community(Nguluka, 2010; Johnson et al., 2013).Furthermore, the programme would be led by trained local teachers creating a positive collaboration between parents, teachers, and the community.

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